

**Selected school stakeholder perceptions of the contribution non college  
and school [CS] educators make to the orderly and effective operation of  
school processes.**

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**Dissertation submitted in completion of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education in the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences  
of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology**

**Supervisor: Jeremy Koeberg**

**December 2006**

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that this dissertation for the degree M.Tech: Education at Cape Peninsula University of Technology is my own work and has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other university. The sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Graham Cupido**

*23.4.07*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

This study is dedicated to Ma Joshua for her tremendous inspiration and prayers and to my parents, Louis and Martha, my wife, Elaine and daughter's Kaylin and Stacy.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor, Jeremy Koeberg for his unwavering support, patience, guidance and encouragement. Cape Peninsula University of Technology, for financial assistance.

## **ABSTRACT**

As a recently appointed principal, I was confronted with many inherited problems. One of the most challenging problems was the management of a group of non CS-educators employed at the school. They presented challenges such as excessive absenteeism, abuse of alcohol, undermining of authority, contestation of power, backbiting, laziness and a negative attitude towards authority. I knew they played an important role in terms of the service they provided to the school and that their daily interactions with educators, learners and parents impact directly on the effective running of the school. The difficulty I experienced in optimizing their potential to contribute to improving the general school climate has inspired me to undertake this qualitative research study

The aim of the research was to explore school stakeholder perceptions of non-CS educator's contribution to the orderly and effective operation of school processes and to explore the perceptions of non CS-educators concerning the contribution they make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes. Data was obtained by means of a focus group interview with six educators, an interview with the school principal and a participant observation with a group of non CS-educators.

The findings revealed that non CS-educators do make a contribution to the orderly and effective operation of school processes and that there are much room for improvement with regards the contribution they make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes and the management of the group.

The study recommends strategies for all the school stakeholders in order to optimize the potential of non CS-educators to contribute to improving the general school climate.

## **ANNEXURE A**

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### **Attention: Dr R. CornellLisen**

Western Cape Education Department  
Private Bag X 9114  
Cape Town  
8000

Dear Sir

### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT CASE STUDY RESEARCH AT SEARIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

I am currently an M.Tech: Education student at the Peninsula Technikon, Bellville. The working title of my research is: "School stakeholder perceptions of the contributions non College and School [CS] educators make to the orderly operation of school processes".

My research focuses on non-Cs educators for the purpose of encouraging School Principals and the Education sector in general to acknowledge the contributions non Cs-educators make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes. A case study will be use to investigate this.

I would like to explore and analyse school stakeholder perception of the contribution non-Cs educators make to orderly operations of school processes.

The participants will be educators and non-Cs educators from a WCED school in Mitchell's Plain. The intended case study will take place during the third school term (June to September) and will be conducted mostly during non-contact time.

The research approach to be employed will be based on three sources of data collection. That is, individual interviews, a focus group interview and participant observation.

You are kindly requested to consent to this research and to the usage of documented material, issued by the WCED, which may assist me in my research.

Thanking you in anticipation.

Mr.G. Cupido (student no.9833285

**ANNEXURE B**

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Dear Sir/ Madam

**REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN A GROUP INTERVIEW RESEARCH**

The effectiveness of schools are determined by many factors. One of these factors might be the contribution non teaching staff make to schools.

I am in the process of researching the perceptions that school stakeholders have regarding the role non teaching staff play in orderly operations of school processes.

It would be wonderful and of great value if you can voluntary be part of this research.

Please note that all information gathered, will be treated as highly confidential.

Your contribution would be greatly appreciated.

Yours in Education

G. Cupido

**CONSENT FOR FINDINGS TO BE USE IN RESEARCH**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ give my consent, without reservation to participate in this research. I have no objection to the information that may be published.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sign

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**ANNEXURE C**

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Dear Sir/ Madam

**REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN A PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION RESEARCH**

The effectiveness of schools are determined by many factors. One of these factors might be the contribution non teaching staff make to schools.

I am in the process of researching the perceptions that school stakeholders have regarding the role non teaching staff play in the orderly operations of school processes.

It would be wonderful and of great value if you can voluntary be part of this research.

Please note that all information gathered, will be treated as highly confidential.

Your contribution would be greatly appreciated.

Yours in Education

G. Cupido

**CONSENT FOR FINDINGS TO BE USE IN RESEARCH**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ give my consent, without reservation to participate in this research.

I have no objection to the information that may be published.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Sign

\_\_\_\_\_  
Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**ANNEXURE D**

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Dear Sir/ Madam

**REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH INTERVIEW**

The effectiveness of schools are determined by many factors. One of these factors might be the contribution non teaching staff make to schools.

I am in the process of researching the perceptions that school stakeholders have regarding the role non teaching staff play in the orderly operations of school processes.

It would be wonderful and of great value if you can voluntary be part of this research.

Please note that all information gathered, will be treated as highly confidential.

Your contribution would be greatly appreciated.

Yours in Education

G. Cupido

**CONSENT FOR FINDINGS TO BE USE IN RESEARCH**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ give my consent, without reservation to participate in this research. I have no objection to the information that may be published.

\_\_\_\_\_

Sign

\_\_\_\_\_

Witness

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

## **ANNEXURE E**

### **SAMPLE Interview questions to School Principal**

1. Can you briefly explain what the job description of non-CS educators is?
2. To what extent are non-CS Educators successful in the execution of, of their duties?
3. To what extent are non-CS Educators not successful in the execution of their duties
4. How do you see their relationship with the Educators?
5. How do their relationship with you and the relationship with the Educators, impact on the operation of school processes?
6. In your opinion, how do non-CS educators and Educators compliment each other in terms of the development of the school?
7. What role does non-CS Educators play in ensuring the safety of learners during school hours?
8. What contribution do the non CS-educators make to the feeding scheme?

## **ANNEXURE F**

### **SAMPLE                      Interview questions to Educators**

1. What role does non-CS Educators play at this school?
2. Of what importance do you think is the non-CS Educators at your school?
3. In your opinion, what contribution do they make to the effective operations of school processes?
4. Do you think that they are utilized effectively at the school, or is there room for improvement and, and how?
5. As an Educator, what do you think is their core function?
6. In your opinion, do you think they meet the expectations of the school in terms of service delivery?
7. If you had the authority to change anything about non-CS educators, what would it be?
8. What about the Non-CS Educators impress you?
9. What about the non-CS educators does not impress you at all?

## **CONTENTS**

	<b>PAGE</b>
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	x

### **CHAPTER ONE: FORMATION OF THE PROBLEM**

1.	Introduction	1
1.1	On becoming a principal	1
1.2.	Non CS-educators	2
1.2.1	Categories of non- CS-educators	2
1.3	Background and rationale	3
1.4	Research objectives	4
1.5	Research questions	5
1.6	Significance of research	5
1.7	Delimitations of the research	5
1.8	Definition of terms	6
1.8.1	CS educators	6
1.8.2	Non CS-educators	6
1.8.3	School stakeholders	6
1.8.4	School effectiveness	7

1.8.5	School climate	7
1.9	Outline of the chapters	7
1.9.1	Chapter one: introduction	7
1.9.2	Chapter two: literature review	8
1.9.3	Chapter three: research methodology	9
1.9.4	Chapter four: analysis of data.	9
1.9.5	Chapter five: conclusion and recommendations	10

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

2	Introduction and background	11
2.1	Intervention of the school principal	12
2.2	School climate	14
2.2.1	Introduction to school climate	14
2.2.2	Definition of school climate	14
2.2.3	Brief discussion of the definitions	15
2.2.4	Explaining the factors that contribute to school climate	
	Factors that contribute to school climate	18
2.2.4.1	Continuous academic and social growth	20
2.2.4.2	Respect	21
2.2.4.3	Trust	21
2.2.4.4	High morale	22
2.2.4.5	Cohesiveness	22

2.2.4.6	Opportunities for input	23
2.2.4.7	School Renewal	23
2.2.4.8	Caring	24
2.2.5	Discussion of the analysis of the school climate factors	25
2.3	School effectiveness studies	26
2.3.1	Definition of school effectiveness	26
2.3.2	The two generations of school effectiveness studies	27
2.3.2.1	The first generations of school effectiveness studies	27
2.3.2.2	The second generations of school effectiveness studies	28
2.3.3	Characteristics that we find in effective schools.	28
2.3.4	A brief analysis of the characteristics revealed by the research literature.	29
2.3.4.1	Leadership	29
2.3.4.2	Emphasis on teaching	30
2.3.4.3	A shared vision	31
2.3.4.4	A positive climate	32
2.3.4.5	Monitoring pupil's progress	33
2.3.4.6	Parental involvement	33
2.3.4.7	High expectations	34
2.3.5	Comment on the analysis of the characteristics	36
2.3.6	Discussion of the analysis of the characteristics of school effectiveness studies and factors of school climate	36
2.4	Systems thinking approach	38

2.4.1	The concept “systems”	38
2.4.2	The “systems thinking” concept	39
2.4.3	Rationale for systems thinking approach	39
2.5	Introduction to non CS-educators	40
2.5.1	Significance of the job description	40
2.5.2	Purpose for creation of non CS-educator post	40
2.5.3	School without non CS-educators: Implications	41
2.5.4	Profile of the typical non CS-educator	42
2.5.4.1	Non CS-educators and the school system	42
2.6	Conclusion	43

### **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

3.1	Introduction	44
3.2	Research design	44
3.2.1	Case study methodology	44
3.3	Setting: why I chose the specific research site	45
3.3.1	Research site	45
3.3.2	Location	46
3.3.3	Accessibility	46
3.3.4	Willingness to participate	46
3.3.5	Representation	46
3.4	Research technique	47

3.4.1	Interviewing	47
3.4.2	Participant observation	49

#### **CHAPTER FOUR - Analysis of the Data**

4.	Introduction	52
4.1	Analysis of the interview with the school principal	52
4.1.1	Job description	53
4.1.1.1	Clarification of categories of non CS- educators	53
4.1.1.2	Duties of non CS-educators	53
4.2.1.3	Efficiency in accomplishing task or functions	54
4.1.4	The principal's perception of non CS-educators	55
4.1.5	Status / Class differences between CS and Non CS-educators	56
4. 1.6	Additional duties	58
4.1.7	Interpersonal relationships	59
4.1.8	Safety and security	61
4.1.9	Summary	63
4.2	Analysis of the focus group interview with educators	63
4.2.1	Introduction	64
4.2.2	Uncertainty regarding the job description of non CS -educators	64
4.2.3	Factors influencing the poor performance of non CS-educators	67
4.2.4	Differing expectations concerning the duties of	

non CS-educators	69
4.2.5 Additional duties performed by non CS- educators	70
4.2.6 Role of the manager	71
4.2.7 Interpersonal relationships	72
4.2.8 Reluctance to perform core duties	73
4.2.9 Summary	75
4.3 The third analysis to be discussed is my observation period working with the non CS-educators.	76
4.3.1 Introduction	76
4.3.2 Other duties	77
4.3.2.1 Administrative duties	77
4.3.2.2 First aid and counselling functions	77
4.3.2.3 Construction and maintenance	78
4.3.2.5 Social responsibility	79
4.3.2.6 Supervision of learners	79
4.3.2.7 Representation on school governing body	80
4.3.3 Interaction with other stakeholders	80
4.3.3.1 Relationship with educators	80
4.3.3.2 Relationship with the principal	81
4.3.3.3 Silence of one of the members	84
4.3.3.4 Relationship amongst themselves	85
4.3.3.5 Relationship with the parents	87
4.3.4 Summary	88

4.3.5	Comments on the three contributions	88
-------	-------------------------------------	----

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

5.	Introduction	91
5.1	Perception of the principal	92
5.2	Perceptions of educators	95
5.3	Perceptions of non CS-educators	95
5.4	Recommendation	98
5.4.1	An official job description	99
5.4.2	Organisational effectiveness	100
5.4.3	Efficiency	100
5.4.4	Work satisfaction	101
5.4.5	Integrated school development programmes	102
5.4.6	Personal circumstances of non CS-educators	102
5.4.7	Leadership of the principal	102
5.4.8	Relationship between effective leadership and the research questions	104
5.4.9	Training program	105
5.4.10	An organisational climate	107

## **REFERENCES**

<b>ANNEXURE A</b>	<b>WCED letter of consent</b>
<b>ANNEXURE B</b>	<b>Letter of consent from Educators</b>
<b>ANNEXURE C</b>	<b>Letter of consent from non CS-educators</b>
<b>ANNEXURE D</b>	<b>Letter of consent from School Principal</b>
<b>ANNEXURE E</b>	<b>Interview questions to School Principal</b>
<b>ANNEXURE F</b>	<b>Interview questions to Educators</b>

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 On becoming a principal**

One of the many problems I inherited as a recently appointed principal was the challenge of managing a group of non CS-educators employed at the school. Despite being a relatively small group consisting of five members, the management of this particular group was challenging and difficult. I was immediately confronted with issues such as excessive absenteeism, abuse of alcohol, undermining of authority, contestation of power, backbiting, laziness and a negative attitude towards authority. Several educators and learners also complained about the non-CS educators unconstructive and pessimistic attitude.

I recognized the important role they play or can play in terms of the service they provide to the school. Their daily interactions with educators, learners and parents impact directly on the effective running of the school. The difficulty I experienced in optimizing their potential to contribute to improving the general school climate has inspired me to undertake this research study. A further motivation to undertake the study was the general consensus amongst stakeholders that the attitudes of non CS-educators negatively affect the effective operation of school processes. This study will therefore investigate school stakeholder's perceptions of non- CS educators

contribution to an effective school climate and explore non- CS educators own views of the contribution they make to an effective school climate. Who or what is a non CS-educator and what role do they play at schools?

## **1.2. Non CS-educators**

Besides educators, many schools employ staff in non-educator positions. This staff component is known officially as non CS-educators and includes administrative and service personnel. Non CS-educators employed by the public service form 30% of the 1.4 million public servants employed in all state departments [Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) Annual Report: June 2000]. About half of the elementary workers are domestic workers (cleaners) in schools and hospitals, the rest are agricultural and construction workers (PSCBC Annual Report: June 2000). At schools non CS-educators fall into different categories:

### **1.2.1 Categories of non- CS educators**

In schools, non CS-educators include two groups namely, administrative workers (school secretaries and clerks) and elementary maintenance workers (cleaners) who have a specific function to perform at schools. The first group's role is purely administrative, viz, answering the telephone, handling the switchboard, arranging engagements and meetings, keeping the principal's diary, dealing with routine correspondence and enquiries, dealing with accounts for municipal services and

related enquiries and maintaining a filing system for records of correspondence, activities, legislation, directives, manuals, inventory, etc.

The latter group viz. non CS-educators, are divided into three categories:

- a) Post Class Cleaner I: They perform cleaning services of a routine nature.
- b) Post Class Cleaner II: This group performs similar functions as Class 1 workers, but has a higher level of independence and responsibility in the execution of these functions. This category of cleaner is second in charge and therefore takes responsibility to open and close the buildings and to manage the team if the foreman is absent.
- c) Post Class Foreman acts in a supervisory capacity over the above categories of worker and does normal cleaning duties (Personnel Administration Standards, 1997).

### **1.3 BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

If the work of non CS-educators is of such a straightforward and routine nature, what is the nature of the problem associated with managing this group or category of worker? The non-CS educator's daily responsibility is routine, mundane and restricted, resulting in a perception amongst non CS-educators of low status and self esteem. In 1994, the Government committed itself to reconstruct the education system of the country. The consistency of their commitment is evident since 1994 in a number of important education policy documents and legislation. Examples of these policies are the Reconstruction and Development Plan 1994, National Qualifications

Framework (1996), South African Schools Act of 1996 and Curriculum 2005 of 1997. This is further supported and defined in the introduction of Labour Policies, such as the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 and the Public Service Act of 1994 for non CS-educators. Combined with the South African Schools Act of 1996 these policies form the basis for non CS-educators to fully participate and contribute in the orderly and effective operation of school processes.

In our infant South African democracy, the above mentioned policies and legislation create the conditions for a school to become an effective organization. Schools operate effectively only once the conditions are created and a favourable school climate has been installed. Given the negative and destructive attitude I encountered from non CS-educators, I posed the question as to whether they had a role to play with regards to creating an atmosphere or climate that enhances the effective operations of the school. As principal, it was my responsibility to ensure that they were managed in such away as to enhance their contribution to the school. This research was thus undertaken to inform me about how best to accomplish this task.

Therefore the following research objectives emerged for this study.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

- 1.4.1 To explore school stakeholder perceptions of non-CS educator's contribution to the orderly and effective operation of school processes.**

- 1.4.2** To explore the perceptions of non CS-educators concerning the contribution they make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes.

## **1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- 1.5.1** How do school stakeholders perceive the role of non-CS educators with regards to the orderly and effective operation of school processes?
- 1.5.2** How do non CS-educators perceive themselves regarding the contribution they make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes?

## **1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

It is hoped that the research findings will help me as the principal determine to what extent the non CS-educators impact on the orderly and effective operation of school processes and how I can optimize their potential so that they can fully contribute to the orderly and effective operation of school processes. It is also hoped that educators will have a better understanding of the role non CS-educators play so that they can provide them the space and support to fulfill their role.

## **1.7 DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH**

This research will be soliciting the perceptions of school stakeholders with regards to the contribution non CS-educators make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes at one primary school in the Mitchell's Plain region.

## **1.8 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **1.8.1 CS educators**

The term refers to an educator employed by the National or Provincial Department of Education at a College or a School.

### **1.8.2 Non CS-educators**

The term refers to non-teaching staff employed at a college or a school . This group is divided into various categories, namely administration and custodial staff.

### **1.8.3 School stakeholders**

In this study, the term school stakeholders refers to the School Principal, Deputy Principal, Heads of Department, CS educators, non CS-educators, learners, the

Governing Body of the school, the parents of learners at the school and Community Organizations that serve the school.

#### **1.8.4 School effectiveness**

The literature has produced a variety of definitions of school effectiveness.

McGaw *et al.* (1991:2) argues that, “an effective school is one that achieves greater student learning than might have been predicted from the context in which it works”.

#### **1.8.5 School climate**

Howard *et al.* (1987:5) are of the opinion that the term “school climate” is used widely in the literature on school improvement. Freiberg and Stein (1999:11) defines school climate as the quality of the school that helps each individual feel personal worth, dignity and importance, while simultaneously helping create a sense of belonging to something beyond ourselves.

### **1.8 AN OUTLINE OF THE CHAPTERS**

#### **1.9.1 Chapter One: Introduction**

The first part of Chapter One outlined my encounter with inherited problems regarding the non CS-educator group and the challenges it presented to me as a new manager that

led to the development of the study. Some clarification is given regarding the types or categories of non CS-educators. The background and rationale deal with the educational change strategies that are mainly directed towards the educators and the learning they produce from students or learners. The omission of non CS-educators within this context raised the concern whether non CS-educators have a role to play in this regard. It is this thinking that has prompted me to design the stated research objectives and research questions. The latter part of the chapter outlines the delimitation of the research and also the definitions of terms.

## **1.9.2 Chapter Two: Literature Review**

The literature review focuses on school climate and school effectiveness in order to see the link between the two so that we can have a better understanding of non CS-educators in relation to the role they play in assisting the school to become effective. Factors that contribute to school climate and characteristics that emerged from school effectiveness studies are analysed and discussed to contextualise the role non CS-educators play or contribute to the creation of an effective school climate. There was minimal evidence of the precise role non CS-educators play or contribute to the creation of an effective school, confirming a definite gap in the educational research literature. A systems thinking approach is used as a guiding theoretical framework.

### **1.9.3 Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

This chapter outlines the methodology followed in collecting and analyzing the data. It addresses the selection of the research site and motivates why the specific site was selected. It also explains why participant observation and interviewing promised to be the most appropriate research techniques to employ. The chapter explains why, as a research approach, qualitative research was considered and why the case study was employed as research design in order to meet the research objectives.

### **1.9.4 Chapter Four: Analysis of data.**

This chapter presents an analysis of the participant observation and interview data gathered. Data was analysed and discussed under themes, taking into account the main purpose of this study and answering the researched questions. The first analysis was the data of the interview with the school principal. From this data three main themes emerged relating to issues of job description, interpersonal relationships, safety and security.

The second data analysis set was the interview with the educators. During this interview the following eight themes emerged. (1) reluctance to perform core duties, (2) interpersonal relationships, (3) role of the manager, (4) duties other than core duties, (5) different expectations, (6) reasons for poor performance of non CS-educators (7) uncertainty regarding the job description of non CS-educators and (8) reluctance to

perform core duties. The third data analysis set concerns the participant observation and interaction that was collected over a period of five days.

From this data two main themes and sub-themes emerged. All the findings were discussed and summarized. All the data analysed in this chapter will serve to introduce the critical analysis that forms part of the final chapter.

### **1.9.5 Chapter Five: Conclusion and recommendations**

Chapter Five brings the main findings of this research study to a close with key conclusions and recommendations. The study hopes to raise awareness concerning the contribution non CS-educators make to school processes and to address the gap in the literature regarding the role they play at schools. It further wishes to raise awareness amongst principals regarding the management of this group.

The following chapter presents a literature review on school climate and school effectiveness.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

We are twelve years into our new political and educational dispensation. As a school principal and a community leader I have become very discouraged as I witness very little evidence of real social change in the immediate school community. The area is plagued by crime, poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, an increasingly high school-dropout rate and an exodus of learners to perceived “better schools” in more affluent areas.

Further discouragement emerged from the challenge of managing a group of non CS-educators and the impact their uncooperative and pessimistic attitude have on the school. They are a small, but very powerful group who present the school manager with many problems such as excessive absenteeism, abuse of alcohol, undermining of authority, contestation of power, backbiting, laziness and a negative attitude towards any form of authority. Although the school has a good operational plan, we are very often drawn away from this plan as I need to “crisis manage” this group. Most of my time is spent in conflict resolution meetings with the group. From a management perspective I knew that the group cannot be ignored as they play an important role in terms of service delivery and interact on a daily basis with learners, educators and

parents. Failure to resolve their problems could lead to serious repercussions for the school in general. I was also not sure to what extent their attitude impacted on the community as I sensed deterioration in the relationship between the school and the community.

Fundamentally something was amiss; it seemed as if the school was not fulfilling its role as a change agent in the community, that the school was not contributing towards an improved quality of life and that the problems of the non CS-educators hindered our efforts to respond to the needs of the community.

At this stage I began developing the study so that I could address the inherent problems of the non CS-educators. This meant that I firstly needed to consult the literature regarding my role as manager and the responsibility I have to address the inherent problems and secondly, that I look at the role of the non CS-educators regarding these problems.

## **2.1 INTERVENTION OF THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

Niewenhuis and van Zyl (1994:1) identifies the school principal as a crucial role player in the way the school will function in practice. They further argue that the principal is a key figure in implementing change and in improving the quality of teaching and learning. This view is supported by Grobler (1998:23), who in his work on school climate and teams, confirmed the responsibility of the school principal in relation to

school climate. He argues that the principal as leader of the school should create a collaborative climate in order for effective teamwork to result in a culture of teaching and learning in the school Grobler (1998:23). As further confirmation of the crucial role of the school principal, Snyders and Anderson (1986:14) claim that the role shift for principals has been a movement away from priority attention to administration towards an emphasis on managing instructional and organizational growth. The literature confirms that the school principal has a responsibility and a definite role to play in improving the school. The next step was to address the inherent problems and therefore I needed to understand from the literature what role non CS-educators play regarding the orderly and effective operation of school processes in order to fully optimize their potential. With this background, the rest of the chapter sets out to:

- Review literature that defines school effectiveness and school climate and how they interrelate,
- Review literature on how to improve school climate with the purpose of reaching higher levels of school effectiveness.

This literature review would give the researcher a better understanding of school effectiveness and school climate. Secondly, the literature review would help frame the research method in order to explore school stakeholder perceptions of non CS-educators' contribution to the orderly and effective operation of school processes and also of non-CS educator's perceptions of the contribution they make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes. The synthesis of these perceptions would

assist me in devising management strategies that would resolve the problems emerging from this group. The new management strategies should begin addressing and improving the orderly and effective operations of school processes.

## **2.2 SCHOOL CLIMATE**

### **2.2.1 Introduction to school climate**

A desire to improve the school into a healthy, challenging and stimulating workplace has lead me to review literature on school effectiveness studies. These studies have produced a number of characteristics that is evident in most of the studies conducted by various researchers. One characteristic that is interesting for the purpose of this study is school climate. The literature claims a link between school climate and school effectiveness. A better understanding of the concept “school climate” and “school effectiveness” will allow me to respond to the issues outlined from a more informed perspective.

### **2.2.2 Definition of school climate**

Howard et al. (1987:5) are of the opinion that the term “school climate” is used widely in the literature on school improvement. The literature presents various definitions, a few of which I will now introduce.

Wynne (1989:236) argues that school climate is a complex matter and defines it as the combination of patterns of attitudes and beliefs in the school. Howard et al. (1987:5) has a different view to Wynne (1989:236) and claim that school climate is an atmosphere for learning that includes the feeling people have about school and whether it is a place where learning can occur. Authors like Freiberg & Stein (1999:11), and Rogers & Freiberg (1994:11) focus on the quality of the school but have different opinions as to the functions of school climate.

Rogers and Freiberg (1994:11) claims that a school's climate can define the quality of a school that creates healthy learning places; nurtures children's and parents' dreams and aspirations; stimulates teachers' creativity and enthusiasm, and elevates all of its members. The last definition comes from Litwin and Stringer (1968:5) who argue that school climate is the perceived subjective effect of the formal system, the informal style of the headmaster and other important environmental factors on the attitudes, beliefs, values and motivation of people who work in that particular school.

### **2.2.3 Brief discussion of the definitions**

The majority of authors hold differing views of what the definition of "school climate" is, but a common thread is evident throughout: school climate is determined by people and it has to do with school improvement as pointed out by Howard et al. (1987:5). People and especially the emotions of people as the determining factor are pointed out by Wynne (1989:236) who define school climate as the combination of patterns of

attitudes and beliefs in the school. This view is supported by Howard et al. (1987:5) who claim that school climate is an atmosphere for learning that includes the feeling people have about school and whether it is a place where learning can occur.

The improvement of the school in these definitions seems to be motivated by the patterns of attitude and belief, and the feelings of people. Contrary to these views, various other authors (Freiberg & Stein, 1999:11; Rogers & Freiberg 1994:11; Litwin & Stringer 1968:5) would respectively argue that factors such as the quality of the school and perceived subjective effect of the formal system, the informal style of the headmaster and important environmental factors are determining factors for school climate and not people. Irrespective of the determining factors, it is evident that these factors that can be created and therefore it is my opinion that it will need continuous effort to maintain it or to improve on it.

In the literature, the term “organisational climate” is also used as a synonym for “school climate”. For the sake of clarity and to eliminate confusion I considered it necessary to shed some light on the use of the terms “organisational climate” and “school climate” as they appear in the literature. In the literature, particularly from the USA, the terms “school climate” and “organisational climate” are often used synonymously (Metz 1996:102). The term organisational climate originates from industry and became an established part of the literature of educational administration in the 1970s (Maxwell and Thomas 1991: 72). Metz (1996:103) clarified the differences and relationship between the terms “school climate” and “organisational climate”. He argued that the

term “organisational climate” originated from a non-educational context and made reference to how workers experience the climate in an organisation. Mentz (1996:103) linked the three aspects (school, organisation and education) and used the following method of categorization that was devised by Basson et al. (1995:655). According to the categorization school climate consist, of the following two facets:

- Organisational climate: refers to how teachers experience the management aspects that influence the climate in the school.
- Educational climate: refers to how students experience the climate in the school, particularly as a result of their interaction with teachers.

Organisational climate is but one aspect that influences the school climate. The objective of the study is to go beyond the one aspect and to explore perceptions of school stakeholders within the broader school climate context. I found seven indicators identified by Grobler (1998:22) that he suggests contribute to school climate and described them as indicators. These indicators are: conformity to rules and procedures, responsibility, standards, rewards, clarity of organisation, warmth, support and leadership.

## **2.2.4 EXPLAINING THE FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO SCHOOL CLIMATE**

- **Conformity to rules and procedures** – refers to the degree to which members feel in agreement with the many rules, procedures, policies and practices to which they have to conform.
- **Responsibility** – refers to the personal responsibility given to people; the degree to which people feel they can make decisions.
- **Standards** – refers to the emphasis placed on quality performance.
- **Rewards** – refers to the degree to which members feel recognized and rewarded for good work.
- **Clarity of organisation** – refers to the feeling amongst members that things are well organized.
- **Warmth and support** – refers to the feeling that friendliness is a valued norm at the school.
- **Support and leadership** – refers to the willingness of members to accept leadership from qualified others.

According to Grobler (1998:22) the presence of these indicators or the absence thereof can be used to assess a positive or a negative climate at the school. Howard et al. (1987:6) on the other hand presents the following eight factors that he claims contributes to the quality of a school's climate for learning:

- Continuous academic and social growth – each student is developing academically, socially and physically in skills and knowledge.
- Respect – students see themselves as persons of worth.
- Trust – is having confidence that others can be counted on to do what they say they will do.
- High morale – people feel good about what is happening
- Cohesiveness – this quality is manifested by a person’s attraction to the school.
- Opportunities for input – every person has the opportunity to contribute ideas and know they have been considered.
- School - the school is self- renewing.
- Caring – individuals in the school feel that some other person or persons are concerned about them.

Several factors or indicators as described by Grobler (1998:22) present some similarities. The description of the various factors as presented by the authors differs, but the content or meaning is similar. Examples of such factors are:

- responsibility and opportunity for input
- standards and high morale
- rewards and opportunity for input
- warmth and respect and warmth and trust
- school renewal and caring and warmth

Grobler (1998:22) identified factors such as conformity, clarity of organisation, and support and leadership that have no similarities with the factors identified by Howard et al. (1987:6). A difference on the part of Howard et al. (1987:6) are factors such as continuous academic and social growth, and cohesiveness. Collectively these factors provide key insights into what affect school climate and its concomitant impact on the orderly and effective operation of school processes. I will now briefly examine and discuss the factors presented by Howard et al. (1987:6) and Grobler (1998:22)

#### **2.2.5.1 Continuous Academic and Social Growth**

According to Howard et al. (1987:6) each student develops academically, socially, and physically in skills and knowledge. The non CS-educators, too, are improving their skills and knowledge with regards to their particular assignments and as cooperative members of the education team. Howard et al. (1987:6) made reference to teaching staff and students in this context and excludes non CS-educators as no reference is made to them. The exclusion of non CS-educators might be because of the menial tasks they perform, or the fact that they are not trained as educators and therefore they are not recognised as part of staff. It is my opinion that the academic abilities of this group of workers might be limited, but they should have the opportunity to improve their skills and knowledge with regards to their particular assignments and as supportive members of the education team.

### **2.2.5.2 Respect**

According to Howard et al. (1987:6) and Grobler (1998:22) the presence of mutual respect amongst all school stakeholders can lead to high levels of self-esteem, respect and appreciation for each other. Students and staff members, including non CS-educators see themselves as persons of worth as their ideas are respected. Respect encourages sincerity and greater participation in any task that needs to be performed by both the educators and the non CS-educators at the school. Respect also has consequence for the management of the institution. A manager who is respected by his colleagues can manage them more effectively and educators and non CS-educators who are respected by their manager will perform better and make an even greater contribution to the workplace.

### **2.2.5.3 Trust**

Trust is the underlying factor in the confidence of people. A lack of trust on the part of the management of the school towards non CS-educators and vice-versa can impact negatively on the school climate and it can hamper the development of an effective school climate. Within the school context mutual trust is very important as it is expected of various stakeholders to work together in order to achieve school effectiveness.

#### **2.2.5.4 High morale**

“In a school with a high morale, people feel good about what is happening” and assigned tasks are diligently executed (Howard et al. 1987:6). Particularly, participation in decision-making processes make people feel good about achievements or attainment of goals. Such a feeling enhances the morale of people. Non CS-educators are very often excluded from decision making processes which make them feel isolated and demoralised. The achievement of success in the school is often not celebrated by both educators and non CS-educators because non CS-educators might have been excluded on the basis of the nature of the event for example a school concert or school sport event. For this reason participation of all school stakeholders should be encouraged. The exclusion of any stakeholder from participation in any planned event can lead to frustrations, which will subsequently have a negative effect on the morale of the institution. A negative morale will in turn impact on the achievement of an effective school climate.

#### **2.2.5.5 Cohesiveness**

Cohesiveness means interconnectedness and according to Howard et al. (1987:6) it is also synonymous to “a sense of belonging”. In order for non CS-educators to give of their best to the school they must experience a sense of belonging. If non CS-educators fail to experience this cohesiveness because of exclusion on the part of the school manager or the educators, hostility towards the school might be manifested and they will

become less productive. Negative attitudes and unproductiveness will undermine any attempt to create an effective school climate.

#### **2.2.5.6 Opportunities for input**

A fundamental element in almost all the definitions of school climate is the feelings of people. Freiberg and Stein (1999:11) for example refers in their definition to feelings of personal worth and dignity. It is thus important for non CS-educators to know that they have a voice at their place of employment and that there are opportunities for input. It is my opinion that if we deny non CS-educators the opportunity for input, then such action might have far reaching implications as it not only impacts on the feelings of the employees or the non CS-educators , but it also impacts on the climate of the school in general. Howard et al. (1987:6) argued that “when people feel they have no voice, it diminishes their self-esteem ....” It is not only the feelings of the school principal or the educators that influence school climate, but the feelings of all the stakeholders including the non CS-educators at the school.

#### **2.2.5.7 School Renewal**

Howard et al. (1987:6) argue that the school is self-renewing; it is growing, developing, and changing. Research on effective schools indicate that in such schools the staff members are confident of their abilities to change, improve, and manage the learning environment (Howard et al. 1987:6). It is my view that school renewal intentions can be

frustrated if non CS –educators are not confident of their abilities to change and to improve. In the case where the non CS –educators lack confidence in their abilities to change and to improve the learning environment, the manager of the school should assist in improving such confidence in order for the non CS –educators to be an integral part of school renewal.

#### **2.2.5.8 Caring**

Howard et al. (1987:6) claim that there should be a concern for one another in the school and that people are interested in one another. Synonyms for caring are kind, thoughtful, gentle, helpful, considerate, compassionate, concerned and loving. Ideally it would be wonderful if all staff members could be caring because that would contribute to an effective school climate. Caring is mutual, non CS-educators should be caring about educators and vice-versa, In fact all stakeholders at the school who are interested in achieving an effective school climate should be caring for each other. A caring atmosphere can be developed. In the school context, the school manager who is also the leader should set the example in this wonderful gesture of caring.

The manager furthermore has the responsibility to motivate and encourage teaching and non teaching staff members to care for one another. It is my opinion that many non CS-educators feel that they are not cared for, and therefore become frustrated and their frustration impacts on the climate of the school. It is often the reason that the school struggles to achieve an effective school climate.

## **2.2.6 DISCUSSION OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE SCHOOL CLIMATE FACTORS**

According to Howard et al. (1987:6) and Grobler (1998:22) these factors determine not only the school climate but also the quality of the school climate that prevails. The greater the evidence of these factors, the greater the degree of an effective school climate. All these factors are negotiable or open for discussions, therefore people can agree to it and make commitments to improve their contribution towards achieving these factors. It is common knowledge that people can only give what they have, or transfer unto others what they have, Consequently most of the factors are transferable. Factors such as respect, trust, high morale and caring are more easily transferable than the others. All the factors are realistic and achievable by all staff members as it does not demand special status or intellectual abilities. The average person can contribute effectively to these factors. A school climate improvement plan can be developed and monitored. These factors are also measurable and as a result schools can continuously improve their school climate.

A further observation is that the school climate factors that are presented in the literature only focus on educators and the school manager as role players and totally ignore the role of non CS-educators within the school climate contexts. I would like to demonstrate how school climate can be negatively impacted if non CS-educators are not engaged or if they respond negatively to those factors.

The very presence of non CS-educators and their interactions with school stakeholders have some influence on all factors as presented by Howard et al. (1987:6). It is the evidence of these factors that will give you a sense of the prevailing climate at the school. If, for example, non CS-educators respond negatively to any of these factors then it will impact on the climate of the school. One can argue that the improvement of the prevailing climate to an effective school climate is dependent on the collective efforts of all stakeholders and that the exclusion of any sector can be critical to achieving an effective school climate. Unlike the silence in the literature, my experience is that non CS-educators interact on a daily basis with educators, parents, the school manager and learners and that these interactions do impact on many of the school climate factors.

## **2.3 SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS STUDIES**

### **2.3.1 Definition of school effectiveness**

There are numerous definitions of school effectiveness or what constitute an effective school. Sergiovanni (1991:76) for example is of the opinion that “an effective school is understood to be a school whose students achieve well in basic skills as measured by achievement test”. McGaw *et al.* (1991:2) argue that, “an effective school is one that achieves greater student learning than might have been predicted from the context in which it works”. In summary, school effectiveness is coupled directly to student achievement.

### **2.3.2 The two generations of school effectiveness studies**

According to Creemers (1996: 38) the study of school effectiveness has a history of twenty years. He outlines two generations of school effectiveness studies and these studies will briefly be discussed under their respective headings:

#### **2.3.2.1 The first generation of school effectiveness studies**

The largest part of the early school effectiveness research was done in the United Kingdom and the United States of America followed by Israel and the Netherlands (Creemers 1996:37). The key findings of these studies indicate that a number of critical factors appear to be related to effectiveness. These factors include the following:

- Strong educational leadership,
  - high expectations of student achievement,
  - an emphasis on basic skills for learners by the educators,
  - a safe and orderly climate and frequent evaluation of pupil progress
- (Creemers, 1996:40).

Factors such as educational leadership and high expectations of student achievement clearly emphasize the role of the school principal and educators in relation to school effectiveness. Basic skills for learners and frequent evaluation of pupils progress make

further reference to educators but the contribution of non CS-educators is not mentioned and therefore appears not to be related to school effectiveness.

### **2.3.2.2 The second generation of school effectiveness studies**

These studies were carried out internationally after the mid 1980 s. Scheerens and Creemers (1989) drew on critiques of earlier school effectiveness studies and develop a comprehensive model of educational effectiveness (Creemers 1996:48). Similarly to the first generation of school effectiveness studies, the contribution of non CS-educators is not mentioned and therefore appears not to be related to school effectiveness.

### **2.3.3 CHARACTERISTICS THAT WE FIND IN EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS**

Various researchers such as Mortimore 1988; Levine & Lezotte 1990 and Reynolds et al. 1997; have engaged in school effectiveness studies and have come across characteristics that are found in most school effectiveness studies. I want to present some of the characteristics as identified by them, in order to shed some light on the possible contribution non CS-educators can make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes. I will further attempt to find a connection between these characteristics, my role as principal (manager) and non CS-educators.

## **2.3.4 A BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS REVEALED BY THE RESEARCH LITERATURE.**

### **2.3.4.1 Leadership**

Leadership, as a distinct characteristic, is identified by all the researchers and refers to the school principal as a good manager who understands the needs of the school, who shares power with the staff, consults on decision making issues, supports teachers, engages in firm and purposeful leadership and who has good recruitment skills. It is my opinion that leadership as a characteristic of an effective school has no direct bearing on non CS-educators. The school is made up of various sub-systems, for example, the finances, the curriculum, the Governing Body and non CS-educators. All these sub-systems function under the leadership of the school manager. His aim to achieve school effectiveness depends on his ability to synchronize and manage all the sub-systems effectively.

Failure to do so will result in constant crises. These crises are time consuming to resolve and normally disrupt well-planned schedules. If for example, there is conflict between non CS-educators, it can cause hostility and unwillingness to go the extra mile or even carelessness in terms of their duty. If the leader is constantly in crisis in terms of his management and leadership of the non CS-educator group, then it will affect the management of other sub-systems as more time will have to be spent with these systems. Ultimately, the constant crises will impact directly on school climate.

#### **2.3.4.2 Emphasis on teaching**

The second characteristic acknowledged by all the researchers is the emphasis on teaching or “academic focus” as Mortimore et al. (1988) describe it. There is greater emphasis on the academic with structured lessons and well designed instructional material. Teachers are stimulated and enthusiastic, there is clarity of purpose and effective teaching practices. Much time is devoted to reading, language and math. The coordination of the curriculum and instruction are important and programs are designed to ensure academic success. The underlying assumption in this case is also that the emphasis on teaching as a characteristic of an effective school has no bearing on non CS-educators. I will argue that these characteristics refer to teaching and the role of educators but have a bearing on non CS-educators as teaching and learning can only take place in an environment that is conducive for such activity.

A dirty and unhealthy environment will obviously not be conducive and therefore in this regard it is expected of non CS-educators to ensure that the environment is clean and neat in order to be favourable for learning. Broken equipment, such as a plug or an overhead projector, that is used to enhance teaching can frustrate the teaching process. In most cases within the school context the educators rely on the non CS-educators to fix the equipment.

### **2.3.4.3 A shared vision**

The third characteristic that is covered by most of them is a shared vision. This characteristic refers to the involvement of teachers in curriculum planning, in the decision making processes, such as splitting the classes they are to teach, and in ways of doing things. This characteristic also refers to staff building consensus on aims and values and to teachers working together as colleagues to carry out instruction to plan curriculum and to refine teaching practices. The underlying assumption is that the vision of the school is limited to the teaching staff. I am of the opinion that if non CS-educators are acknowledged as equal partners in value and worth , but different in function then surely they will share the same vision in terms of whole school development and be able to make meaningful contributions.

One of the processes where they can make an effective contribution is in terms of decision making. If we want them to experience a sense of belonging and ownership, we need to give them the privilege to partake in decision making processes. The most frustrating experience for any employee is to have other people make decisions on their behalf all the time. It will limit their ability to function independently and to be creative. Independent and creative thinkers can only be an asset to a school that strives towards effectiveness. Secondly, aims and values must be designed or established by all role players of the institution. Stakeholders who are overlooked when aims and values were

established, will find it difficult to submit to those aims and values. It will be easy for them to undermine these values as it does not really belong to them. Clear aims are almost a prerequisite if a school intends to become effective. A further prerequisite will be that all stakeholders understand, commit and own those aims.

#### **2.3.4.4 A positive climate**

A positive climate was another characteristic that featured prominently as an important characteristic for school effectiveness. The literature indicates that there should be a pleasant atmosphere with a climate conducive to learning. According to Sergiovanni (1991:218) school climate is interpersonal in tone and substance and is manifested in the attitude and behaviors of teachers, supervisors, students, and principals at work.

Non CS-educators interact on a daily basis with educators, learners and parents and therefore their attitude and behaviour can contribute to either a positive climate or it can undermine all attempts by the other stake holders to create a positive climate.

Grumbling and unpleasant non CS-educators will reflect negatively and will be in conflict with the objectives of the school to create a positive climate. A negative attitude in response to a request to perform a certain duty or duties can also impact in a negative way. Non CS-educators, as valuable human resources contribute equally with teachers, students, and principals towards bringing about a positive climate. Based on the above mentioned reasons, we should consider recognizing them for their contribution to school effectiveness.

#### **2.3.4.5 Monitoring pupils' progress**

There should be an orderly environment, with specific rules and regulations and high expectations of students. Monitoring of pupils' progress is the other fundamental characteristic. Reynolds et al (1997) is of the opinion that there should be well established mechanisms in place for monitoring the performance and progress of pupils, classes and the entire school. The underlying assumption is that there is no connection between these groups as this is a specific teacher's function. I want to argue that non CS-educators can help to create an orderly environment, become familiar with the rules and regulations and help to enforce them. If learners for example litter or play in the garden or smoke in the toilets then non CS-educators should have the liberty to deal with them.

#### **2.3.4.6 Parental involvement**

Parental involvement is an equally important characteristic. It is argued by Sergiovanni (1991:218) that the school must have a good partnership with the community. There must be good communication and a working relationship with parents in the community. Parents must also be included in decision-making at schools. Parental involvement and good partnerships are encouraged by the school principal and the educators.

At some schools non CS-educators assist with gate duty which mainly has to do with access control. Parents are prohibited from collecting learners at their classrooms and collect them at the gate. It is at this point where parents and non CS-educators interact. Disgruntled parents often blow off steam at them and hope that they would convey their sentiment to educators or the management. Most of the non CS-educators also live in the area where the school is situated and based on this they interact with parents on a regular basis. Non CS-educators who are committed to the school and who believe in school effectiveness will encourage parents to become involved in the school. Most non CS-educators also stay in the community and on that level they can promote good partnerships and parental involvement. In conclusion I would argue that although the link between the group and parental involvement is not direct, but as stated above, they can play an indirect role in promoting parental involvement. This relationship between non CS-educators and parents is more prevalent in less affluent areas where parents relate easier to them than the educators or the manager. It also occurs more often where people don't always understand one another's language. In less affluent coloured areas for example, people would speak Afrikaans, but when they communicate with educators or the principal they switch over to English which they themselves often find very difficult to speak.

#### **2.3.4.7 High Expectations for Student Performance**

High expectations were also identified by most of the researchers. There should be high expectations and requirements for student performance. It is also argued that there

should be high expectations in all the facets of the school. This characteristic does not define the role of the non CS-educators and therefore I would like to argue that there are a number of facets that include the co-operation of this group. Firstly, there should be high expectations in terms of service delivery. This ought to include the maintenance and cleaning services provided by non CS-educators.

Secondly, there should be high expectations in terms of the neatness of the school building and the tidiness of the classrooms. Schools are judged by the community for their neatness which in turn impacts on their marketing of the school. In this regard non CS-educators are affected directly as they are responsible for the cleaning of the school. Failure on the part of the management to create high expectations in terms of service delivery can result in an unhealthy environment that will be criticized by the community.

Thirdly, a school that functions well should have high expectations in terms of working relationships amongst all the employees at the school. If for example non CS-educators do not work in peace and harmony with the educators or the manager, then it will disrupt the smooth operation of the school processes.

Finally, there should be high expectations in terms of the enforcement of the code of conduct for learners. Non CS-educators spend some time with the learners during the day, especially during intervals. As staff members, they must have the authority to call a learner to order who violates the code of conduct. If only selected staff members have

such authority, then learners will undermine the code of conduct. High operational expectations can include the duties that Non CS-educators perform and that can blend in well with the request for high expectations all round.

### **2.3.5 COMMENT ON THE ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS**

From the above characteristics it is evident that the roles of the educator and the management of the school are crucial in bringing about school effectiveness. Little indication has emerged in the literature of the precise role non- CS educators play or the contribution they make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes. The only characteristic that can be directly linked to non CS-educators is “a positive climate”. It is for this reason that I continue to examine this specific characteristic as the literature might shed some light on the contribution non CS-educators make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes.

### **2.3.6 DISCUSSION OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS STUDIES AND FACTORS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE**

Little indication has emerged in the literature of the precise role non- CS educators play because the assumption is that their tasks are of a lowly and menial nature and have very little importance. What I now strongly begin to argue is that in terms of their job description, irrespective how menial or insignificant we perceive their tasks

to be, all things add something to the school and if it is not done it creates a notion that the school is not very effective. So, one of my tasks as a manager is to make sure that these menial tasks get done well, because they impact on the impression people have of the school. The other factor we need to take into account is how they impact on the school system. If for example the non CS-educators fail to perform a menial task such as sweeping the classroom, that will impact on the teaching staff who cannot teach in a classroom that is not clean. Their discontent will in turn impact on me as the manager of the school as certain complaints and issues will be brought to my attention. In an attempt to swiftly deal with the complaint and issues, I will have to stop other important matters, such as consulting with parents or completing administrative tasks to deal with the menial task. Irrespective of how lowly and menial the task is, it does affect other interacting, interrelated, and interdependent parts of the system including mine as the manager.

I carry the responsibility as the manager of the school to ensure that menial tasks are done and done well so that I can perform other duties without any unnecessary disruptions. It is also my responsibility to ensure that all the interdependent components of the school system work together with the view to attaining a conducive school climate which could lead to higher levels of school effectiveness. What I have argued from the beginning was that there are certain factors that prevented me from doing that. What I encountered was a particular negative attitude and behavior such as excessive absenteeism, abuse of alcohol, undermining of authority, contestation of power, backbiting, lack of vision and laziness. My personal experience as a

school manager has taught me otherwise and I have the sense that the absence of the non CS-educator component of employee from the school will greatly inhibit the schools from attaining an effective status. It also made me realize that there is no guideline to assist principals in terms of how this group can be more effective in the schools in order to contribute to a favorable school climate.

## **2.4 SYSTEMS THINKING APPROACH**

With a better understanding of our issues regarding school climate, I have chosen a systems approach as the guiding theoretical framework. I will now briefly explain the rationale for the systems thinking approach, but before I deal with that, let us briefly look at the concept “systems” and “systems thinking”.

### **2.4.1 The concept “systems”**

Grobler (1998:1) and Aronson (1996:1) share the same views on the concept “systems” and are of the opinion that a system is a number of interdependent components that form a whole and work together with a view to attaining a common goal. Grobler (1998:1) referred to the school as an example of a system and argues that, when viewing the school as a system, one needs to think of it as a whole, taking into consideration the interrelationship between the different components, and their relationship with the external environment.

#### **2.4.2 The “systems thinking” concept**

Aronson (1996:1) saw the value of systems thinking in the fact that you can design smart, lasting solutions to problems and defines systems thinking as the art of seeing the world in terms of wholes rather than fragmented parts, and the practice of focusing on the relationships among the parts of a system. She further argues that:

in its simplest sense, systems thinking gives you a more accurate picture of reality, so that you can work with a system’s natural forces in order to achieve the results you desire (Daniel,1996:1).

#### **2.4.3 Rationale for systems thinking approach**

According to Grobler (1998:1) the school is a system that consists of a number of interdependent components that form a whole and work together with a view to attaining a common goal. For the purpose of this study the common goal is a conducive school climate which can lead to higher levels of school effectiveness. Non CS-educators are part of the school system and like the other staff members; they are an interdependent component who need to work with all the other staff members in order for the school to obtain an effective school climate. But their issues, behaviour and conduct are affecting the school climate and subsequently the effectiveness of the school.

At this stage I briefly want to discuss the non CS –educators under the following headings: the significance of the job description, the purpose for creation of the non CS-educator post and the implications regarding the absence of this group. I also want to discuss the profile of the typical non CS-educator and the non CS-educators and the school system. The purpose of this discussion is to provide a better understanding of the significance of this group to the school.

## **2.5 INTRODUCTION TO NON CS-EDUCATORS**

### **2.5.1 Significance of the job description**

Their job description seems to be menial and unrelated to school effectiveness, but if these tasks are not executed well it can have a disruptive impact on the smooth operation and management of the school. I briefly want to give an overview of how it came about that we use unskilled labour in our schools and also discuss its worth under the following headings:

- purpose for creation of non CS-educator post,
- implications regarding the absence of this group
- profile of the typical non CS-educator

### **2.5.2 Purpose for creation of non CS-educator post.**

All the facilities that are provided for the purpose of education must be kept clean and in a good condition as effective learning can only take place in an environment that is conducive for teaching and learning. For this reason the state provides schools with a group of workers that perform cleaning and maintenance duties. These tasks are mainly performed by unskilled workers who are called non CS-educators.

### **2.5.3 Schools without non CS-educators: Implications**

Failure to regularly clean classrooms can frustrate educators and cause them to complain to the school manager. Constant complaints will in turn annoy the manager as he will be forced to leave other important matters to give attention to these problems. A dirty and unhealthy school can also result in parents not wanting to enrol their children at the school. This will have an effect on the viability of the school, meaning no learners, no school and consequently it will become a management problem. Complaints from community members to the Education Department about the dirty and unhealthy condition of the school will result in calls for an explanation from the management of the school to the Education Department. The above-mentioned scenarios clearly indicate that the absence of this group of workers from a school, or failure to recognize them as a sub-system that must function well, can impact negatively on the smooth operation of the school processes and frustrate all attempts to become effective. Now that we have

discussed menial labour and its worth, it would be appropriate at this stage to look at the profile of a typical non CS-educator.

#### **2.5.4 Profile of the typical non CS-educator**

This worker can either be a male or a female with little or no formal education or skills. Their age varies from eighteen to fifty five years of age. They earn a minimum wage with few promotion or training opportunities. Their pension and other benefits are low and most of them struggle to survive. In many cases they have a second job or buy and sell goods to supplement their income. This group has a different mandate to the educators in terms of their job description, but they form an integral part of the school as an organization. This brings us to a brief discussion on non CS-educators and how they (as a sub-system) fit into the school as an organization.

#### **2.5.5 Non CS-educators and the school system**

In terms of the broader picture, this group has a specific cleaning and maintenance function that does not happen in isolation. They function within the context of a school system which consists of various interdependent components of which they are one. All schools strive to become organized and effective so that they can become purposeful in terms of responding to the needs of the community. The success of the school depends on how well all the interdependent components work together and how skillful the school manager manages the school. The non CS-educators that represent a particular

component are currently not functioning effectively as they grapple with issues relating to their conduct. Consequently they impact on other components that in turn impacts on the school system. Unless effective intervention is considered, a conducive school climate for the purpose of improving school effectiveness will not be achieved.

## **2.6 CONCLUSION**

It is for these reasons that I was motivated to research their issues, behaviour and conduct in order to address the issues of developing a school climate which could lead to higher levels of school effectiveness. With this in mind, the empirical research component of this study will actively seek the opinions, views and perceptions of various stakeholders in one school setting to begin to address the issues of school climate. My particular methodology was to use a case study to extract the perceptions of this group of workers. I accomplished it through an interview with the school principal, a focus group interview with the teachers and through participant observation technique. This meant going there myself to engage with this group of workers. The methodology I used to do this follows in the next chapter.

Chapter three will outline and argue in detail the methodology used in this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter outlines the methodology used in the collection and analysis of the data regarding school stakeholder perceptions of the contributions non-CS educators make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes. The chapter gives a detailed account of the research design and approach pursued in collecting data. It also explains why the school of choice was identified as the preferred research site.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

##### **3.2.1 Case study methodology**

The literature on research revealed different types of research designs.

Bouma (1993:88) and Groenewald (1986:43) identified the following five types of designs; the case study, the historical study, the typological study, the experiment and the survey. It was important to employ an appropriate design that would meet the research objectives. I wanted to explore and analyze the perceptions of the subjects and in so doing, as Gilbert(1979:78) argues, gain new insight, help modify pre-existing beliefs and point out gaps in knowledge.

When I examined values and limitations of various designs, the case study appealed to me the most as a variety of the elements in the case study linked with the research objectives. Case studies have proved to be particularly useful when applied to similar research objectives where perceptions are explored.

I examined definitions of a case study as presented by various authors such as (Groenewald, 1986; Bell, 1993; Gilbert, 1979; Behr, 1988) and found that all of them underlined the thorough study of a single unit as a key element of the case study. Bell (1993:8 ) further argues that the case study gives an opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time scale. The description of the case study as a thorough study indicates that this design may avail itself of a variety of data sources (Groenewald 1986:44). Examples of these data sources are interviews, focus group interviews and observations.

### **3.3 Setting: Why I chose the particular primary school**

#### **3.3.1 Research site**

The particular primary school was chosen using the following criteria:

### **3.3.2 Location**

The research location would be a primary school in the Mitchell's Plain district where the context would be relevant to that of the school that I manage and where the problems might be similar.

### **3.3.3 Accessibility**

A case study was considered as a research design with a multi method data collection approach, meaning that an interview, a focus group interview and participant observation method would be used to collect data. Accessibility to the research site was thus very important.

### **3.3.4 Willingness to participate**

The willingness of the Principal and all the other stakeholders to participate in the research was a further motivation to utilise the school for the case study.

### **3.3.5 Representation**

For the purpose of this study, I wanted to conduct the research at a school where non CS-educators were well represented in number and diversity. I consulted the Western Cape Education Departmental list regarding the distribution of non CS-educators within

the Mitchell's Plain region. The school I chose as the research site, appealed to me as it had four non CS-educators in comparison to most of the other schools in the region whose numbers varied from two to three.

### **3.4 Research techniques**

For the purpose of this study, participant observation and interviewing promised to be the most appropriate data collecting strategies. I will now clarify the exclusion of other sources and argue in favour of the use of the interviewing and participant observation as data collecting sources for this study.

#### **3.4.1 Interviewing**

The participants that were interviewed comprised a number of stake holders at the school. This group consisted of the school principal, a group of randomly selected CS-educators and all the non CS-educators. A ninety minute session was reserved for the focus group interview and the interview with the principal respectively.

I wanted to give the respondents freedom to respond in an unrestrictive manner and therefore used semi structured questions that were open-ended. I wanted to find out not only what happened to the participant during school hours at the school but also his or her perception of those events and the meaning ascribed to them ( Martin,1990:106).

These interviews were taped and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

The study wants to explore and analyse perceptions. Bell (1993:91) holds the view, that a skillful interviewer can follow up ideas, probe responses and investigate motives and feelings and therefore it is my opinion that the perceptions of people are reflected in the answers they give when interviewed. Bogdan (1982) describes the interview as a tool that is used to gather descriptive data in the subject's own words so that the researcher can develop insight on how subjects interpret some pieces of the world. Behr (1988:150), underlines the flexible approach of the technique and claims that the interview is a direct method of obtaining information in a face-to-face situation.

Like other data collecting methods, the interview method has strengths and weaknesses. The failure of the researcher to obtain consistent, reliable and appropriate data will influence the strength of the technique. According to Skager & Weinberg (1971), strengths and weaknesses are relying in its dependence upon the establishment of a relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. Only when the respondent feels comfortable and free, will he or she express his or her true beliefs and opinions. My objective with this method ultimately is to ensure that I conduct a good or a strong interview so that, as stated by Bogdan (1982) "it can produce rich data filled with words that reveal respondent perspectives".

The technique also presents a number of advantages and disadvantages as pointed out by Sax (1979). To strengthen my argument in favour of the use of the interview as a data collection method I want to suggest four of the advantages as presented by Sax (1997:233). The interview is flexible and applicable to many different types of problems.

- It is useful in obtaining responses from young children or illiterates.
- The flexibility of the interview is advantageous to respondents as it allows the respondent the opportunity to collect his or her thoughts and to respond leisurely.
- Respondent have the opportunity to respond comfortably.
- The respondents has the opportunity to ask for further information.

It allows the investigator to observe both what the respondent has to say and the way in which it is said. It is useful in collecting personal information, attitudes, perceptions, or beliefs by probing for additional information. It attempts to develop rapport between the interviewer and the respondent. The interview technique helps the respondent to be comfortable and allows the interviewer to extract data that is not directly observable. This technique can ultimately benefit the study as the research objectives can without difficulty be accomplished.

### **3.4.2 Participant observation**

I want to introduce this short discussion with some background information. For a period of one week I worked with the non CS-educators and subsequently I had the opportunity to observe and engage with them. The purpose was to observe and gather information with regards to:

- Their interaction with other stakeholders

- Their role as non CS-educators within the school context.
- The contributions they make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes.

The data collection process took ten days which included the interviews and the participant observation process. Participant observation was the main source of data collection and was followed up by interviews. As a qualitative researcher I wanted to observe the behaviour of a group of people within a work situation. My intention was to participate in all the activities and to observe it from that position. This method of observation is in keeping with the view of Groenewald (1986:38), who states that no intermediate observer is at work and therefore there are no degrees of remoteness in the relationship between the observer and that which is observed. The observer thus has the benefit of being an eyewitness. A review of literature regarding observational studies shows that there are two types of observations, namely participant observation and non-participant observation. According to Skager & Weinberg

...there are two distinct advantages to the use of participant observation as opposed to non-participant observation. The first advantage is that one is observing "natural" behaviour and secondly, the relationship of the observed to the observer will be similar to the relationship of true members within the group. (1971:106)

Participant observation had greater advantages than non-participant observation as mentioned above. Participant observation is more reactive than non-participant observation and therefore affords greater opportunity to influence the objectives of the study.

The following chapter presents and discusses the data which was obtained through Interviewing and Participant observation.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents an analysis of the participant observation and interview data gathered. The data is analyzed taking into account the main purpose of the study and answering the research questions. The analysis of the various data sources is discussed separately under the headings that follow. The first to be discussed is the interview with the school principal.

#### **4.1 ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW WITH THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL**

Three major themes emerged from the analysis of the interview with the school principal. The themes relate to issues of job descriptions of non CS-educators, interpersonal relationships amongst non CS-educators and safety and security within the school.

#### **4.1.1 Job description**

##### **4.1.1.1 Clarification of categories of non CS-educators**

The principal outlined the specific categories of non CS-educators in response to a question on the nature of their work. He identified two groups, namely the cleaning staff and the administration staff. It was agreed that for the purpose of this study we only discuss issues relating to the cleaning staff. This category of worker is further divided into sub-divisions of seniority namely: Post class cleaner I, Post class cleaner II and Post class foreman. All the workers performed cleaning duties but workers in senior positions had more independence and responsibility.

##### **4.1.1.2 Duties of non CS-educators**

The principal identified three types of duties performed by this group as defined in the official job description of the Western Cape Education Department (Personnel Administration Standards 1997). These duties comprise cleaning, maintenance and special projects. Cleaning and maintenance duties are performed on a daily basis while special projects happen occasionally. Cleaning or custodial duties comprise the cleaning of the school grounds and the classrooms, toilets and the administration building. Maintenance on the other hand includes replacing windows panes, replenishing light bulbs, painting the building and general minor repairs etc.

Cleaning and maintenance are the core duties, anything else comprise special projects. These special projects can relate to anything from creating infrastructure for a computer lab to assisting in fundraising activities. Special projects are not core duties or basic duties, but are compulsory according to the principal. This view he confirmed when he said;

... and then we look at special projects that the school identifies and where you...it will also be expected of you to... to get involved in those particular projects – that's over and above ... their basic duties that they... that they have to perform. (Transcript 1:2)

This opinion of the principal that non CS-educators perform special projects that fall outside the boundaries of their official job description is according to him not optional, but compulsory and technically core duties now include special projects.

#### **4.1.1.3 Efficiency in accomplishing task or functions**

The principal claimed that the group is about 70% efficient in accomplishing tasks or functions and justified this claim by saying that:

I think probably the reason for it is that these guys are demotivated. ...their morale is not very high at the present moment. (Transcript 1:4)

Low salaries, personal circumstances and socio-economic conditions in general are the main contributing factors for their low morale and lack of motivation. The principal obviously knows his team and it seems that the 70% efficiency that is achieved is done through encouragement and reprimanding his team. He points out that they do the bare minimum and do not always use their initiative and that he occasionally has to remind them of their job-description. At times he even makes arrangements with them to complete unfinished work or tasks the following week.

It also seems that financial difficulties affect their abilities to be efficient. Even their absenteeism from work is related to their personal circumstances as they do not always have money to travel to and from work. The principal expressed this view by saying that:

Okay and then because of their personal circumstances... also it leads to absenteeism. You know, sometimes they don't even have money to get to school, do you know what I'm saying? If they stay quite a distance from school... so that means they stay absent.

(Transcript 1:7)

#### **4.1.4 The principal's perception of non CS-educators**

The principal's perception of non CS-educators in terms of their duties is underpinned in the following statement.

...look, they're performing important duties here at the school...

(Transcript 1:5)

He recognises their duties or their contribution to the school not as trivial, but as important.

#### **4.1.5 Status / Class differences between CS and non CS-educators**

In spite of this important contribution non CS-educators make to the school, he observed that some educators sometimes do not appreciate them. They are discriminatory and do not treat them equally as staff members. As an example he said,

some educators feel that if they mess it's fine, they don't have to clean up, because they have cleaning staff to do the work.

(Transcript 1:5)

This attitude can be based on the perception of some educators that they are more superior than non CS-educators, that their qualifications and job descriptions raise them above non CS-educators. The difference in salaries contributes to a more comfortable lifestyle for some educators and allows them to make more choices in terms of obtaining materialistic items. There is obviously nothing wrong with status and class, but it can become very negative if it is used as a yardstick to discriminate against your own colleagues.

The principal sees absenteeism, regular early-leaving from the school and tardiness as being directly related to low salaries and personal circumstances. He has this notion that if a worker performs duties that are over and above what is expected of him or her, that such a worker should be rewarded with an incentive. He is against unfairness and exploitation in the workplace and believes that workers should be acknowledged for their contributions. An incentive is normally given to someone who has completed a task and therefore indicates an acknowledgement for the task. Acknowledgement for work well done can validate a sense of fairness on the part of management. The Western Cape Education Department has an incentive scheme for non CS-educators who produce excellent work. All Western Cape schools can nominate any candidate of their choice that has produced excellent work. Each nomination is considered by a panel and only one candidate in each Metropole qualifies for the 14<sup>th</sup> cheque. The principal is critical about the 14<sup>th</sup> cheque incentive and feels that it is unfair to expect all the non CS-educators of Mitchell's Plain to compete for one 14<sup>th</sup> cheque. He argues that there should be an incentive for each institution. The inefficiency of non CS-educators is as a direct result of their poor socio-economic circumstances.

#### **4.1.6 Additional duties**

The school had identified many projects and expected non CS-educators to be involved in these projects. This expectation in most instances meant that non CS-educators had to perform a duty that was over and above their core duties. Most of these duties had nothing to do with cleaning or maintenance and therefore comprised duties performed over and above their core duties. The involvement of the non CS-educators was based on the expectations of the principal. Examples of these functions included fundraising projects, assistance with First Aid, supervision of learners and assisting with the infrastructure for the computer lab. The creation of the infrastructure consisted of the remodelling of a classroom including the construction of tables and installation of the new computers.

It seemed that the computer lab was a very successful initiative undertaken by the group which made the principal very proud. He said:

...I've highly commended those guys... (Transcript 1:9)

For the principal an incentive would have been the ideal thing to give these workers for all their hard work and even the sacrifices they made over a weekend. However, he was very disappointed that the school could not remunerate them due to financial restrictions. This did not stop the principal from showing his appreciation; he made some internal arrangement with the management team and gave them some time off,

meaning that they could arrange with him to either come to school late or leave early from school on a particular day.

Another additional duty was the assistance given to the voluntary workers who managed the feeding scheme program. Volunteers were assigned to prepare the food and to distribute it to the needy learners. It was the responsibility of non CS-educators to ensure that the room they used for the preparation of meals was neat and tidy and that the food was stored in a safe place.

#### **4.1.7 Interpersonal Relationships**

The principal claimed to have an open door policy with all staff members and described himself as a person that is straightforward and who understands the non CS-educators. He further claimed that they feel free to consult with him if they have problems. Sometimes they become very sensitive when he reprimanded them but he needs to teach them to be accountable. In his own words he said that:

You need to consult with me continuously, if you're not going to come in a particular day... you need to make contact with the school and if you do what's expected of you and if you take accountability for... for actions... for your actions, then there shouldn't be a problem. (Transcript 1:10)

The principal confirmed that there were some complaints from non CS-educator staff members who sometimes feel that they are not recognised by educators as staff members. Their grievances were based on the fact that they were sometimes included in staff meetings and at other times they were excluded from the meetings, causing an inconsistency that affected their status. There is a perception amongst certain educators, that they are in a better social class than non CS-educators because of their qualifications and the type work that they do. These educators do not easily socialise with non CS-educators and treat them as cleaners only. Despite these tensions, the principal was optimistic that all staff members got on well and that they do not have major problems with regards to discrimination.

He was confident that non CS-educators were familiar with their job description and that requests to perform duties outside their official or core duty was a way to empower them. According to the principal, these additional functions should not impact on their core duties and he would engage in consultation with the rest of the team if he needed a member to perform an additional function. Non CS-educators are very eager and competent to perform additional functions. Non CS1 for example has excellent administrative abilities and knows how to operate all the printing equipment. Besides filing and assisting with the enrolment of learners, she is also familiar with and understands the purpose and use of various administrative forms of the WCED. Should the secretary be absent, the principal relies on Non CS1 to assist in that office.

The establishment of the infrastructure for the computer room on the other hand was a team effort and demonstrated a wonderful co-operative spirit were everybody worked

together. An additional benefit for the school was the computer literacy skills amongst non CS-educator members that emerged from the project. Two of the workers have now become computer literate as a direct result of the project.

Other benefits as a result of good relationships at the school are the contributions of Non CS 3 in that he not only co-ordinates the computer literacy program, but coaches the school choir as well. The fact that he is currently studying towards a music degree is a direct result of the principal's motivation and the opportunity he created for personal development. Developments in terms of successful projects are examples of good working relationships.

...but I would say, overall the working relationship is fine...

(Transcript 1:23)

#### **4.1.8 Safety and security**

The school is situated in an area where gangsterism and gang related activities posed a serious threat to the safety of the community at large. Schools were especially targeted by gangs as they recruited young boys from the school. In spite of claims such as:

We don't have a security problem.

(Transcript 1:29)

The Foreman was instructed to put safety measures in place as part of their safety policy in order to prevent people from entering the school illegally. It was further expected of him to make regular rounds to ensure that unauthorised people did not enter the premises. Another claim the principal made was that the safety of learners was not part of the non CS-educator's duties:

Look, at the end of the day, I need to make it quite clear that, that seeing to the safety of the learners, are not part of the job description. (Transcript 1:30)

However, in terms of the safety and security arrangements at school, non CS-educators were called upon to perform security duties and had to be alert to security breaches. An electronic gate with a surveillance camera was installed to assist with access control but the gate was out of order. The current security procedures were that non CS-educators keep all the gates locked and that the General Foreman (caretaker) takes responsibility to unlock the gates for visitors and escort them to the office.

The other important safety aspect was the access to First Aid. Non CS1 attended a workplace skills training program, obtained a certificate in First Aid and is officially responsible for First Aid at the school. This is one of the many training programmes offered by The Western Cape Education Department. These programs are designed to assist with the development of non CS-educators.

#### **4.1.9 Summary**

It seems that there is much uncertainty on the part of the principal regarding the job description which affects the efficiency of the group. An interesting observation is the extent to which the principal justifies their inefficiency by arguing that their morale is not very high because of low salaries and that their personal circumstances is one of the causes they do the bare minimum . It also seems as if there is an imbalance in terms of core duties and additional functions as additional functions outweigh the core functions. What is very impressive is the willingness of the workers to perform functions that are over and above their core duty. Non CS-educators are not obliged to perform these duties but it can be assumed that they engage in these activities for the sake of good neighbourliness and essentially, a good relationship with the principal. These contributions will ultimately be an advantage to the school as it affects school culture in a very positive way.

#### **4.2 ANALYSIS OF THE FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW WITH EDUCATORS.**

The second analysis that we are going to discuss is that of the group of educators

#### **4.2.1 Introduction**

The focus group consisted of five educators. The duration of the interview was an hour and fifteen minutes. The goal of the interview was to gain some insight into the perceptions of a selected group of school stakeholders, regarding the contribution non CS-educators make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes. The interview was taped and transcribed verbatim for analysis. In the data analysis I identified eight themes for the purpose of interpretation and discussion of the findings. They are (1) perceived reluctance of non CS-educators to perform core duties, (2) interpersonal relationships, (3) role of the manager, (4) duties other than core duties, (5) differing expectations, (6) reasons for poor performance of non CS-educators and (7) uncertainty regarding the job descriptions of non CS-educators. For reasons of confidentiality the five educators were coded as T1, T2, T3, T4 and T5.

#### **4.2.2 Uncertainty regarding the job description of non CS -educators.**

The group of educators were of the opinion that the non CS-educators fulfilled two different functions at the school, namely their core duties and additional duties. Core duties, as mentioned by the respondents consisted of cleaning and maintenance while additional duties included assistance with fundraising events, assistance with the provision of music during assemblies, support in the computer lab, assistance with printing, substituting for the secretary and supervision of learners. This opinion was in

line with the principal's interpretation as well. T1 reported the wide range of duties has brought about confusion in terms of their job description.

...we don't know what their job description is, you see and this is where there's some confusion, or let's say unsureness.

(Transcript 2:4)

Even though most of the respondents experienced the same uncertainties regarding the job descriptions of the non CS-educators, they all seemed to have this common understanding that non CS-educators are responsible for cleaning and maintenance. T1 pointed out that there were different role-players at the school and that each one had their specific role to perform. Educators were responsible for education and therefore teaching should be their role. Non CS-educators on the other hand had to see to the cleaning in order to complement the teaching. The importance of the cleaning function was highlighted by various respondents. T3 for example claimed that dirty toilets posed a health risk for learners and dirty toilets are in conflict with the teaching of cleanliness. In T1's case, during most of her teaching, the learners sat on the mat; a dirty mat posed a health risk and a stumbling block for both learners and educator. According to all the respondents all cleaning and maintenance functions were the responsibility of the non CS-educators. T4 is of the opinion that:

...the whole cleaning of the school, maintaining of the building, the playgrounds all the work needs to be done, you know, there

should be a holistic approach on the whole school, but the... the non-CS Educators should take the lead in... in doing it. (Transcript 2:17)

Amongst some of the respondents there were mixed opinions on whether the non CS-Educators understood their job descriptions. T1 pointed out she was present on numerous occasions when they were told by the principal what they had to do. T4 on the other hand felt that since they applied for the job and were interviewed before accepting the job, they should therefore have known what the job entailed.

T4's concern was that management expected of non-CS educators to perform their core duties and at the same time they expected them to engage in additional functions that sometimes enjoyed priority over the core functions. The difficulty for the non CS-educators in this situation seemed to be the balance they had to maintain between additional duties and core duties. T4 said:

...is it important for the non-CS Educators to fulfil the role overall on the school, in terms of fund-raising and, and all the other things we've mentioned now, or is it important for them to fulfil their primary role, which is to look at the cleanliness at the school and maintaining that...

(Transcript 2:6)

T2 was in agreement with T1 that educators should teach and non-CS Educators should clean but emphasized that these two functions must go hand in hand to ensure the development of the school. It seemed that co-operation between non-CS Educators and educators could impact on the development of the school. A good working relationship could be to the advantage of the development of the school and a problematic working relationship could hinder the development of the school.

#### **4.2.3 Factors influencing the poor performance of non CS-educators.**

The respondents were very uncertain regarding the contribution non-CS Educators made to the school. They claimed that non-CS educators were not very effective, and that some of them do not do enough while others did nothing. Some of the following reasons were given for poor performance by non-CS Educators. Firstly, a lack of leadership on the part of management, T1 said:

If teachers know what are their core duties and whoever is in the Supervisory capacity to lead them... You know and there would be more clarity and I think it would enhance the process.

(Transcript 2:11)

In response to a question regarding whether they are utilized effectively, T2 felt that, if their duties were spelt out more clearly, they would be more effective. Secondly, both

T2 and T1 agreed that non-CS Educators do too many non-core duties and neglect their core duty or as T1 states,

...they sometimes lose sight that they also have to do their core duties... (Transcript 2:8)

Thirdly, T2 states:

... in my opinion, there is no system in place whereby they can work. (Transcript 2:11)

As an example he referred to the many projects they are involved in at the same time and in the process neglected their core duties. T4 referred to the educators and non CS-educators as two different bodies at the school and said each one of them have their own set of rules. T3 pointed to the garden and said it is difficult to hold anybody accountable for the state of the garden as nobody knows who is responsible or whether the garden falls within the boundaries of their job-description.

T1 holds a different view to the other respondents pertaining the core duties of non-CS educators. She agreed in principle that they were responsible for cleaning and maintenance, but the cleaning of the classroom and administration building is limited to sweeping and she claimed that she was not sure whether they should clean the playground or not. It seems that the confusion or uncertainty is as a result of a lack of co-ordination and communication on the part of management. Non CS-educators

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perform core and other duties but there is a lack of leadership and co-ordination on the part of the management of the school. Educators wanted to know the job-description of the non-CS educators in order for them not to unjustly criticize them or expect too much from them.

#### **4.2.4 Differing expectations concerning the duties of non CS-educators**

It was also pointed out by T4 that non-CS educators must meet the expectations of both the educators and management. She claimed that good service delivery can mean one thing to management but the educators might not feel the same. All the respondents felt that non CS-educators did not meet their expectations in terms of service delivery and many of them became despondent with the attitude of non CS-educators. T4 has become so despondent, that she no longer begged non CS-educators but cleans her own classroom and polishes the floors. T1, for instance, must sweep a mat every morning before she can start to teach as her learners sit on the mat during their lessons. She said,

I clean my own room; I do the floors myself ...

(Transcript 2:30)

She claimed that she asked the cleaners on numerous occasions to sweep the mat, but this request had until now fallen on deaf ears. T5 complained about dirty bins that they leave in her classroom for days on end and that she empties it herself out of sheer frustration. There is an unwillingness to even assist educators in obtaining cleaning

materials. On the whole, the respondents felt that non-CS educators have no pride and drag their feet when performing core duties. T4 is of the opinion that a better understanding of the non CS-educators in terms of their role at the school can encourage healthy working relationships. She argues that,

If that information can be shared with educators and that can maybe enhance the working relationship between non-CS educators and educators (Transcript 2:12)

#### **4.2.5 Additional duties performed by non CS-educators.**

All the respondents confirmed that non-CS educators engaged in extra duties and in this way the school benefits from their skills and expertise. T5 confirmed a willingness of the group to do extra duties.

...if they are called upon like, for example to help with photostatting, maybe, or maybe speaking to parents at the window at, by the Secretary, then they would... (Transcript 2:7)

All the respondents felt that the extra duties imposed on their core duties and cautioned that it should not outweigh core duties. T2 comments:

... their main is to clean the school, but if they have other skills that can be utilised for the benefit of the school , then they can use that too ... (Transcript 2:3)

It seemed that there was a concern that the cleaning duties were not to be neglected as too many additional tasks caused cleaning duties to be neglected. It is my view that teaching and learning can only happen effectively in an environment that is clean and safe. A dirty or unsafe environment can obstruct or halt the process of teaching and learning. Because cleaning is an essential service within the context of the school and because there is differentiation in terms of duties within the school, it is important that all role players execute their mandate as prescribed by the Education Department. This explains T4's question,

... will the Educator the non-CS Educator still perform as a Cleaner at our school, or are they performing other, are they, or it's more important for them to fulfil or to act out in other tasks, because then who is going to perform the role of cleaning? (Transcript 2:7)

#### **4.2.6 Role of the manager**

All the respondents confirmed that they did not know what the official job description of the non CS-educator was. There was also the concern that additional duties should not outweigh core duties. T3 for example argued that written proof of a job description

would have helped her to instruct a worker to sweep her classroom, but the uncertainty of what they are supposed to do made her feel powerless. She further argues that the non CS-educators themselves do not know what they are supposed to do and asked the question,

do they know, do they know their job description - what is required of them, do they know? (Transcript 2:12)

The answer to these questions is linked to the management portfolio as it relates to issues that should be addressed by the management. It was said by the respondents on more than one occasion that there is a need for more guidance and leadership, but no specific reference was made to the role of the school principal in this regard. It seemed that the silence of the educators regarding the role of the school principal was deliberate in order to avoid addressing the pivotal role of the principal in terms of managing this group.

#### **4.2.7 Interpersonal relationships**

Educators had problems with work related issues of non CS-educators but generally had good interpersonal relationships with them. T3 confirmed that she was on speaking terms with everybody and accepted all of them as her friends. T1 believed that some of the non Cs-educators were very polite and helpful;

they won't say no to anything ... (Transcript 2:41).

T4 said that they would even supervise a class if the educator had to visit the administration with educators T3 noticed growing tensions and division amongst them and said that it affected their co-operation as a group and respect for each other. T2 shared the same sentiment and indicated that an improvement in the relationship amongst non CS-educators will motivate them to work together. In spite of their good relationship

...there is not a good relationship amongst them, but if they can improve their relationships then they will learn to work and do things together (Transcript 2:44).

#### **4.2.8 Reluctance to perform core duties.**

When T4 was asked what about non Cs-educators impressed her, she said,

Good things, yes - very good things. They would help with photocopying, they would go do this, and they would run errands and do a lot of things for us... (Transcript 2:38)

And then in almost a pessimistic way she continued to say,

...other than cleaning the school, the classrooms and doing what they're supposed to do... (Transcript 2:38).

This reluctance to do what was expected of them was also observed by T3, who was of the opinion that the school would running smoothly and there would no problems if only they could fulfil their basic duty ...“that small little role that they have...” (Transcript 2:27). All the respondents felt that there was reluctance on the part of the non CS-educators to fulfil their core duties. T2 pointed out that he could literally see the dirt in his classroom as it had not been swept for days. The unhealthy state of the toilets was a concern for all of them and T1 said that non CS-educators needed to be reminded constantly about the cleaning of the toilets. Other concerns of T3 were the neglected state of the garden and the school grounds in general. This reluctance was also displayed in their attitude towards their job. T3 said a simple request for black bags or a mop and a bucket can frustrate you as they will drag their feet to assist you. It is for this reason T4 said, she cleans and polishes her own classroom.

Respondents had different opinions as to why this problem existed. T1 drew attention to the mat in her classroom that learners sit on as their teaching and learning happen on the mat. In spite of numerous requests to clean it, non Cs-educators came up with a range of excuses and refused to do so, resulting in her using twenty minutes of her teaching time every day to sweep the mat. She was of the opinion that the problem was created by the authorities that allowed them, as she pointed out, “to get away with something like that...” T4 felt that they should not have had choices,

I don't think there should be a choice given between sweeping the classrooms or looking at the (stocks) overseeing the (stocks) lab, unless the stocks lab has been set as a core duty... (Transcript 2:28).

Educators pointed a finger at the authority that allowed them these choices. T4 further argued that there was a lack of ownership and that these workers should have taken ownership of what they were supposed to have done at the school. According to the educators their willingness to perform other duties and their reluctance to perform their core duties clearly indicate that there is a problem. It seems that there is more than reason why additional duties take precedence over core duties. One of these reasons can be unresolved issues on the part of management, such as the uncertainty regarding the job descriptions of non CS-educators, reluctance to be more assertive when core duties are not performed which then impacts on teaching and learning. There seems to be an inability on the part of management to create a balance between core duties and additional duties.

#### **4.2.9 Summary**

Several issues pertaining to non CS-educators, such as poor work performance, reluctance to perform core duties, unresolved conflict amongst them and uncertainty regarding their job descriptions were highlighted. I observed that a number of these challenges were management related challenges that could be resolved. In spite of the

confusion regarding the official job description, there were lots of evidence from what the educators said, that confirmed the contribution non CS-educators make to the processes at the school.

### **4.3 The third analysis to be discussed is my observation period working with the non CS-educators.**

#### **4.3.1 Introduction**

The observation happened over a period of five days at the school. Non CS-educators were busy with their normal working routine. I was dressed in an old jeans and T shirt, and I fully participated in all their activities such as sweeping classrooms, the corridor and some garden work. I also spent some time with them in their tearoom. My goal during the observation phase was to see, to experience and to gather perceptions of non-CS-educators' contribution to the orderly and effective operation of school processes and also to explore the perceptions of non –CS educators of the contribution they make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes. In the data analysis two main themes and sub-themes were identified for the purpose of interpretation and discussion of the findings. For reasons of confidentiality the four non CS-educators were coded non CS 1, non CS 2, non CS 3 and non CS 4.

## **4.5.2 Other duties**

Over and above their core duties, non CS-educators engaged in several other extra duties as well. These duties include the following: administrative, construction and maintenance duties, social responsibility and counselling duties, supervision, first aid functions, representation on school Governing Body and assistance with general school functions. All the members did not engage in all the activities. Brief discussions of these duties are presented under the following headings:

### **4.5.2.1 Administrative duties**

The school of choice is a large school with almost a thousand learners. The size of the school impacts on the administration of the school and high volumes of people make enquiries on a daily basis. For this reason the secretary becomes extremely busy at times and with the permission of the manager she would ask non CS 1 to assist her or whenever she is absent the principal would request that non CSI act in her position.

### **4.3.2.2 First aid and counselling functions.**

First aid is an essential function that was allocated to Non CS1 by the School Principal. In May 2004 she was sent on a First Aid course and since then she was solely responsible for medical emergencies at the school. Part of her sacrifice is that she spent all intervals in the administration building as the sick bay is located there and learners

are trained to report there in cases of emergency. Once a year, Non CS 1 also addresses the senior girls at the school with regards to their body changes and the use of sanitary towels. She said,

Dit gebeur gereeld dat 'n meisie vir die eerste keer haar maandstonde kry en dan kom sy na my vir advies en hulp. Ek moedig dit aan omdat dit 'n sterk band tussen my en die meisies bevorder.

(Transcript 3)

A grade six learner was raped in their house by a stranger one morning. She came to school and found the courage to share the incident with Non CS1 that to the arrest of the perpetrator.

#### **4.3.2.3 Construction and maintenance**

The establishment of a computer lab was a highlight on the school's calendar and the significance of this project to the non CS-educators was their contribution towards establishment of the lab and their ongoing involvement in the training of learners at the school. The school had been vandalized on a number of occasions and it was expected of non CS-educators to repair most of the damages. Non CS 2 had building trade experiences and very often shared those skills with the school. He was very proud of his abilities and said,

Opvoeders kan getuig van my bekwaamheid en van wat ek gedoen  
het in die verlede... (Transcript 3)

#### **4.3.2.5 Social responsibility**

The school is situated in an area that is faced with serious socio-economic problems and where unemployment is widespread. In response to these challenges the school has embarked on a feeding scheme initiative in order to feed the hungry learners. Most of the non CS-educators are directly involved in this program and assist in various ways for example said,

Ek het die klaskamer vir hulle geveer en maak seker dat die brood  
op tyd daar is, verder help ek met dissipline en gee vir hulle  
skoonmaak midels as hulle dit benodig. (Transcript 3)

#### **4.3.2.6 Supervision of learners**

Absenteeism of educators normally creates a supervision problem for learners at the school and subsequently becomes the manager's problem. As a solution to the problem the manager would ask non CS-educators to assist with supervision. Non CS 3 pointed out that in the case where an Educator is absent he would use his own initiative to supervise the learners. Non CS-educators did not only supervise learners whose educators were absent, but also those learners who were punished by the principal to

perform duty during intervals for transgressing the school rules. Non CS 4 confirmed that he supervised transgressors on numerous occasions during interval.

#### **4.3.2.7 Representation on school Governing Body**

Governing Bodies are structured in such a way that all role-players at the school are represented. In this case, Non CS 3 was nominated and served on the Governing Body from 2000 until 2003. These representations are on a voluntary basis and candidates normally make huge sacrifices as they attend meetings and engage in processes such as appointments and disciplinary hearings.

#### **4.3.3 Interaction with other stakeholders**

##### **4.3.3.1 Relationship with educators**

Non CS-educators seem to have a good relationship with most educators. This was evident throughout my observation period at the school; educators would often pass non CS-educator members and make a comment or smiled. On more than one occasion they would even crack a joke or two. All of them confirmed that they had a very good relationship with some educators and that educators very often relied on them for little favours. One of our discussions was interrupted by an educator who asked Non CS 4 to supervise her class as she needed a smoke break. "We don't just supervise classes if

educators need smoke breaks, but for any other reason if they need to leave learners unattended.” They very often do “supervision favours” for educators Non CS 3 said.

Non CS1 on the other hand felt that certain educators have a condescending attitude towards them. She said:

Vir hulle is ons net skoonmakers met geen kwalifikasies nie.

(Transcript 3)

Non CS1 felt that educators took advantage of them; they would mess in the kitchen and expect her to clean up. She said that an educator is responsible for the tea club and that they serve tea and porridge from 9.00 am and do not clean the kitchen but expect of her to do so. Sometimes she would wash the floors of the foyer then educators will allow learners to walk over the floor. According to her, she sometimes does not feel part of the staff as her opinion, and that of her colleagues are not valued. In an attempt to explain what she meant, she said that they are obliged to be part of functions such as sport days, surf walks or end of term functions but are denied the opportunity to engage in the planning of such events.

#### **4.3.3.2 Relationship with the Principal**

Non CS1 for example said that some educators treated them with disrespect and has complained to the principal on numerous occasions, but these complaints have fallen on

deaf ears. She said if educators complained the principal acted immediately. The principal meets on a regular basis with the CS-educators and had ignored a request made by Non CS 1 last year that he meet with the group of non CS-educators the first week of every month. Non CS1 said:

Ons is siek en sat van die hoof se onregverdigheid en die feit dat hy nie konsekwent is nie. (Transcript 3)

Non CS 2 claimed that the Principal gave preferential treatment to certain non CS-educators. He said that Non CS 3 did a good job with the choir, but at the expense of his work. Visibly agitated he said that Non CS 3 wanted recognition and was at the school for his own advantage. He said the school had quarterly events such as the school concert and prize giving and that it was during this time that Non CS 3 neglected his work as he was deeply involved with choir practices. The principal never had problems with such arrangements, although the rest of the team was unhappy about it as the cleaning duties of Non CS 3 automatically became their responsibility. Non CS 2 feel that the principal has failed to be objective in this regard and that Non CS 3 and Non CS 1 enjoyed preferential treatment. In Non CS1's case, he said,

Die hoof is daarvan bewus dat sy ure deurbring in die sekretaresse se kantoor en dat sy 'n obsessie het met 'n sekretaresse wees.

(Transcript 3)

Any complaints about her neglecting her work or the many hours she spent in the office, was ignored by the principal. According to Non CS 2 the principal does not treat the CS-educators and non CS-educators the same. CS-educators are treated better and more professionally. One example is that non CS-educators were without any explanation no longer part of the general staff meetings in the morning and locks to their room and other storerooms were changed without informing them. Non CS 2 is of the opinion that the principal will not treat the CS-educators with such contempt.

All the non CS-educators besides Non CS 3 agreed that the principal does not have good conflict resolution skills and that the constant squabbles between him and the foreman causes a breakdown in communication as the principal will ignore the foreman and give Non CS 4 instructions of work that he wants them to do. This situation affects the group and causes the principal not to communicate with the group for days on end.

Non CS 4 said,

Die hoof is buierig en is nie konsekwent nie. Hy verander sy planne gedurig, ongeag van besluite wat reeds geneem is.

(Transcript 3)

Non CS1 said the principal is in a habit of putting a structure in place but nothing happens after that. He, for example suggested that the doors on the side of the corridors be kept locked. Less than a month later he unlocked the doors himself. Non CS 4 on the other hand confirmed that he used to keep the minutes of the meetings they had, but

noticed that the principal turned matters around to suit him and would not hesitate to argue against the minutes.

Everyone except Non CS 3 is convinced that the principal does not handle crises very well. It is the opinion of Non CS 4 and Non CS 1 that the principal prefers procrastinating rather than handling matters immediately. Also, he is unable to divorce unresolved issues from his professional conduct, thereby allowing it to negatively influence his conduct.

“’n goeie voorbeeld is die wyse waarop hy onskuldige partye betrek in die stryd tussen hom en nie doserende lid 2. Waarom moet hy vir ons wantrou as nie doserende lid 2 vir hom teleurgestel het. Ons word almal met agterdog behandel, selfs die opvoeders blameer ons as enige iets misplaas is of wegraak in hulle klaskamers,” het nie doserende lid 4 gese . (Transcript 3)

#### **4.3.3.3 Silence of Non CS 3**

I observed that Non CS 3 hardly participated in the discussions and was very open to answering any questions. When asked about his silence he claimed that he doesn't have any problems as the principal is very good to him. He acknowledges that there were problems between the principal and the foreman but chooses not to comment on that matter.

#### 4.3.3.4 Relationship amongst themselves

With the exception of Non CS 3, it seemed that all the other members have a good understanding and working relationship. Non CS 3 has a grade eleven level of education and is musically very talented. Non CS 4 and non CS 1 have great respect for him and are very proud of his achievements. This was evident when Non CS 4 introduced Non CS 3 and he spoke at length about his achievements and his role with regards to the school choir and the computer lab. Through their collaborative efforts, Non CS 3, Non CS 1 and the two educators had created a beautiful computer lab. They spoke proudly of the many hours they worked together to transform an ordinary classroom into the lab and that they were asked by the principal to assist with training as both of them are computer literate.

As a result of ongoing conflict the Foreman had isolated himself from the group, preferring to work on his own. He mentioned that after a two months stay in a psychiatric hospital he feels that he is being treated unfairly. He said that he was discouraged and had no vision for the school. He also complained about the lack of cooperation from the non CS- educator group.

Daar is niks same werking tussen ons nie. Hulle vra nie eers vir my vir werk nie, en dit maak vir my die seerste. Elkeen doen net sy eie ding... (Transcript 3)

He very confidently said that educators can testify to his abilities and of what he has done in the past, and then he became emotional as he said:

... en hulle kan se wie ek nou is. (Transcript 3)

Most of his frustration had to do with the fact that he does not have a formal qualification. This he confirms when he said,

Hulle het opvoeding, ek het nie. (Transcript 3)

As a foreman it is expected of him to do certain administrative duties, such as completing registers or survey forms. This is normally not a difficult task, but for Non CS 2 it was very difficult as he was illiterate. Non CS 2 felt inferior as he could not read or respond to correspondence. His dependence on other people to do these tasks for him caused even more frustrations as he felt disempowered. Non CS 4 and Non CS 3 had the privilege to attend a free computer literacy course and Non CS 1 completed a first aid course. Non CS 2 could not attend any of these courses as he was illiterate. Because of these empowerment initiatives Non CS 3, Non CS 4 and Non CS1 could assist with other functions at the school, such as first aid, computer literacy classes and music tuition. Non CS 2 felt left behind, isolated himself from the group and preferred to work on his own. He said he wanted to leave the school.

#### 4.3.3.5 Relationship with parents

I noticed that the non CS-educators' and the parents who do voluntary work at the school, in particular those who assisted with preparations of sandwiches in the feeding scheme room or "die broodkamer" as they called it, had a very good relationship. Non CS 1 said they like to visit this room as they get the opportunity to talk about every day things. Even Non CS 2 said he loved to spend time with those parents.

Hierdie ouers is van die gemeenskap, hulle is nie baie hoog geleerd nie en spog nie aldag oor hulle kwalifikasies of groot huise of duur vakansies nie. Ons voel tuis met hulle, het nie doserende lid 1 gese .  
(Transcript 3)

Non CS 3 confirmed that they have an excellent relationship with most of the learners' parents and is on a first name basis with most. Sometimes parents will complain to them about the attitudes of educators towards their children or about school fees that they can't afford or even just enquire about the absenteeism of educators. Non CS1 said parent would sometimes ask them to keep an eye on their children at school.

#### **4.3.4 Summary**

The group seems to be very talented, very versatile and willing to perform a host of other duties. Some of these duties seem to be more challenging than their core duties and also have a greater degree of responsibility. In my experience most of these additional duties are normally performed by educators. It seems that these contributions are undervalued and not appreciated because of unhealthy relationships, which are a matter of concern. Non CS-educators have, for example, a good relationship with parents who come from the same community and background as most of them but do not have the same relationship with many of the educators and the principal. It appears that the relationship with the principal is not a very healthy one, because of issues relating to his management style. This is also a matter of concern.

#### **4.3.5 Comments on the three contributions**

All the respondents confirmed that non CS-educators perform core functions and additional functions. There was no doubt from all the respondents about the skilfulness and dedication with which these tasks were executed. The concern of the focus group was the lack of balance between the core duties and the additional duties. Even some of the non CS-educator respondents showed some concern. The principal pointed out the difference between core duties and additional duties and the priority of core duties, but it seems that he persisted that non CS-educators perform additional duties at the cost of

their core duties. It is those decisions that contributed to conflict between non CS-educators and educators and amongst non CS-educators.

The principal confirmed that non CS-educators were not compensated well for all the additional duties they performed and non CS-educators felt that little appreciation was shown towards them. Educators on the other hand felt that non CS-educators neglected their core duties and therefore do not show appreciation and share the same sentiment of principal and non CS-educators. The principal was very defensive when he was questioned about the efficiency of the group and claimed that personal circumstances, a low morale and lack of motivation are some of the reasons for them not being efficient. Educators argue that they are lazy and do the bare minimum.

The role of the non CS-educators at the school is important to the principal, but to the educators it is trivial since many of the respondents see them only as cleaners. Educators complained about the lazy attitude of the non CS-educators and their unwillingness to perform cleaning functions but ironically the principal succeeded in getting them to do additional functions that are more difficult than their core functions. The principal claimed to understand the non CS-educators and to have an open door policy, but most of the non Cs-educator respondents don't have a good relationship with the principal and blame him for not being assertive and accuse him of favouritism. The educator respondents also argue that the principal needs to be more assertive. Most of the additional functions performed by the non CS-educators are functions that are supposed to be

performed by the educators. It is interesting to note that educators complain about the non CS-educators not doing their core duties, but also fail to assist with additional functions. The educator and non CS-educator respondents pointed out that there were conflict amongst the non CS-educators and also agreed that *management must take some responsibility.*

The negative perceptions of non CS-educators towards the principal was not substantiated by the CS educators, neither was the research finding presented to the principal for his response and consequently these views of the non CS-educators are unfair.

Chapter Five brings the main findings of this research study to a close with key conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. INTRODUCTION

The study was conducted at a school of choice in the Mitchell's Plain area. The main objective of the study was to explore school stakeholder perceptions of non- CS educator's contribution to the orderly and effective operation of school processes and to explore the perceptions of non CS-educators of the contribution they make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes. The research method employed was a qualitative research methodology in which a case study was conducted. In terms of the data collection strategy, data was obtained from two interviews and a participant observation process.

Data was arranged under the different data collection methods of which each had the following themes:

- Interview with the principal uncovered three major themes namely, *job description, interpersonal relationships and safety and security.*
- The focus group had the following eight themes viz. *reluctance to perform core duties, interpersonal relationships, role of the manager, duties other than core duties, different expectations, reasons for poor performance of non CS-educators, and uncertainty regarding the job description of non CS-educators.*

- The Participant Observation had two main themes; other duties and interaction with other stakeholders. This chapter concludes the main findings on the basis of the three themes and sub-themes identified for analysing the collected data and also makes some recommendations under the following headings.

## **5.1 PERCEPTION OF THE PRINCIPAL**

The principal was confident that he had a skilful, multi talented, committed and loyal team of non CS-educators who made a significant contribution to the orderly and effective operation of school processes. He believed that he was very progressive and gave them many opportunities to perform various functions at the school which he viewed as empowerment opportunities. These tasks included assistance with administration work when the school secretary was absent or when she is very busy, the construction of the computer lab, training the school choir, First Aid, plumbing, computer tuition and security functions.

One would have expected the entire staff to share the same views about this group. However that was not the case. The principal was aware of some animosity between the educators and the non CS-educators but did not understand the full extent of the problem. Unresolved problems amongst the group escalated and the principal acknowledged that the group was not very efficient and perceived them to be demotivated and to have a low morale. According to him this was as a result of poverty and pointed out the realities of poverty that these workers face.

The study revealed that these workers were on salary levels 1 and 2 and that they had of the lowest pensions, lowest take-up on benefits and truncated career paths. They subsequently struggle to make ends meet and lived in poor socio-economic conditions. It is my experience that they often become vulnerable to alcohol abuse and abusive relationships as they battle to cope with the stress of ongoing financial crisis and the obligation to provide. Many of them fall prey to money lenders and gambling in order to provide for their families. The study revealed that the personal circumstances of most of the workers caused them to develop guilt and low self esteem as they view themselves as the underdogs and always make excuses for their conduct.

What the principal failed to see was that most of the problems amongst the educators and non CS-educators and even between himself and the staff were as a direct result of his management style and his inadequacies. I want to qualify this statement by citing some examples. One would expect educators and not non CS-educators to perform most of these additional duties as most of these duties form part of their co-curricular responsibilities in terms of the Educators Employment Act. One must wonder why the principal persistently requested from non CS-educators to perform these duties.

Secondly, the study found that the principal had a clear understanding of the official job description of non CS-educators. He knew that special projects fell outside the boundaries of their official job description and could distinguish between core duties and special projects. However, according to him, special projects were compulsory and subsequently became part of their core duties. It seemed that the principal hardly had any problems in getting the group to perform additional functions. The only problem

according to some respondents was that non CS-educators performed most of these tasks at the expense of their core duties and consequently the cleaning of classrooms and the school grounds were neglected, causing frustrated and overworked educators to clean the classrooms themselves. Respondents were also concerned about the school grounds that were untidy and neglected. Obviously if the workload of additional functions is almost equal to that of core duties, one or the other will be neglected. The study found that some educators understood their difficult position and pointed a finger at the principal for failing to address the situation. The unfortunate situation is that the group has an obligation towards the manager to be loyal even at the cost of unhappy educators or their own happiness. On the other hand one cannot blame the educators for being hostile towards them.

To make matters worse, some snobbish educators were very condescending towards them and treated them with disrespect and arrogance. The group claimed that some educators saw them as cleaners and expected of them to clean-up after them. The principal perceived some educators to be people who thought of themselves as being in a better social class. The principal denied that there were problems between the non CS-educators and the educators and that everything was in order. This was not the only thing that the principal was in denial about. He denied that additional duties impact on core duties and claimed that he always asked the group if he could use one of the members. He denied the fact that non CS-educators neglected their core duties at the cost of additional duties. Even educators become disturbed about non CS-educators neglecting their core duties. He denied the fact that one of the non CS-educators acted as

the secretary in her absence. In spite of the school being located in a gang infested area with electronic gates and surveillance cameras, he denied that the school had serious security problems. He further denied that non CS-educators acted as “security personnel” as they are the ones who had to confront everybody who enters the school premises. So the question that remain is: given the context, is it fair to say the group is lazy and to judge them against this background?

## **5.2 PERCEPTIONS OF EDUCATORS**

Educators perceive non CS-educators to be very inefficient and claim that some workers do not do enough while others do nothing. Educators pointed out two main reasons for their inefficiency, namely a lack of leadership and too many additional duties performed by the non CS-educators at the cost of their core duties.

Educators claim that management has failed to provide clear guidelines in terms of the official job description of non CS-educators and as a result it has caused confusion amongst educators, non CS-educators and the principal. They claim that not even the non CS-educators fully understand their job description as they are involved in so many projects that are over and above their core duties. Almost all the respondents referred to the untidy classrooms and neglected school grounds and argued that additional duties are performed at the cost of core duties. They said that non CS-educators have a negative attitude towards their work and perceived them to have no pride. In addition, they claimed that they drag their feet when performing core duties. The willingness to

perform additional duties and the unwillingness to perform core duties signify that there is a problem. Educators claim that non CS-educators perform additional duties at the request of the manager and that the manager has failed to co-ordinate these task appropriately. The manager knew most of the time that non CS-educators neglected their core duties, but fell short to address it as a problem. Educators perceive the manager as not assertive, allowing non CS-educators to do as they please. They feel there is no balance between the duties of the educators and non CS-educators. On the positive side, educators claimed that some non CS-educators are very polite and helpful and that they are willing to supervise the classes at any time. Educators are concerned about the growing tension and divisions amongst the non CS-educators.

### **5.3 PERCEPTIONS OF NON CS EDUCATORS**

Non CS-educators very proudly highlighted a range of additional functions they performed. They could clearly distinguish between their core functions and additional functions. Although they were proud of their achievements, they did not appreciate the schools failure to recognize their hard work and claimed that their contributions are not valued. Contrarily to the principal, one of the non CS-educators said that the school had money and could have paid them as they needed the money more than the arrangement of special time-off.

The principal was not well liked by all the non CS-educators as they accused him of being inconsistent, biased and unfair. One of the many examples they cited was his habit

of responding to complaints by the educators whilst failing to respond to their complaints. He would also have regular meetings with the educators but do not meet with them in spite of numerous requests by concern workers.

*There is a strong feeling amongst the group that the principal is responsible for the divisions amongst the group as he would give preferential treatment to certain members. He would for example always use a very musically talented member to assist with the training of the school choir during school hours and as a result the member neglects his core duties. This particular worker was very isolated and chose his words carefully as he most probably felt obliged to protect the principal for the many privileges he enjoys. He very tactfully also demonstrated his loyalty to the group in order to protect the already frail relationship they had. One of the female members would for many hours assist the secretary at the cost of her core duties. They felt that it is convenient for the principal to sanction such behaviour as it is in his interest. There is indication that he struggles to be objective, even in his approach towards the two groups. He seems to be more professional and loyal towards the educators. Non CS-educators claim that at one stage the principal, without any prior arrangements or explanation excluded non CS-educators from the general staff meetings that they have every morning. He also changed the locks of their room and that of the store room. They claim that he became very unfriendly towards those who cross swords with him. Non CS-educators were frustrated with the inability of the principal to stick to his plans. They claimed that he would change plans without any consultation.*

The group in general struggled with relationships. There is very little trust amongst them and they do not openly rejoice in one another's achievements. The foreman in particular had very little trust in the group and claimed that the group is in cahoots with the principal in an attempt to undermine him. His life at work became very stressful and he had to spend some time in a psychiatric hospital. He was clearly very discouraged. He said that he had lost the vision he had for the school. What contributed to his situation was the fact that he was illiterate and dependent on his colleagues to read circulars and to compile reports for him. He was further disadvantaged as it was difficult to attend any courses where he would be compelled to read or write. Sadly the principal and the system did very little to improve his situation.

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATION**

To improve the role of non CS-educators with regards, to the contribution they make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes and to improve the management of this group, the following recommendations are put forward:

- *School stakeholders must acknowledge that non CS-educators play a role in the orderly and effective operation of school processes and non CS-educators are no longer just cleaners who perform menial tasks. This mind shift will require more than just an announcement on the part of management.*
- *It is suggested that the principal facilitate a series of workshops with all school stakeholders and discuss the important role non CS-educators play within the*

school. The workshops must be based on the findings of the research as well as the principles of school effectiveness and the characteristics of effective schools in order for the non CS-educators to understand why we view their contributions as important.

- The goals and mission statement of the school must be redefined at the workshops and must include non CS-educators in order to have a collective goal and mission statement that represent the ideals of all school stakeholders. It is this type of inclusiveness that will develop a sense of ownership.

#### **5.4.1 An official job description**

The management and non CS-educators must jointly design an official job description at the workshops that will give recognition to all the duties performed by the non CS-educators. This job description must be brought to the attention of all the other school stakeholders. Every body must understand that besides determining the specific task and responsibility to be carried out by each member of the non CS-educator group, that there are other advantages of the job description as pointed out by Carrel et al, (1997:113) and French (1990:182), who argue that *organisational effectiveness, efficiency and work satisfaction can be obtained through an effective job description*. I consider it necessary at this point to briefly discuss each advantage and point out their relevance to the study.

#### **5.4.2 Organisational effectiveness**

Given the duties expected to be performed by non CS-educators and the additional duties they perform, it is evident that the effectiveness of the school in the study is to some extent dependent on the contribution non CS-educators make to the school.

Regrettably, respondents fail to notice the significance of this contribution at the school as there is no official job description they can refer to.

#### **5.2.3 Efficiency**

In order to evaluate the efficiency of non CS-educators, an official job description would have been an ideal benchmark. The data collected in the study revealed that there are different views with regards to the efficiency of the non CS-educators. The group themselves take much pride in their achievements, such as the establishment of the computer lab, their assistance with computer training, the counselling of female learners, their assistance regarding the supervision of learners when they are needed and the administrative duties they perform. Their opinion of their efficiency is directly linked to these duties which is in most cases not part of their core duties. On the other hand, the educators and principal view their efficiency differently. The study revealed that educators and the principal perceived them to be inefficient. My opinion is that this is not necessarily the case as they have demonstrated a willingness and a competence to participate in activities that benefit and contribute to the effectiveness of the school. It is further my opinion that an official job description would have caused educators and the

principal to perceive the efficiency on non CS-educators differently as there would have been clear guidelines.

#### **5.4.4 Work satisfaction**

The study reveals excessive absenteeism and grievances amongst non CS-educators. According to Carrel et al. (1997:575) this can be as a result of a high level of job dissatisfaction. Theron (1996:55) argue that job satisfaction is a measure of whether there is a continuous, deliberate focus on the needs and interest of employees. French (1990:131) defines job satisfaction as a person's emotional response to aspects of work (such as pay, supervision, and benefits) or to the work itself. The study found that the response of the group was very negative towards these aspects of work and therefore it can be assumed that they did not experience much job satisfaction. It is also recommended that the job description be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that the needs of the school are addressed effectively. Duties that fall outside the constraints of the job description should be negotiated with the workers and they should be remunerated accordingly. Management should consider financial compensation instead of time off. The job description must also be presented to the relevant unions for approval and to prevent disgruntled members from declaring unnecessary disputes in the future. This should not discourage members to lodge legitimate disputes regarding their conditions of service and remuneration if need be.

#### **5.4.5 Integrated school development programmes**

The school manager must use the workshop to facilitate discussions regarding integrated school development programmes where non CS-educators and CS-educators are developed simultaneously. The two groups should have a common goal to make the school effective. The notion that everybody is equal but different in function should be underpinned and also be the starting point to work together for both groups.

#### **5.4.6 Personal circumstances of non CS-educators**

The study revealed that non CS-educators were underpaid and that most of them live in poverty and struggled to make ends meet. This situation is not very encouraging, especially in the light of the important role they play at school. Although the principal does not have control over the remuneration of non CS-educators, he can use his position to lobby support from other school principals and the union and recommend a salary increase. It is further recommended that the findings of the study be submitted to the Department of Education in order to create an awareness of the relationship between a decent living wage and the self-esteem of workers, their sense of pride and the encouragement to be committed.

#### **5.4.7 Leadership of the principal**

The study revealed that the leadership of the principal is not very effective.

School effectiveness studies have indicated that the role of the principal is key to school effectiveness. It is the responsibility of the educational leader to lead the school towards effectiveness. The underlying assumption would then be that the educational leader influences the role non CS-educators play with regards to the contribution they make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes. This view is underpinned by Nieuwenhuis & Van Zyl (1994:1), who argue that:

The overall effectiveness of any school is directly influenced by the way in which it's principal manage all activities, communicates with staff, students and the community, implement change, and shape the general quality of education on offer.

One of the principal's activities that influence the overall effectiveness of the school is the management of the non CS-educator group. The study found that there is some underperformance regarding the leadership provided to the group by the school manager. Leadership is vast and very difficult to describe but Sterling and Davidoff (2000:14) have identified ten principals of leadership which I want to refer to and also use as a benchmark in order to determine to what extent the principal in the study demonstrated good leadership.

- Leadership means having a holistic perspective.
- Leadership means bringing core values to life.
- Leadership means encouraging a vision.

- Leadership means building your school as a learning organisation.
- Leadership means understanding and acknowledging the needs and contributions of others.
- Leadership means flexible response.
- Leadership means working with balance, rhythm and flow.
- Leadership means acknowledging creative complexity and controversy.
- Leadership means finding the path of integrity.
- Leadership means modelling the way.

These principals of leadership raised by Sterling and Davidoff are not fully and effectively accomplished by the school principal in the study and therefore he finds some difficulty in dealing with some of the above mentioned leadership issues. It is recommended that he study the principle of leadership and implement them in his day to day tasks.

#### **5.4.8 Relationship between effective leadership and the research questions**

The contribution of non CS-educators can not be seen in isolation as it happen within an environment created by the principal of the school. It is within this environment that non CS-educators contribute to the goals and objectives of the school in order to make it effective. The study revealed that the underperformance of the principal hinders the establishment of such an environment, resulting in school stakeholders perceiving non CS-educators as not being very effective to the operation of school processes. Non CS-

educators on the other hand take much pride in the duties they perform, especially the additional duties, and perceive themselves as making a meaningful contribution to the orderly and effective operation of school processes.

It is therefore recommended that the principal become knowledgeable regarding school management models, and that he designs clear job tasks for himself or herself. It is also suggested that the principal develops a number of managerial skills as pointed out by Nieuwenhuis and van Zyl (1994:10). These skills are: i) Conceptual skills, needed for problem-solving and decision making; ii) Interpersonal skills needed for communication, conflict management and negotiation skills and finally, iii) Functional skills that refer to technical and functional competence to get a job done, these relate to activities such as planning, organising, leading and control. It is hoped that this study will encourage educational planners and Educational Management and Development Centres (EMDC) to provide ongoing leadership training for principals. A campaign should be launched throughout the profession whereby principals are encouraged to make a paradigm shift in terms of the worth and management of non CS-educators.

#### **5.4.9 Training program**

It is recommended that the school manager implements a training program for the purpose of teaching non CS-educators a number of valuable skills. Firstly, the negative behaviour and attitude that non CS-educators learned over a period of time must be unlearned in order for the school to reach its effectiveness objectives. It is therefore

suggested that the school principal engage in a formal training program over a long period of time, as training according to Anderson (1993:9), is a process to change employees' behaviour at work through the application of learning principles. According to Buckley and Caple (1996:11) the greatest value of training is that it helps the organization to achieve its objectives. Training could be the appropriate initiative to help the school achieve its effectiveness objectives. They further argue: that training should be a systematically planned investment in the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by an individual to perform a job to a satisfactory level. Buckley and Caple (1996:11)

*The training can take on various forms for example, on the job training where the principal carries out one-to-one instruction or coaching at the school and covers the knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the correct performance of the job. Coaching is another form of training. With this form the abilities and experience of the non CS-educators are developed by giving them systematically planned and progressively more "stretching" tasks to perform, coupled with continuous appraisal and counselling. Buckley and Caple (1996:11).*

Secondly, just as educators attend ongoing workshops to enhance their skills, so non CS-educators should be workshopped and trained in order to enhance their skills. The study revealed that non CS-educators engage in activities, such as counselling,

security functions, computer training, construction and maintenance functions. All these functions are skills driven, therefore the more skills they can acquire the more efficient and effective they can become.

An important skill for workers in any organisation, including schools, is conflict resolution skills. The current conflict amongst the group must be addressed and valuable conflict resolution skills must be taught to the group. It is recommended that management be mindful of the advantage educators have over non CS-educators in terms of conflict resolution skills as conflict management was part of their training. The educational background of the different groups should also be a factor to be mindful of. An illiterate person might find the approach to conflict resolution difficult and might consequently frustrate all efforts to effectively deal with conflict.

#### **5.4.10 An organisational climate**

A further recommendation is the establishment of an organisational climate that will motivate non CS-educators to change their behaviour and subsequently enhance their working life. Trade Unions should be consulted regarding this study in order to lobby support from the Government to address the working conditions and remuneration of non CS-educators. Unions currently engage in a variety of training programs, all intended to improve the working conditions of workers. It is also recommended that unions be approached to assist with specialised training of their members.

It is hoped that this study has shed some light on the contribution non CS-educators make to the orderly and effective operation of school processes and gives some insight to principals regarding the management of this group.

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