CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter the methodology used in this research was explored. The data collected by means of interviews, photographs and documents is analysed and interpreted in this chapter. The summary of this chapter is indicated in the figure below:

Figure 4.1: Summary of Chapter 4
4.2 PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Internal Stakeholders

✓ School A: Participant 1 – (male) HOD; Participant 2 – (Female) Educator; Participant 3 – (Female) Principal; Participant 4 – (male) clerk.
✓ School B: Participant 5 – (Female) educator; Participant 6 – (Female) HOD; Participant 7 – (Female) clerk; Participant 8 – (Female) deputy principal.
✓ School C: Participant 9 – (Male) clerk; Participant 10 – (Female) educator; Participant 11 – (Female) HOD; Participant 12 – (Female) HOD.
✓ School D: Participant 13 – (Male) HOD; Participant 14 – (Female) educator; Participant 15 – (Female) clerk; Participant 16 – (male) deputy principal.

External Stakeholders

✓ School A: Participant 17 – (Female) Parent
✓ School B: Participant 18 – (Female) Parent
✓ School C: Participant 19 – (Male) Parent
✓ School D: Participant 20 – (Female) Parent

It was necessary to include this section for practical implementation of confidentiality in the handling of data.

4.3 RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS

The following results related to the research objective on factors that are perceived to be building reputation by internal and external stakeholders.

Effective provision of services: teaching and learning

Reputation is very important for educational institution because the primary goal of a school is to educate and to develop the behavior of learners. This theme was supported
by a number of sub-themes including team work, hard work, commitment and effective teaching which led to good academic performance by learners.

One of the factors contributing to good service provision was that of team work which was supported by eight (8) participants from four schools who believed that reputation in their schools was very good. This was evident from their responses to the question on reputation.

“There is a strong team work among educators. I can rate the school 5 out of 10 (4); “There is a strong team work among educators, and parents have confidence of educators (1); I also explain the importance of working together and supporting each other (3); For you to achieve you cannot do it alone, it is a team effort (7). There is a strong team work among educators, During holidays the schools governing body as well as parents come to school to paint and to clean classrooms (9); teachers work together, we assist each other, and another thing is that during holidays we do not close, we make sure that the extra time during holidays is used effectively (11); We work together as teachers, there is a good team work and that is why we succeed and our learners are achieving good work (14); They work hard and there is a lot of team work (15).”

Participants from all four schools indicated the importance of teamwork in ensuring that work was done. It is worrying that this team effort was mostly amongst educators and not also among educators and school managers. It was only in one school that the participant in the SMT indicated working together with educators.

“Here at school we work together with educators, we do not just do things (6).”

There is so much that a school can achieve where there is team work. The literature supports the team effort as it indicates that learner achievement is likely to be greatest where there is teamwork among staff member (Ruler & Lange, 2002) (cf. 2.3.6).
External stakeholders also supported this theme highlighting the importance of teamwork between educators and parents.

“We work together with the educators, parents come to school to assist in cleaning and repairing toilets (17); we work together with educators, we also clean grade 1 learner’s classroom’s everyday they also started a vegetable garden to produce food for needy learners (18); parents, educators and school governing body work together (19); parents and educators work together to solve learner’s problems (20).”

All four external stakeholders mentioned working together with educators but their involvement was limited to assisting with cleaning and discipline of learners. It is worrying that only one participant mentioned being involved in decision making.

Another factor was that of hard work which also played a major role in strengthening reputation in the participating schools’ environments. This statement was supported by four participants (2 SMT Members and 2 educators) in their responses to a question on important factors strengthening reputation. This is what the participants said:

“Educators are working very hard (5); the image of this school is very good because educators are working very hard (8); teachers and learners in this school work very hard to achieve the good results that we get every year (10); teachers and learners in this school work very hard to achieve the good results that we get every year (12).”

Hard work was mentioned as one of the pillars of reputation strengths. It is worrying that only participants from two schools regard hard work as important. However, parents also reiterate this with one of them also adding commitment as an important element.

“Our educators work very hard (17); our teachers work very hard and our learners are disciplined (18); teachers at this school are working very hard sir (19); our teachers are committed and work very hard (20).”
All four external stakeholders regarded educators in their schools as hard working. This is good for the image of these schools.

Another factor mentioned was that of commitment. Commitment is one of the cornerstones of success. This statement was supported by one participant.

“Educators are committed to go an extra mile when schools are closed during easter holidays, here we continue with classes even during winter and September holidays, we do not close in order to enhance the performance of learners (11)”.

Only one participant mentioned commitment as a factor in building reputation. This participant was supported by one external stakeholder.

“our teachers are committed and work very hard (20).”

Another factor which was indicated as important was teaching and learning, which was reiterated by five participants (2 SMT members, 1 clerk and 2 educators). In our communities a well functioning school is judged by its performance.

“Educators know that they must be in class teaching learners (5); you will never see teachers walking around; they are all in their classes teaching (6); in this school we work sir, I’m not saying these things to buy face we are really matured at this school (7); this is a good school when it comes to education and sports (9); there is effective teaching in this school (10).”

The schools that articulated the importance of teaching are two, schools B and C. In school B participants mentioned factors such as awareness of duties, dedication and maturity. The positive attitude of teachers towards teaching can contribute to effective teaching. Literature indicates that the collapse of the culture of teaching and learning in
a school can aggravate matters such that it can lead to poor school results, low morale among educators and ill discipline among learners (Kruger, 2003) (cf. 2.6.2).

Effective teaching was linked to another factor, that of good academic performance by learners. Four participants (2 SMT members, 1 educator and 1 clerk) supported this theme, these participants were from schools C and D:

“Our pass rate is good and the way our sporting codes are, some schools struggle to beat us (9); in 2010 grade 12 learners achieved 70% and in 2011 they obtained 60% pass rate, but last year the grade 12 results were very good, they got 95,6 %. (10); our learners managed to do well in their first examination and they got about 70% pass rate, as a school we never got less than 55% in the examinations, the deputy minister of education came to visit our school to congratulate the school for 100% pass in mathematics (13); I teach English and my students obtained 100% pass. Our educators as well as our learners performed well. In 2010 we achieved 70% in grade 12. In 2011 we obtained 60% in matric results (16)”.

It is commendable that these schools boast of high pass rate. Literature indicates that the effectiveness of a school is often judged based on academic results (Gray, 2004) (cf. 2.3.5). The good performance in schools C and D was also supported by parents from these schools. It is surprising that only the parent in school A mentioned performance and not the educators as indicated below:

“The results in this school are very good (17); The school results are very good because there is co-operation amongst educators and parents (19); The results are very good but the challenge is that learners in grade 9 did not perform well because it was the first time writing Annual National Assessment (20)”.

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It is highly praised that parents from three schools mentioned good results as contributing to good reputation. Literature indicates that parents are aware of schools that are doing well academically and those that are struggling. This is one criterion used for school choice, schools that are reputable, who do not lack the main requisite the culture of teaching and learning (Woolman & Fleisch, 2006) (cf. 2.5.2) which leads to good academic results.

The reason for the focus in results in the two high schools and not in the two primary schools was due to the fact that it was only in 2010 that the Department of Basic Education introduced ANA to measure the performance of learners in primary schools.

The performance of the two secondary schools was good when checking their results published by the Department of Education in the Free State Province.

**Table 4.1: Grade 12 results in two participating high schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL C</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No enrolled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No qualified for Bachelors</td>
<td></td>
<td>38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage pass</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>95.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL D</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No enrolled</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No qualified for Bachelors</td>
<td></td>
<td>06</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage pass</td>
<td>75.4%</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
<td>77.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEZILE DABI DISTRICT</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
<td>68.8%</td>
<td>73.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table above indicates that in terms of quantity both schools seemed to be performing well above the district and the province. It is worrying though that the number of candidates who qualified to do Bachelors was low in both schools. The percentage of students who qualify for Bachelors in school C was 41.3% while in school D it was only 11%. To both the external and internal stakeholders in this research the percentage
passed seemed to be more important than the number of learners that qualified for Bachelors. This table paints a depressing picture in that more than 50% learners in these schools did not qualify to pursue studies in higher institutions. Literature indicates that only a small percentage of learners qualify for tertiary education (Department of Basic Education, 2010) (cf. 2.3.5).

One of the parents from a primary school indicated that the results from the school where her learner attended were good. This is what she said:

“The results in this school are very good (17)”

The table below indicates how the two primary schools in this research performed in Annual National Assessment since it started in 2010.

Table 4.2: Grade 3 and Grade 6 ANA results 2011-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL A</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Home Lang</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>FAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% passed</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>45.5</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>17.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement rate</td>
<td>50-69</td>
<td>70+</td>
<td>50-69</td>
<td>70+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No in rating</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL B</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>Home Lang</td>
<td>Math</td>
<td>FAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% passed</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achievement rate</td>
<td>50-69</td>
<td>70+</td>
<td>50-69</td>
<td>70+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No in rating</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roll</td>
<td>176</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The table above shows ANA results, there was an improvement in the First Additional Language in 2012 in school A. Maths also improved significantly. However, learners who passed with 70% and above were very few. Most learners were average and below average. This is worrying in that if learners pass with poor marks in their primary education it seems that they will struggle to pass in higher grades.

The table shows that learners had performed exceptionally well in languages in Grades 3 and 6 and performance in Mathematics in Grade 6 was also good. The challenge as in school A was the number of learners who passed with good marks. The participant below reiterates this notion, saying:

“The results are very good but the challenge is that learners in grade 9 did not perform well because it was the first time writing Annual National Assessment (20)”.

It is commendable that there was a parent who was so involved in education in that he or she knew that it was for the first time that Grade 9 learners write ANA for the first time. The Department of Education encourages the involvement of parents in education. Such parents could be of assistance to educators at school.

**CHARACTERISTICS OF EMOTIONAL APPEAL**

As discussed in Chapter 2 (cf. 2.2), emotional appeal pertains to factors such as respect, trust and appreciation. The first factor under this theme was that of respect that the school earned because of what it did. This statement was supported by two participants (1 educator and 1 HOD) from the same school, who indicated that:

“The school is one of the most respected schools in Zamdela (10). There are a lot of people who attended in this school here in Zamdela, some of these people are men and women that are respected (12); I’m not saying these things to buy face we are really matured at this school (7)”.
It is worrying that only two participants mentioned respect as an important factor in building reputation. The respect that the school enjoys reflects the image of the external stakeholders. From what the participant from school B indicated it can be deduced that there was appreciation for the educators’ work. This theme is supported by literature where it indicates that respect, trust and appreciation are key to emotional appeal. Literature further states that image is not something that is permanent and can be affected when educators experience times of frustrations with teaching as it is a very demanding job (Department of Basic Education, 2010:25) (cf. 2.2). For this reason, it is imperative that reputation be managed. Another participant mentioned people who are respected who also attended in the school. Literature indicates that reputation has a historical dimension (Le Roux, 2003:3) (cf. 1.1).

**STRONG FOCUS ON THE WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT AND SCHOOL CLIMATE**

In the literature this theme appears under school climate (cf. 2.3.6). The aspect of clean surroundings was supported by three (3) participants (1 SMT member, 1 educator and 1 clerk) who said:

“This school is beautiful, sir, it is nice to work in such a school (5); Don’t be fooled by what you see now, it is these hands that worked so hard for this school to look like this, the surroundings must tell you stories about the kind of a school you are in (7); this school is beautiful sir (11)”.

Only participants from two schools mentioned the surroundings as important. It is not surprising however that the two participants from the same school regard beautiful surroundings as important for reputation. This is how their school looked like outside.
The picture depicts clean surroundings in school B with a demarcated parking area. Literature supports the theme of a workplace environment that is welcoming, it says that such an environment is conducive to effectiveness in a school and it comprises of a physical environment that is welcoming (Modin & Östberg, 2007) (cf. 2.2).

The external stakeholders also realized the importance of clean surroundings, this is what they said:

“Parents assist in cleaning the school (17); the school is not as clean as I wish because only 1 person is working here and the school is big (19); cleanliness in general is good the environment and the classrooms are kept clean (20)”.

It was surprising that it was only the parent from school D that mentioned cleanliness and not the educators but it seems that what she said was true judging from the picture below.
Not even one internal stakeholder from school D mentioned the cleanliness of the surroundings. This may be attributed to the fact that it was not their focus at that moment in that the school was still under construction. The picture below depicts the side of the school that was still under construction.
The picture above shows part of the school under construction, a situation which makes it difficult for staff members to keep all parts of the school clean. There are several factors that are indicated in the literature regarding the benefits of having a positive school climate. They include motivation, learner achievement, few behavioural problems, sense of belonging and less educator attrition (cf. 2.3.6). It seems that the three schools that indicated having clean surroundings were enjoying these benefits.

The second factor mentioned by participants was that of safety and security of learners at these schools. Three participants articulated this theme (2 SMT members and 1 educator):

“our learners are always safe and happy at school even when the school is out, we also have alarm system in place (3); our gates are always locked and the security is extremely tight (14); Our security is very good and our learners are very safe (16)”.
The participants that mentioned the issue of safety came from two schools, school A and D. It is interesting that only educators mentioned safety as a contributory factor in building reputation.

**Figure 4.5: Locked gates in school A**

The picture above bears evidence to what participant from school A said about ensuring safety in their school. This is in line with policy on safety in schools that indicates that gates should be locked until the school is out. This prevents thugs from entering the school premises to disrupt the smooth running of the school. Safety is a factor in school climate. Literature indicates that some people emphasise school safety (Sanders, 2004) as important in a work place environment. An environment that is orderly is conducive to building a good reputation where the school personnel is able to pursue the school's mission without being concerned about disruptions and safety (Koth, Bradshaw & Leaf, 2008) (*cf.*2.2).
Participants also mentioned involving staff members and community members to ensure safety of learners, this is what they said:

“Our security personnel or factotum plays a very important role in our school. Our security is very tight. Those people who work outside they check and control the entrance of every person (14); we are presently improving our policies to be compliant. We involve structures or stakeholders such as health department, social development, safety and security department so that they advise us on how to keep our policies compliant (16).”

It is commendable that some schools realise that they cannot do all things on their own and that involvement of people with expertise would enhance their efforts and allow them time to focus on the core duty that of teaching learners. It is also good that these schools realised that reputation management cannot be sustained without the help of their community members and government institutions.

Another aspect mentioned by participants was engagement in sporting activities. This theme was supported by eight participants (3 SMT members, 1 educator and 4 clerks)

“Our learners are taking part in sport and they perform very well, if you look around there are trophies all over (1); the school competes with other schools and they win trophies (4); When we participate we don’t just participate but we aim very high, our target is to reach provincial level. In most cases we do reach our objective (7); our learners like to play soccer, and they know how to play sport. They also like choral music a lot. (9); we have soccer, netball, choir, and volleyball, few days ago our learners were playing table tennis, chess and netball with a neighbouring school, our team played very well (11); our learners take part in different codes i.e. soccer, netball and athletics. We currently have learners who will be going to Canada for rope skipping (14); we have different sporting codes such as athletics, netball and soccer. Our learners do take part in
The responses above indicate that learners were involved in sport in all the participating schools, both learners and educators loved sport. The sport was not only done to keep learners active but they do it at a competitive level. It seems that sporting codes that are common in these schools are soccer, netball, volleyball, chess, tennis, athletics and rope skipping. Participation of learners in different sporting codes contributes in learners’ physical and mental health and also promotes a positive school climate. Literature also indicates that there is a strong relationship between positive school climate and increased learner achievement (Johnson & Stevens, 2006) (cf. 2.3.6). However, the results in school A are not very good but they perform well in sport as indicated in Chapter 3 (cf. 3.5.1).

Learners in one school were taught about the benefits of being involved in sporting activities, this is what the participant indicated:

“We teach our learners to take sports very serious because some of them are talented. We also teach them that sports assist learners to stay alert and it improves their mental capacity (16)”. 

It is good that the benefits of being involved in physical activity are taught to learners as indicated by the participant from school D. The education in physical activity will enable learners to realise the benefits of keeping physically active thereby developing life-long involvement.

“When we participate we don’t just participate but we aim very high, our target is to reach provincial level. In most cases we do reach our objective (7)”. 

It is highly praised that in school C learners are not discriminated against but involved so as to expose them to an understanding of the value of regular participation in
physical activity. It is in the same school that learners were exposed in many sporting codes, learners were not only spoilt for choice but also the school tried its level best to involve all learners in sport as indicated earlier on. The achievements for school C are indicated in the table below:

It can be deduced that participation in sport had become a culture in these schools and that this culture was enhanced. The photo below was taken from school A

**Figure 4.6: Trophies in school A**

The photo above shows trophies obtained by school A for their involvement in different sporting codes. Literature mentions the atmosphere distinguished by the social and professional interactions of the individuals in the school (Joseph *et al.*, 1999) indicating that climate has to do with the way people feel about the culture that has been created within their organizations (*cf.* 2.3.6). All four schools were from disadvantaged communities as indicated in the previous chapter but with the little resources they had they were able to develop the schools to be what the internal and external participants could be proud of.
The participating schools (2 SMT members and 1 clerk) indicated various reasons for their achievements in sporting activities. This is what they said:

“Teachers play their role in training learners, they work until very late at 16h00. When our teams play with other schools they always win. This is due to the fact that teachers train them a lot (7); we achieve more because we start early in the year with our programmes, we do this because we want to be ready during the competition time, there is only one thing that brings success to sporting activities and that is discipline (11).”

Both participants from two schools mention commitment as the contributory factor to their achievements in extra-curricular activities. This was for the second time that commitment or its sign was mentioned, first in teaching and now in extra-curricular activities. This commitment was evident in schools C and D in both the core and extra-curricular activities. This could mean that these two schools had educators that were dedicated to their work.

Two participants indicated involving parents for assistance with sport. This is what the participants said:

“Parents also assist in sports and athletics. Those who specialize in coaching soccer and netball they come and assist us (13); we also invite parents to assist us with the skills they have (16).”

The participants from school D mentioned involving parents to ensure school safety earlier on and again parents were involved in this school to help out with extra-curricular activities. The involvement of parents is commendable, again this entails the realisation that schools cannot be effective on their own but need the support of their communities. The participant from school D indicated few problems in their implementation of sporting activities. The participant said:
“We know that they sometimes think they are old enough not to partake in the activities, they give us problems, but we help them to use the talent they were given by God (16)”.

The problems highlighted by the participant in school D were about learners who did not want to participate in sporting activities. The identification of these problems can be an indication of how active the school was in sport and its commitment in ensuring that all learners participate.

PROVISION OF EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN BOTH CORE AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

This theme is discussed in Chapter 2 (cf. 2.3.4). Literature indicated the importance of a visionary and transformational leadership. This theme was supported by the participant from school D. This is what the participant said:

“Our acting principal is one person who is actively involved in sports and she assists in coaching learners (16)”

The participant from school D mentioned the involvement of the principal as a contributory factor to their achievements in sport. Literature indicates the importance of a leader who influences his or her group members to help the group to achieve its goals (George & Jones, 2002) (cf. 2.3.4). The influence in this instance is in the form of role modelling, this is a kind of a leader who leads from the front.

The importance of leadership in school organizations cannot be over emphasized. This is because without leadership, the chances of school attaining educative teaching goals cannot be achieved. This statement is supported by 3 participants who indicated the following:
“When I came to this school I drew up an organogram showing the responsibilities of the SGB and the management. I also showed them how important each stakeholder is and how important their roles are (3); We are fortunate to have visionary leaders who are known and who have knowledge of the policies of the department (5) I really thank God for the kind of leadership we have in this school, they are energetic, visionary, they listen and support (7)”.

The participants who indicated that their leaders are good were an educator and a clerk. It is good that the followers saw something good in their leaders. The deputy principal in school A showed leadership characteristics by defining the roles of stakeholders so that they know exactly what was expected of them and they can be effective in their work. Literature indicates that leadership pertains to a social process in which the leader is able to influence the behavior of the followers, but only once the followers have accepted their relative positions (Greenberg, Ashton-James & Ashkanasy, 2000:682) (cf. 2.3.4). It seems that the first participant was strategic in managing in that he or she started by making sure that followers understood their roles. Clarifying roles is a role of a manager. Without this clarification the lines of operation could be blurred such that people end up doing tasks that they are not supposed to do a situation that could lead to conflict.

There are also signs of good management as articulated by three participants below:

“Workbooks are controlled by HOD and feedback is given to the educators (1). I hold meetings for my department, for a teacher who experience problems with presentation of the lesson (12). The school management team meets every week to check progress. In these meetings we look at a number of things, such as strength and weakness, and try to address them, we also have control and monitoring tools, a plan for the whole year indicating that work will be controlled on certain dates (16)”
There were three tasks that were mentioned by participants above, they included evaluation of educators’ work, planning and controlling. It is good that managers controlled educators’ work in two of the four participating schools. There was also curriculum support in school C. This is in line with literature where it indicates that leadership is based on the ability to empower followers (Werner, 2002:349) (cf. 2.3.4). In school D evaluation and control of educators’ work was planned and educators were informed about the plan. This strategy show signs of transparency. Where people expect what is to happen it is likely to accept it and they become emotionally ready for the evaluation.

Effective communication is indicated in the literature as a factor contributing to good reputation. This theme is discussed in Chapter 2 (cf. 2.3.3). Communication was articulated by five participants (2 SMT members, 2 educators and 2 clerks). Communication between the school and the parent is of vital importance if a school has to achieve its objectives and effective communication is the responsibility of school managers. The following statements indicate what parents were mainly called for at schools:

“In terms of ill discipline we write letters to parents because we don’t use corporal punishment or abusive language. After we have called the parents we also make follow up to see whether the learner behavior has improved or not, we hold parents meetings here at school although at times we do not attend such meetings (2); every teacher explains the behavior and the performance of a learner (10)”

These two participants from different schools indicated misbehaviour of learners as matter of concern that needed to be discussed with parents. The following participant from school A mentioned calling parents for an award ceremony.

“We give awards to deserving committees and other stakeholders and show (parents) them trophies (3)”
It is good to call parents for something positive, to show them the good things that their children do, this could motivate parents to become more involved in their children’s education. A participant from school B indicated calling parents for academic performance of learners.

“Communication with parents is very good; we invite them for sessions such as sectional meetings to come and check the work of the learners, all educators report even if the parents meetings are held on Sundays. Attendance register is signed by both educators and parents (7)”

The communication regarding learners’ progress is supported in the literature. Meetings about learner performance are about being transparent on how learners perform. Literature indicates that transparency means to transmit information without hiding anything or without hidden agenda (Hall, 2002) (cf. 2.3.1).

There were specific times when parents are called to schools, these times are indicated by participants as:

“Every term the finance committee gives financial report to the parents and to the SGB. (1); we have news letters that we send out every term, parents attend in big numbers (2) at the end of the year we give awards to deserving committees, parents are invited quarterly for reports and annually for awards to learners who performed well (3); we call parents to a meeting whenever we need them. At the end of each term we call parents of each grade learner, i.e. grade 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 (10)”

It seems that both schools meet with parents at least once per term, at the end of the year and about urgent matters. The frequency of the meetings with parents is in line with the South African School Act (1996) that indicates that the SGBs should meet with parents at least once per term.
Regarding the form of communication the participants indicated different forms such as:

“We type letters and send them to parents inviting them for meetings, we have news letters that we send out every term, parents attend in big numbers (2); we issue out letters or notices informing them about the date, time and agenda of the meeting. Our parents are highly motivated and attend in big numbers (13); we use correspondence and the community radio to communicate with parents, especially when we want them to come to school for a meeting (10)”

The forms of communication mentioned in three schools were only two, letters and community radio. Letters to parents were the most used mode of communication, and it becomes the only form of communication in some schools. Literature indicates that effective communication can be promoted if a variety of school to home as well as home to school communication strategies with families each year (Hanhan, 1998) (cf. 2.3.3). Regarding the forms of communication indicated by participants there was no variety secondly, the communication was one way in that it was only the school that communicates with parents.

“The school invite us through letters every quarter to give us feedback about the performance of our leaner’s (17); the school writes letters to invite parents, if there is an urgent meeting they use the services of a community leader who uses the loud speaker(18); the school invite us by giving letters to leaner’s (19); the school write letters or invitations to parents informing them about the meeting (20)”.

The external stakeholders also articulated one way communication and one form of communication. Literature indicates dangers in the use of one way communication, one danger is that the staff members make little effort to create channels to listen to parents or dismiss parents’ information (Hanhan, 1998) (cf. 2.3.3).
There seems to be problems regarding parental involvement at some of the participating schools. This is what participants said:

“Parents do attend meetings but it is only 50% of them that attend because others are working outside Sasolburg. They work in the Gauteng Province, we call parents to a meeting whenever we need them (10); communication is fine, but there is a challenge of free movement of parent coming to school during school hours which disturb teaching and learning (15).”

One participant seems to be worried about the poor attendance of parents in meetings while the other complains about parents disturbing the smooth running of the school. The problem again relates to lack of variety in communication with parents. If the school adopted modern ways of communication such as sending them text messages on their cell phones, they would get such messages wherever they are and make means to attend the meeting.

In school D it seems that there were no visiting hours stipulated or that parents and educators do not adhere to stipulated times, hence the confusion.

Another factor that was articulated by participants was that of finance management. The South African school’s act no 84 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) makes it mandatory for schools to manage school funds and to take responsibility to implement all the necessary financial accountability processes such as budgeting, reporting and auditing. This statement was supported by 4 participants in three schools who mentioned the following procedures.

The participants indicated a clear procedure regarding the management of funds, this is what they said:

“Finances in this school are used according to policy (6); we have a finances committee that is made up of the principal, parents in the school governing body
and educators that have accounting skills to assist parents and to explain to the how money is spent in the school (6); The school funds are managed by the principal, the school governing body and the financial committee (9).”

Both school B and C agreed that the management of finance was in the hands of the finance committee. The finance committee mentioned was made up of different stakeholders. It can be assumed that the principals were the chairpersons of the finance committees in these schools, in that way they would be held accountable for any misappropriation of funds.

It was good that in school A different committees that were accountable to the finance committee or to the SGB on their expenditure.

“Each and every committee here at school has a file and they account for every money they spent, when we collect money from learners we take it to the clerk so that it can be recorded and receipts issued to learners (2).”

Under normal circumstances the clerk collected the money from learners but there were instances where educators also collect money from learners. It seems that in this school there was a clear procedure regarding acquisition and how money should be spent.

“Educators are also given the chance of submitting their needs more especially with regards to curricular matters. 50% of the budget is used for learning support material. (1).”

The HOD in school A was clear about how the money should be spent spending half of the money for LSM is in line with finance policy of the Department of Education.

“When money has been deposited into the school’s account the principal call a meeting with the finance committee and the SGB members to give report
regarding the money, the principal shows the bank statement to the members (6)"

The HOD in school B seems to be aware that the principal has to be transparent regarding finances.

Meetings for financial reports and budgets were supported by parents and an HOD from three schools. This is what they said:

“The school governing body draws the budget every year and takes it to the parents for approval, every term the finance committee gives financial report to the parents and to the SGB. (1); financial reports are given to parents every quarter (18); the school gives financial report to parents and the budget is approved by the parents (20)”.

Taking the budget to parents for approval is in line with South African Schools Act, act 84 (SA, 1996).

One parent from school B articulated the quarterly meetings for financial reports to parents.

“Financial reports are given to parents every quarter (18).”

It seems that the involvement of parents help with discipline. This supports what was indicated earlier on in this chapter about parental involvement with discipline at schools.

“The SGB plays a vital role in disciplining learners who misbehave. When a child does not wear a school uniform after we talked to him or her, we invite the SGB to intervene and attend to that case. They will even go to an extent of going to the learner’s parents. If the parents cannot afford to buy school uniform, the SGB will fundraise and buy school uniform for that learner (13.); we called for parents
to assist us to maintain discipline of our learners and parents were on our side. Gates were locked and learners were not allowed to move up and down during tuition time. When learners misbehave, we called parents to assist us. Even today our learners are behaving well, we don’t have serious problem as far as discipline is concerned (14)”.

Discipline was maintained through the help of parents, the situation went back to normal as they were able to lock the gates to avoid unauthorized entry to the school. In this situation it can be learnt that reputation cannot be managed without the help of community members, this was also articulated by participants below. The involvement of other departments becomes imperative as indicated by these participants:

“Parents help the school with cleaning. In the foundation phase parents clean every day after school. They share and they know who is cleaning on Monday, Tuesday, etc. no we don’t pay them; they are doing it for free, voluntarily. In addition parents who have soccer, netball, volleyball skills they come on Wednesday to assist learners during sports activities. Even educators, children who possess good sport skills come and assist our learners here at school. The district office is also assisting us (5); As the chairperson of disciplinary committee I contacted the nursing sister from the local clinic and adopted her for our school. She was going to assist us with learners who experience health problems. All learners who experience those challenges will be referred to her. We also adopted a social worker who will be responsible for all learners who experience serious misbehavior such as theft, doing drugs etc. in such cases an adopted cop will be invited to talk to such learners, showing the danger and the disadvantages of those wrong deeds (5); these learners are vulnerable they need help from different section such as health department, social department, and as well as safety and security department. We also adopted a social worker, a nurse and a police officer (16)”
It is good that not only parents were involved but the government departments, if this continues it would help schools and government institution not to work in silos. The honours is on principals of these schools to manage not only the day to day activities in their school, but be able to manage beyond these boundaries to strengthen ties with institutions in their communities to the benefit of their learners. The participants below reiterated the support they get from their communities:

“We only have a post for remedial educator who assists all learners who experience learning problems. She assessed different cases and contact relevant people for assistance. At the end of the term she gives a report of how many learners were assisted and referred (5); parents come to school to support teachers when we have invited them, and when there are problems here at school. They come and this is an indication that parents have interest in the school. When they hear that there are learners that are misbehaving, they come; even if they are not theirs, because they do not like their children to learn to misbehave from those that have behavioral problems. The community members help only with the donations during the time when the school is raising funds (10).”

In the utterances below it seems that community members’ involvement made them to feel that they were part of what was happening at school. This was also a positive factor that can build reputation. From these utterances it can be deduced that reputation can be built and maintained with the support of external stakeholders.

“The community has got something called “sense of ownership”. They are jealous about our school. They feel that they are watch dogs of our school. Although we know that criminals and vandalism is all over, but it is not right. At times you hear them saying “principal the lights were not on last night, that alone show they really care (5)”
Parents took advantage of the indicators of good reputation highlighted above. Parents prefer to register their children in good schools where effective teaching and learning takes place. This statement was supported by the participants from five participating schools.

“Our challenge is accommodation, if we had more accommodation (classrooms) we would enrol more learners (4); During registration time every parent wants to register his or her child at this school (5); Our learners also enjoy to be registered at our school and parents have confidence of educators. I say this based on the following aspects; academic performance and sport is where our learners are excelling (9); Parents like enrolling their learners in this school (10); Parents like our school and they like to register their learners to this school (15).”

It is commendable that at least one participant from each participating school indicated having a high roll of learners with parents that are happy to enrol their children at these schools.

The following results related to third research objective on factors that are perceived to be leading to bad reputation by internal and external stakeholders.

EXTERNAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTORY TO BAD REPUTATION

There were external factors that lead to bad reputation in school D one participant indicated the following:

“In our school we had a problem because we were using an old building in town. This resulted in our learners not being satisfied with the building and demanded that the department of education must provide them with their own building in the township because they walked long distance from the location to town. Most of the learners were unable to pay for transport and this resulted in them toy-toying and joined gangsters to help them fight for their right (13).”
Although the Department of Education came to the school’s rescue by providing it with a building, there was a challenge that it could not solve that of transporting learners from the township to town resulting in learners bunking school. This was an indication of lack of thorough planning on the side of the Department. As it seems, a problem was solved by creating another. It also seems that there was no monitoring of the intervention by the Department, if they monitored they would have come up with a solution to the problem together with school managers.

The incidences that led to loss of reputation at school D escalated as indicated by the HOD and the educator from this school:

“There have been bad times though, there was a bad spirit, there was something about burning the school down (10); later on when learners got their building in the township they kept on joining gangsters and their behavior was not acceptable and nobody gave us a chance, because our school was labelled as the worst school because of the stigma (13); some of our learners could not arrive on time and others could not reach their destination. Some of the learners are met with friends on their way to school and started smoking dagga (14).”

The school had a bad reputation because of the bad behaviour of learners, non-attendance of classes and absenteeism. It seems that the educators were not in control of the situation. No one seemed to be doing anything about the situation. From the HOD’s statement it seems that stakeholders distanced themselves including the Department of education. It seems that no one took responsibility to solve the problem until it spiralled downwards, having a ripple effect on everything that was happening in the school. In such a situation the educators, leadership and management were under spotlight, in such a way that they felt helpless in the situation. This incident was an indication that a school can lose reputation not because of its own doing but because of the circumstances that it finds itself in. It can be deduced that if problems are not solved for longer periods of time, this can dent the image of the school.
The school was then “labelled”, meaning that there could have been an agreement between the internal and external stakeholders that things were not well. The labelling came about because of the behaviour of learners. It was not the incidence itself that brought about the bad reputation but the “labelling”, what people were saying, their perception. Literature indicates that reputation is built around perceptions, positive or negative, deserved or undeserved, these perceptions shape how an organization is seen by the public (Armistead, 2002; Erdmann, 2002; Bursalioglu, 2000:39) (cf. 2.2). The school was at that stage perceived as the worst school.

The situation was so much out of hand in that it also attracted the attention of the police and the parents also reacted negatively. This is what the participants said:

“When we were busy teaching we would see police coming to school to report that some of our learners were arrested for shoplifting, and in possession of dagga. (14); police were always complaining about the behavior of our learners (14); parents did not attend meetings in big numbers because of the distance they were supposed to walk. Others were afraid of attending meetings because of rumors which were spread saying our learners were very dangerous because they were carrying knives and smoked dagga (14)”

The image of the school was dented because of the behavior of learners and the lack of discipline. It was not only parents that saw the school as bad but also the police. Identity was also affected, the school was having a different identity from the one it initially had. To add fuel to the fire learners were taking photos and publishing the incidences.

Another problem we are experiencing is the cell phones. Learners bring cell phones to school and they disturb or distract effective teaching. They take photos of educators and later these photos appear in websites like face book. We have requested parents to assist us not to allow their learner’s to carry cell phones to school. Some of these learners are naughty and full of anger. When a teacher reprimands him or her is almost ready to fight and some of our teachers are short
tempered they find themselves exchanging blows with learners. When this happens learners begin to take photos using their cell phones (16).”

Technology is good but it seems that in this school it had a negative consequence in that effective teaching was disrupted. It seems that educators in this school were reactive in their approach as it was after the disruption of classes and photos of teachers taken to websites that they took action by involving parents. The school could not adapt to the changes in the environment on time as the only way of solving this was the involvement of parents which was good but they never explored other options such as educating learners about their rights and violation of the teachers’ rights by taking their pictures to a website without their consent.

The educators did not seem to have a strategy to deal with learners who misbehaved hence the exchanging of blows. The fights between the male educators and the learners contribute to the bad reputation of the school. Another problem was the inability of the school management to decide on the course of action. It seems that a visionary mission was lacking. This according to literature is the school manager’s ability to see the big picture and to formulate a plan of action to reach a lofty goal (Werner, 2002:349) (cf. 2.3.4).

Another factor that has a negative impact on a school’s reputation is that of inability to deal with media.

‘As far as the media is concerned, we can consult (5); we have never been in such a situation before, but here at school we do not have the expertise to talk to the media (11); I do not know if the principal has a right to talk to the media maybe he has to refer them to the Department of Education (11), parents are the ones who can talk to the journalists about such things (11).”

The participants from school B and C did not seem to be sure of what the procedure was regarding communication with media.
“The principal had to talk to them (parents) over the community radio, he explained to them what the school was experiencing so as to satisfy them (11) we had to be told about what was happening, so that they do not blow this out of proportion (11).”

It seems that the participant from school C did not regard the community radio as media as earlier s/he mentioned that they did not have the expertise by later on the principal communicated with parents through community radio. In school C they communicated with parents through media when they wanted to clarify something or to satisfy parents. The community radio could be used for communicating positive things as well.

“I think the first people that need to know would be the SMT as they are able to deal with it especially the principal as the one who adheres to policy (2); yes, we can be able to deal with such a situation. If stakeholders know, I think the first people that need to know would be the SMT as they are able to deal with it (3); we do not answer the media and we do not have a policy as far as the media is concerned (4); our gates are always locked and the security is tight. Media cannot enter the school premises without permission (14), at school we do have a school policy but it does not cater for such incidents (15); at school we have a safety committee. We only treat cases which are at our level, but those which are serious we refer them (16)”.

The participants thought that the SMT is the one with knowledge of dealing with the media. It is worrying that in school A and D there are no policies indicating the procedure for dealing with media and yet there are incidences that end up with media as indicated earlier. This is incompetency on the side of these schools.

The following results related to fourth research objective on strategies employed by managers to manage reputation.
DIFFERENT STRATEGIES USED TO MANAGE REPUTATION

Participants indicated several strategies used in their schools to manage reputation. This is what the participants said:

“Before they (parents) could enter the school premises they must first get permission from the principal (14); “we give awards to deserving committees and other stakeholders and show (parents) them trophies (3).”

This was a good strategy used in these schools, that of motivation. It is when principals play a role of a leader that they are able to win their followers over through motivation. This also shows appreciation and respect for what others do. This kind of gesture could create a sense of belonging, motivating followers to be dedicated in their work.

Another factor relating to work environment was that of good working relationships between educators and managers. Six participants (2 SMT members, 1 educator and 3 clerks) articulated this theme.

“When coming to curriculum management we meet with our educators and discuss the progress as well as the challenges, workbooks are controlled by HOD’s and feedback is given to teachers (1); we discuss things and get ideas from everybody (6); the SMT supports the staff members with everything, I also support educators in their personal life because it is important for every teacher to perform (7); an HOD has to have a good relationship with teachers (9); I don’t hesitate to ask a teacher to assist me with certain aspect of a learning area if I know that that teacher is good at that aspect (14); we are working harmoniously with educators, the school management team listens to advices given by the staff members (15).”

The good working relationships are mainly between the managers and the educators in all four schools, in one school the clerk also supported the educators with personal issues. Harmonious relationships enabled personnel to be effective in their work.
Literature indicates that school climate includes relationships, which include professional interactions of individuals which can lead to motivation, job satisfaction and performance (Ruler & Lange, 2002) (cf. 2.3.6).

Statements below indicated that the relationships are not good all the time. Participant from school D indicated this:

“What I have realized is that teachers think that when the HOD is inviting them to a meeting they think of being attacked. They always feel threatened by their supervisors (HOD’s). Even if you want to develop them they will still feel unsecured (13)”

This statement above indicates a communication breakdown where there is no trust, educators not trusting their managers. Literature mentions disengagement, high hindrance and low esprit (Lindahl, 2006) (cf. 2.3.6). Strategies to enhance climate need to be developed in order to avoid such situations.

4.4 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH RESULTS

Most of the factors mentioned in the literature as contributory to good reputation were also highlighted by participants. Reputation management in participating schools was thereof focused on aspects that schools can provide. These included good workplace environment (especially the cleanliness of the surroundings and security); emotional appeal which included respect and appreciation; accountability; effective school financial management; communication; and good leadership and management; academic performance; and school organizational climate. There was no mention of factors such as social responsibility and corporate ethics.

There was also no mention of factors that schools must have such quality of training of educators; and trained managers. It could seem that participants did not regard these as contributing to reputation.
Regarding financial soundness, Chapter 3 revealed that all four schools were from disadvantaged communities, they therefore relied heavily on the funding from the State. The schools were therefore not financially sound as they also relied on financial contributions made by parents.

On factors leading to bad reputation, schools seemed not to have the ability to deal with issues pertaining to bad reputation in their schools, the only attempt that was made was on the behaviour of learners where schools involved parents. Incidences that lead to school D labelled as the worst school are an indication of ineffectiveness of school managers in the school to manage beyond the borders of the school. There is also an indication of a lack of training regarding reputation management in schools.

Effective strategies of reputation management were used, it seemed that these strategies were used over time and had produced good results for the schools but the inability to adapt to the changing environment by adopting new strategies while retaining those that were working threatened these schools’ survival.

4.5 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the textual and visual data was analysed and interpreted. Analysis of data yielded six themes which led to the research findings that are highlighted in Chapter 5. Although factors contributing to good reputation exist in participating schools there was no consistency in the managing reputation. It seemed that in some instances reputation management occurred by chance or as a reactive strategy.

The next chapter presents the findings of this research and recommendation thereof.