



Indonesian Educational Research Journal

Journal homepage: <https://journal.id-sre.org/index.php/ierj/index>



Discovering School principals' Servant Leadership Practices in Serving Teachers

Jeremiah Khoarane

Teaching Service Department, Ministry of Education, Lesotho

*khoarane@yahoo.com

<i>Received</i>	<i>Revised</i>	<i>Accepted</i>	<i>Published</i>
October 15, 2023	December 06, 2023	December 19, 2023	December 23, 2023

:

Abstract

There is an interesting issue that concerns leadership in 21 century that is faced with 4th industrial revolution on leadership. This paper aimed to discover school principals' practices of servant leadership in serving teachers. The study engaged servant leadership and Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as theoretical frameworks. Servant leadership was used to interpret the practices of the school principals, while CHAT was used to identify and explain the findings in terms of culture and context. Two schools were chosen; both owned by the public and found in the rural area of Maseru. This paper is located within interpretive paradigm and adopts qualitative approach. The study engaged focus groups, interviews and observation as a means of generating data. There were two focus groups, one from each school. There were 8 members in each focus group. The interview was done with school principals of the two schools in Lesotho. The findings revealed that school principals practised servant leadership. One core business of servant leadership is to serve. Teachers were served by reducing conflicts, facilitating the decentralisation at school, promoting information sharing in schools; augmenting teacher commitment boosting job satisfaction and retention of teachers, creating a pleasant working climate and developing teamwork.

Keywords: Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), Leadership, School Principal, Teachers, Servant Leadership

* Corresponding author, email: khoarane@yahoo.com

How to cite: Khoarane, J. (Year). Discovering School principals' Servant Leadership Practices in Serving Teachers. *Indonesian Educational Research Journal*, 1(2), 76-96.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to discover school principals' servant leadership practices. The literature about the concept of servant leadership spans studies across the globe, and these include countries such as Turkey, United States of America (USA), Canada and Germany (Gul, 2017:112; Salgam, 2017:110; Noland & Richards, 2015:21, Crippen, 2015:215, Paul & Fitzpatrick, 2015:33; Gungor, 2016:1815; Fitzgerald, 2015:76).

The essence of servant leadership is serving and leading (Spears, 2004). This study found that the principals of the participating schools served and led teachers in various ways, including the promotion of peace and stability among the teachers. In doing so, the principals persuaded, motivated and inspired the teachers to maintain peace and good working relationships. In a study that explored leadership practices regarding turning around a low-performing school in Lesotho, Makhasane and Khanare (2018) found that one of the leadership practices that the principal adopted was creating a peaceful school environment.

In the USA, a study conducted by Hammond (2018:27) found that teachers were empowered through emotional healing, organisational stewardship, and self-empowerment by the school principal. In the same country, it was found that teachers were empowered through humility, intensive job satisfaction, effectiveness and efficiency, as well as stewardship (Fischer & Jong, 2017:77).

The study conducted in Iran showed that school principal empowered teachers by being their role models, exemplar, motivator, respecting their rights, maximising staff capacity, supporting their interests, and making decisions together (Ghalavi & Nastiezaie, 2020:254-255). In one study conducted in Canada, teachers were empowered through collaboration, promotion of professional learning, and development programmes (Crippen & Willows, 2019:176).

The school principal is responsible for boosting the morale of teachers and learners in his/her school (Cerit, 2009:601; Standen, 2007:11). In Arizona, the morale of teachers increased when school principals concentrated on individual needs of teachers, enhanced self-confidence of teachers, and advanced a sense of ownership among them. This was achieved by engaging attributes of servant leadership like listening, support, patience and praise (EL-Amin, 2013:57).

However, literature on servant leadership at school level is an emerging phenomenon and focus. Hence, this study conceptualised and explored servant leadership from a school context, with the purpose of eliciting insights about possibilities of better performance from all role-players. It is clear from the above discussion that the studies conducted were not of the principals' servant leadership practices. My study focused on school principals' practices of servant leadership, specifically on how school principals, through this approach to leadership, served different school stakeholders.

Contextually, the study has contributed to the context of Lesotho. As indicated in earlier, there is no study that was conducted in Lesotho about school principals' practices of servant leadership. This study contributes to the knowledge contextually, because those practices were not done in the context of Lesotho. Methodologically, the study has contributed by having different school stakeholders such as teachers and school principals heard about servant leadership practices of school principals.

Previous studies about servant leadership in schools have not employed a combination of servant leadership and CHAT theories as a theoretical framework. Thus, by combining the two theories, this study provides a unique contribution to the body of knowledge about servant leadership practices in schools. A blend of these two theories provided a useful theoretical lens for articulating the thesis of the current study. The study used two theories, servant leadership and CHAT (culture, history, activity and theory). The two theories were used as to guide the study and interpret the findings.

In some schools, there is poor service delivery, authoritarian leadership, and incompetent leadership, poor coordination of school activities, low team spirit, and lack of delegation of duties. Bossy leadership portrayed by school principals repels teachers, learners and other school stakeholders, and harms relationships in the schools (Morenammele, 2020:101). To curb the challenges faced by school principals, servant leadership is a tool that could be used for caring for

others and fostering required behaviour (Sigh & Ryah, 2021:59), empowerment (Lawyer, 2021:108) and serving others (Brohi, Khahro, Jamali, Shah & Hassain, 2021:5344).

The paper draws from a study the conducted in two Lesotho High Schools from 2019 to 2022. Out of that study, this paper seeks to address two critical questions as follows: (1) what are the school principals' practices of Servant leadership in the selected schools? (2) How do the principals in the selected schools serve teachers?

The theoretical frame work adopted in this paper consists of theories namely: Servant leadership (SL) and Cultural Historical Activity Theory CHAT. Servant leadership is used as guide in interpreting the leadership practices of the school principal and how the school principal serves the teachers as a leader. CHAT is used in interpreting the leadership practices in the cultural and historical context of the schools and the country. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:74) observe that the results obtained through the engagement of theoretical framework are interpreted in light of the theoretical framework engaged.

Servant leadership is a philosophy and a set of practices aimed at enriching the lives of individuals by creating a more caring work environment, and building a better organisational structure. It is debilitating for those who are feeling trapped and helpless concerning their ability to help others. Thus, the servant leadership approach is an avenue where all altruistic individuals can contribute to building a better society. Principles of behaviour, acknowledgement of internal and external influences on ethical leadership, emphasis on integrity and astute decision-making, are pillars of effective servant leadership (Fitzgerald, 2015:76; Kiersch & Peters, 2017:153). In addition, it is a concept of leadership that recognises the interests of the employees over the leader's personal interests, as it prioritises serving the followers through special leadership style that makes an organisation harmonious (Gul, 2017:111).

CHAT is a theoretical framework that provides lens through which the understanding of human cognition is realised. This is particularly when examining dialectical relationships that exist among people in a community or society, tools they engage with, as well as goals set. These are influenced and fashioned by social culture, social structure and history of the given social (Trust, 2017:100). Stetsenk and Arieivitch (2004:476) explain that CHAT is an approach that allows the researcher to deal with individual and social dimensions in a non-dichotomising manner, and offers grounds for progress of conceptual development.

Both servant leadership and CHAT are concerned about working together for school or society common goal, and emphasise cooperation among the people (Crippen, 2010:33; Noland & Richards, 2015:17; Foot, 2014:331 and Trust, 2017:100). This shows that the school stakeholders have different roles to play for the school to accomplish its mission. They all complement each other for the fulfillment of the school mandate (Fitzgerald, 2015:76; Kiersch, 2017:153; Foot, 2014:331).

The servant leader tries by all means to build the community by emphasising the mutual relationship that exists in the community or society. People rely on one another for proper learning to take place (Crippen, 2010:33). Noland and Richards (2015:17) posit that the school principal is to be acquainted with the notion that the community is independent, and that teachers and learners work hand in glove to benefit the under-privileged community. The school as a community should develop engaged stakeholders and emphasise the mutual relationship that exists among the school stakeholders. One person needs others. People are empowered with different skills that benefit others if used well.

2. METHODS

This paper adopted the qualitative research approach to explore school principals' practices of servant leadership in two Lesotho high schools. The qualitative research approach is explained by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:23) as the gathering of data was done naturally. The generated data is in the form of words (descriptive). The study also used case study design. The school principals' practices of servant leadership were discovered as in serving teachers in their respective schools. Case study uses multiple data sources found in social settings to explain the phenomenon (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:24). The multiple sources of that that was used in this study were focus groups interviews and observations.

The rationale was based on the characteristics of the qualitative research approach. Nieuwenhuis (2007:54) says that qualitative approach places more focus on social construction of people, concepts and ideas. This approach focuses on why and how people interact with each other together with their motive and relationship. This study foregrounds the fact that school principals interact with teachers in practising servant leadership.

A sample is the set of individuals or participants from whom the data is going to be generated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:29). It can be selected from the large group of participants identified as the population. I employed purposeful sampling; where McMillan and Schumacher (2010:138) state that the researcher selects particular participants from the population who are informative of the topic under scrutiny. This is based on the researcher's knowledge of the population and who would provide the best information to address the purpose of the research. Sampling is also important for choosing the site and participants. The population for this study was of two schools and is located in the same centre in Maseru district, in Lesotho. There were two school principals that were interviewed while there were eight teachers in a focus group.

Meyrick (2006:7) asserts that good qualitative research needs to contain sufficient content concerning how data will be produced, with much description of the context. This allows transparency to assist readers to make informed decisions. The study employed different methods to generate data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:24) as is permissible within case study methodology. Multiple techniques yielded different insights concerning the topic, which increased the credibility of the findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:331). I used focus group interviews, individual interviews and observations as data generation techniques to ensure triangulation and reviewing of information holistically and comprehensively (Nur, 2018:166).

Data analysis is described as a systematic, dilated examination of relevant contexts of a certain body of materials with the purpose of classifying themes, patterns and biases. (Kambule & Amsterdam, 2018:4). The generated data was summarised at the end of each day after being generated. It was then classified into themes that emerged during discussions. The themes that were classified are reducing conflicts at school, decentralization and devolution of power, promoting information sharing, boosting job satisfaction and retention, creating pleasant working climate and developing team works in their schools. The patterns and biases were also considered, while analysing information.

In qualitative research, the researcher is required to ensure trustworthiness of the study. In qualitative research, trustworthiness and credibility is achieved and tested through the engagement of multiple methods of data collection (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:102,331). In this study, I used interviews, observations, and focus groups. This was done to assure the trustworthiness and credibility of the data produced. The three instruments that I engaged complemented one another to strengthen the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

Donnelly, Dollat and Fitzmaurine (2013:110) state that, when involving people in conducting research, ethical consideration is of prime importance (Cua & Theivananthampillia, 2009:7). When

conducting research, the researcher has to adhere to the ethics pertaining to the research (Mack, Kathleen, Macqueen, Guest & Namely, 2005:9). Ethics are the agreed-upon standards that ensure that the researchers have explicitly considered the needs and the consensus of people who are engaged in the study on the basis of trust. The researcher must have the participants' well-being in mind.

I explained to participants about the procedures that were to be followed when conducting the research. I asked them to sign consent forms and they were to remain anonymous. I explained to them that they were at liberty to withdraw at any time they feel like, and being involved in the study was free and voluntary. I asked permission to conduct the study from the Lesotho Ministry of Education and Training and also from the school principals of the participants' schools to conduct research at their schools. I also applied for ethical clearance from the university (UFS).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section is organised according to the themes that emerged from the data. The school principal of Nku high school is denoted as Mr Sefako while that one of Poli high school is denoted as Mrs Lehloa. The focus group of Nku high school is denoted as Mosi while that one of Poli is denoted as Semoko.

Serving the teachers by reducing conflicts

Serving the teachers by reducing conflict is the first of seven dimensions that characterised principals' servant leadership behaviours as they served the teachers. The workplace is bound to have conflict prevail because of the human activities and their nature. The conflicts, at some point, make the environment not conducive for teaching and learning. The findings suggest that school principals worked hard to minimise those factors that may hinder effective teaching and learning. In interviewing the school principals, they did not mention that they reduced work conflicts, especially as one of leadership practices that they had to engage in. It was only explained by the teachers that the school principals assisted them by reducing conflicts in the schools. It is worth discussing it as the two focus groups emphasised it.

It was in the Semoko focus group discussion where it was discovered that the school principal, Mrs Lehloa worked day and night to reduce the conflicts at work. Members of the focus group expressed different views on this. Some explained that when the school principal addressed an issue and solved the conflict, she got to the root source of the problem, which assisted in the better understanding of the nature of the conflict. Others expressed the view that when Mrs Lehloa solved the conflict, she observed the non-verbal communication, which is mostly regarded as a contributing factor to conflicts in schools. Mrs Lehloa did not avoid the issues that could have caused conflict. She created an atmosphere that encouraged fewer conflicts at school.

The findings resonate with the views expressed in the literature from a study that was conducted in New Jersey, about the collaboration of school principals. Kasaun (2009:70, 73) explains that the school principal, through the engagement of servant leadership approach, developed a strategy to focus on doing what was best for the teachers, and putting more emphasis on the importance of creating a culture and climate that appealed to the development of a sense of collaboration and a relationship based on trust. Mrs Lehloa reduced the conflicts through engagement in non-verbal communication with teachers. The two studies were conducted in the school context but in different countries and different continents.

Mrs Lehloa played an active role in reducing conflicts at her school. Reducing conflicts signifies that she served others. Serving teachers is a principle of servant leadership approach in which the focus falls on others rather than on the leader him or herself. Serving others is a principle that

recognises the interests of teachers over the school principal's personal interests. It establishes a special leadership style that makes school more harmonious (Gul, 2017:111).

Mrs Lehloa served teachers by reducing conflicts. The focus group explained that avoiding the root cause of the conflicts created more conflicts. However, in the case of Mrs Lehloa, she dug into the root cause of the conflict and not avoided it. This made it easy for her to reduce the conflicts at her school. Moreover, Mrs Lehloa created an atmosphere in which all teachers could collaborate. This facilitated a reduction of conflicts as they all developed a clear understanding that they were to work together to solve their conflicts. This also helped teachers ease emotional stress that negatively affects effective curriculum delivery.

The findings demonstrated that some members of the focus group expressed the view that non-verbal communication was one of the sources of work conflicts. Non-verbal communication created misunderstanding among the teachers at school; as a result, conflicts arose. The findings were that Mrs Lehloa observed non-verbal communication and minimised work conflicts. Mrs Lehloa was aware that non-verbal communication was the source of conflicts and encouraged teachers to be aware of it as a source of conflicts.

My conversation with Mosi focus group revealed that the school principal, Mr Sefako reduced conflicts at school using a different approach. Some members of the focus group expressed the opinion that the principal recognised the impact of conflicts at work to the teachers. Others had the view that he listened and communicated in a positive way. This assisted him to focus on the present and encouraged teachers not to dwell on the past. His approach was that of searching for a common ground where those who had conflicts had a platform for problem solving. Listening to the teachers is one of the qualities of servant leadership. The school principal committed to listening deeply to get the voices of others as well as those that come within them (Fitzgerald, 2017:78). Crippen (2010:29) explains that listening involves getting the inner and outer voices of the educational leader; to be a good communicator. The school principal has to listen to him or herself and to others.

Some members of the focus group felt that a common ground was regarded as a way of finding where teachers in conflict could have a win-win situation. Listening with much focus on the future or the present situation established an environment through which the conflicts were minimised. A school principal, who practises servant leadership approach, tends to reduce the conflicts at school. Babalola, Stouten and Euwema (2016:12) explain that school principals are equipped with relevant skills that help them to handle conflicts professionally, and continuously regulate their behaviour in social context. The skills such as listening and consideration of individuals' ideas are useful in constructively handling the conflicts at school.

There is a similarity with the findings in the two schools. Poli and Nku High Schools seemed to have fewer conflicts as depicted in the focus groups. Since the arrival of the current school principals, work conflicts were reduced. Mrs Lehloa used non-verbal communication to reduce conflicts, while Mr Sefako engaged in effective listening for the reduction of conflicts. Servant leaders have listening skills, which help them to find the underlying cause of an issue. Both school principals capitalised on listening skills to reduce the conflicts.

The school principals of Nku and Poli High Schools, Mr Sefako and Mrs Lehloa reduced conflicts at their schools as they practised in servant leadership. This was achieved through facing the issue that may have caused the conflicts among the teachers. This created an atmosphere that invited all the teachers to work collaboratively. They explored all avenues that could result in an amicable resolution of the conflict. They further reduced conflicts by making sure that all the teachers had fair and equal treatment, as well as allowing them to be free to lodge a complaint if someone was not satisfied.

While the findings reflected that the participating school principals served teachers through the reduction of conflicts at school, things did not always go as smoothly as everybody would wish. Some teachers pointed to unhealthy relationships that sometimes existed and posed a challenge for the

school principals' efforts to minimise conflicts. For instance, it surfaced during the interviews with Mr Sefako that servant leadership practices were compromised by unhealthy relationships. Some teachers did not have good, civilised relationships. They tended to create an environment in which discipline of learners was a challenge, and sometimes led to strikes. Mr Sefako said:

When teachers do not relate well, this is passed to learners. Learners observe when teachers are not relating well and copy that behaviour. They (Learners) then lack discipline knowing that teachers will not act as team in disciplining them. Others will be on their side. There was one instance when teachers were telling learners to strike when a particular teacher had missed classes for some days. This was an influence from other teachers, of which were having unhealthy relationships with. They were influencing learners to act against the other teacher who was not in good books with them. This could not have happened if teachers were having healthy relationships. Unhealthy relationships affect learners' discipline. Lack of discipline in learners affects their performance and practices of servant leadership.

The strikes emanated from conflicts and disturbed the efforts of school principals in reducing conflicts. The school principals made extra effort to get into the causes of conflicts. If there were healthy relationships among teachers, school principals would spend less time and effort reducing conflicts in schools. Conflicts compromised school principals' practice of servant leadership in improving academic performance of learners, motivation of learners, and developing self efficacy. It is not easy to motivate learners who are ill-disciplined. It was also revealed during the conversations with Mrs Lehloa that unhealthy relationships at her school affected her attempts to reduce conflicts at her school. She said during the interview:

Teachers are not relating well in my school. I am working day in and day out to reduce conflicts, but this is of unhealthy relationship affects my efforts. It is becoming a problem that needs serious attention. When teachers are not relating well, learners' performance is affected. Teachers have cheap gossip about others. This stops them working towards one goal, which is teaching learners. Cheap gossip breaks the healthy relationships. They gossip about other teachers with learners. Learners then tend to underperform on the subjects that are taught by those who are gossiped.

The school principal needs more effort to motivate learners, develop self-efficacy, and improve academic performance of learners. It is also not easy to discipline them.

Serving the teachers by the decentralisation and devolution of power in schools

Serving the teachers by devolving power in schools is the second dimension. Decentralisation of structures and devolution of decision-making power is realised when the school principal's powers or responsibilities are delegated to teachers to make decisions on aspects that concern them and their departments. It was clear during the interview with Mr Sefako that decentralisation was one of the practices he used in executing his duties.

It is along the discussion in Mosi focus group one member declared this.

'One way that Mr Sefako demonstrated that he is serious about decentralisation, he allows us to take decisions at meetings'

Decentralisation is empowering the teachers to act or to make decisions at their level of operation without having to always wait for the decision from upper structures such as the principal's office. For instance, Mr Sefako allowed the teachers to make decisions at their departmental meetings, allocate

resources, and take responsibilities for their decisions. The decisions made at the department or in class by the teachers empowered them. The decisions made at departmental level brought a sense of ownership, and teachers took responsibility of the resources allocated to their department. It was during the interview with Mr Sefako that he claimed:

On my arrival in this school, there were old hierarchical structures that teachers were to follow. The school principal was the only person in the school to make decisions on policies, regulations, and guidelines to mention a few. I had to rethink of changing that attitude so as to decentralise the work.

It is evident from the above extract that when decentralising, the school principal, Mr Sefako had to change the way things were done and adopt a new strategy that would engage all teachers to take part in decision-making. That developed a sense of ownership. Decentralisation is the best platform that allows power to be exercised. In other words, decentralisation of structures may not be useful if not accompanied by devolution of power to make decisions at lower levels of the structure. That is why Mr Sefako began by dismantling the hierarchical structure. Martinez-Vazquez, Lago-Penas and Sacchi (2015:1) observe that decentralisation is a way of dealing with school activities in an organised manner. It creates learning and teaching opportunities for better performance, as well as stakeholders' welfare. Mr Sefako had to change the way the administration of the school was conducted. He had to rethink the structural arrangements and attitudes to allow decentralisation to take place. Servant leadership is applicable in different contexts and situations, and focuses on empowering others.

Barnett (2018:39) explains that decentralisation is a shift in the location of the decision-making and power to different authorities in dissimilar context. It is the re-distribution of power and functions from a central point to the local levels of a system. This is in line with my observation of different sub-committees that served different purposes at Nku and Poli High Schools. The sub-committees made decisions that concerned them. They were given powers to deal with issues. They did not have to consult school principals when making decisions. Mr Sefako allowed teachers to make decisions on their own. This is empowerment, a principle of servant leadership. Olesia, Namusonge and Iravo (2013:89) explain empowerment as an act of letting of the power of the school principal to teachers. Mr Sefako empowered teachers by making them feel valuable and significant; and by engaging in effective listening, placing more emphasis on teamwork and valuing love and equality.

Mr Sefako empowered teachers through decentralisation. The empowerment could be exercised through engaging teachers in decision-making and collaborative planning. It is explained in Mahember and Engelbricht (2014:2) that servant leadership manifests itself through development and empowerment of teachers through authenticity, interpersonal acceptance, stewardship, and humility. Empowered teachers have high self-confidence and a great sense of positive influence at the workplace. Mr Sefako was practicing servant leadership through decentralisation. This addresses the main research question about how the school principals' practised servant leadership. This also addresses the objective of the study on school principals' practice of servant leadership.

The school principal of Poli High School, Mrs Lehloa, also practised servant leadership through decentralisation. This was noted in the interview, where decentralisation was considered a key factor to be considered when empowering teachers. Mrs Lehloa allowed the teachers to take responsibility and ownership of their actions. This is empowerment. Decentralisation empowers those who are led. Mrs Lehloa let them to do what was best for them. Mrs Lehloa noted this during the interviews:

I fostered teamwork of experts in my school. I developed a team of those who are willing and able to go extra mile for the school activities and the people with passion of what they are doing. I work and strategise around the common goal for everyone.

Mrs Lehloa developed a team that was empowered to take decisions in their respective departments. The teachers became knowledgeable and gained experience and passion in what they were doing. Literature indicates the benefits of teamwork in developing centralisation. Helms (2017:69,71) explained that teachers recognise the importance of the school principal who does not distance herself/himself from the rest of the teachers and other school stakeholders, but integrate with teachers and the staff to form one team.

Findings revealed that Mrs Lehloa empowered teachers through decentralisation of structures such that lower levels within the structure could participate in making decision that affects them. Power to make decisions has to be devolved to lower levels, and that happens better when structures are decentralised. The decentralisation could be exercised through engaging teachers in decision making, budgeting and planning together.

The school principal devolved her powers to the teachers. The school principal empowers teachers when s/he develops their expertise to do things themselves, and devolves power to act independently. Decentralisation as practiced by the school principal responded to the main research question on how the school principal practised servant leadership. This also responds well to the objective of the study on school principals' practices of servant leadership in schools.

There is a resemblance of findings in the two schools. Both school principals enacted servant leadership through decentralisation and devolution of powers, but they did this slightly differently. Mr Sefako changed the old hierarchical structures. However, Mrs Lehloa fostered teamwork through the use of experts in her school to facilitate decentralisation. Literature has shown that decentralisation allows teachers to be at liberty to consider the local context, and address and embrace the diversity among the students they teach (Lavonen, 2017:22-23). This is in line with the findings of the current study. The school principals of Poli and Nku High School engaged teachers in making decisions at their department by engaging their local context and allowing diversity of ideas. Teachers who make decisions on their own tend to perform better and feel at home.

Literature reviewed earlier showed that decentralisation assists the school to work as an activity system. Foot (2014:330) refers to activity as entailing all what people do together at the community or society, and it is fashioned by cultural and historical situations. In the school, teachers and school principal are to work hand in hand to accomplish the school mandate.

The findings revealed that the two principals viewed decentralisation as a critical element of serving others. The school principal who is a servant leader allows teachers to take decisions. This acts as a tool for empowering them not to rely on the school principal to take the decisions on their behalf. The decentralisation allowed teachers to allocate resources where they are needed most. The resources were spread evenly to different individuals or departments. Teachers who make decision on their own tend to perform better and feel at home.

Literature has shown that the school principal empowers teachers to make their own decisions. This helps them accept the challenges they face and excel. The empowerment of teachers by the school principal helps them to realise their full potential. This is done by modelling and teaching. Allowing teachers to make their own decisions is empowering (Finley, 2012:136; Taylor, Martin, Hutchinson & Jinks, 2007:404).

The findings from the interviews were in line with my observation. When I interacted with the teachers and the school principals at Nku and Poli high schools, I observed that the schools had different committees and sub-committees assigned different duties. Those committees and sub-committees worked together in accomplishing the mission and the vision of the schools. The working together of the teachers and the school principals on a given task or shared goal signified decentralisation. This was beneficial to teachers' collegiality, job satisfaction, retention and school attendance (Terosky & Reitano, 2016:209). It also enhanced the social capital, which is explained as

interaction of teachers and the actual potential resource included in relationship at school. The decentralisation developed teachers' job satisfaction.

I observed that there were different sub-committees at Poli and Nku high schools that dealt with different issues with reference to the school activities. The schools have discipline committees, which deal with the learners and teachers disciplines. The disciplinary hearing that involves teachers is guided by a code of conduct (Education Act, 2010:197). If the committee gets the solution, the matter is not taken to the school governing board. A staff welfare committee deals with how to take care of the staff issues. Schools have sports committees and entertainment committees. These are just a few that could be mentioned.

Decentralisation has benefits in the sense that the local decision-making is considered. This allows school principals of Nku and Poli high schools to have strong feeling of ownership and assist teachers to allocate resources in real planning, as well as implementation of educational policies rather than having control and inspection. This empowers teachers to have maximum collaboration and on on-going commitment to life-long-learning.

The school principals served the teachers through decentralisation by doing away with the old traditional way of thinking that the school principal is the only person who will take decisions and action at school, as well as be responsible. They developed a team of experts who assisted them in running the school. They worked around the common goal of the school, and found a way of working as a team.

Serving the teachers by promoting information sharing in schools

Serving the teachers by promoting information sharing is the third dimension. Proper management and administration of the school depends, inter alia, on the information sharing. School principals share information with relevant stakeholders to keep them informed about the latest developments within the institution. The school principal has much to share with the teachers. The information sharing lies at the heart of teaching and learning in schools. This was reflected in the interview with Mrs Lehloa, the school principal of Poli High School, that she enacted servant leadership through information sharing. Mrs Lehloa shared information that she had with teachers. She developed a habit of sharing information as well encouraging teachers to share the knowledge that they had to make teaching and learning possible. This was one of the ways she served the teachers. Mrs Lehloa noted during the interview, how she shared information with the teachers and why:

In order to facilitate information sharing, I usually have face to face meetings with the teachers and other school stakeholders, sent emails to all who are concerned, at some point make telephone calls for follow ups and messages that need immediate feedback, as well as having forums where different school stakeholders discuss issues that concerns them.

Mrs Lehloa used different methods of communication to share information. Teachers were regularly informed about the school's issues and kept abreast with the latest developments, ensuring better decision-making. When teachers and the school principal hold meetings, it helps them to have a common goal. That is one of the ways in which principals serve the teachers. Having a common goal and working together is a community, according to CHAT. Foot (2014:331) explains that community in CHAT consists of people who share views, experiences, and sentiments about the subject of interest. Van der Walt and Wolhunter (2018:119) note that, in CHAT, community is explained as all the individuals in a community who share the same goal. The subject in the case of Mrs Lehloa is information sharing. Mrs Lehloa shared information with teachers at school, which is the community. It is worth noting that CHAT is a theoretical framework that informed my study.

In addition to what was said by Mrs Lehloa, it reflected that Mr Sefako also practised information sharing. As the school principal, Mr Sefako was the first to get the information from different education officers. The information needs to be shared for proper running of the school. The school principal said:

I have briefing sessions with the teachers where necessary; I have weekly meetings with those who are concerned as well as quarterly meetings. The meetings could be in the form of parents'/caregivers meetings, open day and issuing of the academic reports. I encourage teachers to share knowledge and skills they have among them.

As mentioned by Mr Sefako, knowledge sharing is of prime importance and allows sound decisions on different departments or area of responsibilities. Information sharing empowered teachers and helped them to realise their full potential (Sahawner & Benntu, 2018:111). Mr Sefako enacted servant leadership through information sharing, which ultimately empowered teachers. It is worth noting that empowering teachers by sharing information by Mr Sefako, is one of the characteristics a servant leader should possess. Servant leadership is a theoretical framework that directs my study. Culturally, it is expected that leaders should empower those they lead. Culture is one of the attributes of CHAT. CHAT explores different ways through which human beings interact with the cultural and historical context in which they are engaged (Riet, 2009:69; Tkachenko & Lois, 2017:145).

In addition to what Mr Sefako mentioned about sharing information with teachers, participants from Mosi focus group suggested that Mr Sefako practised servant leadership through information sharing. One participant from the focus group said:

Mr Sefako allowed sharing of information. He is able to share the information with teachers. The information from the education officers, from the parents or caregivers, other school stakeholders, is shared among the teachers, as it is shared from the school principal.

Mr Sefako made teachers share their skills and knowledge when having challenges and problems. The information shared with the teachers was imparted to the learners. Teachers were able to share the information and the challenges they faced on academic issues among themselves. This facilitated the discussion. Discussion is important in assisting learners to do their best in their studies.

Semoko focus group also shed some light on the issue of the information sharing by the school principal. Members of the focus group had different opinions on the sharing of information. Others expressed the views that she exercised servant leadership through sharing information with teachers and the parents or caregivers. Others explained that Mrs Lehloa called Open Days where teachers had face-to-face talk with parents. The school principal's facilitation on the Open Day is another way of sharing information. Information sharing sessions the school principal initiated is of prime importance to the teachers, parents or caregivers, as well as other school stakeholders in passing information from one to another. One participant from the focus group said:

Mrs Lehloa uses different platforms to share information with teachers. She is so keen to keep teachers updated on the issues that concerns school and teachers. Information is knowledge.

Mrs Lehloa shared information with all the stakeholders but teachers were the target beneficiaries. This theme is about serving the teachers through the use of information sharing. Therefore, the sharing of information by Mrs Lehloa denotes putting the interests of teachers first. It is worth noting that serving the interests of teachers by Mrs Lehloa was one of the qualities of servant leadership. The

school principals must start by serving teachers first before they can lead them. The focus is placed on the needs of teachers who are led by the school principal; in terms of how best they are meeting such interests (Salameh, 2011:138; Crippen, 2010:207).

The focus group discussion explained that Open Days called by the school principal were used as a means of sharing information between the parents/ caregivers and the school leadership, teachers, and/or learners. The parents/ caregivers, teachers and learners are able to share ideas and information on academic issues that concerned them in a safe space.

On top of what is said in Semoko focus group, it was revealed in the Mosi focus group that the school principal shared information with teachers. The participants had dissimilar views on the sharing of information. Members explained that sharing of information between the school principal and teachers helped them to understand each other. Others participants explained that teachers were able to get others feeling when the school principal explained the real issues affecting various departments of the school. There was agreement amongst all the members of the focus group that parent-learner-teacher meetings, teachers and learners gave them ample time in a safe space to discuss academic performance of learners with individual learner and parent/ caregiver.

The focus group explained that the school principals facilitated sharing information in a passionate way. Each teacher was given a space where she/he met with the learner and the parent or caregiver. They discussed the academic performance of the learners. It is in those gatherings that the school principal explained and gave valuable information to parents or caregivers were supposed to know. The sharing of information at school improves the relationship among the colleagues.

Mr Sefako and teachers of Nku high school required necessary information about learner's needs. It was also of utmost importance that the difficulties experienced at school should be shared so that all the teachers' needs were accounted for in the educational environment. The literature shows that information sharing is intended to ensure professional exchange of key information, and to address the needs of all school stakeholders and learners' holistic needs, development and educational challenges (Hart & O'Reitly, 2018:235-236).

This is consistent with the findings of the current study. The school principals met the learners' needs and shared experiences with professional skills. The open day that the school principals facilitated allowed parents and teachers to share valuable information, such as academic performance of learners. They offered professional assistance when the learners' needs were recognised.

There is a similarity in the findings from the two schools in the emphasis on the importance of sharing information among school stakeholders. There was also an emphasis that information sharing assisted teachers and school principals to understand each other. In Poli High School, Mrs Lehloa encouraged teachers to share information and challenges they have at school. She advocated and instilled information sharing culture in the school. What constituted the main resemblance is the fact that all the school stakeholders were updated about the importance of information sharing and the current situation in the respective schools. Both school principals expressed a similar understanding about the importance of information sharing.

The process of sharing information by the school principals was done through various platforms like face-to-face interactions with the concerned school stakeholders, through e-mails sent to the teachers and other stakeholders. Telephone follow-ups were also used, while in some instances, telephones were used not as a follow up to previous communication. However, this form of communication was used only when there were emergencies. Otherwise, the school principals relied more on regular briefings with the teachers so that they are kept abreast with the latest developments in the school. Besides, the whole theme was dedicated to how school principals served the teachers through information sharing.

Serving the teachers by boosting job satisfaction and retention

Serving the teachers by boosting job satisfaction and retention of teachers is the fifth dimension. One of the challenges that the school principals faced was the teachers who were not satisfied with their job. The school principals are to work hard to boost the job satisfaction of teachers. Teachers who are satisfied are productive. Grujicil, Bata, Radjen, Navakovic and Grujic (2016:737) describe job satisfaction as being happy with beliefs, assumptions and evaluation of the job. It is all about reaction towards the job effectiveness which explains emotions about the work. It was reflected in the interview with Mr Sefako that he was working to boost the job satisfaction of teachers.

Mr Sefako boosted job satisfaction of teachers in all aspects. Job satisfaction is a determining factor for the success of the school. The interviews demonstrated that teachers' job satisfaction increased when there were benefits associated with the job. Mr Sefako offered certain benefits to teachers such as tea, lunch; afternoon time offs for teachers who did not have lessons in the afternoon, and closing socials or get together at the end of the year. He developed trust among the teachers and the school leadership. Mr Sefako noted during the interview that:

I usually have a small budget to buy small gifts for teachers when they have done so well. I praise them in public and criticise in private as well as encouraging them to reward themselves when they have done well. On top of that, I listen to teachers when they are talking to me.

The school principal incurred extra cost to benefit the teachers in the staffroom. Those costs had direct relationship with the job satisfaction of teachers. The teachers, who are taken care of, are increasingly satisfied, and are subsequently able to relate well. Mr Sefako, has to listen attentively to what teachers have to say so as to get better understanding. It is worth noting that listening is one of the attributes of servant leadership.

A study conducted by Havery (2018:155) demonstrated that the teachers' job satisfaction was the result of school principal establishment of professional development, positive working environment and reduced work load which are the product of servant leadership. There is a similarity with the findings. The focus on both studies was on making teachers' lives better. In my study, Mr Sefako bought presents and rewards for teachers when they had done well, while in the literature, the focus was on developing teachers professionally in order to increase their job satisfaction.

In addition, it was also indicated during the interview with Mrs Lehloa that she was able to increase the job satisfaction of the teachers. There are benefits that come with a satisfied teacher. Mrs Lehloa was able to foster job security of teachers. Teachers who are sure that their jobs are safe and stable tend to be satisfied with their jobs. An interview suggests that she also offered career opportunities for teaching staff.

Interviews also suggest that Mrs Lehloa encouraged teachers to enrol for short courses or go to school to further their studies in full time or part time. This enriched their content knowledge and they became confident in their teaching. It is explained that teachers who are content would be able to deliver the content that is relevant to learners. Any challenge that they faced would be tackled with much confidence.

Teachers tend to remain longer in the school when their job is safe. Therefore, teacher retention is also improved. As part of increasing teachers' job satisfaction, Mrs Lehloa encouraged teachers to further their studies. This is the commitment of school principal to develop others. Developing others is characteristic of servant leadership. It is the interest of the school principals as a servant leader to develop those they lead. Servant leaders strive to develop teachers to be wise, more autonomous, and grow healthier (Finley, 2012:136-137).

When teachers are satisfied at school, they have motivation to teach all the contents, and that learners have more understanding on the teachers that has job satisfaction. When teachers' job satisfaction has increased, they attend classes with joy and enthusiasm. Mrs Lehloa noted that:

Psychologically, teachers are well off when they are satisfied. They are going to be friendly to learners and parents or caregivers. This contributes to the child- friendly school. The satisfied teacher works hard to improve the enrolment of the school through their excellent service delivery. They relate well with the society and the community. Their health also improves, as there are no work stress and challenges that hinders their progresses.

It is depicted in the extract above that school benefits from boosting of satisfaction among the teachers. For instance, Mrs Lehloa stated that the satisfied teacher increased the enrolment of learners and child-friendly environment. The findings demonstrated that a satisfied teacher goes an extra mile and does extra time in her/his work. The satisfied teachers like their work to be recognised. The child is the focus. The learners flourish and go an extra mile as the teacher goes extra mile as well. Literature demonstrates that a teacher who is satisfied at work is more productive, has higher performance, is contented, and has much dedication to work. Teachers become more committed once they are satisfied (Vieira, 2019:4).

This resonates with the findings of this study. For instance, I observed that teachers were ready at all times to perform their duties as they were happy. There is no need for government officials to come to school and pressure teachers to do their work. Satisfied teachers do their work willingly, and without any pressure being exerted on them by anybody. Teachers who are satisfied with their work and working conditions do all what it takes for the success of the learners. These teachers also develop teamwork among them and work well with other stakeholders. The similarity is in having the same school context as in and the practice is of the school principals.

The results from the two schools showed remarkable similarity. For example, Mr Sefako focused on both financial and non-financial rewards to boost teachers' job satisfaction. Mrs Lehloa focused more on factors that contribute significantly on improving job satisfaction of teachers. For instance, she encouraged teachers to further their studies and to improve their content. What these participants were doing resulted in resemblance in terms of application of servant leadership in their respective schools.

Serving the teachers by creating a pleasant working climate

The working condition is one of the factors that make school leaders and managers face in terms of ensuring that they are conducive to effective teaching and learning. The school principals know that if the conditions are not good, workers become unhappy and work commitment may suffer as a result. Therefore, school principals have to ensure that the working conditions are pleasant to make sure that teaching and learning is effective. There are certain factors that contribute to improving these working conditions. Grujicic, Bata, Radjen, Navkovic and Grujic (2016:741) identifies these factors as better salaries, better working conditions, adequate rewards, and better organisational climates. They also include understanding, less stress, fair working environment, teamwork and adequate workload. Adequate equipment and space, personal development and advancement with education, as well as proper management are also contributing factors.

In interviewing Mr Sefako, it surfaced that one of the practices he was engaging in as a servant leader, was that of improving the working conditions, trying to make them pleasant. Mr Sefako worked to make sure that the working conditions in his school were pleasant. This is because when the working conditions are pleasant, teachers enjoy being at school and doing what is expected of

them. Consequently, academic performance of the learners improves. Mr Sefako said during the interview:

I engage in different activities and strategies that boost the pleasant working conditions in my school. I encourage social interactions of teachers by assigning them tasks in pairs, as well as having lunch together and sometimes, going out for drinks, show appreciations when they have done so well as in rewarding them and praise them in public. Listening is the best tool that I use and offering support and assistance where teachers are in need. I also involve teachers in decision making as part of boosting pleasant working conditions'

Listening is one of the activities or strategies that Mr Sefako used in creating and boosting pleasant working conditions. Mr Sefako has to listen to the teachers and to himself. The school principal as a servant leader is to be in a position to trust and listen with positive intentions. They listen receptively to teachers in an open-minded manner without judging them. Listening portrays a feeling that people are valued (Salameh, 2011:138).

Mr Sefako involved teachers as much as he could in running the school. Teachers were involved in the decision-making processes and so had a sense of ownership of the school. This improved a pleasant working condition. Teachers are happy when they are involved in decision-making processes; as a result, the working conditions improve. Harries (2018:35) emphasises that a school principal who is engaged in servant leadership seeks input from the teachers when making decisions, and seeks buy-in from teachers. These helps enhance opportunities among the teachers of feeling valued. This boosts pleasant working conditions for teachers.

Mr Sefako practised servant leadership through the enhancement of pleasant working conditions. Participants had deliberation about how Mr Sefako enhanced pleasant working conditions. Some voiced a view that he involved teachers in decision-making. Including teachers in decision-making is another way of enhancing pleasant working conditions. Others expressed the view that teachers who were involved in collaborative decision-making and collaborative participatory culture felt welcome and valued by the school principal. This adds more dimension to improving pleasant working conditions.

This finding resonates with Terosky and Reitano's (2016:209) observation that working together of the teachers and the school principal on a given task is beneficial to both the teachers and principal. It empowers and engenders collegiality, which is associated with a high rate of teachers' job satisfaction, retention and good attendance at school. As a result, the working conditions improve. One member from the focus group noted this in the interview;

Mr Sefako offer facilities that make life easy at school, as in having the heaters in the staff room, have appropriate furniture for teachers, have microwave for teachers to warm their food, small fridge to keep their food when it's hot, as well as providing them with teaching materials. Each year when we are done with the school work, he usually organises a closing social and have braai and drinks together.

It could be interpreted that the school principal, Mr Sefako, takes care of the teachers. Small things that he was doing for teachers improve the working conditions, as in providing the appliances that make life easy while at work, taking care of the teachers' welfare improves the working conditions. Mr Sefako created an inspirational environment that one would love to work in. This is called stewardship, and stewardship is one of the attributes of servant leadership. According to Standen (2007:11), stewardship is about serving the needs of the teachers. The school principal is mandated to take care of the well-being and be committed to meet the needs of teachers and build a

conducive environment for learning and teaching. School principals are expected to be trusted and to hold the well-being of teachers at the school they lead (Crippen, 2010:32; Fitzgerald, 2017:82).

It was reflected during the interview with Mrs Lehloa that she boosted the pleasant working conditions at school. Mrs Lehloa explained that she provided enough resources for the teachers. Teachers performed well when they had sufficient supplies of teaching materials and resources needed for effective teaching and learning. She purchased textbooks, stationery and ensured that teaching and learning aids were always available to facilitate effective teaching and learning. In addition, it is noted from the interview that she made sure that the workloads for teachers were appropriate and fair so that teachers were not overworked. There was no teacher who had more than enough number of lessons in her school. Mrs Lehloa stated this during the interview:

I planned the workload of teachers in such a way they have enough lessons. Not too much or too little. The working hours allow teachers to rest in between the lessons. I also have meetings with teachers and briefings as to inform them of all what is taking place in their school and have closing socials event where I relax with teachers and enjoy being together. The last thing, I am approachable; hence, teachers are able to come to me when they have issues.

Drawing from the extract above, it can be deduced that the workload of teachers is an important factor to be considered for enhancing the working conditions and boosting the morale of the teachers. Mrs Lehloa allocated the workload in a manner that allowed teachers to rest. When informing teachers what was going on at school, it made them feel valued and wanted. This improved the working conditions at school. Mrs Lehloa set aside time to relax with teachers. It is in this relaxed mood that they bonded and found ways of improving working conditions.

The findings reflect resemblance between the two schools. Mr Sefako and Mrs Lehloa enacted servant leadership by enhancing the quality of the working conditions, and boosting the morale of the teachers. They both created time for relaxation and entertainment. It is in the relaxation that they bonded and came up with suggestions of making their working conditions better and pleasant. In addition, Mr Sefako and Mrs Lehloa ensured that teaching and learning resources were available all the time, which contributed to pleasant working conditions. The findings also reported that, in order to improve the working conditions, Mrs Lehloa discouraged favouritism when approaching teachers. There must be fair and equal treatment for all teachers. Teachers and school principals had social gatherings where they socialised in a work environment.

My observation reflected that the school principals had the responsibility to make sure that teachers build good relationships. The school principal has to be neutral when teachers are having conflicts. They have to be fair to all the stakeholders and arrange counselling be paid for by the school. They encourage teachers to say what is bothering them, and attend to issues; especially conflicts well on time and not wait until the issue has blown out of proportion. The school principals have to have more information about the school and the teachers. This improves working conditions.

My observation from both schools was that the school principals worked with teachers to provide pleasant working conditions. When there are disagreements or conflicts among the teachers, the school principals intervene with the sole purpose of improving the pleasant working conditions among the teachers. The teachers took school trips for pleasure. This helped them to relax from the stressful work that they always engaged with. This also served as a platform where they socialised and took learning in a different perspective.

Literature shows that the pleasant-working environments that are at school include interpersonal relationships, good personal qualities of the school principal or immediate supervisor. It includes support from the school principal or immediate supervisor to get promotion or better job, cooperative working environment, and job security. Opportunities for improvement offered by the school and

independence in routine task add more to pleasant working conditions. Rewards for exceptional work and professional supervision are also contributing factors (Grujicic, Bata, Radjen, Navkovic & Grujic, 2016:741). The school principals developed positive relationships among the teachers. It is in good relations that teachers and school principals can enhance pleasant working environment at school. It is also stated that the school principal should praise or reward teachers where they have done well. This encourages them to improve and do more next time.

The school principals enhanced working conditions at their schools by creating an inspirational climate that improved the working conditions. This was done by providing equipment and appliances such as small fridges at school, a microwave, and a heater as well as offering tea. The workloads of teachers were planned to ensure every teacher had adequate and fair number of lessons, as well as time to rest and relax before going to another class. The principals also held briefing sessions and meetings where teachers were kept up to date about current situations in the schools. Social gatherings for teachers and school principals were organised for fun and relaxation.

Serving the teachers by developing teamwork

The seventh and the last dimension is that of servant leaders serving the teachers by developing teamwork. Schools need to develop teamwork so that it can achieve its goals effectively and efficiently. One of the goals that each school wants to achieve is high academic performance of the learners. It is not easy for learners to perform well when there is no teamwork among the teachers. This was highlighted during the interview with the school principals that they had to develop teamwork at their schools in order to get better academic results.

It was during the interview with the school principal of Nku High School Mr zefako, that it emerged that he encouraged collaboration and teamwork among the teachers. It was reported that, in order to develop teamwork, Mr Sefako sat down with his colleagues to set and develop the vision and mission statement of the school, which gave them a sense of purpose and direction. It is in this teamwork that they were able to set the goals and the team rules to guide them. Communicating the vision and mission statement effectively and more often assisted them in maintaining the focus. Mr sefako claimed this during the interview:

I have meeting with teachers in my school to set the school's goals that emanates from the vision and the mission statement that develops the purpose of the school. This made it easy by engaging the effective communication that is two ways. I developed teamwork among teachers as a way of facilitating development in my school.

The above excerpt suggests that when teachers know the purpose and the route that the school wants to take, they tend to develop a stronger team. The development of teamwork depends on the effectiveness of communication by the school principal and the interactions that take place among the key stakeholders. The teachers and Mr Sefako worked together to realise the vision and mission of the school. When teachers and the school principal are focused, they are able to develop and sustain teamwork. Teamwork denotes community according to CHAT. Community denotes a group of individuals who are involved in a joint activity or practice, as well as a common object of activity, which happen to be motivated by the same object (Van der Walt & Wolhunter, 2018:119).

Ewan, Rulssen, Eys, Zumbo and Beauchamp (2017:2) describe teamwork as how the members of the team perform a given task. It contains a range of interactive and interdependent behavioural processes among the team members that have the objective of converting the team input into output. Team members are assigned to work together in order to get the best result and successfully achieve the team purpose. Mr Sefako and the teachers worked together as a team towards the mission and vision of the school.

Members of the team work interdependently and count on one another to make goals, task and output progress (O'Neil & McLarnon, 2017:1). This is similar to the findings reported in this thesis. Mr Sefako worked with teachers as a team with different inputs towards the same purpose, realising the vision and mission of the school. Both studies were conducted in schools. The theories that constituted a theoretical framework were not the same but the results were similar. In CHAT, one of the two theories that guided the current study, states that working together as teachers and the school principal is an activity. Foot (2014:330) says the term activity refers to all what people do together at a community or in society, and it is fashioned by cultural and historical situations. Mr Sefako and teachers were working together as a team to promote academic performance of learners.

Mrs Lehloa practised servant leadership through developing teamwork. This emerged during the interviews. It emerged that the teachers taught perfectly well when they were interacting along the notion of teamwork. Teamwork allowed the sharing of information, knowledge and tasks. It is through teamwork that teachers tended to develop self-efficacy that is needed for effective teaching and learning. Mrs Lehloa said this during the interview:

I always assign duties in pair as a way of developing and encouraging teamwork in my school. Teachers are to work as a team in setting the goals of the school and work together in all the activities they are doing.

It is evident that the school principal, Mrs Lehloa assigned tasks and duties in pairs, encouraged teachers to scheme and record together in departments, and do team teaching to develop teamwork among them. The completion of assignment in pairs signifies that the school principal was indeed developing a community of teachers who worked collaboratively. Developing a community is one of the characteristics of servant leadership. Members of the team rely on one another for proper learning. Mrs Lehloa recognised that the school was operated interdependently, and teaching and learning work benefited the under-privileged community (Crippen, 2010:33; Noland & Richards, 2015:17).

The school principal, Mrs Lehloa acknowledged the benefits of teamwork. Therefore, she assigned duties and responsibilities accordingly. The tasks were also completed in pairs or groups to encourage teamwork. Teachers learned well when they were interacting. This was achieved through teamwork. The findings indicated that teamwork was essential when the school principal and the teachers wanted to support each other. The practice of teamwork is needed for the entire school in different departments that work together to accomplish given tasks.

Helms (2017:69, 71) explains that teachers recognise the importance of the school principal who does not distance himself or herself from the rest of them, but instead integrate with them to form one team. This does not imply that the teachers desire a sense of positional equality, but that they recognise the need for the school principal to be the leader and school figure head. The school principal should be there for teachers and the teachers should be there for the school principal in offering the optimal support.

The findings revealed that working as a team helped teachers to assist one another. When one teacher has a weakness, the other will assist. They offer support to each other. The work becomes easier when the school principals and teachers are working together. Teamwork improves division of labour in which people with specialisation on a particular area do more.

Mr Sefako practised division of labour through teamwork. Division of labour is one component of CHAT which involves all the actions taken by different stakeholders towards the object (Riet, 2009:68; Foot, 2014:331). Teachers and Mr Sefako worked as one team. There is a similarity in the two schools in terms of developing teamwork. Mr Sefako developed teamwork by having meetings with teachers where they set goals and objectives from the mission statement and vision of the school. He focused on effective communication in facilitating teamwork. Mrs Lehloa developed teamwork by

assigning duties in pairs as a way of fostering team spirit. The resemblance is servant leadership being rooted in the working together of different stakeholders. The school context played a big role in shaping the results. Developing teamwork responds to the first and second objective and research question, this is about how the school principal practises and understands servant leadership in their school.

4. CONCLUSION

The findings are consistent with my observation. I observed that the school principals held planning meetings with the teachers to work on budgets, scheme of work and records, preparation, allocation of classes and drawing up of a time table to mention but a few. It is in this working together as a team that each individual teacher or school principal learns from one another. They supplement each other when they are working together as a team. When there are parents' meeting, teachers work with the school principal in addressing the issues that concern parents. Teachers assist in responding to the questions that are asked by parents or caregivers in meetings that are usually called by the school principal. This signifies that the teachers and the school principal worked together as one team. This is a practice of servant leadership which is intended to be discovered.

The findings indicated that school principal's practices servant leadership by reducing conflicts at school, decentralization and devolution of power, promoting information sharing, boosting job satisfaction and retention, creating pleasant working climate and developing team works in their schools.

REFERENCES

- Babalola, M.T, Stouten, J. & Euwema, M.C. (2016). The Relation between Ethical Leadership and Workplace Conflicts: The Mediating Role of Employee Resolution Efficacy. *Journal of Management*, 44(5), 1-27
- Barnett, E. (2018). Education Quality in Malawi: What Role for Decentralisation? *The London School of Economics and Political Science*. London
- Brohi, N. A, Khuhro, M. A, Jamali, M. Shah, I. A & Hussain, A. (2021). I am of value to the organization: the role of servant leadership in predicting psychological capital and turnover intention among school teachers in Pakistan. *Ilkogretim Online - Elementary Education Online*, 2021, 20 (5), 5344-5360.
- Cerit, Y. (2009). The Effects of Servant Leadership. Behaviours of School Principals on Teachers' Job Satisfaction. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 37(5), 600–623.
- Crippen, C. (2010). Serve, Teach, and Lead: It's All about Relationships. *Journal of Scholarly Teaching*, 5(1), 27-34.
- Crippen, C. (2017). A Case Study of Servant Leadership in the NHL. *Springer Science and Business Media Dordrecht*, 48, 205–216.
- Cua, F & Theivananthampillai, P. (2009). Understanding the quality qualitative research in IS: A practitioners' road map. *University of Otago*, New Zealand: University of Otago Press.
- Donnel, R., Dollat, J. & Fitzmaurice, M. (2013). Supervising and writing a good undergraduate Dissertations, Dublin: *Bentham Scimell Publisher*: 248-271
- Finley S. (2012). Servant leadership: a literature review. *RMIC*, 5(14), 135-144.

- Fitzgerald, R. J. (2017). Becoming Leo: Servant Leadership as a Pedagogical Philosophy. *Critical Questions in Education* 6(2), 75-84.
- Foot, K. A. (2001). Cultural-Historical Activity Theory as Practice Theory: Illuminating the Development of a Conflict-Monitoring Network. *International Communication Association*: 56–83.
- Foot, K. A. (2014). Cultural-Historical Activity Theory: Exploring a Theory to Inform Practice and Research. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 24 (3), 329-347,
- Grujičić, Bata. J. J. Radjen, S. Novaković, B. & Grujičić, S. S. (2016). Work motivation and job satisfaction of health workers in urban and rural areas. *Vojnosanit Pregl*; 73(8): 735–743.
- Gül, F. T. (2011). The Affects of Secondary School Administrators' Servant Leadership Behaviors on Teachers' Organizational Commitment. *Journal of Education and Training Studies*, 5(12), 110-118.
- Güngör, S. K. (2017). The Prediction Power of Servant and Ethical Leadership Behaviours of Administrators on Teachers' Job Satisfaction. *Universal Journal of Educational Research* 4(5), 1180-1188.
- Hart, T. & O'Reilly, M. (2018). The challenges of sharing information when a young person is experiencing severe emotional difficulties': implications for schools and CAMHS. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health* 23, No. 3, 2018: 235–242.
- Kasun, R. (2009). The Application of Servant Leadership by Selected New Jersey Public School Principals *Seton Hall University*.
- Kiersch, C. & Peters. J. (2017). Leadership from the Inside Out: Student Leadership Development within Authentic Leadership and Servant Leadership Frameworks. *Journal of Leadership Education*: 148-168.
- Kiersch, C. & Peters. J. (2017). Leadership from the Inside Out: Student Leadership Development within Authentic Leadership and Servant Leadership Frameworks. *Journal of Leadership Education*: 148-168.
- Lavonen, J. (2017). Governance decentralisation in education: Finnish innovation in education. *RED. Revista de Educación a Distancia*. Núm. 53. Artíc. 1. 31, 1-22.
- Lawyer, A. (2021). The phenomenological study on the impact of servant leadership for establishing a culture of high performance as perceived by high school principals. *Brandman University Irvine, California Dissertations*. 369
- Makhasane S. & Khanare F. (2018). The impact of learners' violence in rural schools in South African schools. *Journal of Social and Anthropology*, 5(1), 81-93.
- Mahembe, B. & Engelbrecht, A.S. (2014). The relationship between servant leadership, organisational citizenship behaviour and team effectiveness. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology/SA Tydskrif vir Bedryfsielkunde*, 40(1), 1-10.
- McEwan, D. Ruissen, G. R, Eys, M. A. Zumbo, B. D. & Beauchamp, M.R. (2017). The Effectiveness of Teamwork Training on Teamwork Behaviors and Team Performance: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis of Controlled Interventions. *PLoS ONE* 12(1), 1-18.
- Meyrick, J. (2006). What is a qualitative research? A first step towards a comprehensive approach to judging rigour/inquiry. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 11(5), 799-808.
- Morenammele, J. M. (2020). Spirituality in leadership. Research into schools, congregation and the work place. *Acta Theological Supplementum* 30. University of the Free State.
- Morenammele. J. M. (2015). A Practical Theological Investigation of the impact of Christian Leadership in work place in Lesotho. *University of the Free State*.

- Nkambule G & Amsterdam C. (2018). *The realities of educator support in a South African school district*. South African Journal of Education, 38(1), 1-11.
- Noland, A. & Richards, K. (2015). Servant Teaching: An exploration of teacher servant leadership on student outcomes. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 15(6), 16-38.
- Nur, S. (2018). Secondary English language teacher's capacity. *Insight from Bangladesh and literacy studies*, 6 (4), 163-174.
- Olesia, W. S. Namusonge, G. S. & Iravo, M. E. (2013). Role of Servant Leadership on Organizational Commitment: Survey of State Corporations in Kenya. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(13), 85-92.
- Paul, W. K. & Fitzpatrick, C. (2015). Advising as Servant Leadership: Investigating Student Satisfaction. *NACADA Journal*, 35(2): 28-35.
- Sağlam, M. H. & Alpaydın, Y. (2017). The Relationship between School Administrators Personalities and Servant Leadership Behaviours. *Journal of Education and Training Studies* 5(8), 106-113.
- Sağlam, M. H. & Alpaydın, Y. (2017). The Relationship between School Administrators Personalities and Servant Leadership Behaviours. *Journal of Education and Training Studies* 5(8), 106-113.
- Sahawneh, F. G. & Benuto, L. T. (2018). The Relationship between Instructor Servant Behaviors and Satisfaction with Instructors in an Online Setting. *Online Learning Journal*, 22(1), 107-129.
- Salameh, K. M. (2011). Servant Leadership Practices among School Principals in Educational Directorates in Jordan. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 22 (2), 138-145.
- Singh, S. & Ryhal, P. R. (2021). How Does Servant Leadership Behaviour Affect Job Satisfaction? A Study on Indian Academia. *FIIB Business Review* 10(1), 52–61.
- Stetsenko, A. & Arievitch, I. M. (2004). The Self in Cultural-Historical Activity Theory Reclaiming the Unity of Social and Individual Dimensions of Human Development. *Sage Publications*, 14(4), 475–503.
- Taylor, T. Martin, B. N. Hutchinson, S. & Jinks, M. (2007). Examination of leadership practices of principals identified as servant leaders. *International Journal of leadership in education, Theory and practice*, 10(4): 401-419.
- Tkachenko, O. & Louis, K. S. (2017). Re-Shaping the Faculty: Emergence and Development of “Permanent-Contingent” Roles through the Lens of Cultural-Historical Activity Theory. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 6(1), 1-12.
- Van der Walt, J. L. & Wolhuter, C. C. (2018). An examination of the potential of cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) for explaining transitions in national education systems. *Acta Academica* 50(1), 104-124.