

**COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE PRINCIPAL AND SCHOOL GOVERNING  
BODY IN THE MANAGEMENT OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN PUBLIC  
SCHOOLS**

by

**VANITHA GOVINDASAMY**

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**SUPERVISOR: Prof R. Mestry**

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- Above all, to God for giving me the strength and courage to persevere.

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## **DEDICATION**

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I dedicate this research to my dear parents

**MY DEAR MOTHER**

**MRS. MALIGA NAIDOO**

and

**MY LATE FATHER**

**MR. VICTOR NAIDOO**

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## SYNOPSIS

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The new government that came into power in 1994, brought with it changes to the education legislation, which emphasised the parents as important partners for schools. This partnership was formalised by the South African Schools Act (SASA), which identifies school governing bodies (SGBs) as official partners in school governance. Thus, the new structure of school governance has resulted in the development of new relationships between parents and (SGBs). Collaboration may be viewed as a significant requirement in the relationship between the principal and SGB in order for them to effectively manage their school's financial resources.

Clearly, financial constraints can constitute one of the most significant, inhibitory factors in the creation of good, quality education in schools. Schools therefore need to ensure that financial resources are effectively managed so that quality education is sustained. As schools in South Africa are increasingly functioning as Section 21 schools, there is a stronger emphasis on financial management. However, if collaboration between the principal and SGB is not enhanced, this could ultimately affect the management of financial resources negatively. This places a heavy burden on principals, as they now need to cultivate genuine processes of collaboration in order to empower SGB members in the management of financial resources.

This study focuses on the crucial need for schools to initiate and maintain a collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB. Without this, mutual trust, teamwork, collaborative decision-making, open-communication and co-operation will be absent, and can therefore impact negatively on the management of the school's financial resources. Further, the government's intention to transform schools and redress past education inequalities may prove futile.

The aim of this research as outlined in chapter one was to examine the collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB and to measure its impact on the effective management of financial resources in public schools. In order to achieve this, the specific objectives were to determine the roles and functions of the principal and SGB in light of new legislation, to identify the nature and essence of collaboration, and to provide guidelines for principals and SGBs to develop a collaborative relationship in order to effectively manage their school's financial resources.

The study also highlights the barriers that prevent collaboration among stakeholders, especially between the principal and SGB. Chapter two focused on the nature and essence of collaboration, with specific reference to the relationship between the principal and SGB in the management of financial resources. The success of the SGB and the principal performing their functions relating to the management of financial resources for example, depends on the principal and SGB working in a collaborative relationship. Various aspects that contribute to a collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB are discussed. To have a rich understanding of how collaboration impacts on the effective management of financial resources by principals and SGBs in schools, the researcher examined the collegial model, the structural model and Giddens' structuration theory.

Following the literature review, chapter three deals with the rationale for the choice of a generic qualitative research method which employs multiple techniques for example, both interviews and observations are often conducted within a single study. The most common data collection techniques used in qualitative research is observation, interviews and document analysis. In this study, all three of these techniques were used. Participants were chosen for the interviews using purposeful sampling technique because the researcher could hand pick the research participants on the basis of their judgement of their typicality. Data obtained through interviews, observations, content of existing material and documents, which included financial records, minutes of meetings and journal entries were analysed. In this study, the researcher made reference to Tech's method of open coding in order to identify themes

and categories. The researcher also dealt with ethical issues and lastly, the limitations experienced were discussed.

Chapter four explores the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained through the interviews undertaken with principals, parent SGB members and school bursars. The comparative method was employed to analyse the participant's responses as well as the observed interactions. The following themes extracted from the research were discussed: effective structures for collaboration, collaborative cultures, relationships, communication as well as SGB knowledge of their roles and functions. Results of this research show that there is a lack of collaboration between principals and SGBs as a result of numerous factors, which were identified. Some of the key findings that emanated with regard to the roles and functions of the SGB were that SGB members were unclear about their roles and functions, the SGB's lack of financial knowledge and skills, the contradictions on the roles and functions of the SGB as stipulated in the SASA, the power relations that exist between the principal and SGB, and the SGBs lack of understanding on the issue of responsibility and accountability. It was further discovered, with regards to the findings related to the nature and essence of collaboration, shared responsibility, teamwork, trust, communication, co-ordination, collaborative decision making, delegation and co-operation are important aspects of collaboration.

The various findings were discussed and has allowed the researcher to propose guidelines to improve the collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB which ultimately have an impact on the efficiency of schools.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

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#### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Prior to South Africa's first democratic elections in 1994, the education system in the country was complex. Despite the existence of central control, the system comprised a conglomeration of different sub-systems, which had its own relationship with the department and with parents, and had its own governance arrangements (Motala & Pampallis, 2000:147). In the previous education system, schools were not 'self-managing'. McLennan and Thurlow (2003:37) characterises management in education in this era as being authoritarian, hierarchical, non-consultative and non-participative. Against this background, which has consigned to history an education system based on racial inequality and segregation, it became necessary that South Africa required a new national system of schools (Calitz, Fugalstad & Lillejord, 2002:93).

South Africa's democratic government inherited huge disparities from the apartheid education system. Thus, significant legislation and policy reform in post-apartheid South Africa started immediately after the election in 1994 when the state began to fulfil its aim to redress past injustices. The reform process inevitably impacted on school leaders as they were faced with the challenge of transforming schools to comply with the rapidly changing policies. Changes in education has brought to the fore the need for principals and school governing bodies (SGBs) to manage their financial resources through working collaboratively and directing the complex new policies, and, in so doing, realising the transformational goals set out. Some authors have asserted that reform initiatives in South Africa have relied on collaborative principles (Barth, 1990; Cook & Friend, 2003). In fact, collaboration has become and will continue to become a significant and critical factor in the

dynamics of contemporary education and school reform (O'Shea & O'Shea, 1997). Slater (2004:42) points out that as schools systems in many countries have restructured their organizational features and activities, the need to develop a more collaborative approach has also been part of the direction. In addition to what O' Shea and O' Shea (1997), have stated above, Slater (2004:43) further points out that the ability to work collaboratively with others is becoming an essential component of school reform.

In South Africa, as in many other countries, educational trends, such as decentralisation, the shift of responsibility in roles, community involvement, building of partnerships and accountability in schools have impacted on the organisation and structure of schools. This has resulted in changing associations and patterns of interaction amongst participants in schools (Murphy & Hallinger, 1993:267). Thus, collaboration may be viewed as central to each of these trends.

As school principals and SGBs in schools grapple with the demands of managing their schools' resources efficiently and effectively it is important to reflect on the collaborative relationship society expects from them, whether there are significant gaps between these expectations and current practice, and what can be done to enhance the capacity to diminish such gaps in the future. In this study, the researcher is interested in investigating the importance of collaboration between principals and SGBs, how they collaborate, what they collaborate about, and what the outcomes of such collaboration are.

## **1.2 MOTIVATION FOR AND BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH**

In order for a school to function effectively, the principal and SGB need to work collaboratively with each other. Clase, Kok, and van der Merwe (2007:235) share the view that the success of any country's education system is dependent to a great extent on the mutual collaboration and trust existing between partners in a school. Maintaining a good, collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB is often difficult, mainly due to new legislation

as well as numerous weaknesses in existing legislation. In South Africa, all public schools must elect a SGB as part of the governance and management structure of the school. As pointed out by Bisschoff and Mestry (2003:4), the allocation and management of resources are critical to effective school management and should relate to the needs of the learner. Potgieter, Visser, van der Bank, Motala and Squelch (1997:11) regard school governance as an act of determining policy and rules by which a school is to be organised and controlled. Rules, regulations and policies should be carried out effectively in terms of the law and the budget of the school. Financial resources are a means of supply and support that assist school managers in the achievement of goals, and consist of money, time and material resources. It is imperative that the principal and the SGB manage their school's financial resources in a sound, efficient and effective manner so that maximum responsibility and accountability is present at all times (Naidoo, 2006:4).

In an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB, the researcher has based her research findings on relevant theories and models. Bush and Hughes (1991:234) assert that theories/models are most useful for influencing practice when they suggest ways in which the events and situations can be perceived. Thus, the study made use of collegial models to guide and form a theoretical framework for the research. Collegial models emphasise that power and decision-making should be shared among some or all members of the organisation. Collegial models assume that organisations determine policy and make decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus. Power is shared among some or all members of the organisations who are thought to have a mutual understanding about the objects of the institution. Collaboration encompasses the values inherent in collegial organisations (Bush, 2004:64).

The researcher is of the opinion that an effective organisational structure is essential in promoting collaborative principles. Blanford (1997:75) states that the participation in the decision-making process in schools is dependent on the relationship between stakeholders and, therefore, proposes that structures may be needed to provide a framework for collaboration. Thus, the researcher

used Bercher and Kogan's structural model (Bush, 2004:39) and Giddens structuration theory (Clark, Modgil & Modgil, 1990:25), as both theories were felt to be relevant and guided her research. Bercher and Kogan's structural model makes reference to four levels within the organisation: the central level, the institutional level, the basic level and the individual level. They point out that relationships between these levels can be categorised as either normative or operational. The normative mode refers to the monitoring and maintenance of values within the school while the operational mode refers to the carrying out of practical tasks at the different levels. Giddens theory of structuration, on the other hand, explores the question of whether it is individuals or social forces that shape our social reality. He argues that all basic concepts in social theory should acknowledge that social action and collectivities consist in, and are generated by, ongoing forms of social praxis. Giddens identifies three kinds of structures in a social system, those of signification, legitimation and domination. The model provides evidence of the web of interactions among stakeholders and the complex path to effective management of financial resources. Thus, with the use of the above theories and model the researcher sought to interpret the meaning, experiences and understanding of the collaborative relationship between principals and SGBs.

Looking further into the education system in South Africa, the myriad of changes has culminated in reform legislation and policy initiatives, which together represent the intention to restructure education. The new policy frameworks and legislation make it clear that governance and management need to be reconceptualised at all levels of the education system, especially at the level of the school (Bisschoff & Thurlow, 2005:3). This path set on course by reform legislation and policy ushered in a new era in the management of schools whereby conventional notions of school management were transcended (Maile, 2002:326). These policies are outlined in documents such as the South African Schools Act (SASA) (South Africa, 1996b) and the "Norms and Standards for School Funding" (South Africa, 1998). In the preamble to the SASA, it is stated that parents, educators and learners accept co-responsibility for the governance, funding and organisation of schools. Section 16(1) of this Act assigns governance of schools to the



governing bodies that must be established at all public schools. The principal of the school, acting under the authority of the provincial head of education, is given the responsibility for the professional management of the school (Section 16(3) of the SASA). Furthermore, in terms of section 16A(1)(2) of the SASA 84 of 1996 (Education Laws Amendment Bill of 20 July 2007), the principal carries the responsibility for the day-to-day operational leadership and management of the school. With regard to financial matters, the principal manages various kinds of school accounts and has to keep accurate financial records and to make the best use of funds. This responsibility appears to be vague and to some extent contradicts the Schools Act. The question arises: Are these prescriptions in the various policies interpreted correctly in practice? It may be concluded that the roles and functions of the principal and SGB are not specifically distributed. Further, it is not clearly stipulated, to what extent SGBs may exercise their power without infringing the principal's domain and vice versa.

The principle objective of the SASA is “to provide for a uniform system for the organisation, governance and funding of schools.” (South Africa, 1996b). The Act encourages schools to become self-managed and self-reliant. Caldwell and Spinks (1998: 4-5) define a self-managed school as a school in a system of education in which a significant amount of authority and responsibility to make decisions about the allocation of resources within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, standards and responsibilities, has been decentralised. An essential requirement for decentralised governance and management to succeed is that the governors and managers must understand their own roles and functions and must have the ability to perform these functions (Caldwell & Spinks, 1998). This may become a mammoth task, as principals are often unsure of their roles and responsibilities because of the lack of clarity in numerous pieces of legislation. Furthermore, the SASA (Sections 20 and 21) allocates functions to the SGB and does not stipulate specifically that a representative on the SGB should be responsible for performing these functions. This may result in members trying to dominate each other. This dominating behaviour may have a detrimental effect on the

principal and SGB working collaboratively to manage the school's financial resources.

In this study, it is indicated how accountability can also influence the collaborative relationships between principals and SGBs. Bisschoff and Mestry (2003:5) state that the school principal is accountable to the provincial head of department, the SGB of the school as well as the parents of the learners attending the school. 'Accountability' involves reporting on the control and use of resources. In the school context this means, amongst other things, confirming that the school's resources actually exist, that they have been used for legitimate and legal purposes, and that the assets and resources have been accounted for in a proper way. The notion of accountability creates unexpected power relations between principals and SGBs. In the past, principals were the ultimate decision-makers. However, this is no longer the case. Principals may now no longer take decisions unilaterally because the SGB has power within the school. Thus, principals may feel disempowered and this may impact on the collaborative relationship of the principal and SGB. Ntshangase (2002) found in his research that the self-interest of principals is one of the main factors why there is a lack of effective collaboration and support. He further found that parents are often suspicious of what the principal is doing and always prefer to get another opinion. Some parents are also conservative in their approach to education and hence do not support changes in the school. Mestry (2006:33) found that there is a lack of collaboration among stakeholders and state that in many instances, principals are not prepared to share the responsibility of school governance lest they lose their power, and regard withholding of information with regard to school finances as an intentional act on the part of the principal'.

A lack of collaboration between the principal and SGB was also evident when the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE), employed the services of an independent quality assurance service provider to look into the lack of transparency and accountability in section 21 schools (2004). Some of the weaknesses that were identified were the lack of control over cash receipts, receipt issuing and banking of cash, lack of control over cash transactions,

financial statements not being compiled, budgets and financial statements which did not comply with the policy requirements, inadequate monitoring of actual expenditure against budgeted expenditure and a lack of control over the use of telephones, photocopiers and printers. A financially skilled and trained principal and SGB working together collaboratively might have helped alleviate the above-mentioned weaknesses.

Heystek (2006:475) argues that for many schools in South Africa, especially the historically disadvantaged schools, the involvement of parents as governors is relatively new, as the first SGBs took office as recently as 1997. For many principals it is a new experience to share their role with other people. Principals now have to cope with the many individuals who may become involved in this relationship, while at the same time they are expected to work together in a relationship of trust. Many principals feel threatened because SGBs have been given the responsibility of managing the schools' funds (Mestry, 2006:28). Although the responsibility and accountability for the accuracy of the financial records lies with the principal, the management of the school's finances is the primary function of the SGB, of which the principal is a member. It is thus clear that co-operation and collaboration between the principal and the SGB in their effort to effectively manage school resources is essential. The SASA (South Africa, 1996b) stipulates that the relationship between the principal and the SGB must be based on mutual trust and support. Heystek (2006:308) asserts that this relationship must be to the advantage of the school and community to ensure school improvement, including improved teaching and learning.

To understand the relationship between the principal and the SGB, it is important to understand the composition of the SGB. According to the SASA, Section 23(9), the number of parents in the SGB must be one more than the total of the other members in the SGB (South Africa, 1996b). This majority may create the impression with parents that they can 'run' the school. This impression contradicts what is supposed to be a collaborative relationship between principals and the SGBs.

As Heystek (2006:476) further points out, in many schools where the parents have limited skills, knowledge or experience and, even lower levels of literacy, they might find it difficult or impossible to assume responsibility for drafting and managing the budget. Assessing the functions of SGBs, Vandeyar (2002:104) found that the biggest problem that SGBs face, is the enormous baggage of policies they are required to familiarise themselves with, such as the SASA, national education policies, provincial policies and district directives concerning a whole range of issues such as school admission, assessment requirements and financial policies. She argues that many SGBs do not have the time or the inclination to empower themselves. It then becomes the responsibility of the principal, as *ex-officio* member of the Department of Education (DoE) and according to the SASA, to provide support to the SGB. However, the SASA does not clearly state what support means, how the principal is meant to provide support, when it could be regarded as support and when it could be argued that the principal has overstepped their line. Principals are often faced with the question whether they can exert power over the SGB if it was incompetent or ineffective. It can be concluded that if principals and SGBs were working collaboratively then principals would not be faced with such dilemmas. Many principals feel that they end up doing the job for the SGB and, instead of getting the recognition for their added duties, they are sometimes criticised and even accused of mismanaging funds.

It is the opinion of the researcher that collaboration between the principal and SGB is crucial and pivotal for the successful management of financial resources in public schools. McILrath (2005:7) states that collaboration is an important strategy for fostering effective management of financial resources in public schools. The principal and the SGB have complementary roles and therefore should be in a collaborative relationship. However, such relationships are often not easy to build or maintain as conflicts can arise. From these arguments it is clear that a lack of collaboration between the principal and SGB is a serious concern to all stakeholders in the education system as it may significantly threaten the effective functioning of a school.

Having discussed the background to the problem of the research it is now necessary to state the problem in a more precise way by outlining the research question as well as the aims of the study.

### **1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The problem that this research seeks to address is why collaboration is important between principals and SGBs in the financial management of resources in public schools. The problem is encapsulated in the following three secondary research questions:

- What are the new roles and functions of the principal and SGB in the management of financial resources in public schools?
- What is the nature and essence of collaboration and what implications does it have on the relationship between the principal and SGB?
- What guidelines can be set for principals and SGBs to work collaboratively so that they can manage their schools' financial resources effectively?

Having demarcated the research problem it is now necessary to state the aims of this research.

### **1.4 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

The general aim of this study is to examine the collaborative relationship of the principal and SGB in the management of financial resources in public schools. The research has the following specific objectives:

- To determine the role and functions of the principal and SGB in the light of new legislation;
- To identify the nature and essence of collaboration; and
- To provide guidelines to assist the principals and SGBs to develop a collaborative relationship in order for them to effectively manage their school's financial resources.

In order to achieve the aims of the research, the research design and methodology, which directed this study, will now be clearly outlined.

## **1.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Babbie and Mouton (2001:75) state that research methodology focuses on the process and the kinds of tools and procedures used to collect and interpret data. The researcher made use of a generic qualitative study to establish the collaborative role of the principals and SGBs in ensuring that their school's finances are effectively managed. According to Brown and Eisenhardt (1997) cited in Lee (1999), generic qualitative research studies apply multiple techniques such as interviews and observations which are often conducted within a single study. Adler and Adler (1998) cited in Lee (1999:21) further state that a qualitative researcher's participation can vary from direct involvement to hands-off observation and using a combination of qualitatively analysed questionnaires. According to Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:33), qualitative research does not present all the answers but it offers a variety of explanations for the research question. Qualitative researchers collect their data through sustained contact with people in settings where the subjects normally spend their time (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992:2).

This research method allows the researcher to concentrate on how the principal and SGB relate to a collaborative working relationship, by focusing on their written and spoken words and their observable behaviour. Qualitative research can also enhance the study of formal schooling structures by allowing the researcher to reach beyond the documentation of the structural features of the education system to describe the actual operation of the various processes in education in diverse cultural settings and from the point of view of the participants involved (Lemmer, 2000:292). The generic qualitative approach is clearly relevant to this research study, as it allows principals and SGB members to reflect their perspectives, through a variety of data collection methods, on the issue at hand.

### **1.5.1 Data Collection**

The researcher collected data by means of observations, interviews and document analysis:

#### **1.5.1.1 Observation**

The researcher collected data by watching and listening to principals and SGB members, made notes and recorded actions, interactions and events without disrupting them as they carried out their day-to-day activities (Creswell, 2005:185-188, Payne & Payne 2004:166). The researcher also attended several SGB meetings and School Management Team (SMT) meetings to observe how these meetings were conducted, what was discussed in the meeting, who dominated the meetings and how decisions were reached. The primary advantage of using observation as a data gathering technique, according to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:268), is that the researcher does not need to worry about the limitation of self-report bias because the information is not limited to what the research participants say but also how they say it.

#### **1.5.1.2 Semi-structured one-to-one and focus-group interviews**

Data was also collected through interviewing. The researcher conducted five semi-structured one-to-one interviews at five schools chosen for the research. Principals and parent SGB members was interviewed to find out what their experiences were in managing financial resources. Thus, their opinions and ideas were of specific interest to this investigation (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1995:98). As a member of an SMT, the researcher has worked closely with members of the SGB and school principal for several years. During her interaction with members of the SGB and principal, the researcher noticed the relationship between a SGB and principal can be tense. Interviews were scheduled at specific times and at specific venues. The researcher provided the interviewees with a set of prepared questions to scan and reflect on. The aim was to pre-empt certain responses. These interviews were guided by an

interview schedule comprising of open-ended questions and interviews took approximately half an hour to complete. Merriam (1998:23) points out that the purpose of interviewing is to find out what is in someone else's mind and, since this cannot be directly observed or measured, the interviewer must ask questions in such a way as to obtain meaningful information. Open-ended questions encourage the respondent to provide more information and also lead to other questions (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smith, 2004:70).

In addition to the semi-structured one-to-one interviews, focus group interviews were also conducted in the five schools. According to Krueger and Casey, (2000:7), the purpose of focus group interviews is to promote self-disclosure among participants and to find out what they really think and feel in a non-threatening environment. The targeted participants will comprise the principal, a parent member on the SGB, and the school bursar. The researcher is interested in the view-points and opinions of these participants within the related field of research as well as to obtain a group consensus on some of the difficulties principals and SGBs face in performing their role as financial managers in schools. Denzin (1989) indicates that groups create their own structure and meaning and a group interview provides access to that level of meaning. This is in addition to clarifying arguments and revealing diversity in views and opinions. Permission for interviews to be tape recorded was obtained from all the participants. Tape recording, according to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:453) ensures completeness of the verbal interaction. While the interviews are being conducted the researcher also wrote down notes as a back up if the tape recording proved unsuccessful. Charmaz (1983:286) states that she makes notes as the interview progresses to remind herself to revisit some questions and perhaps omit others.

### **1.5.1.3 Document Analysis**

In addition to interviews and observations, documents such as the school's financial policy, school policies, minutes of SGB and staff meetings and financial reports were analysed. Primary documents such as the Constitution (South Africa, 1996a), SASA (South Africa, 1996b) and National Norms and



Standards of Funding (South Africa, 1998) formed an integral part of this research. Other documentation such as magazine articles, newspaper and media reports and information available on the internet was also collected, analysed and studied with the purpose of drawing out any relevant data on the relationship of principals and SGBs in managing school financial resources in public schools. Analysis of selected documents provides an internal perspective of the organisation. They show the official chair of command and they provide clues about the values of the organisation (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:455).

## **1.5.2 Population and Sampling**

### **1.5.2.1 Population**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:165), a population is a group of elements whether individuals, objects or events, that conforms to specific criteria and from which we intend to generalise the results of the research. The population for this study comprised four hundred public schools in Gauteng that have been allocated Section 21 functions and of which five schools were chosen. The researcher looked at the socio-economic background of the learners, diversity, level of government funding and accessibility of the school before choosing the schools to be researched. Of the five schools chosen, two schools are situated in Berea, where the majority of the learners are black and come from low socio-economic backgrounds. The next two schools are situated in an affluent area in Midrand and consist of multi-cultural learners from a high socio-economic background. The last school is situated in a township and consists of black learners from a very low socio-economic background.

### **1.5.2.2 Sampling**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:401), purposeful sampling increases the utility of information obtained from a small sample. They further state that in purposeful sampling, samples are chosen because they are likely

to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon the researcher is investigating. Creswell (1994:14) states that the idea of qualitative research is to purposefully select informants who will best answer the research questions. For this study, principals, parent SGB members and bursars of five public schools were selected using the purposeful sampling technique to represent the different categories of public schools.

### **1.5.3 Data Analysis**

After the interview was transcribed and checked for completeness and for errors, the data obtained was managed and analysed. Data management is an integral part of data analysis. It consists of the activities aimed at achieving a systematic, coherent manner of data collection, storage and retrieval (De Vos, 1998:335). The researcher used Tesch's eight steps approach in data analysis as outlined by Creswell (1994:155) to guide her research. This method involves steps used in the analysis of data, in this case, the transcriptions of the interviews with principals, SGBs, and bursars. Each transcribed interview was read carefully and compared to the handwritten responses. Main thoughts were highlighted. Similar topics were clustered together. Data was compared to establish themes, patterns and trends. Themes were further categorised into topics and related topics were placed into one category.

### **1.5.4 Trustworthiness of the research**

Marshall and Rosmann (1999:143) observe that all research must respond to canons that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of the project can be evaluated. These canons can be phrased as questions to which all research must respond. The questions phrased by Marshall and Rosmann (1999:143-145) are:

- How credible are the particular findings of the study?
- How transferable and applicable are these findings to another setting or group of people?

- How can we be reasonably sure that the findings would be replicated if the study was conducted with the same participants in the same context?
- How can we be sure that the findings would be reflective of the subjects and the inquiry itself, rather than the researcher's biases or prejudices?

In this study, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), cited in De Vos (2002:346) was used to establish the validity of the research.

Having discussed the research design and methods applied, it is now essential to discuss the ethical considerations that governed this research study.

## 1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS



Permission to conduct the research was obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education under whose jurisdiction the sample of schools selected, fell. Each respondent was presented with a form on which they consented to participate in the study and in which they were given an assurance of anonymity and confidentiality with regard to data about the site. A brief description of the study was outlined in the consent form. The researcher was ensured that the information obtained would be viewed in a sensitive light and would not be used to the detriment of the respondent.

Researchers have a dual responsibility: protection of the participant's confidence from other persons in the setting whose private information might enable them to identify them, and the protection of the respondents from the general reading public (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:533). At no stage will the comments of the principals and members of the SGB be revealed to the department or to any other source. Uys and Basson (1991:98) state that the researcher should ensure the anonymity of any person or institution. To

ensure anonymity, the researcher used letters of the alphabet to identify participants.

Participants was informed that their participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw at any time. The researcher's integrity to the body of knowledge was maintained by avoiding falsifying or altering data to suit the predications of the study. According to De Vos (2002:66), deception involves withholding information or offering incorrect information in order to ensure participation when it would otherwise have been refused. All information obtained was kept safe for the duration of the study and the findings of the study will be accessible to the participants upon request. The study was conducted in a way that it did not interrupt the normal school activities. Ethical standards also include honesty in reporting, an aspect that was adhered to in this study.

## **1.7 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION**

Following the discussion on ethical considerations it essential to clarify concepts that will be used in the study.

### **1.7.1 Self-managing schools**

A 'self-managing school' was originally defined by Caldwell and Spinks as a school in a system of education in which a significant amount of responsibility to make decisions about the allocation of resources within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, standards and responsibilities, has been decentralised. Levacic (1995:3) states that the movement towards self-managing schools means added responsibility for all stakeholders, for example, principals and SGBs must manage the school's financial resources through a collaborative working relationship.

### 1.7.2 Financial school management

Levacic (1995:7) explains that financial management is an integral aspect of resource management. It ensures that the expenditure is well directed towards achieving good value for money involving the appropriate acquisition and allocation of physical resources. According to Bisschoff and Mestry (2003:3), financial management is the performance of management action (regulatory task) connected to the finance of schools within the main aim of achieving effective education. Bisschoff and Mestry (2003:3) state that financial school management is the process of ensuring that the SGB and SMT plan, organise, delegate and control the funds of the school in such a way that it achieves its' goal. The SASA (South Africa, 1996b) places the responsibility of financial management on the SGB which is accountable to the parents, educators and Department of Education. The principal, as leader of the school, must support the SGB in the governance of the school

### 1.7.3 Resources



Resources are the means by which the process of education may be 'operationalised' (Foskett & Lumby, 2003:129). They are means of supply and support that assist school managers in the achievement of goals (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2003:3). These resources consist mainly of money, time, material resources and human skills. Physical resources include learning materials, educational aids and equipment, information technology, buildings, grounds and services such as water and electricity. Financial resources include school fees actually collected, expenditure items and capital costs. For the purposes of this study, resources are defined since the effective management of resources is crucial in ensuring effective school management and development.

#### **1.7.4 Accountability**

Accountability, according to Bisschoff and Mestry (2003:50), is reporting on the control and use of resources. In the school context this involves, among other things, confirming that the school's resources actually exist, that they have been used for legitimate and legal purposes, and that the assets and resources have been accounted for in a proper way.

Beckmann (2000:8) points out that accountability follows the exercise of power, use of resources and implementation of policy. Schedler (1999:13-17) states that accountability has to do with checks, oversight, surveillance and institutional constraints on the exercise of power. He points out that there are three essential elements of accountability: enforcement, monitoring and answerability. Bush and West-Burnham, (1994:310) state that accountability implies that one is to give an account of behaviour to those who may have a legitimate right to know. The researcher is of the opinion that schools will become more effective where there is evidence of collaboration, and where there is accountability with those involved in the collaborative process.

#### **1.7.5 Collaboration**

The word collaboration is often used to refer to working jointly on an activity, as in teamwork or group activity. Anderson-Butcher and Ashton, (2004:40) define collaboration as 'working together and sharing responsibility for results'. 'Collaboration' is the term employed to express partnership, co-operation, agreement, consent and working in combination to accomplish institutional objectives' (Cardno, 1990:1). In this research, collaboration implies the principal and SGBs, ability to work together in a relationship based on trust, understanding, co-operation and shared goals.

## 1.8 EXPOSITION OF STUDY

The research findings is elucidated in separate chapters of this study to ensure logical exposition and presentation of data.

Chapter one deals with the orientation of the study and focuses on the introduction, motivation and background to the study, the statement of the problem, the aims of the research, research design and methodology, concept classification, and an exposition of the research.

Chapter two provides the theoretical framework, which underpins this study. The background for the investigation of the collaborative relationship between principals and SGBs in the management of financial resources in public schools is also provided. The researcher examines the role and functions of the principal and SGB in managing financial resources in schools.

Chapter three provides a description of the research design. Development of the research instrument and sampling is also discussed and a detailed explanation of the research methodology used is given. The researcher will also deal with ethical standards and the limitations of the study are discussed.

Chapter four explores the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the observational notes, documents and interviews conducted. The themes extracted from the analysis process are discussed and a literature control was undertaken in order to contextualise the findings of the study with the literature review.

Chapter five provides a summary of the research results. The findings and the interpretation of the data collected from the literature review, interviews, observations and document analysis is presented here. Based on the findings, guidelines to assist principals and SGBs to develop a collaborative relationship are provided. Recommendations for further research are also suggested.

## 1.9 SUMMARY

In this chapter the relationship between principals and SGBs in managing financial resources in public schools was discussed. The various factors that affect a collaborative relationship between the principal and the SGB as well as the significance of this research were presented. The research problem was described and formulated. The methodological issues, design, researcher's role, data analysis, ethics, trustworthiness of the research and demarcation of the field of study are provided. The rationale for the choice of qualitative research method used in this study was described. Data was collected through observations, interviews and document analysis.

The subsequent chapter provides a review of the literature related to the importance of collaboration between principals and SGBs in managing financial resources in public schools.





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## CHAPTER TWO

### **COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE PRINCIPAL AND SGB IN MANAGING FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

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#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

In chapter one, the motivation and background to the study, research methodology and design were discussed. Important concepts were also clarified. In this chapter, the emphasis will focus on the importance of collaboration between principals and SGBs in the management of financial resources, with specific reference to the roles and functions of principals and SGBs, the organisational structure of schools, decentralisation, various policies and legislation that outline the functions of the principal and SGB, the relationship between the principal and SGB, as well as other aspects of financial school management. A review of the literature dealing with this topic is also presented to examine the importance of collaboration between principals and SGBs on the effective management of financial resources.

Of all the many complex challenges facing schools, none is as demanding or as crucial as creating in schools a culture of collaboration and ensuring that everyone who works there, especially the principal and governors of the SGB, have the knowledge, disposition, and skills to collaborate (Cook & Friend, 2003:8). It is the researcher's view that collaboration is an important strategy for fostering effective management of financial resources in schools. Thus, the role of the principal and SGB is pivotal for the successful management of financial resources of a school.

In South Africa the devolution of governance and management to schools followed the enactment of the SASA (South Africa, 1996b). Section 16 of SASA states that governance of a public school is vested in its governing body, while the principal is responsible for the professional management of the school, under the authority of the Head of Department (HoD). The overlap

between the areas of governance and professional management has resulted in many conflicts between parent members of SGBs and principals (Mestry, 2006; Beckmann, 2000:80). According to the SASA the principal is responsible for the professional management of the school and is assisted by the SGB. The SGB, on the other hand, has the overall responsibility to ensure that the school delivers quality education for all learners (South Africa, 1996b). The principal and SGB, therefore, have complementary roles and should be in a collaborative relationship. However, this is not often the case, due to various reasons such as changes in the education sector, implementation of various new policies and legislation, uncertainty of roles and functions, lack of skills and knowledge and limited training. Visser (2003:160) maintains that there should be a balance of power between principals and SGBs to accomplish quality education service delivery. Some of the challenges outlined by him include accountability, the lack of a shared vision, the composition and structure of the SGB, and lack of clear defined goals.



## **2.2 COLLABORATION AS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT IN THE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

In this study, the researcher is interested in the collaborative financial management role of principals and SGB members in ensuring that a school's financial resources are effectively managed to achieve educational goals. In terms of section 3T(1) of the SASA 84 of 1996 (South Africa, 1996b), SGBs have been mandated to perform financial responsibilities. SGBs in this respect require some of the following skills: financial accounting; keeping financial records of all transactions; budgeting; cost management; income generation; policy-making; payroll, and procurement.

The principal performs a consultative role, and must facilitate, support and assist the SGB in the execution of its statutory functions related to the assets, liabilities, property and financial management of the school (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2003:17). Bisschoff and Mestry (2003:17) further maintain that it is fundamental that school managers be prepared and equipped with financial

skills and competencies that will enable them to be responsible and accountable for the funds that have been placed in their care, for the achievement of specific school objectives and the improvement of the overall productivity of the school. Van Wyk (2007:53) has expressed concerns that many SGBs are not well trained and as such, they do not know what is expected of them with regard to school finances. In addition to the above view, both Ngidi (2004) and Mkhonto (1998) as cited in Joubert and Bray (2007:7) found that the community is not highly involved because parents do not understand their roles as SGB members. From the above, it is apparent that the principal and the SGB should be in a collaborative relationship to ensure the existence of sound management of financial resources.

### **2.3 DECENTRAISATION OF POWER**

Traditionally, in South Africa, school governance and management have been hierarchical and authoritarian in nature. The locus of control and decision-making powers resided mainly with the school principal (Squelch, 1993 as cited in Lemmer, 2000:128). In contrast, a decentralised co-operative approach to school governance has been introduced as part of the education reform process in South Africa. According to Squelch (1993), in Lemmer (2000:129), decentralisation rests on the principle of shared decision-making, which presupposes open communication, consultation and a willingness to negotiate. The rationale for the establishment of decentralized governance is based on the desire to make schools more efficient and effective, to improve the quality of education and to raise the levels of learner performance (Lemmer, 2000:137). It is further argued that the principle underpinning the international trend to self-management is a belief that because the principal, SGB and the School Management Team (SMT) are operating daily within the school, they are most likely to make the appropriate spending decisions. A similar view is held by Simkins (1998:64), who states that the improvement of efficiency, quality and standards is best achieved by a reliance on micro-level decision making, through which relevant decisions about resource deployment are located as close to the point of delivery as possible, that is, within institutions. Gamage (1994) cited in Van Wyk (2007:132) argues that

the devolution of authority will lead to a healthier and stronger relationship between the school and community.

In contrast, Chisholm, Motala and Vally (2003:246) as cited in Mestry (2006:7) assert that although decentralisation allows stakeholders to participate at a level in which they can have direct impact on matters that concern them, it allows different capacities and inequalities of power and influence at that level to be expressed more strongly. It is further argued that decentralisation has brought with it tensions and conflict between parent governors and school management teams, in particular, school principals (Anderson & Lumby, 2005:5). This highlights the importance of collaboration between the principal and SGB. Thus, this devolvement of power and authority to schools emphasises the need for the proper control of finances and collaboration between the principal and parent SGB members is significant in the effective management of financial resources.



## **2.4 IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION IN SELF-MANAGING SCHOOLS**

Hargreaves (1994:187) points out that the trend towards self-management of schools implies a greater collective responsibility of stakeholders in schools to implement centrally defined governance mandates, which places even greater reliance on the development of collaboration at the school. Joubert and Bray (2007:10) add that self-managing schools have come about because of the devolution of power from a higher order agency or government to the local school. According to Holmes (<http://www.apapdc.edu.au/conference2000>), self-managed schools or local management of schools enhances local participation and ownership. It enables collaboration and facilitates decision making at local level. From the above definitions, it is clear that self-managing schools imply participative management and decision-making, collaboration and shared leadership. Pugh (1990) quoted in Joubert and Bray (2007: 83) state that 'if principals are to manage the local management of schools successfully, relationships based on trust, openness and mutual respect must be established at the earliest possible moment'. Further, in self-

managed schools government has focused on the development of financial systems in schools and an increasing change in spending patterns. This implies greater responsibility and accountability from the school principal and SGB.

In South Africa, the trend towards the devolution of powers to schools was consolidated in the SASA (South Africa, 1996b). One of the fundamental principals of the SASA is that each school should be moving towards self-management if it has not already been established. In Section 16, this Act assigns governance of schools to SGBs that must be established at all public schools (South Africa, 1996b). The introduction of SGBs was envisaged as part of the democratic transformation from an authoritarian, unrepresentative, bureaucratic and unresponsive system to one of stakeholder participation (Taylor, 2004 in Anderson & Lumby, 2005:64). The rationale of the South African government for the establishment of SGBs was to address the inequalities of a divided education system. The Act stipulates the importance of the partnership between all people who have an interest in the school. Thus, with the introduction of SASA, school principals are expected to work collaboratively with the SGB and share in the responsibilities related to school governance. The idea of sharing and working together has been expressed by Lemmer and Squelch (1994:101) who maintains that school principals, parents and educators need to form a relationship of mutual trust and understanding so that they can work as partners to the benefit of the school and learners.

Governments and school districts in many parts of the world have also moved towards self-management (Levacic, 1995:79). Levacic points out that some countries refer to self-managed schools as local management schools (LMS) or grant maintained (GM) schools as in England and Wales, to site-based management (SBM) schools like in North America. The central components, however, have remained the same. Features include a centrally determined framework, a shift of responsibility in roles, accountability, shared governance and community involvement.

Self-managing schools improve accountability for the use of funds and resources. It ensures the pooling of resources and expertise to the benefit of all stakeholders. Furthermore, it improves efficiency in the use of resources in educational services. Included in the advantages of a self-managed school, is the fact that it fosters collaboration and facilitates decision-making. From the examples cited above, it is apparent that collaboration is an essential ingredient in self-managing schools.

## **2.5 SECTION 21 SCHOOLS**

In order to investigate the collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB in managing financial resources in schools, it is important to understand the difference between section 21 schools and non-section 21 schools and to further establish how these categories of schools impact on collaborative efforts.

Subject to the SASA (South Africa, 1996b), a governing body may apply in writing to the Head of Department (HoD) to be allocated additional functions provided that they have the means and ability to fulfil them. Schools that are allocated additional functions are referred to as Section 21 schools. With Section 21 schools the state's allocation is paid directly into the schools banking account. Financial management decisions are devolved to the school, but the onus is on the school to exercise considerable fiscal discipline. The advantage is that schools can negotiate best prices, discounts and delivery dates for learning support materials from suppliers (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2003: 26). Money not utilised in the current year may be carried over to the next financial year, and is not lost as it remains in the school's banking account. The main disadvantage is that if schools opt to go with higher services, then the school will have to find ways to supplement the state's contribution.

Section 21 schools have more financial freedom as they determine their own spending patterns. By implication, Section 21 schools are required to exercise considerable control and management of their financial resources. However,

principals and SGB members of many public schools lack the skills and competence to manage their financial resources due to one or more of the following reasons: mistrust and conflict between principals and parent SGB members, a lack of collaborative decision-making, uncertainty of the roles and functions of principals and parent SGB members, power play among principals and parent SGB members, and the numerous changes in legislation (Bush, 2004 & Heystek, 2006). From the above discussion, it is clear that in Section 21 schools, it is of paramount importance that collaborative relationships exist between principals and school governors.

## **2.6 NON-SECTION 21 SCHOOLS**

In the case of non-section 21 schools, the government's funding allocation is not paid directly, but is communicated by means of a 'paper budget' (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2003:25). Allocated amounts have to be allotted proportionally in respect of learner support materials; educational materials, equipment and curriculum needs; maintenance of and repairs to buildings; and payments for municipal and other services. Schools can only purchase goods and receive services of approved suppliers, determined by the provincial Department of Education.

The advantage of being a non-section 21 school, is that if services or goods exceed the allocated amount, then the government is required to pay the difference. Bisschoff and Mestry (2003:25) state that there are numerous disadvantages for non-section 21 schools. They claim that schools are unable to negotiate discounts, better prices and more efficient suppliers. Moreover, education districts do not have the capacity to process requisitions on time. Goods are therefore, not delivered on time and services are not rendered when required. Thus, non-section 21 schools also require a collaborative working relationship between the principal and parent SGB in order to overcome some of these disadvantages.

## 2.7 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PRINCIPALS AND SGBs

Prior to the SASA (South Africa, 1996a), school activities were largely unregulated and this had a detrimental effect on the culture of teaching and learning (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2003:16). Clearly there was a need to set guidelines on how schools should be managed. Since 1996, government attention to governance in South Africa has focused on the formal articulation of rules, roles and responsibilities.

The SASA was the first attempt to outline these rules, roles and responsibilities. In the preamble of the SASA (South Africa, 1996b), it is stated that parents, educators and learners should accept co-responsibility for the governance, funding and organization of the school. Section 16 of this Act assigns governance of schools to SGBs. The principal of the school is given the responsibility for the management of the school. The SASA also places obligations on the principal to co-operate with the SGB with regard to all aspects specified in the SASA. Section 19(2) of the Act states that the HoD must ensure that the principal and other officers of the Department of Education (DoE) must render all necessary assistance to SGBs in carrying out the terms of this Act.

School principals function in two capacities: that of an *ex-officio* member of the governing body, on the one hand, and a departmental employee on the other hand. The relationship between the principal and the SGB is to a certain extent defined by the fact that the principal is an *ex-officio* member of the SGB. This seems to suggest that insofar as the principal is a member of the SGB and has to provide it with the necessary support and assistance, they can be regarded as the SGB's representative or executive officer of the school. At the same time, the principal is also a government employee and has been delegated by the HoD to perform specific functions. In this respect the principal acts on behalf of the DoE and is accountable to the HoD.

According to the Personnel Administration Measures of 1999 (PAM), (South Africa, 1999), the core duties and responsibilities of the principal are defined.



The core duties and responsibilities of a principal as described in PAM include, being responsible for the professional management of the school. According to PAM, the principal must keep accounts and records and make the best use of funds to the benefit of the learners. This responsibility, however, clashes with the responsibility of the SGB since the SASA stipulates that the SGB must open and maintain a banking account and keep a record of funds received and spent. PAM further states that the principal is a member of the SGB and should provide the necessary support and assistance to the SGB. Beckmann (2000:194) argues that the above expectation lends support to the view that the relationship of the SGB and the principal is, to a certain degree, defined by the fact that the principal is an *ex-officio* member of the SGB in terms of the SASA.

From the discussion above, there is a clear indication that there seems to be certain grey areas between governance and professional management. Beckmann (2000) and Foster and Smith (2001: 176) distinguish between professional management and school governance. School governance implies overall control and authority of the school and its policies and directions, whereas management implies day-to-day supervision and administration of activities within the institution. The above definition, however, does not clearly define professional management (responsibility of principals) and governance (responsibility of SGBs) and the role of the SGB and principal is not clearly defined. It can be further concluded that the responsibility of the principal and SGB seems to be interrelated.

The above comments do not give a clear separation, in defining the concepts 'professional management' and 'governance'. They do however, emphasise that the relationship between the principal and SGB can be extremely complex and may result in conflict. This misconception between policy intentions and actual implementation highlight the need for special efforts to ensure that the SGB and principal maintain a collaborative relationship in managing a school's financial resources.

The researcher is of the opinion that an essential requirement for collaboration between the principal and SGB to succeed is that both the principal and SGB must clearly understand their own roles and functions. Heystek (2006:480) states that one of the main reasons for uncertainties and problems is that neither the SGB nor the principal is sure about the demarcation of functions for the SGB and SMT. While the functions of the SGB and principals are stipulated in the SASA and in provincial policies and regulations and provide a clear indication on what the responsibilities of the principal and SGB are, these are not clearly understood. This uncertainty has the potential of entrenching friction between principals and parent SGB members. This further, highlights the essential need for the principal and SGB to be in a collaborative relationship.

According to section 20(1) (a) of the SASA (South Africa, 1996a), the SGB of a public school must promote the best interest of the school and try to ensure its development by providing quality education for all learners; adopt a constitution; develop the mission statement of the school; adopt a code of conduct for learners at the school; support the principal, educators and other staff in the performance of their professional functions; allocate times of the school day; and administer and control the school's property, buildings and grounds. The SGB should also encourage parents, learners and other staff to offer voluntary services, make recommendations to the provincial heads of departments on the appointment of educators and non-educators; allow school facilities to be used for educational programmes not offered by the school; join the voluntary association representing governing bodies of public schools; and hire additional educators and non-educators and pay them.

These are extensive and complicated tasks and the success of the SGB performing these compulsory functions depends on the trust, collaboration, co-operation and support that should exist between the principal and SGB. In addition to the compulsory functions, a governing body may apply to the HoD for additional functions such as maintaining and improving the school's property, buildings and grounds; determine the extra-mural curriculum of the school and the choice of subjects in terms of provincial curriculum policy;

purchase text books and other educational material or equipment; and pay for services to the school. In an article entitled 'Relationships between principals and parent governors – A question of trust?' Heystek asserted that these allocated functions demand a good knowledge of and skills in respect of finance and asset management and the school must have substantial income to make it a viable option for the SGB to apply for these functions (2006:473). This places a great deal of strain on the relationship between principals and SGB members mainly due to their lack of financial knowledge and skills.

Another factor that hampers a collaborative working relationship between the principal and SGB is the composition of the SGB. Section 23 of the SASA (South Africa, 1996b) states that the exact number of governing body members may vary from school to school. Three groups are represented on the governing body: elected members, the school principal, and co-opted members. Elected members include:

- Parents of learners at the school;
- Educators at the school;
- Staff members who are not educators E.G. secretaries;
- Learners in the school who are in grade eight or above;
- The school principal;
- Members of the community; and
- Owners of school property if privately owned.

The SASA stipulates that the number of parents on any governing body must comprise more than half of all the members who may vote. Co-opted members are optional and are there to help the governing body with its functions. Members of an elected governing body should elect office bearers which include a chairperson, a treasurer, and the secretary. The SASA states that the term of office bearers in the executive should not exceed a period of one year. Only a parent member is qualified to become a chairperson of the SGB. An important factor that should be considered here is that despite having the majority representation on the SGB, parent SGB members rely on the principal for leadership and guidance in decision-making. Karlsson (2002) in Van Wyk (2007:135) ascribes this to the parents lack of understanding of

their role, a lack of skills needed to perform governance functions, and irregular attendance of meetings. On the other hand, majority representation of the SGB may result in them abusing their powers. It, therefore, appears that collaboration between the principal and SGB is vital in the management of financial resources. Further, it is acknowledged that trust is at the heart of a collaborative process. Developing trust requires considerable time and experience. However, since the term of office for the SGB is three years, building a strong collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB may be difficult. Johnson (1990:114) reiterates this point and states that “collegiality seems to wither and die when individuals are given insufficient time to engage in the kinds of joint tasks that build collegial relations and collaborative processes.”

## **2.8 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRINCIPAL AND SGB**

The relationship between the principal and SGB is one of the most important variables in determining the effective management of a school's financial resources. Most SGBs are not fulfilling their policy-making role but are relying on the principal to do this (Anderson & Lumby, 2005:172). Bush and Joubert (2004) noted in their research that some SGB members do not understand their role or their ineffectiveness in fulfilling it. According to Tsipane (1999:4), one of the biggest problems experienced by SGB members is its lack of knowledge of the powers, roles and functions of the SGB in relation to principals. The SGB is given the responsibility to raise funds in order to meet the schools expenses. It, therefore, becomes essential that parents serving on SGBs have certain skills such as an understanding of basic accounting principles, the drawing up of financial statements, preparing a budget, reconciling record books and making good return investments (Anderson & Lumby, 2005:173). Thus, it becomes essential for the principal and SGB to have a collaborative relationship.

Van Wyk (2007:49) points that an effective SGB will have the following features: working as a team; good relationships with principals; effective time management and delegatory powers, conducting effective meetings, having

knowledge of the school and organising training and development of school governors. However maintaining a good relationship with the principal, for example, is not always easy and conflicts sometimes arise. Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosego and Ngcobo (2008:161), point out that the main challenges for maintaining a good working relationship between the principal and the SGB relates to the vast differences between the capabilities of the SGBs at different schools.

Some of the problems that do occur in schools include principals and SGBs inability carrying out their functions effectively. This can be attributed to the fact that many of the roles and responsibilities tend to overlap each other. For example, both the SGB and the principal have duties regarding financial record keeping at the school. Conradie (2000) in Beckmann (2000:85) points out that certain functions of the SGB are clearly management tasks. He claims that the promotion of the best interests of the school, the adoption of a constitution, and the development of a mission are actually management tasks. In the light of this, it is necessary that the principal and SGB work together as a team.

It has been reported that some schools have been mismanaging their funds. In the case between *Schoonbee and others vs. Member of the Executive Council for Education (MEC), Mpumalanga and Another* (unreported case No. 33750/01, (T), the issue of accountability was raised. The MEC argued that the principal was the accounting officer and, was therefore, accountable for the mismanagement of funds. The legal representative (on behalf of the principal) submitted that there was no justification for the MEC/HoD to claim that the principal is equivalent to an accounting officer of the school (DoE, 2007: 31). It was argued that principals have a duty to facilitate, support and assist the SGB in the execution of its statutory functions relating to assets, liabilities, property and the financial management of the school. The HoD is, therefore, not entitled to hold the principal liable for the SGBs obligations. Moreover, the SASA describes the role of the principal as fiduciary in respect of a school as the overall governance of the school rests with the SGB.

The ruling judge in the Schoonbee case reflected on this role of the principal. He argued: “The principal is an educator who manages the school professionally ....Managing the finance is something you cannot expect from him (the principal). The contention that the principal should be held accountable for the finances is an absurd proposition.” The principal, by virtue of his position, plays a dual role: one who is responsible for the professional management of a school, and the other as *ex-officio* member of the school governing body. This dual role that the principal plays puts him in a difficult position. Being an official of the department, they must follow departmental expectations. On the other hand, being a member of the SGB, they are expected to serve the community. The forensic audit report in the Schoonbee case suggested there were several matters that the SGB could have done differently in respect of the arrangements around the expenditure of school funds and the use of school property by the principal. Evidence shows that the SGB lacked proper skills related to financial management and proper adherence to policy and legislation. Furthermore, there was a clear indication a collaborative working relationship between the principal and the SGB in managing the school’s financial matters was lacking. Thus, to ensure accountability, a collegial relationship needs to exist between the principal and SGB. Lawrence (2006) in Naidu et al. (2008:44) argues that authentic accountability stems from reciprocal rights and responsibilities that underline formal relationships in schools. This implies that sound relationships are a pre-requisite for the principals and SGBs to be accountable for their roles and responsibilities.

Section 36 of the SASA (South Africa, 1996b) and section x of the Norms and Standards (South Africa, 1998) place a duty on the SGB to take reasonable steps to supplement the school’s state allocation of money in order to improve the quality of education. The researcher is of the opinion that in most schools the principal ends up taking responsibility for embarking on fund-raising activities as the SGB is either unavailable or lacks the necessary skills. This view can be substantiated by Lawler (1984) in De Grauwier (2004:6) who states that “for the community to play a role, four requirements should be present for legitimate participation: knowledge and skills; power; information,

and rewards”. This is hardly the case in many communities. Although the provincial department of education provides financial management training for SGBs, many schools, especially disadvantaged public schools, continue to experience problems in this area. Heystek (2006:308) states that the limited training of the main role-players in the management and governance of schools, coupled with their uncertainty regarding their functions and duties, sometimes make it difficult for principals and SGB members to work together collaboratively.

Not all duties and responsibilities of the SGB and principal can be completely separated, but a lack of separation may also cause conflict between SGBs and principals in their capacity as managers of schools who are required to effectively manage their financial resources. It, therefore, is significant that the principal and SGB must work collaboratively in managing their school’s financial resources. Further, the roles and functions of the principal and SGB cannot be carried out if there is no collaborative participation in tasks related to managing financial resources.

## **2.9 IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRINCIPAL AND SGB**

In this section the aspects which form the basis for a collaborative relationship between the SGB and principal in managing financial resources in public schools are addressed.

### **2.9.1 Partnership**

Section 16 of the SASA identifies parents as official partners in the governance of schools with the Act constituting the legal framework for the partnership between parents and schools. According to De Wet and Yeats (1994) in (Beckmann, 2000:556), a partnership is an association of people and partners who agree voluntarily to work together on an equal basis to achieve specified goals. Macbeth, McCreath and Atchison (1995:17) also define ‘partnership’ as a working relationship that is characterised by the

school's sense of purpose, mutual respect and willingness to negotiate. Wolfendale (1992:14) states that for a partnership to succeed, there is a need for a shared sense of purpose, mutual respect, sharing of information, responsibility and accountability. Shared decision making is a concept that is closely linked to partnership (Heystek, 2006:413)

Section 16(2) of the SASA (South Africa, 1996b) states that, "a governing body stands in a position of trust towards the school". By this it is meant that there must exist between the partners, openness, co-operation, participation and accountability to work together to achieve the effective management of financial resources. Problems, however, are inevitable if one of the partners dominates the partnership. For example, if a principal assumes a dominating role, the SGB members may refuse to co-operate and this will affect the collaborative relationship required between the SGB and the principal. From the above it may be concluded that the principal and SGB should always work as partners in carrying out their roles and functions.

Blanford (1997:69) states that, as part of a collaborative process, communication is the means by which collaboration occurs. The researcher is of the opinion that communication written or oral, are essential for the success of a collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB. Blanford (1997:71) argues that the complexities of resource management are often compounded by limited communication and points out that an open and supportive communication climate will promote co-operative working relationships where stakeholders feel valued, trusted, secure and confident.

### **2.9.2 Teamwork**

According to Everard and Morris (1996:156), a team is a group of people with common objectives that can effectively tackle any task, which has been set up to do. The principal and SGB should work as a team in order to achieve the common goal of the school. Corson in Harris, Bennett and Preedy (1997:94) notes that teamwork reflects a commitment to collaboration. Wragg and Partington (1995:70) further state that a poor relationship between the SGB



and principal can affect the governance of the school. Similarly, Moon, Butcher and Bird (2000:57) state that power play is normally part of any teamwork or interaction. This power play may have a detrimental effect on the relationship of trust and mutual support. Squelch and Lemmer (1994:70) state that informed decisions are made when people work as a team resulting in excellent performance. Thus principals and SGBs need to form a relationship of mutual trust and understanding and work together as a team to ensure that the school's financial resources are effectively managed.

Joubert and Bray (2007:77) point out that, although the SGB and principals may come from different backgrounds, have different academic qualifications, and different skills and interests, it is essential for good governance that they work together as a team.

### **2.9.3 Delegation**

Delegation is part of organising the financial management of a school, since a specific task is given to a specific staff member through delegation (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2003:56). The principal being an effective collaborative leader needs to trust in the strengths and capacities of the SGB and this is done through delegation. Thus, the principal is able to integrate and utilise a variety of skills and resources to effectively manage the school's financial resources. Delegation is only effective if there is clear communication between the principal and SGB and if there is a clear demarcation of functions and responsibilities. This implies that the principal and SGB must be in a collaborative relationship. Finally, when delegating, principals need to ensure proper control and this is done through effective co-ordination.

### **2.9.4 Co-ordination**

Piek (1992) defines co-ordination as the attempt to relate people, tasks, resources and/or time schedules in such a way that they are complementary and supplementary. It is a process that harmonises the functions performed

by individuals. Effective co-ordination results in co-operation and, therefore, the achievement of the goals and objectives of the school. Managing the school's financial resources involves delegating responsibilities, thus, when delegating, the principal and the SGB need to ensure proper control which is done through effective co-ordination. For example, in managing school resources, co-ordination should involve the synchronising of all administrative and accounting activities in the school. Failure on the part of either the principal or the SGB to co-ordinate the management of financial resources can lead to conflict. Thus, maintaining a collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB would include being able to co-ordinate effectively.

### **2.9.5 Co-operation**

To co-operate is to 'work together in order to achieve something (Wehmeier, 2004). Essential to co-operation is the existence of healthy relationships underpinned by trust, empathy and a willingness to assist in the conditions that foster cooperative actions. Mbigi (1997:67) emphasises that co-operative financial management will lead to collective stewardship and practices involving all stakeholders. There must be a trusting and co-operative relationship amongst all stakeholders as apposed to an atmosphere of mistrust and division.

### **2.9.6 Communication**

Kreps (1990) cited in Chance and Chance (2002:155) defines communication as a social force that facilitates co-operation and organisation among individuals toward the pursuit of mutual goals. Communication is an essential function in schools and the collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB is defined by effective communication structures. Principals play a key role in managing the flow of communication. If not effectively managed, it can have a negative impact on the collaborative relationship between principals and SGBs and inevitably, on the effective management of financial resources.

In examining the relationship between principals and SGBs, it is necessary to know what collaboration is, what it is not, and how it applies to school initiatives such as managing financial resources in public schools. The nature and essence of collaboration will now be discussed.

## **2.10 COLLABORATION**

According to Davidoff and Lazarus (1997:190), collaboration is about different people working together in an attempt to find solutions that satisfy the concerns of those working together. They further add that it means 'digging' into the issue in order to identify underlying concerns of the people involved, and it attempts to create alternatives that satisfy the needs and concerns of those involved.

Having briefly discussed the concept of collaboration the researcher will now discuss the importance of collaboration.

### **2.10.1 The importance of collaboration in schools**

Ongoing research into school culture, change, and improvement is finding that success is more likely when individuals in schools are collegial and working collaboratively on improvement activities (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991) as cited in Peterson (1994:3). Furthermore, findings from research done by Fullan and Hargreaves (1991) and Nias, Southworth, and Yeomans (1989), show that collaboration exhibits relationships and behaviours that support quality work and effective instruction and it encourages more complex problem solving and extensive craft knowledge. Collaboration also creates stronger professional networks to share information and there is greater risk-taking and experimentation. It further allows for more continuous and comprehensive attempts to improve the school which gives rise to increased job satisfaction and identification with the school.

Hargreaves (1994:244) identifies several principles of collaboration. The first being moral support where he points out that collaboration assists principals

with change such as new school governance measures. Collaboration eliminates duplication; activities are co-ordinated, and responsibilities are shared. This ensures increased efficiency. Collaboration improves the quality of work and, therefore, improves the management of financial resources. It also reduces work overload as a result of sharing and integration of expertise. Another principle pointed out by Hargreaves (1994) is that collaboration reduces uncertainty between the principal and SGB and it creates collective professional confidence. Collaboration enables principals to interact more confidently with the SGB, thus enhancing political assertiveness. It also pools the collective knowledge of principals and SGB and therefore, they are able to learn and grow from one another. The last principle is continuous improvement. Here, Hargreaves (1994) points out that collaboration ensures ongoing improvement.

Having discussed the importance of collaboration, the researcher will now distinguish between collaborative cultures and contrived collaboration. Hargreaves (1994:194) also draws a distinction between collaborative cultures and contrived collaboration. He characterises each depending upon the amount and kind of administrative control and intervention that are exercised in each case.

### **2.10.2 Collaborative cultures**

Peterson (1994:2) states that in collaborate school cultures, the underlying norms, values, beliefs, and assumptions reinforce and support high levels of collegiality, teamwork and dialogue about problems of practice. According to Sergiovanni and Starratt (1998:125), collaborative cultures are formally recognised communities of practice that work deeply and firmly to bring people together around themes of practice. They state their purposes publicly, review commitments that they make to embody the norms and purposes in their practice, and they create an environment of accountability that is informal but public.

Cook and Friend (2003:5) define collaboration as a style of direct interaction between at least two parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal. They clarify this definition by detailing several defining characteristics. For example, in collaborative cultures collaborative working relations are spontaneous. This means that the DoE should administratively support principals and SGBs and allow their relationship to evolve from and be sustained by the DoE. Collaborative relationships are voluntary and arise from the perceived value among principals and SGBs that is derived from experience, inclination or non-coercive persuasion that working together is both enjoyable and productive.

In collaborative cultures principals and SGBs may work together primarily to develop initiatives of their own, or work on externally supported or mandated initiatives to which they themselves have a commitment. For example, the principal and the SGB share the same commitment, namely providing quality education for all learners. In collaborative cultures, it is not always a scheduled activity that can be administratively fixed at a particular time and space. Principals and SGB members may schedule meetings, but they do not dominate the arrangements for working together. Further, in collaborative cultures, principals and governors have the discretion and control over what will be developed, and because of this, the outcomes of collaboration are not easy to predict or control.

From the above characteristics, it is clear that in order to ensure that the principal and governors manage the school's financial resources effectively, a collaborative culture must exist in schools. Thus, the principal and parent SGB member are more likely to adopt a collaborative working relationship.

### **2.10.3 Contrived Collaboration**

The word contrived refers to something that is artificial, forced, laboured, planned and unnatural (Collins Thesaurus, 1986). In the context of this study, contrived collaboration refers to the artificial, planned and unnatural working

together of the principal and SGB in managing the school's financial resources. The researcher is of the opinion that due to the power relations that tend to exist between the principal and SGB, one method of removing this tension is to make use of contrived collaboration. According to Hargreaves (1994:195), contrived collaboration is administratively regulated, compulsory, implementation-orientated, predictable, and fixed in time and space.

There is little spontaneity about this form of collaboration. It is an administrative imposition that requires principals and parent SGB members to work together on a task and is often regarded as a duty. In contrived collaboration, working together is compulsory. Little discretion to individuality is afforded. Principals and SGB members are required or 'persuaded' to work together to implement the mandates of others, in other words, those stipulated by the SASA or the DoE. Contrived collaboration takes place at particular times and at particular places. It is also designed to have a high predictability regarding its outcomes.

Having distinguished between collaborate culture and contrived collaboration, the salient features of collaboration will now be addressed.

#### **2.10.4 Salient features of collaboration**

In order to develop an understanding of collaboration, it is important to look at the salient features of collaboration.

Participants in collaborative relationships hold common or mutual goals that may be beneficial to their organisation, to themselves and to each other (Cook & Friend, 2003; Welch & Sheridan, 1995). Thus, if principals and parents serving on the SGB accept that they have shared goals, this will contribute to a sense of bonding among them resulting in a mutual commitment to effectively manage the financial resources of the school.

Parity and equality in education is another essential component of collaboration, (Cook & Friend, 2003; Welch & Sheridan, 1995). Parity is a

situation in which each person's contribution to an interaction is equally valued and each person, has equal power in decision-making. In schools collaboration may bring together people of unequal status. However all participants must believe that they have a meaningful contribution that they can make to the relationship. Consequently, when principals and SGBs collaborate to manage a school's financial resources, their mutual influence involves shared power and equality.

Collaboration is voluntary. It is not possible to force principals and parent SGB members to collaborate in their interactions together. The government may pass legislation and policies that expect principals and parent SGB members to be in a collaborate relationship, but unless they choose to collaborate, they will not do so. Individuals participate in collaboration on a free and voluntary basis (Cook & Friend, 2003). In essence, the DoE can mandate administrative arrangements that require principals and parent SGB members to work in close proximity but if collaboration is imposed upon them then the relationship will become strained and lack equality.

Successful collaboration depends on the personal interaction of individuals. Trust, respect, and effective interpersonal communication are the key elements of the collaborative process. This point is re-iterated by Van Schalkwyk (1992:212) who adds that the best partnership in education is characterised by mutual trust and respect, a common vision, open communication and shared goals and values.

Collaboration depends on a shared responsibility for participation and decision-making. Shared participation implies that both the principal and governors use skills and expertise in particular areas, to complete a certain task towards the achievement of a common goal. For example, in the management of financial resources, while the principal may have excellent financial accounting skills, the parent SGB member may be good at keeping excellent financial records. In the example described above, principals and parent SGB members may have different responsibilities in managing

financial resources, but to collaborate, they must participate equally in the final decisions taken on managing finances.

Individuals who collaborate share resources. Principals and governors engaged in a collaborative activity should have resources to contribute that are valuable for reaching the shared goal. Time and availability to carry out essential tasks, knowledge in a specialised area or technique and access to other individuals who could assist in the collaborative activity, are some of the resources that principals and parent SGB members can contribute to the collaborative activity. Individuals who collaborate share accountability for outcomes. Whether results of collaboration are positive or negative, principals and governors are accountable for the outcome.

#### **2.10.5 Principals as effective managers of collaboration**

According to Fullan and Hargreaves (1991), in collaborative cultures, leadership is more widely dispersed, regularly enacted, and important to change and improvement. They further add that the principal as a collaborative leader is distinguished by the bridges they build, bridges that individuals willingly cross, connecting their personal needs and motives with a shared public purpose and the work that they do with others whose collaborative alliance can help them do it better, faster, more easily, more enduringly, more effectively, with bigger impact, with broader ownership, or with higher meaning. According to Squelch (1993) in Lemmer (2000:143), whether or not decentralised governance works will, to a great extent, depend on leaders who are able to develop decision-making structures and processes that promote rather than hinder meaningful participation and collaboration.

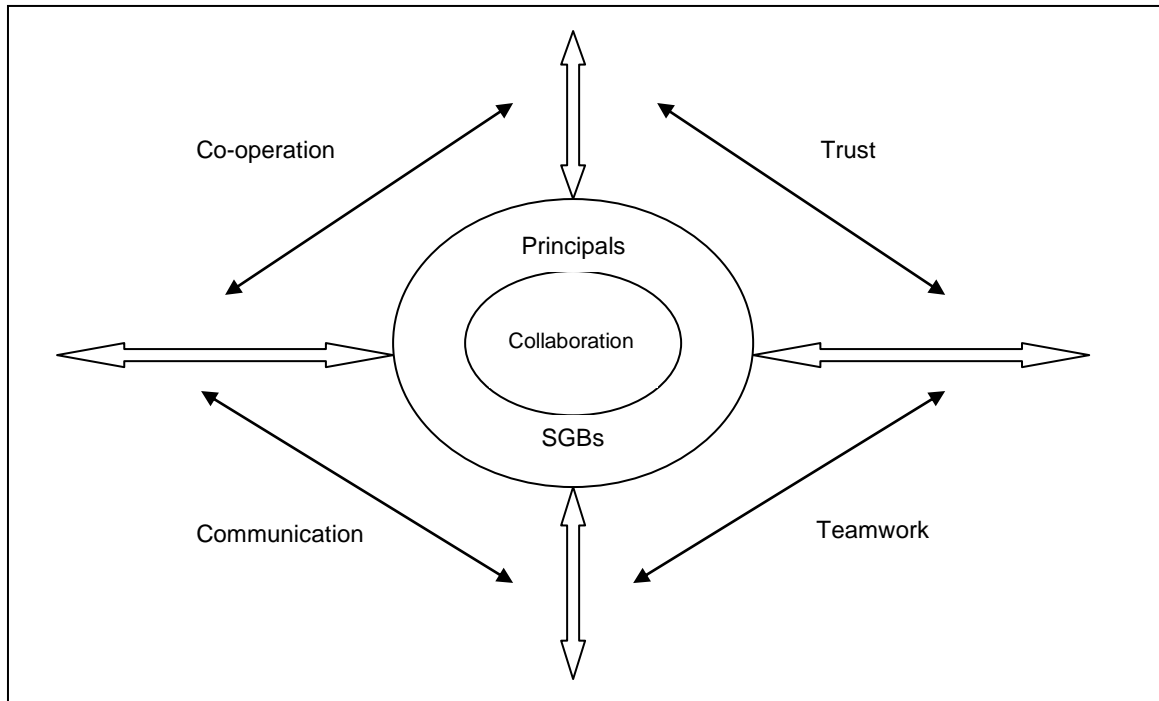
Although the decision-making authority of the principal has been curtailed to some extent and although they may not serve as chairpersons, strong SGBs require, strong leadership from principals (Lemmer, 2000:107). It is the researcher's view, that the principal as a manager needs skills to lead the collaborative process. According to Hall (2003:62-63), leading and managing collaborative efforts means managing people for collective ends, managing



collaboration and managing processes. She identifies 12 characteristics of effective managers of collaboration. They include:

- Promoting joint work for joint purposes;
- Supporting positive relationships;
- Achieving a high level of sharing in order to solve problems;
- Using collaboration to enhance both individual and institutional effectiveness;
- Realise that individuals and groups vary in their readiness to collaborate;
- Using different forms of collaborative leadership;
- Using leadership styles that place a similar emphasis on structuring group activities and motivating group members;
- Recognising that collaboration needs time and commitment from participants;
- Diagnosing the setting (culture and climate) before promoting collaboration;
- Operating in settings that are open, collegial and consultative;
- Influencing the setting in which collaboration occurs; and
- Using collaboration to respond to change.

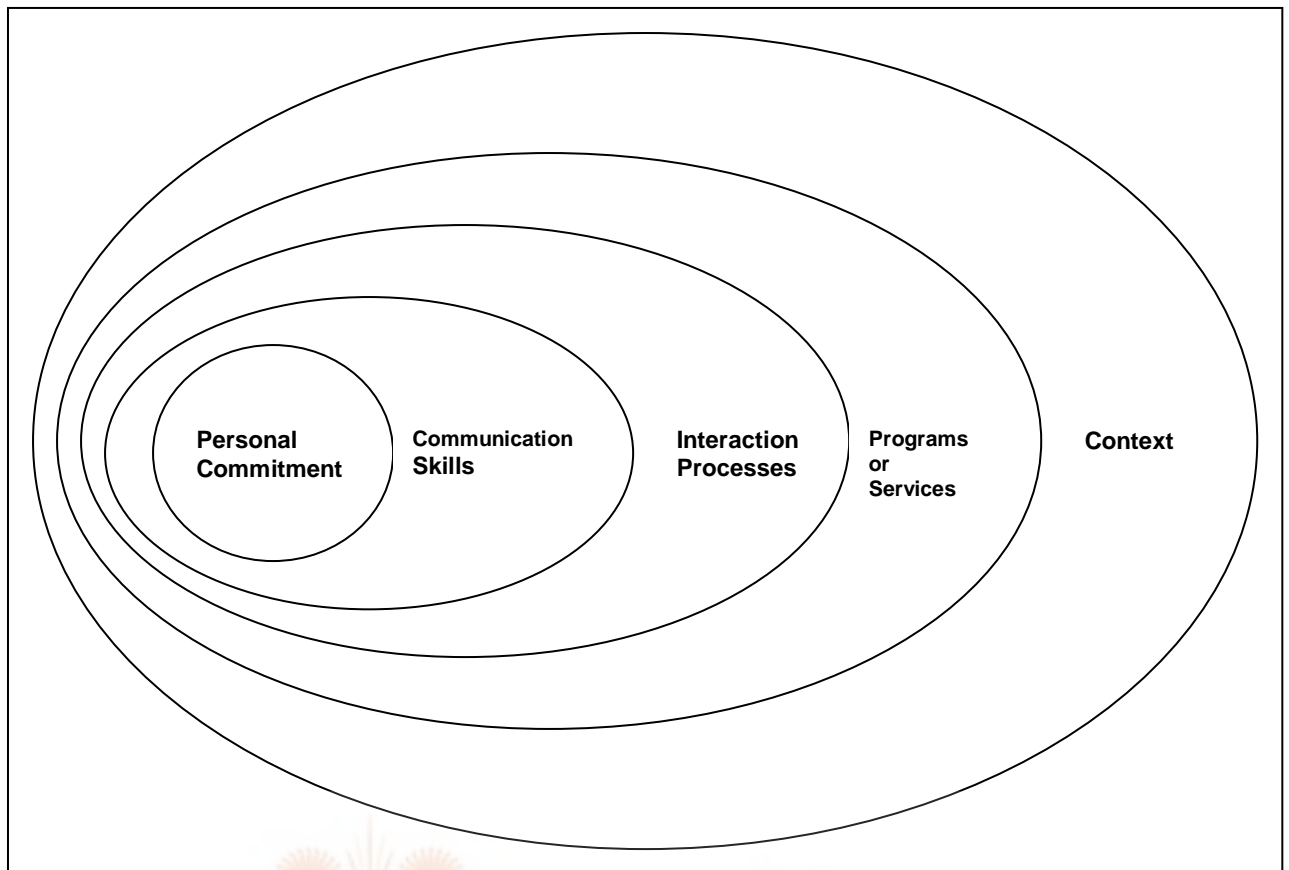
Figure 2.1 illustrates the characteristics of effective managers of collaboration. The diagram clearly indicates that co-operation, trust, communication and teamwork are key aspects that principals as effective managers of collaboration must enhance in order to encourage a collaborative relationship with SGBs. In relation to financial matters, this implies that principals play a key role in ensuring that they co-operate with SGB members regarding financial planning and control. Principals must also ensure that effective communication channels and resources for financial management exist. Trust and teamwork are also important characteristics that principals need to enhance in order to ensure that financial resources are effectively managed.



**Figure 2.1:** Characteristics of effective managers of collaboration (Hall, 2003:63)

### 2.10.6 A framework for learning about collaboration

Friend (2000) as cited in Cook and Friend (2003:21) suggest that in order to learn to form effective partnerships with others, you should strive for as complete an understanding of collaboration as possible. Thus, he presents a framework for learning about collaboration (Figure 2.2) that shows the components of collaboration and their relationships to one another.



**Figure 2.2:** Components of collaboration (Cook and Friend, 2003:22)

The first component of the study of collaboration concerns your *personal commitment* to collaboration as a tool for carrying out the responsibilities of your job, including your beliefs, about the benefits of working closely with colleagues and the added value of learning from others' perspectives. The second component of collaboration comprises *communication skills*, the basic building blocks of collaborative interactions. Trenholm (2001) as cited in Cook and friend (2003:30) supports this view and states that effective interpersonal communication is essential for collaboration. Although, most SGBs and principals may have relatively strong communication skills in order to be in their profession, the skills needed for collaboration are somewhat more technical and are best learned with practice. In order to ensure effective communication listening is a critical factor. The major benefit of effective listening is that principals and SGBs will be able to obtain sufficient and accurate information necessary for participating in collaborative activities. Another important communication skill is the skilful use of non-verbal behaviours that is essential in communicating attitudes necessary for

establishing and maintaining positive relationships (Egan, 2001 cited in Cook and Friend, 2003:40).

The third component includes interaction processes, that is, the steps that take an interaction from beginning to end. The most common interaction processes include problem solving and responding to conflict and resistance. Problem solving is a central process used in collaborative activities. Cook and Friend (2003:118) identify several steps to follow when having to deal with a problem: identify the problem; generate potential solutions; evaluate the potential solutions and then specify the tasks that will have to be completed to accomplish each; select a solution from those preferred; implement the solution; and, finally, evaluate the outcome. Furthermore, collaboration can lead to difficult interactions due to conflict or resistance. Principals and SGB members may prefer to respond to conflict, by being either, competitive, avoiding, accommodative, or compromising. Specific negotiation and mediation strategies may be used to create constructive outcomes in conflict situations.

The fourth component of collaboration is the set of *programs* or *services* in which collaborative activities occur. Such services include teaming, consultation and co-teaching. Principals and SGB members need to acknowledge that teams are characterised by collaborative relationships. Principals and SGB members should share parity, have a common goal, share responsibility for decision-making, and share responsibility for outcomes. In a school situation consultation can be referred as a voluntary process in which the SGB, for example, assists the principal to address a problem concerning a parent. Collaboration also leads to co-teaching, a common approach to service delivery in schools. Thus, the principal and SGB can jointly decide on how best to offer instruction to ensure the effective management of financial resources. The final component of collaboration is context. Context refers to the overall environment in which collaboration occurs.

The above discussion implies that principals and parent SGB members must learn about collaboration by understanding their personal commitment, learning communication skills, learning interaction processes, creating programmes and services in which collaborative approaches can be used, and recognising context factors that foster or constrain collaboration.

A key feature of collaboration is the existence of a collegial relationship between the principal and parent SGB. Therefore, what follows is a detailed discussion on collegiality.

### **2.10.7 Collegiality**

Collegiality involves a process of discussion by groups of staff who share the management of a school and is involved in setting institutional and personal goals as well as implementing them (Bush, 1995:48). Lomax (1996:19) argues that the collegiate approach emphasizes collaboration and teamwork, enabling each member to contribute to decision-making. Brundrett (1998) in Bush (2004:305) notes that 'collegiality can broadly be defined as teachers conferring and collaborating with other teachers'. In this study, reference is made to principals and parent governors conferring and collaborating with each other to ensure the effective management of financial resources. Little (1982) cited in Bush (2004:166) claims that "something is gained when teachers work together and something is lost when they do not". Similarly, when one looks at the principal and SGB relationship, it can be agreed that the school and its learners stand to lose a great deal should the principal and SGB not be working collaboratively in achieving the goals of a school. Collegial relationships exist when individuals discuss problems and difficulties, share ideas and knowledge, exchange techniques and approaches, observe one another's work, and collaborate on instructional projects (Little, 1982; Rosenholtze, 1989; Smylie, 1988). In schools where collegiality is the norm, these professional, interactive, supportive relationships are accepted, enhanced, and socially encouraged (Little, 1982). Such relationships have a

significant impact on schools and provide the opportunity for principals and parent SGB members to work collaboratively in the management of financial resources.

Thurlow, Bush and Coleman (2003:51) identify three advantages of collegiality. Firstly, stakeholders seem to participate more freely in the management of schools. Secondly, the quality of decision-making is likely to be better when all role-players participate in the process. Finally, effective implementation of decisions is much more likely if role-players have been involved.

In order to comprehensively understand collaboration and its importance in the relationship between the principal and parent SGB member in the management of financial resources, the researcher found that the collegial model of educational management forms a theoretical framework that is most appropriate for this study. How this model relates to the principals and school governors will now be addressed.

#### **2.10.8 Collegial Models**

According to Coleman and Anderson (2000:17), the collegial model is suitable for institutions like schools where expertise is distributed widely within the organisation. It is the researcher's view that the collegial model supports the principle of participatory, consultative and collaborative leadership, and decision-making, thus, making it one of the proposed models in this study. Collegial models emphasise that power and decision-making should be shared among some or all stakeholders of the organisation. Anderson and Lumby (2005:27) assert that resource allocation is an important dimension of decision-making. This implies that principals and SGBs must engage in collaborative decision-making to ensure that financial resources are managed effectively. Collegial models assume that organisations determine policy and make decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus. Power is shared among some or all members of the organisation who are thought to have a mutual understanding about the objectives of the institution (Bush,

2004: 64). Bush (2004:65) points to the following main features of collegial models:

1. Collegial approaches reflect the view that management is based on agreement. Principals and SGB members should base their decision-making regarding management of financial resources on democratic principles.
2. Collegial models assume that professionals have a right to share in the wider decision-making process. Principals and parent governors should respect each other's expertise, support and skills when it comes to decisions related to the management of financial resources. Brundret (1998) in Bush (2004: 65) refers to the importance of a 'shared vision' as a basis for collegial decision-making. The principal and parent governors share a common vision, namely providing quality education for all learners at the school. Thus, in ensuring this, principals and parent governors need to take decisions regarding finances, together.
3. Collegial models assume a common set of values held by members of an organisation. Common values held by principals and parent governors make it easier to reach agreements on the management of financial resources thus, ensuring that a collaborative relationship is maintained. These common values guide the managerial activities of the school and, in particular, lead to shared educational objectives.
4. The size of decision-making groups is an important element in collegial management. The principal and the chairperson serving on the governing body make the final decision. However, this will depend on their collaborative working relationship.
5. Collegial models assume that, decisions are reached by consensus rather than by division or conflict. It is understandable that principals and parent governors may have a difference of opinion regarding the financial management of resources. This can, however, be overcome

by the force of argument (Bush, 2004). However, this can only be achieved if the principal and SGB are in a collaborative relationship.

The above discussion validates the collegial model as having significant value in maintaining a collaborative relationship between the principal and parent SGB. Collegial models assume structures, which are lateral with the principal and parent governors having equal rights to determine policy and influence decisions. Further, schools that foster collegiality are well organised to ensure that the financial resources of public schools are effectively managed through a collaborative process.

## **2.11 IMPORTANCE OF EFFECTIVE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURES FOR COLLABORATION**

Schools like any other organisations need structure. The structure of an organisation refers to the relationship among members around its technical core of work. In South Africa, reform initiatives such as the SASA (1996) on school finance and governance, has called for a reassessment of the organisational structure within a school (Joubert & Bray, 2007). Thus, a school's organisational structure cannot stay the same if there are continual changes in reform strategies.

Mullins (1995) cited in Joubert and Bray (2007:72), define an organisational structure as a planned co-ordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of a common goal or purpose. He further argues that for schools to be efficient there need to be some formal structure. To ensure proper control and management of a school's financial resources, it is imperative for schools to organise themselves appropriately. To understand this task, Mullins (1995) identifies four concepts that need to be understood: Authority, responsibility, accountability and delegation.



### **2.11.1 Authority**

Authority is the right, allocated or delegated to a person by virtue of their qualities and capabilities, to act in a specific manner (Joubert & Bray, 2007). The school principal has the authority delegated from the director-general of the provincial department of education. The SGB has the authority in terms of the SASA (South Africa, 1996b).

### **2.11.2 Responsibility**

Responsibility is the duty that rests upon a person to carry out their appointed task to the best of their ability (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2003:50). The principal and SGB have specific responsibilities related to the management of the school's financial resources.

### **2.11.3 Accountability**

Accountability involves two responsibilities: first is the responsibility to undertake certain actions and the second is, to provide an account for those actions. For example, the SGB has a responsibility to manage the resources of a school entrusted to it by the community and the responsibility to provide an account of its management too. Submitting an annual report and financial strategies serves as mechanisms for discharging accountability (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2003).

### **2.11.4 Delegation**

In schools, delegation occurs when the principal and /or the SGB grants certain financial resource management responsibilities and authority to persons on lower levels who must report to the principal and SGB on these tasks. Parent governors may also delegate certain responsibilities to the principal. For example, should the principal have more skills and knowledge

related to finances then the parent governor may delegate certain financial tasks to them.

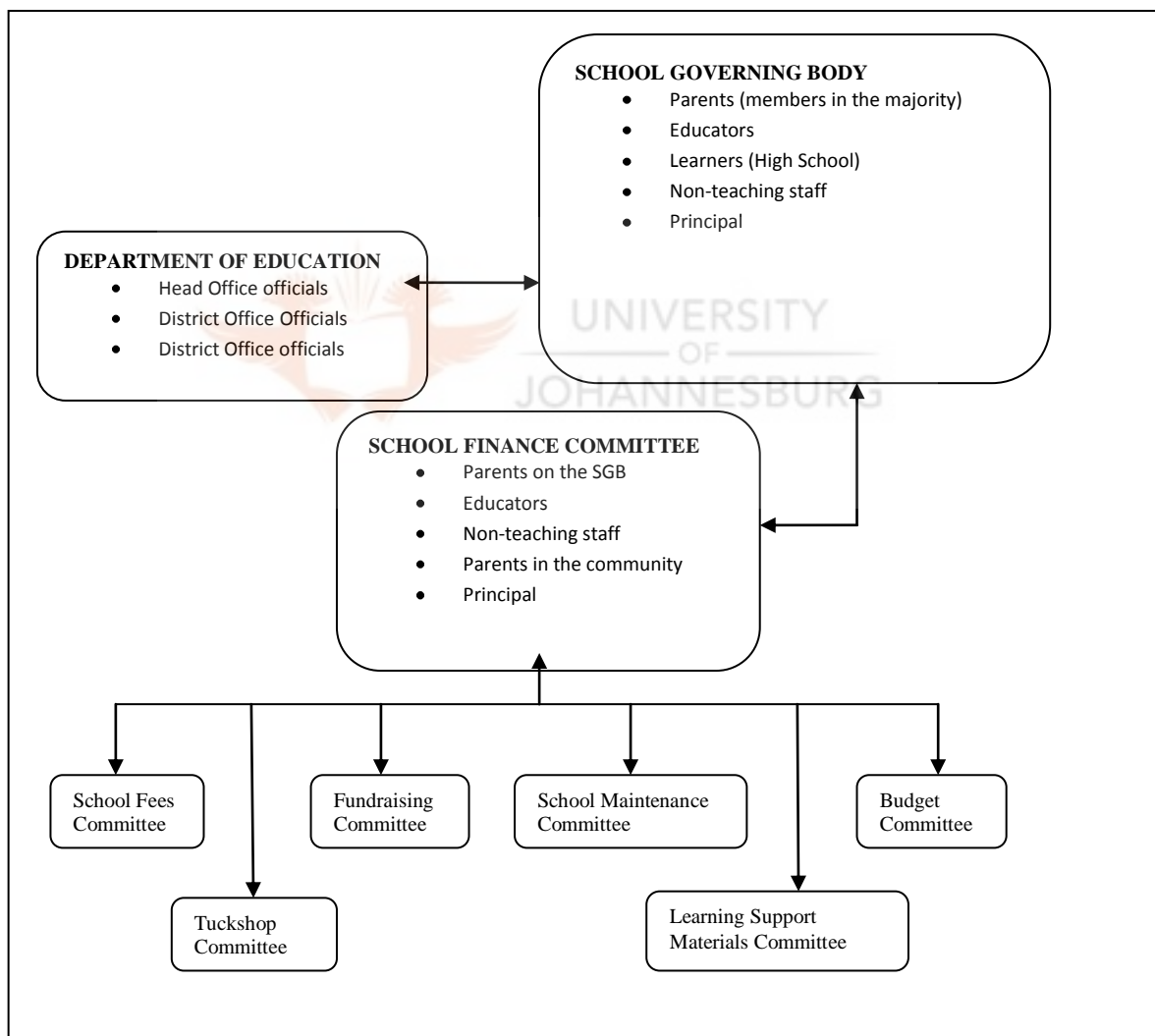
Thus, principals and SGB members must have a clear understanding of their authority, responsibilities, accountability and delegation in order to organise themselves appropriately in the management of financial resources in the school. This provides effective collaborative structures which encourages a collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB.

From the above discussion, it is clear that collaboration is an essential part of a school's organisational structure. Effective structures for collaboration will assist the principal to share financial management tasks and decisions with the SGB. Holy and Southworth (1989) in Motaung (2000:10), state that the principal cannot single-handedly impose their mission nor do they have sufficient time and resources to be free of other tasks. It is the researcher's view that in a collaborative school, the principal and SGB have specific roles and functions in the management of financial resources. These roles and functions are performed without enforcement. The co-ordination of activities in ensuring that principals and SGB members perform their tasks depends on appropriate and effective organisational structures. Furthermore, effective organisational structures for collaboration will ensure that everyone is informed about expectations and other related activities (Reddy, 1999:81).

### **2.11.5 Organisational structure of schools prior to 1994**

Prior to 1994 legislation, the governance structures in public schools had less or no influence on policy decisions in schools. There was very little or no participation of parents in the school (Lemmer, 2000:128-36). Schools that operated in the apartheid era were governed by the *Principal's Handbook* (House of Delegates: 1980), which was a 'top-down' approach. Chapter F in the *Principal's Handbook* prescribed how financial matters of the school had to be managed. There were clearly stipulated, stringent financial control measures. However, this style was autocratic and reflected apartheid principles and practices. In the past, the education as hierarchy saw the

principal as the person responsible for managing the school. With the new education structure, the SGB that comprises parents, educators, learners, non-teaching staff and the principal, shares in the management of the school. According to the SASA (South Africa, 1996a), the SGB is allowed to set up sub-committees as indicated in figure 2.3 below (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2003:64). The organogram illustrates the new structure that shows how management functions are carried out. It is evident that collaboration plays a pivotal role within this structure, in ensuring the effective management of financial resources.



**Figure 2.3:** Organogram of school financial management (Bisschoff & Mestry, 2003:64).

Thus, in the period since the 1994 elections, there has been a radical change in the idea of what it means for principals to manage a school. The principal is

no longer able to see themselves as the authority figure. With regards to the new roles of principals, Smilanich in Dimmock (1993:119) states that, the principal now has the task of arbitrator, of soliciting the needs of the staff and the SGB being the final authority on planning decisions reflected on the proposed budget. According to Bisschoff and Mestry (2003:4), and Chapter Four of SASA (South Africa, 1996b), places the responsibility for the financial management of the school in the hands of the governing body of the school. Thus, principals now cannot make decisions related to finances on their own. They have to engage in collaborative and participative decision-making. This implies that the principal has to consult with all stakeholders on matters concerning the management of financial resources of the school.

Blanford (1997:75) states that the participation in the decision-making process in schools is dependent on the relationship between stakeholders and therefore, structures may be needed to provide a framework for collaboration such as the structural model designed by Bercher and Kogan (Bush, 2004:39). Their structural model will now be addressed because, in the opinion of the researcher examining the organisational structure of schools, will provide a basis for understanding the fundamental concept of collaboration.

#### **2.11.6 Structural models**

According to Bush (2004:45), structure refers to the formal pattern of relationships between people in organisations. It expresses the ways in which individuals relate to each other in order to achieve organisational objectives. Bush (2004:38) states that organisational problems typically originate from inappropriate structures that can be resolved through restructuring or developing new systems.

Bercher and Kogan (1992) in Bush (2004:39) propose a structural model which has four levels:

1. *The Central level*, including the various national and local authorities which are, between them, responsible for the overall planning, resource allocation and monitoring of standards.
2. *The Institution* as defined in law and convention. This is the school.
3. *The Basic Unit* which corresponds with departments and pastoral units in schools.
4. *The Individual Level* which comprises the teacher, learners and support staff.

The structural model features normative and operational modes. The normative mode refers to monitoring and maintenance of values within the system as a whole. The operational mode refers to the business of carrying out practical tasks at different levels within the system.

Relationships between levels can be categorised as either normative or operational. Normative relationships involves appraisal while operational relationships that exist between the levels relate to the allocation of resources, responsibilities and tasks. Evetts (1992) cited in Bush (2004:84) stresses the hierarchical nature of school structures and reinforces the authority of the principal. Thus, schools that have a hierarchical structure are able to facilitate delegation and decision-making, two important features of collaboration. Thus the principal and SGB, in their collaborative efforts, are able to direct the management of financial resources with disagreement or opposition. The organisational structure offered by Berger and Kogan (1992) cited in Bush (2004) provides a valuable framework for understanding existing relationships in schools, especially in schools, were the four levels mentioned above exist.

In order to have a richer understanding of how collaboration impacts on the effective management of financial resources by principals and SGBs in schools, the researcher will now examine Giddens' structuration theory.

### 2.11.7 Giddens Theory of Structuration

Giddens' structuration theory is a focused, informative and integrative way to analyse the collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB in schools. Giddens theory of structuration explores the question of whether it is individuals or social forces that shape our social reality. According to Clark, Modgil and Modgil (1990:34), Giddens lay the foundation of structuration theory at the intersection between theories of action and collectivities. He argues that all basic concepts in social theory should acknowledge that social action and collectivities consist in, and are generated by, ongoing forms of social praxis. Social structures are both constituted by human agency, and yet at the same time, are the very medium of this constitution. In this regard, he defines structures as consisting of rules and resources involving human action. Rules are patterns people may follow in social life. Resources relate to what is created by human action. Giddens, notes in his article "Functionalism" (1976), that 'to examine the structuration of a social system is to examine the modes whereby that system, through the application of resources are produced or reproduced in social interaction.' This process of structures producing systems, are called structuration. Giddens further defines structuration as 'the structuring of relations across time and space, in virtue of duality of structure.' Giddens make time and space two major aspects of his theoretical perspective. He states that time and space are central aspects of social life.

Thus, Giddens' theory of structuration is a theory of social interaction, which claims that society should be understood in terms of action and structure. The structuration theory therefore, presents a framework that helps to explore how principals and SGBs produce effective collaborative structures that enable them to manage the financial resources of schools. Further, Giddens' structuration theory can be employed to explore how principals produce, reproduce, and transform the management of financial resources through their collaborative relationship with SGBs across time and space.

### 2.11.7.1 Types of structure

Giddens identifies three kinds of structures in a social system: signification, legitimation and domination. In the stratification model of structure, Giddens attempts to illustrate the links between structure and the system of interaction (Olson & Yahia, 2006:4). The first type of structure is signification. This produces meaning through organized web of language (semantic codes, interpretive schemes and discursive practices). The second dimension of his stratification model, legitimation, produces a moral order via naturalization of social norms, values and standards. Here, it implies that when principals and SGBs interact, they exhibit consciously, subconsciously, or unconsciously meanings to their behaviour. Interacting in this manner shapes the current social norms and is weighed against the moral rules of the structure. The final element, domination, focuses on the production and exercise of power originating from the control of resources.

### 2.12 SUMMARY



In order to ensure that principals and parents SGB members work collaboratively to manage the school's financial resources they must recognise the powers they have, and the responsibilities they must discharge. They must further realise the critical role collaboration plays within the patchwork of education governance and management. In keeping with international trends, South African schools have also moved towards decentralisation and more powers concerning school governance has been devolved to schools (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:176). Squelch (1999) asserts that democratic school governance has now been initiated and formalised through legislative mandates intended to exact compliance with regulation concerning the election, composition and functioning of governing bodies. He further adds that principals can no longer be the 'lord' of an education fiefdom. Instead, a democratic coalition of interest groups is now responsible for administering and managing schools (Holt & Murphy, 1993 cited in Mestry & Grobler, 2007). This entails active and collaborative participation among principals and SGBs.

This chapter provided an overview of the literature on collaboration, with specific reference to the relationship between principals and SGBs in the management of financial resources. Various concepts related to the relationship between the principal and SGB were discussed. This chapter also dealt with the importance of an effective organisational structure for collaboration. The success of the SGB and the principal performing their functions relating to the management of financial resources, for example, depends on the principal and SGB working in a collaborative relationship. Thus, various aspects of collaboration as well as important aspects in the relationship between the principal and SGB were discussed. Having reviewed the literature on the collaboration, chapter three will focus on the research method to be used and design of the research instrument in order for the researcher to reach a valid conclusion.





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## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

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#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two investigated and explored the importance of a collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB in the management of financial resources in public schools. The literature review undertaken provided a theoretical framework that informed the enquiry. In this chapter, the researcher will outline the research methodology used to collect data. In addition, the chapter will focus on the research design to provide clarity on the following aspects of the research study:

- The purpose of qualitative research;
- Planning for the in-depth interviewing of individuals and groups;
- The discussion of selected questions used in the interviews;
- The discussion of data collection techniques and data analysis;
- Explanation of the sampling procedure;
- The participants used; and
- The discussion of ethical issues.

The purpose of the study is to firstly, examine the collaborative relationship of principals and SGBs in the management of financial resources in public schools. Secondly, it investigates the importance of collaboration in the relationship of the principal and SGB in the management of financial resources. Based on the results and data of this research, guidelines necessary to assist principals and SGB members to develop a collaborative relationship to effectively manage their school's financial resources, will be discussed.

In order to achieve the above, the researcher used a generic qualitative research approach (Lee,1999:21), employing an exploratory, descriptive and

contextual focus. This chapter will also explain all aspects of the research process employed for this study, including the sampling procedure, its rationale and limitations, the data collection process, the instruments used and their validity and reliability, the way the data was analysed and its relevance to the aims of the study.

## **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

McMillan and Schumacher (1997:33) refer to research design as a plan and structure of investigation used to obtain evidence to answer research questions. The purpose of a research design is to plan and structure a given research study in a manner that maximises the validity of the research findings (Mouton & Marais, 1991:33).

### **3.2.1 Generic qualitative research method**

According to Glicken (2003:1), research may be regarded as a rational approach to problem solving. Darlington and Scott (2002:20), on the other hand, state that 'research is essentially all about seeing the world in fresh ways, about searching again or re-searching the same territory and seeing it in a different light'. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:21), educational research is interdisciplinary and provides descriptions, explanations, predictions, and evaluations of educational practices. Using the above three definitions as a basis for the researcher's understanding of research, the researcher thus employed a generic qualitative research approach (Lee, 199:21). Creswell (2005:39) defines qualitative research as a type of educational research in which the researchers rely on the views of participants; ask broad, general questions; collect data consisting largely of words (or texts) from participants; describes and analyses these words for themes; and conducts the enquiry in a subject-based manner. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:395) share this view and maintain that qualitative research is an inquiry in which researchers collect data in face-to-face situations by interacting with selected persons in their setting. According to Brown and Eisenhardt (1997) cited in Lee (1999), generic qualitative researchers apply

multiple techniques in their research for example, both interviews and observations are often conducted within a single study. Adler and Adler (1998) cited in Lee (1999:21) further argue that a qualitative researcher's participation can vary from direct involvement to hands-off observation, and a combination of qualitatively analysed questionnaires. For this study, data includes interview transcripts, audiotapes, and an analysis of a range of documents such as minutes of SGB meetings and the school's financial policy documents, as well as the observer's comments. In this study, the researcher was the primary instrument for data collection.

The task of the researcher was to capture the evidence of the collaborative relationship between principals and SGB members as a product of how they interpret their roles and functions in managing the school's financial resources, and to understand events from their viewpoints. According to Henning et al. (2004:20), knowledge is obtained not only by observable phenomena, but also from people's intentions, values, perceptions, reasons, meaning-making and self-understanding.

Miles and Huberman (1994:6-7) state that generic qualitative research as falls into four major domains namely, participant observer, non-participant observer, interviewing, and archival research. In this study the researcher followed a participant observation strategy in examining the collaborative relationship between principals and school governors. Through this experience the researcher was able to converse with, interview, and observe principals and school governors manage their school's financial resources. The researcher also followed a non-participant strategy, thus assuming a passive observational role (Adler & Adler (1988) cited in Lee, 1999:24). Interviews (Miles and Huberman's third domain) were also used. Semi-structured one-to-one interviews and focus group interviews were conducted in this study. Their final domain is archival. In this study, archival refers to various documents that the researcher analysed in order to generate findings that will explain why collaboration between the principal and SGB is important in ensuring the effective management of financial resources.

The researcher used suggestions outlined in Neuman (2003) (cited in Glicken, 2003:153) to ensure in-depth findings related to the research question. As a result of Neuman's suggestions the following points can be made:

- The researcher attempted to observe and experience the principals and SGBs day-to-day roles and functions.
- Because the researcher is an educator and has served on the SMT and SGB, she knows and understands the principals and SGB members' roles and functions and the setting she is studying. Thus, the researcher was able to acquire an 'insider's point of view'.
- The researcher made use of notes, outlines, diagrams, and pictures.
- The researcher began to develop personal relationships with the participants and was thereby able to report on the lives of the participants in a way that projects a caring attitude.
- The researcher was able to deal with high levels of uncertainty in the process of the studying events, situations and participants.
- The researcher was able to recognise events, interactions, and social processes without interfering.

A discussion on population and sampling will now follow.

### **3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING**

#### **3.3.1 Population**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:165), a population is a group of elements whether individuals, objects or events, that conforms to specific criteria and from which we intend to generalise the results of the research. The population for this study comprised four hundred public schools in Gauteng that have been allocated Section 21 functions.

### 3.3.2 Sampling

A sample is a small proportion of a population selected for observation and analysis (Best & Kahn, 1986:12). Sarantakos (2000:156) describes sampling in qualitative research as being relatively limited, based on saturation, not representativity, the size not statistically determined, and involving low cost and less time. It can thus be inferred that non-probability sampling methods, and purposeful sampling in particular is mostly utilised in qualitative research. In this study, purposeful sampling was considered more appropriate, because the researcher was able to generalise subjectively according to her own experiences (De Vos, 2006:329). Further, purposeful sampling technique was employed because the researcher could hand pick the research participants to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000:103).

Patton (1990:169) and Creswell (1994:11) point out that, the purpose of purposeful sampling is to select information-rich cases and informants who will best answer the research question. Thus, based on these ideas of purposeful sampling the samples consisted of five principals, five parent governors and five school bursars. The researcher believes that because of their experience in financial matters and having the most comprehensive understanding of the phenomena, the participants were able to assist the researcher in addressing the main question: why is collaboration important between the principal and SGB in the management of financial resources? Principal A & B were principals of previously ex-Model C schools in Berea (Johannesburg) that now cater for a low socio-economic group. Principal C and D are also from a previously ex-Model C school that is situated in a high economic residential area in Midrand. Principal E manages a township school in Thembisa. These principals were chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative on the topic being investigated and the type of school they manage will ensure the researcher's understanding of the relationship between the principal and parent governors, from different perspectives (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:397). For this study, the principals' opinions and ideas were of special interest and relevance to the

topic being researched. Their experience in the financial management of resources which they relayed to the researcher allowing her to address general questions about the skills, understanding, attitudes, roles and functions held by the participants in financial management initiatives that result in successful collaboration. The researcher also felt that it was important to interview parent governors and the school bursar because of the governance position they hold within the school. Further, it is the researcher's opinion that these participants have the most comprehensive understanding of the phenomena and that they have worked closely with the principal on matters related to finances.

### **3.3.3 Pilot Study**

A pilot study using focus group interviews was conducted with the principal and parent governor of one school to determine if relevant information would be gained by the questions posed and whether the method of questioning was suitable for the participant. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:155) defines a pilot study as 'a small study conducted prior to a larger piece of research to determine whether the methodology, sampling, instruments and analysis are adequate and appropriate.' The pilot study helped the researcher to identify confusing and ambiguous language and to correct any mistakes that may have occurred during the interview process. It further ensured the success and effectiveness of the investigation.

An exposition of the data collection techniques utilised in this study will now follow.

## **3.4 DATA COLLECTION**

Leedy and Omrad (2001:94) define data as pieces of information that any particular situation provides to an observer. Slavin (1992:240) asserts that qualitative research uses the natural setting as the direct source of data and the researcher as the key instrument of data collection. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:269) state that the most common data collection

techniques used in qualitative research is observation, interviews and document analysis. In this study, all three of these techniques were used.

### 3.4.1 Interviewing

Sewell (2001) in De Vos (2006:286) defines qualitative interviews as 'attempts to understand the world from the participant's point of view, to unfold the meaning of the people's experiences and to uncover their lived world prior to scientific explanations'. Cormack (2000:294) further states that an interview is a purposeful interaction between two or more people who are in a process of communication, conversation and negotiation for specific purpose associated with some agreed subject matter. In this study, the researcher used both semi-structured one-to-one interviews and focus group interviews with the aim of providing the participants with the opportunity to speak and share their experiences so that the researcher could obtain deeper insight into issues relating to the research topic.

The following were central questions asked in the interviews:

- How does collaboration between principals and parent SGBs impact on managing financial resources?
- What are the roles and functions of the principal and SGB in managing financial resources?
- What are some of the problems or obstacles experienced at the school as a result of the principal and SGBs' working relationship in the management of financial resources?
- What suggestions/measures can be put forward to ensure that the principal and SGB work collaboratively in managing financial resources?

(See Appendix B)

### **3.4.1.1 Semi-structured one-to-one interviews**

Initial data was collected by means of semi-structured interviews with each principal in a face-to-face manner. This was important for establishing rapport with principals. The researcher used semi-structured one-to-one interviews in order to gain a detailed picture of the principal's perceptions about the importance of collaboration in the management of financial resources.

### **3.4.1.2 Focus group interviews**

In the second set of interviews, the principal, parent SGB member and the bursar were selected to participate in the focus group interview to get a group consensus about issues related to the topic instead of relying only on the opinions and responses of the principal. A total of five group interviews were conducted. According to Darlington and Scott (2002:61), focus group interviews are particularly well suited to collecting in-depth qualitative data about individual definition of problems, opinions and feelings, and meanings associated with various phenomena. The reason for opting for focus group interviews was because of its numerous advantages. The researcher was aware that in focus group interviews there is a group interaction where the cross flow of communication unpacks easily. Furthermore, groups take the pressure off participants having to respond to every question. Hearing others talk about their experiences in a supportive environment, may enable participants to feel comfortable about sharing their own experiences (Basch, 1987; Mariampoloski, 1989; Morgan, 1997 as cited in Darlington and Scott, 2002: 62).

### **3.4.1.3 The interview schedule**

A questionnaire written to guide interviews is called an interview schedule. It comprises a set of predetermined questions that may be used as appropriate instrument to engage the participant and designate the narrative terrain (Holstein & Gubrium, 1995 as cited in De Vos, 2006:296). In this study, the researcher compiled two different interview schedules: interview schedule A



for principals and interview schedule B for the focus group interviews (See Appendix B) in order to guide the interviews. The interview schedules comprised a list of topics/open-ended questions to be covered in the interview. The researcher made sure that the open-ended questions left the participants completely free to express their responses as they wished, as detailed and complex, as long or as short, or as they felt appropriate (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:118). Patton (1990:46) states that open-ended questions permit participants to describe what is meaningful and salient to them without being 'pigeonholed' into standardised categories. In this study, the researcher asked questions that gave principals and SGB members the opportunity to think back and describe their personal experiences that involved collaboration.

To ensure that the interviews were planned well, the researcher first chose a suitable time and venue for the interviews. The researcher provided the interviewees with a set of prepared questions to scan and reflect on. The researcher found that this pre-empted certain responses and alerted the participants unnecessarily to possible sensitive points (Henning, 2004:75). The interviews were approximately thirty minutes in duration. Through the different interviews with principals, parent SGB members and the school bursar, the researcher aimed to develop an understanding of the importance of collaboration in the management of financial resources in schools.

### **3.4.2 Observation**

The primary advantage of using observation as a data gathering technique is that the researcher does not need to worry about limitations of self-report bias because the information is not limited to what the research participants say but also how they say it (McMillan, 1995:79). The researcher chose the observational method because she was able to see and hear things, which she deemed necessary and meaningful to record for the outcome of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 1997:268). Observation is a very effective way of finding out what people do in particular contexts, their routines, and the interactional patterns of their everyday lives (Darlington & Scott, 2003:73). In

this study, the researcher observed the interaction between the principal and SGB in carrying out their day-to-day financial responsibilities.

The researcher found that the observational method advantageous the study as the SGB and principal required little active effort on their part, and the researcher was able to control what was recorded.

### **3.4.3 Document analysis**

In addition to interviews and observations, documents such as the school's financial policy and other school policies, minutes of SGB and staff meetings, and financial reports were analysed. According to Johnson, (1990:23) document analysis can prove to be an extremely valuable source of data. Official documents such as the Constitution (South Africa, 1996a), SASA (South Africa, 1996b) and the National Norms and Standards of Funding (South Africa, 1998) formed an integral part of this research. Other documentation such as newspapers, media reports and information available on the internet was also collected, analysed and studied with the purpose of drawing out any relevant data on the collaborative relationship of principals and SGBs.

By analysing selected documents, the researcher was able to obtain an internal perspective of the school as an organisation, they showed the official chair of command and they provided clues about the values of the school (McMillan & Schumacher 1997:455). The researcher evaluated the authenticity of some of the documents by comparing them to other documents, or by verifying the data in some documents by interviewing district officials (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:285-286). The reason for this was because that there is often a considerable time lag between the occurrence of the event and the writing of the document, the delay thus leading to lapses of memory and inaccuracies (Bailey, 1994 cited in De Vos, 2006:317).

### 3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Marshall and Rosmann (1999:111), data analysis entails bringing order, structure and meaning to a mass of time-consuming, creative and fascinating procedures. McMillan and Schumacher (1997:501) further state that data analysis involves the process of analysing, coding and interpreting data collected. In this research study, the researcher analysed data obtained from interviews; observations; the content of existing material and documents which included audio-tapes, financial records, minutes of meetings and journal entries. Data obtained were first transcribed and checked for completeness and errors. These transcriptions were then analysed manually in order to make sense of, interpret and theorise about the data (Henning et al., 2004:127). Thus, the researcher identified common themes, patterns and trends from the participants' description of their experiences. In this regard, Schwandt (2001) in Henning et al. (2004:127) maintains that data analysis ought to be vigorous, systematic, disciplined, carefully and methodologically documented.

In this study, the researcher made reference to Tech's method of open coding to identify themes and categories. Tesch's method cited in Creswell (1994:155) involves several steps. First, it is important for the researcher to get a sense of the data obtained by carefully reading all the transcriptions obtained and by jotting down some ideas as they come to mind. It is then necessary to pick the most interesting, shortest document and go through it, asking yourself what it entails. The researcher must not think about the substance of the information, rather the underlying meaning. Thoughts should be written in the margin. After completing several documents, the researcher should then make a list of themes/categories. It is then important to place similar themes together and arrange them into major themes, unique themes and left-overs. The researcher must then take the list back to the data, abbreviate themes as codes and write the codes next to the appropriate segment of the text. In this way, the researcher will realise new categories and codes. Thereafter, the most descriptive wording for topics can be turned into categories, while related topics can be grouped together to reduce the

total list of categories. Lines may be drawn between categories to show relationships. A final decision on the abbreviation may then be made and the codes must be alphabetised. It now becomes necessary to assemble data belonging to each category and put in one place for preliminary analysis. Lastly, existing data should be recorded.

When constructing categories during the process of analysing the content, the researcher used the following considerations as outlined in Merriam (1998:183) as guidelines. The researcher reflected on the purpose of the research; attempted to be exhaustive; ensured that themes were mutually exclusive and independently derived from a single classification principle.

Strategies to ensure trustworthiness will now follow.

### **3.6 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE RESEARCH**

The researcher ensured that her research responded to questions that stand as criteria against which the trustworthiness of her study could be evaluated (Marshall & Rosmann, 1999:143). The researcher then asked herself the following questions outlined by Marshall and Rosmann (1999:143-145):

- How credible are the particular findings of the study?
- How transferable and applicable are these findings to another setting or group of people?
- How can we be reasonably sure that the findings would be replicated if the study were conducted with the same participants in the same context?
- How can we be sure that the findings would be reflective of the subjects and the inquiry itself, rather than the researcher's biases or prejudices?

In this study, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) (as cited in De Vos, 2006:346) was employed to establish the validity and reliability of the research.

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:157), validity means the degree to which a study actually measures what it purports to measure. Reliability, on the other hand, refers to the consistency of the data. This raises the question whether the researcher would yield the same results if conducted by a different researcher or even the same researcher at a different time (De Vos, 2006:331).

### **3.6.1. Validity**

Validity, in the context of this study, asks whether the interview questions were actually measuring what it was supposed to measure (Neuman, 2000:234). Thus, the interview questions were pilot-tested by using a principal and parent SGB member not included in the sample. The purpose was to determine whether the questions in the interview schedules would measure whether principals and parent SGB members are working collaboratively to manage the school's financial resources. The pilot study helped in detecting unforeseen problems such as vague questions and overly sensitive questions. As a result of the pilot study, some questions were modified to ensure that relevant and correct data were collected. The researcher used the pilot study to ensure that the interview questions were established in a logical and sequential order and that the time frame set aside for the interview ensured that all questions could be answered.

### **3.6.2 Reliability**

Guba and Lincoln (1985) cited in Henning et al. (2004:148) refers to reliability as the extent that one's findings can be replicated. In this study, reliability was established by ensuring that the researcher probed for specific answers related to the study. Where it was found that questions were probably misunderstood, the researcher re-phrased or repeated the question. Furthermore, data obtained from the interviews were compared to the data collected from the observation sessions and from an analysis of documents such as minutes of meetings and financial documents.

### **3.6.3 Credibility**

Credibility is established when the context, participants and settings are interpreted and presented truthfully (De Vos, 2006:332). In this study, the researcher reassured principals and parent governors that they were neither judged nor evaluated on their financial management skills, rather that we were collaborating together to determine how school financial resources could be effectively managed. The researcher made the participants aware that their input and responses were valued.

### **3.6.4 Transferability**

Transferability becomes apparent when the results obtained can be identified in other settings. According to Foster (2005), transferability refers to the extent to which the findings from one research study might prove applicable to another setting. Lincoln and Guba (1985) in De Vos (2006:346) state that triangulation of multiple sources of data can enhance a study's transferability. Padgett (1998) in De Vos (2006: 361) describes triangulation in qualitative research as the convergence of multiple perspectives that can provide greater confidence that what is being targeted is being accurately captured. In this study triangulation is achieved through various procedures of data collection: interviews, observation and document analysis. Thus, the researcher could much more easily validate and cross-check findings (De Vos et al., 2006:346).

### **3.6.5 Dependability**

De Vos et al. (2006:346) refer to dependability when the researcher attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for the study as well as changes in the design created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting. Merriam (1998:10) states that, as the nature of the qualitative research design is based on understanding the experiences of participants, the qualitative research design is flexible and evolving. This implies that the research design may need to be altered as new findings emerge during the data collection process. The researcher aimed to enhance

dependability of this study by including detailed descriptions of the circumstances and context of the study, as well as records of the process followed.

### **3.6.6 Confirmability**

Foster (2005) explains confirmability as being the extent to which the research findings can be confirmed or corroborated by others. Strategies for enhancing confirmability that were utilised for this study included conducting a 'data audit' to pinpoint potential areas of bias in order to document the limitations of the study (Foster, 2005). Original transcriptions of the interviews, observation notes, anecdotes and journal entries are available for scrutiny. Although, the researcher served on both the SMT and SGB, which gave her the opportunity to observe the relationship between the principal and parent SGB members, the researcher ensured that she stayed objective in the data gathering and analysis process. The researcher reassured the participants that she was aware of researcher bias and, therefore, made certain that she only reflected on what the participants replied to in the interview and did not recall her own story based on her experiences on the SGB and SMT (Fraenkel & Wallen 2003:453).

### **3.6.7 Limitations of the study**

The researcher initially experienced difficulty securing suitable times for the interviews, as the principals were often busy. Certain interviews had to be re-scheduled due to clashes with school activities that were not evident on the term plan. The researcher is of the opinion that some participants were reluctant and felt uneasy to answer some of the questions fearing that it may cause conflict. Another important limitation was that participants, notably the principals, were reluctant to supply financial information pertaining to their schools. Furthermore, the participants were not happy about being tape-recorded, even after much persuasion from the researcher.

### 3.7 ETHICS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

De Vos et al. (2006:57) define ethics as a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents, employers, sponsors, other researchers, assistants and students.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (1997:418), qualitative researchers need to be sensitive to ethical principles because of the nature of the research topic and because of the face-to-face interaction they have with the participants when collecting data. In this study, various attempts were made to win the trust and confidence of the research participants and to assure them that their confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed if so required. The researcher took the following ethical issues, as outlined by De Vos (2006:57-66) into consideration.

#### 3.7.1 Informed consent

According to Gliner and Morgan (2000:34), informed consent is the procedure by which participants choose whether or not to participate in the study. De Vos et al. (2006:59) argue that the information provided to participants should include the investigation, the research goals and procedures. Babbie and Mouton (2001), and Thomas and Smith (2003) in De Vos et al. (2006:59) call informed consent 'voluntary participation'.

The researcher first obtained permission from the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) to conduct the research. Permission to conduct the research was then obtained from the principals of the selected schools. A letter of consent was drafted by the researcher, so that participants could give their consent to participate in the research (See Appendix C and D). In this study, the researcher ensured that participants were given accurate and complete information about the study so that they could fully comprehend the investigation and consequently be able to make a voluntary investigation and



thoroughly reasoned decision about their participation (De Vos et al., 2006:59). The participants were assured that their privacy and sensitivity would be protected. Thus, during the analysis process and findings of the study no names of those participating in the study were mentioned. Participants were labelled as, 'A', 'B', 'C', and so on.

### **3.7.2 Deception of subjects/participants**

Lowenberg and Dolgoff (1998), in De Vos et al. (2006:61) describe deception of participants, as 'deliberatively misrepresenting facts in order to make another person believe what is not true, violating the respect to which every person is entitled'. Neuman (2000:229) says that deception occurs when the researcher intentionally misleads subjects by way of written or verbal instructions, about the actions of other people, or about certain aspects of the setting. In this study, the researcher ensured that the participants were not misled and the researcher provided participants with the necessary information about the study.

### **3.7.3 Violation of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality**

Sinledton (1998) in De Vos et al. (2006:61), explains that 'the right to privacy is the individuals right to decide when, where, to whom, and to what extent his or her attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour will be revealed'

In this study the researcher assured participants that their privacy would not be violated. Participants were also informed about their status of anonymity. Participants were given a choice as to whether they wanted their names and institutions revealed or not. The researcher also obtained consent from research participants to use a tape-recorder.

### **3.7.4 Actions and competence of researchers**

Researchers are ethically obliged to ensure that they are competent and adequately skilled to undertake the proposed investigation (De Vos et al.

2006:63). In this study the researcher ensured she was aware of her ethical responsibilities towards information on the composition of the research population, the sampling procedure, the methodology utilised, the processing of data, and the writing of the research report (De Vos et al. 2006:63).

### **3.8 SUMMARY**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher has chosen a generic qualitative research method. In this chapter the researcher discussed and motivated the choice of a generic qualitative research method. The researcher examined why collaboration is important between the principal and SGB in the management of financial resources in schools. Sampling procedures, data collection techniques and data analysis were also discussed in detail. The researcher dealt with strategies that ensured trustworthiness and the limitations experienced were also addressed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ethical issues that were taken into account during the course of the research study. In the subsequent chapter the analysis and interpretation of the research findings will be explored.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH DATA

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#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter three, the researcher discussed the research design, methodology and the rationale for using the generic qualitative research method. The research sample, data analysis and ethical issues were also explained.

This chapter provides an analysis of the data obtained from various interviews, observations and the analysis of documents provides some evidence against which to examine the importance of a collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB in the management of financial resources in public schools. The researcher aims to ensure that the data analysis process brings order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data (De Vos, 2006:333). Researchers like Babbie, Mouton, Foster and Prozesky (2001:101) point out that, data collected is interpreted for the purpose of drawing conclusions that reflect on the interest, ideas, and theories that initiated the enquiry.

#### 4.2 INTERACTION WITH THE RESPONDENTS

The empirical research process began with a formal written request to the principals of the various schools selected in Gauteng, to conduct research at their schools. Participants were contacted to firstly introduce the researcher and to secure an appointment for interviews to be conducted on the school premises. Participants were also presented with a form consenting to their participation and were given assurance of anonymity and confidentiality with regard to data collected about the school.

Once the sample was purposefully selected, one-to-one and focus group interviews were conducted. The researcher transcribed interviews manually

and the transcriptions were coded according to a set protocol in order to identify the underlying themes and categories. The first set of interviews formed part of a pilot study for the research. The researcher then conducted additional interviews after being satisfied with the feasibility and correctness of the interview procedure in the pilot study. The same procedure that was followed with the first interview was repeated in each interview. It was then decided to include the pilot study in the formal research as many of the themes and categories identified in the pilot study correlated with those in the subsequent interviews. Thereafter, the themes and categories identified were examined to reach consensus.

A brief discussion of the themes and categories identified through data analysis will now be discussed.

### 4.3 THEMES

The following themes were identified through data analysis:

- Effective structures for collaboration
- Collaborative culture
- Cordial relationships
- Effective communication
- SGB roles and functions

The process followed is that each theme is discussed and supported with examples from the interviews. The quotations in support of categories are given verbatim without making any alterations. Where necessary, concepts are clarified in brackets.

Following the qualitative approach, a literature control is undertaken after each theme has been described. The literature control is used to explain, support and extend the theory generated in this research. This provides the researcher with a basic understanding of the research problem and the evidence that the study conducted was appropriately based on the current

knowledge of the problem (Burns & Grove, 1999:108). The literature knowledge thus reflects the existing knowledge on the importance of collaboration between the principal and SGB in the effective management of financial resources. This in conjunction with the other relevant literature will facilitates the researcher’s attempt to formulate guidelines to assist principals and SGBs to develop a collaborative relationship to effectively manage their school’s financial resources.

Table 4.1 below gives a summary of the themes and categories that were identified through data analysis.

**Table 4.1:** Themes and categories.

THEMES	CATEGORIES
Effective structures for collaboration	Equal involvement of stakeholders Collaborative decision-making Co-ordination and delegation
Collaborative culture	Collaboration Shared responsibility and equality Collegiality Teamwork
Cordial relationships	Mutual trust and understanding Rapport and respect
Effective communication	Lack of communication resources
SGB roles and functions	Lack of financial knowledge and skills Overlap of roles and functions

### 4.3.1 Effective structures for collaboration

It became clear from the participants' remarks that an effective organisational structure plays a significant role in facilitating collaboration between the principal and SGB in the management of financial resources. An effective structure for collaboration ensures the smooth and efficient running of the school, encourages collaborative communication and it leads to responsibility for and accountability of roles. Most participants in the study supported the above statement. Four categories were distinguished: equal involvement of stakeholders, decision-making, co-ordination and delegation of collaborative activities.

#### 4.3.1.1 Equal involvement of stakeholders

Effective structures for collaboration demand that principals should work with and through others, on objectives that are far too big for one person to achieve (Motaung, 2000:9). Further, Clase, Kok and Van der Merwe (2007) state that SGBs are instruments put in place by the state to foster partnerships with all role players to make inputs in the educational process. It appears, however, from the interview analysis that parent governors are not treated as equal partners.

The following participants commented on the issue of equal involvement of stakeholders:

*“Although I am the chairperson of the SGB, I have very little influence on financial matters. We [SGB] are not seen as equal partners in sharing in the governance of the school.”*

*“Parent governors entering collaborative partnerships need to feel that they are can be trusted and that they are equally involved in school initiatives. This will ensure that collaboration is sustained.”*

This is verified in the researcher's observational entries that parent governors are excluded from matters concerning finances. Furthermore, the SASA identifies parents as official partners in the governance of their children's school. Calitz, Fuglestad and Lillejord (2002:110) are of the opinion that principals need to initiate the equal involvement of parent governors in financial matters.

#### 4.3.1.2 Collaborative decision-making

Effective organisational structures will assist principals in involving parent governors in collaborative decision-making. Thody (1994:125) maintains that opportunity to participate in decision-making by all stakeholders gives them a feeling of empowerment and it increases motivation and commitment.

Principal A indicated the importance of an effective organisational structure in the following manner:

*"It is without doubt that a school must have an effective organisational structure that promotes collaborative principles. In this way both the principal and SGB can work together as a collective unit in co-ordinating collaborative activities that ensures effective management of financial resources. I am sure that you have noticed at this school, there is a good working relationship among staff and the SGB, there is excellent communication and we value and respect each other's contributions when it comes to making decisions."*

In contrast, Parent Governor C indicated that an effective organisational structure does not exist at the school. She commented as follows:

*"Most of the decisions are made by the principal. We all just tend to go with what the principal says. Go with the flow, so to speak. I guess, because he is the head of the school and plus, we don't want conflict."*

The researcher's observational notes demonstrate that principals make decisions without consulting the SGB. It was noticed that principal A excluded

parent governors from broad decision-making out of fear that parent governors may influence decisions taken. In contrast, Principal C excluded parent governors from certain financial decisions due to their lack of financial knowledge and skills. Further, an analysis of SGB meetings indicated that principals made the final decision even though they may have had resistance with regard to certain decisions taken. The findings derived in a research conducted by Karlsson (2002:332) indicate that principals continue to play a dominant role in meetings and decision-making. He found that this is attributed to the principal's position of power and the fact that they have first access to information from education authorities.

According to Oosthuizen (1997:39), better decision-making can take place in schools, if the collective efforts of the principal and SGB members are sustained. It is therefore essential that effective structures for collaboration be implemented in schools.

#### 4.3.1.3 Co-ordination and delegation

Effective structures for collaboration will ensure that collaborative activities are well co-ordinated. Moreover, principals will value and respect contributions made by members of the SGB. This will encourage principals to delegate and share responsibilities.

Parent Governor A commented:

*“Eh.... The principal plays a pivotal role in implementing effective structures for collaboration. If the principal is able to share financial responsibilities and co-ordinate collaborative activities then it can be assured that a collaborative relationship will exist between the principal and SGB.”*

The researcher's observational notes clearly indicate that principals tend to delegate mostly administrative duties. The principal enforces their ideas and rules on what they expect. Thus, the expertise and skills of parent governors are not recognised.



### 4.3.2 Collaborative cultures

It is evident from the response of the interviewees that the existence of a collaborative culture in a school is essential in ensuring that principals and parent governors manage their financial resources effectively. In light of this, four categories were distinguished: collaboration, shared responsibility and equality, collegiality and teamwork.

#### 4.3.2.1 Collaboration

There was a common understanding among participants that principals and parent governors need to work together in order to ensure that the school's financial resources are managed effectively. They stressed the importance of collaboration in ensuring accountability and transparency.

Principal B stated the following:

*“Collaboration is good, as it strengthens the oversight role of the parents. It also ensures accountability and transparency by the principal and SGB. But, if not properly and carefully managed it can result in tardiness as a result of differences on key areas such as effective management of financial resources.”*

He further stated that: *“Collaboration requires skill and practice.”*

Principal C also emphasised the importance of collaboration between the principal and parent SGB member. She explains that:

*“The two cannot function without each other. Mutual support and trust must be earned in order to secure a functional working relationship. At my school we are fortunate the relationship is not that bad, however, I have heard that this is not the case in some schools, hence the school is unable to function properly. One of my colleagues who is a principal at a school in Hillbrow says that she has regular heated arguments with the chairperson of her SGB over finances.*

*She said that we were much better off before the SGBs started taking over the governance of schools, at least we could afford to buy textbooks then.”*

Most of the SGB participants differed from the principals regarding the issue of collaboration. They felt that there is a lack of collaboration between the principal and parent governors. They indicated that, on many occasions, parent governors were excluded from financial responsibilities. They further claimed that principals are not willing to share their power and this made them very suspicious.

Parent governor C remarked:

*“We are often kept in the dark when it comes to major financial decisions. Our ideas and suggestions are most of the time pushed aside. I am concerned as to what is happening with the monies generated from the school fees. The school always claims to be in financial difficulties, yet 80 per cent of school fees are coming in.”*

Other SGB views were emphasised in such comments as: *“The principal excludes us from certain financial decisions”, “Teamwork is not encouraged at the school”, “there is no open communication” and “our expertise are undermined.”*

The impression the researcher got from the views quoted above is that, although some principals claim to have a collaborative working relationship with parent governors, this is not always the case. The researcher believes that parent governors tend to hide their true feelings for fear that it may result in conflict. The researcher’s observational notes provided sufficient evidence that contrived collaboration is rife in schools. For example, in School B, when asked by the principal in a SGB meeting: ‘I think we should fix the pump for the pool. Getting a new pump would be too expensive. How do you feel?’ SGB members agreed with the principal because this is what they thought the principal wanted to hear. Thus, SGB members collaborated in an artificial

manner because their feeling of dissonance forced them to agree with the principal's decision.

Further, the researcher's observational notes have sufficient evidence to show that conflict and disagreements do occur and that they are not always settled in an amicable and professional manner.

Although personal reasons varied for engaging in collaboration, participants in this study mostly agreed that it is important for the principal and SGB members to collaborate on a voluntary basis. In contrast Parent Governor C in the study claimed that the principal forced collaboration on them. This resulted in feelings of anger, frustration and disappointment:

Her feelings were expressed when she stated: *"While, I fully agree with working together, sharing ideas, expertise and responsibilities, collaboration must be voluntary. I do not like to be forced into participating in collaborative activities or attend SGB workshops especially, if they are planned at inconvenient times. This breaks down the trust and respect for each other."*

Mestry (2006:33) also found in his research that there is a lack of collaboration between principals and parent governors. A principal in his study remarked that *"parents have no understanding of schools. They interfere in the school's affairs."* When analysing the SASA, it is clear that the principal must support the SGB in all its efforts to govern the school and, at the same time, the SGB must support the principal in achieving the ultimate objective, to educate the learners (Mestry, 2006:33). This indicates that the SASA encourages collaboration.

#### **4.3.2.2 Shared responsibility and equality**

Participants in the study felt that equality and shared responsibility were identified as important components of a collaborative process. Parent Governor C expressed her frustration when she explained that:

*“A collaborative relationship cannot be achieved if a person’s skill and knowledge is undermined in the belief that they have no educational background. Everyone should be treated equally; everyone’s knowledge, skills and expertise should be recognised.”*

From the investigation it is apparent that most participants concurred that responsibilities should be shared. This creates a collaborative work ethic. Within this context, Principal A expressed the following regarding shared responsibility:

*“I cannot run the school on my own. I rely on the SGB for support and sharing responsibilities in order to ensure the effective and smooth running of the school.”*

The researcher’s observational entries provided sufficient proof that responsibilities regarding finances were not equally shared. There were several entries made in School C where, despite the parent governor being an accountant, the principal saw to most of the financial matters. Further, an analysis of SGB meetings indicated that parent governors were often absent in these scheduled meetings.

#### **4.3.2.3 Collegiality**

According to Sergiovanni and Starratt (1998:109), collegiality speaks not only about the degree of trust, openness and good feelings, but also to the kind of norm system that binds everyone as a collective unit. Most participants felt that there was a lack of collegial relationships in the school. Parent Governor C remarked that:

*“Problems and difficulties that the school may be experiencing are not discussed with us. There is ‘no working together’ ethos. I feel that I am deliberately kept uninformed about matters of the school, especially those related to finance.”* A similar view was made by a parent in a study conducted by Mestry (2006:33) when they remarked that:

*“Principals are frightened that if we....get involved in school matters they would lose all power. They deliberately keep us uninformed about the funds of the school.”*

An analysis of some of the school documents such as the financial and school policy documents shows clearly the steps principals and SGB members should follow in carrying out certain financial tasks such as drawing up the school budget. This clearly indicates that collegial relationships do exist. However, the researcher’s observational notes indicate that this is not the case in practice.

In South Africa, the legal requirement to consult with the SGB about the school budget may be regarded as a form of collegiality. Anderson and Lumby (2005:34) state that parent’s views should be seen as significant in determining how the schools financial resources are managed.

#### **4.3.2.4 Teamwork**



All stakeholders in a school should work together as a team in order to achieve the common goal of the school. Bell (1992) in Blanford (1997:45) defines teamwork as a group of people working together on the basis of a shared perception, a common purpose, commitment, co-operation and resolving disagreements openly by discussion. What emerges from the interviews is that teamwork plays a major role in the effective management of financial resources.

Principal C expressed their concern that: *“parent SGB members are reluctant to work as a team. They always want to be in control. We rarely come to a compromise over financial matters. Our meetings always end up in conflict.”*

Principal D, on the other hand, explained that: *“Parent SGB members at my school are reluctant to work as a team mainly due to their lack of knowledge and skills in financial matters. Some of them can hardly speak English well. I*

*think they feel embarrassed and that they may be seen as ‘fools’. They rely on the principal to make all the decisions.”*

However Parent Governor A claimed that:

*“Teamwork involves listening and responding to ideas and views expressed by others. We are fortunate to have a wonderful working relationship with the SMT. We often work as a team. We also have an excellent principal who is very supportive and understanding.”*

What can be concluded from these quotes is that parents in more influential communities tend to support teamwork, while parents in deprived communities are not actively involved in school matters. Further, it is evident that the principal as leader is in the position to provide opportunities for collaborative teamwork. From the researcher’s observational notes, entries indicate that principals and parent governors do not work as a team. Evidence indicates that the reasons for not working as a team include, reluctance, time constraints, a lack of trust and the inability of the principal, as leader, to initiate opportunities that allow for teamwork.

### **4.3.3 Cordial relationships**

Participants mentioned that relationships that involve trust and mutual understanding are key factors for them to collaborate. Participants in the study felt that collaboration emanates from relationships and those kinds of relationships must be built.

As Principal A states: *“You can’t just expect collaboration to happen. You have to first build a relationship based on trust and understanding.”*

Participants emphasised the importance of knowing people well to develop trust and respect that is the benchmark of collaborative relationships.

Principal B points out that: *“It doesn’t help when the chairperson of the SGB decides to leave in the middle of the year.”* Principal C added: *‘just when you eventually develop a good working relationship with the chairperson of the SGB, their term of office expires.’*

Principal A, commenting on a break down in the relationship between the principal and SGB, stated that:

*“The GDE always gives short notices for SGB workshops. This places me in a difficult situation of having to inform SGB members. Most of the time I get resistance and frustrations from SGB members. What’s worse is that SGB members don’t realise that these are inconsiderate demands from the GDE. They are under the impression that I am enforcing attendance to such workshops. This creates enormous, unnecessary tension between SGB members and myself. What makes me sad is that these workshops could prove to be extremely beneficial had it been well planned.”*

An entry in the researcher’s observational notes shows that the crux of collaboration was cordial relationships. The fact that the principal and SGB members maintain cordial relationships indicate that they are engaged in collaborative efforts.

#### **4.3.4 Effective Communication**

Communication is referred to as the way in which the various subsystems of the school links up with one another (Davidoff & Lazarus, 2002:109). In this study, the focus group interviews conducted revealed that the lack of effective communication was one of the major reasons for the poor relationship between the principal and SGB.

##### **4.3.4.1 Lack of communication resources**

The lack of communication can be attributed to inappropriate or insufficient communication resources. Bisschoff (1997:104) asserts that communication

needs to be used to create financial structures, delegate, co-ordinate, establish relationships, motivate staff, and exercise control.

Parent Governor C expressed their frustration when they stated that:

*“The principal should not have the final say. The SGB is not often made aware of how the finances are managed at the school. We always seem to be the last ones to find out about any school related matters. Sometimes the school claims that they sent me a SMS, which I never receive. This happened to me on many occasions.”*

On the same note, Principal C said that:

*“It is often very difficult to get hold of the chairperson of the SGB. He never answers his phone and he does not have access to email. This places an enormous stress on the SMT as we rely on him to sign our cheques. As a result we fall behind on deadlines, we miss out on promotional or discounted educational items, salaries are not paid on time and eventually conflicts arise. At the end of the day, it is our learners that face the consequences.”*

What emerged from the responses with regard to communication was that there is a significant lack of appropriate and essential communication resources. The researcher’s observational notes indicate that there is very little effort on the part of the principal to ensure that financial matters are regularly communicated to parent governors. On two occasions it was observed in School C that the principal tried to contact the chairperson of the SGB but with no success. However, the principal did not make any further attempts to contact the chairperson, either by email or through their child.

Mulibana (2005:62) found in her research that there are open channels of communication in schools where co-operative governance is practised. Further, decisions taken are distributed to all relevant stakeholders.



### 4.3.5 Knowledge of roles and functions of SGBs

In this study, the interview transcripts revealed that lack of knowledge and skills deficit in relation to finances among parent governors weaken the effective management of financial resources.

#### 4.3.5.1 Lack of financial skills and knowledge

Participants in this study expressed the need for financial skills training, induction workshops, and publicity in the media on SGB responsibilities.

Within this context, Principal C asserted the following:

*“There are usually disagreements over expenditure. The SGB lacks knowledge and skills on budgeting. The SMT and SGB often disagree on what’s “priority” in terms of educational resource expenses. I think parent SGB members feel as if they ‘own’ the schools money and they should be free to spend it on what they feel are necessary for the school.”*

Principal B commented that: *“parents SGB members lack confidence in financial management due to their lack of financial skills.”*

A similar view is held by Vandeyar (2000) cited in Calitz et al. (2002:103). She states that parents have little or no business acumen. Pilane (1994:4) also pointed out that SGBs do not have the required capacity to manage the school’s finances. An analysis of the staff meetings indicated that within a space of six months, there has only been one SGB training programme of which only one educator representative attended. Furthermore, Van Wyk (2001:24) states that it is clear that the competence of the SGB is directly related to the amount of training they receive.

With regards to SGB training, most participants mentioned that training provided by the DoE is insufficient. The following comments were made regarding SGB training:

“Training provided by the DoE should be relevant and should relate to matters concerning school governance.”, “Training officials should be well prepared and should have a thorough knowledge in school financial matters.”, “There should be follow-up training programmes and not just once of seminars.”

Furthermore, SASA (South Africa, 1996b) states that it is the responsibility of the DoE to provide training to SGBs on all matters, including financial matters of the school.

From an analysis of the respondents’ answers to the questions posed to them, it becomes evident that parent governors lack the necessary financial skills and knowledge to effectively manage finances. Similar evidence was found in a research conducted by Van Wyk (2007:135). One teacher in her research explained: “SGB members lack confidence and are not sure about their duties. This is often because of low levels of literacy and lack of training.” Furthermore, 47 percent of teachers and principals interviewed by the Ministerial Review Committee (Department of Education, 2004:91) felt that skills deficit among SGB members weaken the effective functioning of the SGB. It is further evident that wealthier and more influential schools often have parent governors who are highly skilled professionals with some financial background. However, in more deprived communities, principals tend to have reservations about the parent SGB members’ competence to manage the school’s financial resources.

An analysis of one principal’s view on parent governors, the researcher found that some principals do not undermine the capabilities of parent governors or their lack of skill and knowledge of finances. This principal responded to a remark made by another principal at a principals’ meeting.

The remark by one of the principals stated “*Unemployed or uneducated parents will be of no value to my school. Lets face it, what can a domestic worker do for my school.*”

In response, another principal said that: *“My perspective is quite different, unemployed or uneducated does not equal unwise or inexperienced.”*

#### **4.3.5.2 Overlap of roles**

Principals interviewed felt that parent governors did not fully understand the SASA and the powers and responsibilities it afforded to school governors.

Principal B, in this regard commented:

*“Although, the idea of assigning the governance of schools to the SGB was done to minimise the responsibilities of the principal, this is not always the case. SGB members are reluctant to carry out their roles and functions as prescribed by the SASA. Many parents at this school do not comprehend their responsibilities as SGB members, and most of the time they tend to infringe on the principals domain, which is the professional management of the school. Further, parent SGB members lack the necessary skills and knowledge for them to participate effectively in the management of the school’s financial resources.”*

Principal D expressed his concern that the *“Majority of our parents do not understand English and therefore fail to execute the tasks delegated to them.”*

Principals interviewed for this study also revealed that the role of the SGB is not fully understood and that some members tend to infringe on the professional management of the school.

Principal C explained: *“Parent SGB members do not know where their boundaries in relation to their powers lie. They sometimes want to take over the professional management of the school.”*

It is evident from the above responses that there seems to be confusion among parent governors in terms of their role in the governance of the school. While some principals saw the participation of parents in managing financial

matters as beneficial, they were at the same time concerned that parents may overstep their boundaries.

In response to the question: have you experienced any problems/obstacles in working together with the SGB in managing the financial resources at your school? Principal B commented as follows:

*“It is quite frustrating when parent SGB members don’t know what their roles are in relation to the governance of the school. They also have to be constantly reminded about related policies. So, I believe that if parent SGB members lack the essential knowledge on what is expected of them in terms of financial matters, how can collaboration take place?”*

In a recent study of the function of SGBs in managing finances, Mestry (2006:31) argued that there is a common misconception amongst various stakeholders regarding the function of SGBs in managing school funds. Furthermore, Van Wyk (2007:134) found in her research that the role of the SGB is often not clearly understood and that some members tend to get involved in the management of the school. One principal in her research explained: “Some SGB members do not where their powers start and end. They confuse school governance with school management. They sometimes want to take over the professional leadership of the principal.”

In accordance with the stipulation of the SASA that the overall governance of the school rests with the SGB, the SGB is accountable to the parents for the efficient and effective management of school funds. They however, may delegate certain financial functions to the principal who is accountable to the SGB.

In order for the SGB and principals to carry out their functions in realisation of the aim of ensuring effective and efficient education, successful relationships between them must be built. Joubert and Bray (2007:67) argue that the basic requirements for a good, collaborative relationship between the SGB and principal, is that they need to know each other better and build trust to

understand each other's ways of functioning and to acquire better skills to work together efficiently and in the best interests of the school.

In response to the question: 'What are the role and functions of the SGB at your school?' The principal from School A said that parent SGB members are fully involved in school matters, while the principal in School D (a rural school) argued that SGB members show "no interest" in the school.

#### **4.4 SUMMARY**

This chapter dealt with the data analysis process and the interpretation of the interviews undertaken with principals and SGB members. The aim was to investigate the importance of a collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB in effectively managing a school's financial resources. The following themes extracted from the research were discussed: effective structures for collaboration, collaborative cultures, relationships, communication and SGB knowledge of their roles and functions. A literature control was also undertaken in order to contextualise the findings of the study with the literature review.

Chapter five will focus on the summary of the study, limitations and conclusion of the research study. Guidelines to assist principals and SGB members to develop a collaborative relationship for them to effectively manage their school's financial resources will also be presented and recommendations for further research study will also be suggested.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSION

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#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The conceptual framework of the study is based on the assumption that collaboration between the principal and SGB is pivotal in the effective management of financial resources. In chapter four, the researcher undertook a data analysis and interpreted the research results. A literature control was also undertaken.

In this chapter, a brief summary of the research project as well as the research design and method used, is presented. The chapter focuses on the findings obtained from the interviews, observations and document analysis with regard to the collaborative relationship of the principal and SGB in the management of financial resources in public schools. The results of the data analysis are summarised, guidelines are offered for principals and SGBs to develop a collaborative relationship and recommendations for future research are also made.

A summary of the study will follow.

#### 5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

##### 5.2.1 Background, problem and aim of the study

Chapter one gave the background and rationale of the research. It stated the research problem, the aims of the research, and the conceptual framework of the study. The research focuses on the relationship between the principal and SGB and its impact on the effective management of financial resources in public schools. The purpose of this study was to explore the importance of a

collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB in the management of financial resources. Furthermore, the study highlights the barriers that prevent collaboration among stakeholders, especially those between the principal and SGB. Chapter Two focused on the nature and essence of collaboration, with specific reference to the relationship between the principal and SGB in the management of financial resources. The success of the SGB and the principal performing their functions relating to the management of financial resources, for example, depends on the principal and SGB working in a collaborative relationship. Thus, various aspects that contribute to a collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB were discussed. The collegial model, structural model and Giddens structuration theory were explored to provide a context for the study.

Following the literature review, Chapter Three dealt with the rationale for the choice of the qualitative research method. Sampling procedures, data collection techniques and data analysis were outlined and discussed in detail. The researcher also dealt with ethical issues, and lastly, the limitations experienced were discussed.

Chapter Four explored the analysis and interpretation of the data obtained from the interviews undertaken with principals, parent SGB members and school bursars. The comparative method was employed to analyse the participant's responses as well as the observed interactions. The aim was to investigate the importance of a collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB in effectively managing a school's financial resources. The following themes extracted from the research were discussed: effective structures for collaboration, collaborative cultures, relationships, communication as well as SGB knowledge of its roles and functions.

The findings and the interpretation of the data collected from the literature review, interviews, observations and document analysis were outlined and summarised in chapter five. The interpretations were done in accordance with the aims of the research study stated in Chapter One.

The subsequent section presents the findings in accordance with the stated aims of the study in order to indicate how each of the research was achieved.

### 5.3 FINDINGS

In light of the literature review, observations, document analysis and interviews, the following findings were made. These findings were interpreted in accordance with the aims of the research study.

The following aims were identified:

- The roles and functions of principals and SGBs in light of new legislation;
- The nature and essence of collaboration; and
- Guidelines that could assist principals and SGB members to develop a collaborative relationship in order to effectively manage their school's financial resources.

#### 5.3.1 Findings on the role and functions of principals and SGBs in the light of new legislation.

The first aim is concerned with the roles and functions of the principal and SGB. A number of factors with regard to these roles and functions that contribute to a lack of collaboration between the principal and SGB were identified. The key factors that emanated from the literature review and interviews were that SGB members were unclear about their roles and functions, the SGB's lack of financial skills and knowledge, the contradictions on the roles and functions of the principal and SGB as stipulated in the SASA, the power relations between the principal and SGB and the issue of responsibility and accountability. Another important finding regarding the principal's role was that principals, being *ex-officio* member of the SGB may not chair SGB meetings. However, minutes of SGB meetings revealed that principal were chairing SGB meetings and they played a dominant role in decision-making.



During the interviews with the principals, it became apparent that parent SGB members did not clearly understand their roles and often got involved in the professional management of the school. Principals also claimed that there was a knowledge and skills deficit among SGB members which created tensions in their relationship. Another important finding in this study was that the SGB's participation and execution of their roles and functions remains unequal in schools. The researcher is of the opinion that an important reason for the lack of collaboration between the principal and SGB was found in the perception amongst principals that SGB members do not have any educational background and, therefore, lacked necessary skills and knowledge.

### **5.3.2 Findings related to the nature and essence of collaboration**

The second aim intended to identify the various aspects of collaboration that impact on enhancing a collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB in the management of financial resources. The aspects that were identified in ensuring a collaborative relation between the principal and SGB were: establishing effective structures for collaboration; engaging in collaborative decision making; ensuring effective communication; ensuring shared responsibility and teamwork; maintaining trust and mutual understanding; and the development of the principal as an effective leader of collaboration.

Across the five schools studied, views on collaboration revealed that participation by parents in financial matters is limited to certain issues determined by the principal. During the researcher's observations, it became clear that parent SGB members did not supervise financial initiatives nor were they involved in broad decision-making. Another major finding in this study was that the mutual mistrust between the principal and SGB was one of the important factors that led to a lack of collaboration between the principal and SGB. Further, from an analysis of the literature on collaboration, there is a need for principals to be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge regarding collaborative methods.

The findings of this research have been used as a basis for the guidelines suggested in the next section.

#### **5.4 GUIDELINES TO IMPROVE COLLABORATION**

The main purpose of this research study was to investigate the importance of collaboration between principals and SGBs in the management of financial resources. The findings of this study have allowed the researcher to propose the following guidelines to improve the collaborative relationship between principals and SGBs which will ultimately have an implication on the efficiency of schools.

The guidelines are not necessarily presented in any particular order of preference.

##### **Guideline One**

SGBs who are involved with school governance at school level should be trained on the content and conditions of the SASA so that they can understand what their respective roles and functions entail. Although SGB members are not compelled to attend SGB training sessions, it should be the onus should be on the principal to encourage SGB members to attend these training opportunities. Further, the DoE needs to be well planned in ensuring that training is professional, meaningful and at the same time convenient for SGB members to attend. The DoE must come up with media programs that address the various roles of the SGB in school governance.

##### **Guideline Two**

It is important for principals, in their actions and decisions, not to be seen as infringing on the rights and powers of the SGB as this can lead to SGBs becoming less involved and less committed to collaboration. This will, in turn, impact negatively on the effective management of financial resources. It is, therefore, important for principals to develop an in-depth understanding of their roles and functions.

### **Guideline Three**

Principals should commit themselves to ensuring that collaborative communication channels and opportunities are continually monitored, revised and improved to avoid possible conflict situations. Therefore, information programs should be designed to provide SGB members with accurate and up to date information on all aspects related to financial matters.

### **Guideline Four**

The leadership role of the principal has changed. Principals are now expected to have the required knowledge and skills to ensure that an effective collaborative leadership emerges. Principals, therefore, need appropriate and ongoing training opportunities to assist them in enhancing collaborative processes. Financial management programmes and projects should also be planned effectively to compensate for any principal's lack of skills and knowledge.

### **Guideline Five**

Principals need to strive to inspire a culture of collaboration at their schools in order to empower SGB members, encourage teamwork and share responsibility. Further, every effort should be made to establish a sense of trust and mutual understanding between the principal and SGB. The principal must create a favourable climate that will encourage SGB members to work together and to share their skills and knowledge. This can be done by having team building exercises and by initiating activities that encourage collective efforts.

### **Guideline Six**

Schools need to establish an effective organisational structure where activities are planned and co-ordinated and where all stakeholders are represented and take co-responsibility for the effective and efficient management of financial resources. Participative decision-making, open communication and mutual accountability within the structure should be enhanced.

### **Guideline Seven**

The DoE needs to consider the contextual limitations that result in the poor participation of parent SGB members in collaborative activities. SGB members should be compensated for their transport costs, phone cost as well as any unforeseen expenses. The DoE, therefore, should ensure that enough money is set aside for SGB compensations.

## **5.5 RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH STUDY**

### **Recommendation One**

The involvement of parents as governors in public schools is relatively new. For many principals it is a new experience to share their roles in the management of financial resources. It is becoming more urgent that collaboration exists between the principal and SGB to assist their effort to effectively manage financial resources is essential. It is, therefore, recommended that further research be undertaken on the effectiveness of collaboration in the management of financial resources. Furthermore, research on the phenomenon must be more broadly based with special emphasis on the experiences and perceptions of principals and SGBs in township schools.

## **5.6 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter, the results of the analysed data were discussed, within the framework of existing theory, as presented in chapter two. Based on the themes that emerged, possible guidelines necessary to assist principals and SGB members to develop a collaborative relationship were made. Possible recommendations for further research were also suggested.

The research aimed to examine the collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB and its impact on the effective management of financial

resources in public schools. In order to achieve this, the specific objectives were to determine the roles and functions of the principal and SGB in light of new legislation, identify the nature and essence of collaboration, and to provide guidelines for principals and SGBs to develop a collaborative relationship in order to effectively manage their school's financial resources.

Clearly, financial constraints can constitute one of the most significant, inhibitory factors in the creation of good, quality education in schools. Schools, therefore, need to ensure that financial resources are effectively managed so that quality education is sustained. Thus, as schools in South Africa are increasingly functioning as Section 21 schools, there is a stronger emphasis on financial management. However, if collaboration between the principal and SGB is not enhanced, this could ultimately affect the management of financial resources negatively. This places a heavy burden on principals, as they now need to cultivate genuine processes of collaboration in order to empower SGB members in the collaborative management of financial resources. It is the researcher's observation that principals as collaborative leaders are in a good position to develop collaborative structures that promote trust, co-operation, delegation, teamwork, effective communication, and collaborative decision-making.

This study has accentuated the crucial need to initiate a collaborative relationship between the principal and SGB in the effective management of financial resources. Without this sense of collaboration, mutual trust, open-communication and co-operation prevailing, the government's intention to transform education and redress past education inequalities may prove futile.

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