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**LEADERSHIP, EMPOWERMENT AND  
INTENTION TO LEAVE OF EDUCATORS IN  
SELECTED SCHOOLS IN THE SEDIBENG WEST  
DISTRICT OF THE GAUTENG PROVINCE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Title:** Leadership, empowerment and intention to leave of educators in selected schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.

**Key terms:** Leadership, empowerment, intention to leave, leader empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment and educators.

The teaching context in South Africa is continuously transforming. Consequently, there are numerous challenges that the educator has to face. Schools are challenged in ways that are different from private sector companies. Lack of resources and funds, teacher turnover, dealing with discipline, lack of learner motivation and self-esteem, racism, violence, antisocial behaviour, shortage of skilled personnel and educator strikes are some of the challenges in the educational environment.

The education profession needs to re-think and re-design its existing management processes in order to retain staff. It can be expected that educators will be negatively influenced by the above challenges and will therefore express intentions to leave the profession. The ability of any school to achieve excellence will depend on the quality, level of competence and energy of the educators. The school requires motivated educators and should attract, develop, care for, retain and inspire the best people on a continuous basis. The school principal should be competent and willing to empower educators. Leadership empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment could lead to lower levels of teachers' intention to leave.

The aim of this research was to investigate the extent to which leader empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment predict educators' intentions to leave the teaching profession in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province. The research method consisted of a literature study that served as the foundation of the empirical research. A cross-sectional survey design was used to achieve the research objectives. Three standardised questionnaires were used in the empirical study, namely the Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire, Measuring Empowerment



Questionnaire and Intention to Leave Questionnaire. The statistical analysis was conducted with the aid of the SPSS program. The statistical methods applied in the study consisted of factor analyses (validity), descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha coefficients (reliability), correlations and regression analyses.

Significant correlations were found between Leader Empowering Behaviour, Psychological Empowerment and Intention to Leave. Leader Empowering Development and Leader Empowering Decision predicted a high percentage of the variance in Psychological Empowerment. Leader Empowering Development and Leader Empowering Decision predicted 18% of the variance in Psychological Empowerment (Attitude). Leader Empowering Behaviour predicted 11% of the variance in Intention to Leave. When Influence was entered into the equation, 19% of the total variance in Intention to Leave was predicted. Based on the results, recommendations were made for schools and for future research.

Leadership and empowerment of educators are important challenges that influence Intention to Leave and that could ultimately reduce turn-over rates of talented people. The empowerment and retention of staff are not only important challenges for schools, but for the growth and prosperity of the country. This research will hopefully contribute in assisting other researchers to develop strategies for improving leader empowerment behaviour and educators' meaning of work.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT**

### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

According to Jackson, Rothmann and Van der Vijver (2006:263), education plays a mayor role in developing the South African economy. In response to constant changes, schools are continuously under pressure to re-position themselves. South Africa, like the rest of the world, is undergoing major changes in the social, political, economical, technological and educational environments. This includes changes in the world of work over the past two decades, which is characterised by life-long learning, risk taking, speed and change, networking and measuring outputs (Wentzel & Geldenhuis, 2005:50). This necessitates organisations to become more transparent, distribute power, reduce hierarchy and integrate new knowledge from employees and customers into their core business processes in order to innovate and meet the marketplace demands (Austin & Harkins, 2008:105).

Schools are challenged in ways that are different from private sector companies. Lack of resources and funds, educator turnover, historical “machine-age” thinking all serve to make schools an unpopular environment to adapt to innovative practices (Austin & Harkins, 2008:105). The education profession needs to re-think and re-design their existing management processes in order to retain staff fundamentally.

The teaching context in South Africa over the past decade is continuously transforming. Consequently, there are numerous challenges facing the educator. Among others, outcomes-based education (OBE), new rules and policies that enforced different structures of governing bodies for schools, ways of dealing with discipline, uninvolved parents, lack of learner motivation and self-esteem as well as dealing with children with learning difficulties, are some of the challenges facing educators (Schulze & Steyn, 2007:692). Jackson *et al.* (2006:263) add factors such as racism, violence, antisocial behaviour, shortage of skilled personnel and educator strikes as challenges



facing the educator. Other factors that can impact on educators' performance and well-being are large class sizes, lack of resources, limited promotion opportunities and inadequate salaries. Against this negative background, it can be expected that educators will be negatively influenced and thus express intentions to leave teaching; basically because even when motivated, some of the challenges raised above are beyond educator's abilities to eradicate them.

Kersaint, Lewis, Potter and Meisels (2007:791) state that the need for highly qualified educators demands a focus on developing and retaining educators that are currently part of the workforce. Schools should invest large sums of money to replace educators and try to prevent instability, last minute hires of under-qualified educators, inadequate orientation, and the emotional and psychological effects of such changes on children (Kersaint *et al.* 2007:775).

Boninelli (2004:3) support the importance of motivated employees when they state that companies need to attract, develop, care for, retain and inspire the best people in order to be winners in the new economy. The ability of any school to achieve excellence will to a large extent depend on the quality of its people. More than ever, the ability of schools to consistently perform and develop will be determined by the level of competence and energy of their people. The demand for talented and skilled people outstrips the supply and one can assume that the search for talented and competent people will intensify (Stander, 2007:2). The pressure will be on schools to retain competent staff members.

The question can be asked whether the school principal is competent and willing to empower educators, that is, for educators to perceive themselves as competent, experiencing meaning in their work and feel that they can influence their work environment. One should ask oneself if leadership empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment could lead to lower levels of educators' intention to leave.

This research will make the following contribution to educational management as a science:

- Recommendations for interventions to enhance leader empowerment behaviour, leading to perceptions of psychological empowerment and impacting positively on the intention to stay at the school and in the profession.
- Scientific information on the relationship between leader empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment, and intention to leave of educators in selected schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province will be valuable in the development of strategies to manage talent and performance.

## 1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Extensive research identified a relationship between job satisfaction and work-related factors such as retention, attitudes toward work, and the commitment to the organisation (Mau, Ellsworth & Hawley, 2008:48). They further stipulate that job satisfaction and the associated higher retention rates are often a concern to educational administrators, as they consider what steps to take in order to address the shortage of educators (Mau *et al*, 2008:49). According to Billingsley and Cross (1992:453), educator retention is a growing area of concern in education. Xaba (2003:287) states that educator turnover and attrition is a global phenomenon and he further shares his concern about educator shortages. "Turnover translates, amongst other things, into shortages in educator supply, costs in recruitment, training and mentoring, poor learner performance due to disruption of planning programs and continuity, as well as overcrowded classes" (Xaba, 2003:287).

Billingsley and Cross (1992:453) further state that in order to prevent attrition, it is important to identify the factors that influence educator commitment and job satisfaction, because both have been linked to individuals' intention to leave. According to Xaba (2003:287), it is important that the educational system take cognisance of the high turnover and develop interventions to address the situation before it reaches critical proportions. Kersaint *et al*. (2007:782-784) mention the large financial impact of retention, and at the same time they identify six important factors that influence educator retention.

Time with family, administrative support, financial benefits, family responsibility, paperwork/assessment and joy of teaching are factors that impact on educators' willingness to stay in the profession.

Xaba (2003:288) highlights commitment to the organisation, long-term prospects, and job satisfaction as main sources of educator turnover. Kersaint *et al.* (2007:777) name lack of administrative support, insufficient mentoring, poor facilities, low pay and increased focus on assessment and accountability as factors that have deterred some educators to continue in the profession. Schulze and Steyn (2007:691) state that South African educators experience the following stressors: uninvolved parents, poor learner discipline, lack of learner motivation, learners' negative attitudes towards themselves, numerous changes inside and outside the school, and lack of self-esteem.

Ladebo (2005:355) mentions that working conditions, intrinsic satisfaction, job apathy and professional commitment are factors associated with an intention to leave the profession. Intentions to quit have a direct impact on occupational turnover, and job satisfaction and organisational commitment are considered as the primary determinants of intention to leave a job (Ladebo, 2005:358). Research done by Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2000:30) indicates that participants from diverse industries and functions gave career growth, learning and development, exciting work and challenge, meaningful work, making a difference and a contribution, autonomy and sense of control over your work as some of the most common reasons to stay with a company. Birt, Wallis, and Winternitz (2004:28) identify challenging and meaningful work, advancement opportunities, manager integrity and quality, empowerment and responsibility and new opportunities as the most important reasons why employees will stay on in a company. Wentzel and Geldenhuis (2005:53) state that to keep the best employees, organisations need to offer them freedom of choice and greater participation.

From the above discussion, the conclusion can be made that the leader or principal can play an important role in creating an environment in a school that will be conducive to retaining and empowering educators. De Nobile and



McCormick (2008:117) state that the principal has a vital role as an instigator of democratic communication and as a role model. The findings of their study suggest that the selection criteria for appointing principals should include a proven ability to develop and encourage open-, supportive-, and democratic communication and to model it through their leadership and management behaviour (De Nobile & McCormick, 2008:117). Leaders with these characteristics will create environments in schools where educators are empowered.

Menon (2001:157) conceptualises empowerment as an act, a process or a state. She classifies empowerment into three broad categories, based on the underlying thrust and emphasis, namely situational empowerment, motivational empowerment and leadership empowerment. Empowerment as a situational construct emphasises moving decision-making authority down the organisational hierarchy so that the employee has the ability to impact on the organisational outcomes.

Laschinger and Finegan (2005:439) are of the opinion that empowerment has become an increasingly important factor in determining employee health and well-being in these changing conditions. Empowered educators tend to have a stronger affective attachment to the school (Dee, Henkin & Duemer, 2003:272).

Buckle (2003:29) identifies increased performance and motivation, quality products and services, lowered absenteeism and turnover, and more creative employees as advantages of empowerment for the organisation, while job satisfaction, commitment, energy, high performance and willingness to learn were identified as some of the advantages for the individual.

Since the late eighties researchers have taken an interest in psychological empowerment (Avolio, Zhu, Koh & Bratlia, 2004; Bogler & Somech, 2004; Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Dee *et al.*, 2003; Konczak, Stelly & Trusty, 2000; Laschinger & Finegan, 2005; Menon, 2001; Somech, 2005; Spreitzer, 1995; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997; Thomas & Velthouse, 1990).

Psychological empowerment as a motivational construct reflects an individual's active orientation to his/her work role, with his/her cognitions being shaped by a work environment (Spreitzer, 1995:1444). Psychological empowerment exists when employees feel that they exercise some control over their work life (Spreitzer, 1995:1444). Menon (2001:156) conceptualises motivational empowerment as psychological enabling. Enabling implies motivating through enhancing personal efficacy by creating conditions for heightening motivation for task accomplishment (Conger & Kanungo, 1988:474). Spreitzer (1995:1444) defines psychological empowerment as "a motivational construct manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact".

Work environments of schools may not be particularly empowering, especially where educators' work roles are routine and repetitive and where pressure of time and understanding leave minimal time for doing anything new or different (Dee, *et al*, 2003:258 ).

The leadership approach to empowerment focuses on the leader who energises his/her followers to act with the leader providing future vision (Menon, 2001:156). Delegation of authority, accountability for outcomes, participative decision-making, information sharing, coaching and developing of people have been identified as leadership behaviours that will empower people (Arnold, Arad, Rhoades, & Dragow, 2000:254-255; Conger & Kanungo, 1988:474).

Avolio *et al.* (2004:953) state that transformational leaders involve followers in envisioning an attractive future and inspire them to be committed to achieving the future. In the process they enhance followers' level of psychological empowerment. School leaders should encourage and practise behaviours such as giving praise, showing concern with words and body language, maintaining regular contact with all staff as well as initiating supportive communication among their staff (De Nobile & McCormick, 2008:116). Psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between six dimensions of empowering leader behaviour and organisational commitment (Konczak *et al.*, 2000:301).



Wallach and Mueller (2006:104) state that leaders can empower followers by providing positive emotional support and opportunities to experience task mastery (competence). In this regard Kelley (2004:447) show that educator retention increases when they experience expert mentoring and networking in a comprehensive induction program. Spreitzer (1995:1443) and Thomas & Velthouse (1990:672) describe that higher levels of decision-making and responsibility provide meaning, feelings of self-efficacy, a sense of impact, and perceptions of self-determination as being key ingredients of empowerment.

Wallach and Mueller (2006:97) are of the opinion that empowerment is a mediator between organisational factors and positive outcomes for workers. Wilson, DeJoy, Vandenberg, Richardson, and McGrath (2004:567) define a healthy work organisation “as the one characterised by intentional, systematic, and collaborative efforts to maximise employee well-being and productivity by providing well-designed and meaningful jobs, a supportive social-organisational environment, and accessible and equitable opportunities for career and work – life enhancement”. In their research, Wilson *et al.* (2004:568) developed and validated a model for a healthy organisation consisting of six interrelated components namely organisational attributes, organisational climate, job design, job future, psychological work adjustment and employee health and well-being.

The South African education system is exposed more than ever to challenges from the internal and external environment. Tremendous pressure is placed on schools to improve their performance and deal with educator turnover that will lead to educator shortages in South Africa. Xaba (2003:289) postulates that the causes of turnover are situated in either the school as an organisation or those factors over which the department has control. He is of the opinion that conditions that lead to high turnover are mostly situated within the school. For this research the focus will be on educators' perceptions of leader empowerment behaviour, and their perception of psychological empowerment leading to intention to leave the profession.

This research will concentrate specifically on the role of the principal in empowering educators. The principal's behaviour can impact on educators' feeling of empowerment and commitment to the school. At the same time the level of commitment and empowerment can influence educators' intention to leave or stay in education. In summary, it is clear that educator empowerment and the retention of staff are crucial challenges, not only for schools, but for the growth and prosperity of the country.

There is a lack of research on the relationship between leader behaviour, psychological empowerment, and employee retention in South African schools. The information obtained in this study can be of value when facilitating organisational development interventions, individual development, talent management strategies and training programs in the Department of Education.

On the basis of the above-mentioned problem statement, the following research questions are identified:

- How are leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment, intention to leave and the relationship between these constructs conceptualised in the literature?
- What is the relationship between leader empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment and intention to leave of educators in selected schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province?
- To what extent do leader empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment predict intention to leave of educators in selected schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province?

### **1.3 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **1.3.1 Aim of research**

The aim of this research is to establish the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment and intention to leave of

educators in selected schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.

### **1.3.2 Research objectives**

The research objectives are the following:

- To conceptualise leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment and intention to leave and the relationship between these constructs from the literature.
- To empirically determine the relationship between leader empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment and the intention to leave of educators in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.
- To determine the extent to which leader empowerment behaviour predicts psychological empowerment of educators in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.
- To determine the extent to which leader empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment predict intention to leave of educators in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.

## **1.4 RESEARCH METHOD**

The research for this study consists of a literature review and an empirical study.

### **1.4.1 Literature review**

Primary and secondary literature sources will be studied to gather information about leader empowering behaviour, empowerment, psychological empowerment, and intention to leave of educators. ERIC, Emerald and EBSCO HOST searches will be done to obtain relevant literature. Key words will include the following: leader empowering behaviour, empowerment, psychological empowerment, intention to leave and educators.



### **1.4.2 Empirical research**

The purpose of a research design is to plan and structure a research project in such a way that it enhances the ultimate validity of the research findings (Mouton & Marais, 1990:32). The research design will be quantitative in nature.

A cross sectional survey design will be utilised to reach the research objectives. This design can be used to assess interrelationships among variables at one point in time, without any planned intervention. This design is ideally suited when the aim of the study is predictive and descriptive by nature (Shaughnessy & Zechmeister, 1997:129).

Empirical research will be conducted to determine the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment and intention to leave of educators in selected schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.

### **1.4.3 Population and sample**

A population is the set of elements that the research focuses on and determines to which extent the results obtained should be generalised (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:87). The Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province consists of 101 primary and 47 secondary schools. To ensure a final sample of at least 10% schools, it was decided to identify 14% primary and 17% secondary schools. Schools will be mainly selected for pragmatic reasons (having some form of contact with principals, schools known to researcher, etc). The population for this study could be defined as all educators teaching in selected primary and secondary government schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province (N=3600). Because of pragmatic reasons a non-probability sample will be used. The disadvantage of this method will be reduced by enlarging the sample (Bless & Higson-Smith: 1995:88). Ideally a bigger sample of educators will be used (n=500).

In this study only standardised questionnaires that have been used in South Africa and/or educational environments will be used. Formal and informal

discussions related to the research have been conducted with the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province, members of school governing bodies, principals and educators. Therefore a pilot study will not be conducted.

#### **1.4.4 Measuring instruments**

Four standardised measuring instruments will be used in the empirical study, namely the Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire (LEBQ) (Konczak *et al.*, 2000), Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (PEQ) (Spreitzer, 1995), and the Intention to leave by Sjöberg and Sverke (2000).

##### **1.4.4.1 The Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire (LEBQ) (Konczak *et al.*, 2000)**

This instrument provides leaders with feedback on behaviour relevant to employee empowerment. The six-factor model provides behavioural specific feedback for coaching and development purposes. The six dimensions are: delegation of authority, accountability, self-directed and participative decision-making, information sharing, skills development and coaching and developing for innovative performance. The original questionnaire consists of 17 items. The inter factor correlations ranged from 0,40 to 0,88 (Konczak *et al.*, 2000:308).

##### **1.4.4.2 Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (PEQ) (Spreitzer, 1995)**

This scale contains three items for each of the four sub-dimensions (for example, meaning: "the work I do is meaningful to me"; competence: "I have mastered the skills necessary for my job"; self-determination: "I have significant autonomy in determining how to do my job"; and impact: "I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department") of psychological empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995:1465). Participants indicate the extent to which they agree with each statement on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 7 ("strongly agree"). Convergent and discriminate validity of the empowerment measures in the industrial sample indicate an excellent fit [(AGFI) (adjusted goodness-of-fit index)] = 0,93, RMSR (root-

mean-square residual) = 0,04, NCFI (non-centralised normal fit index) = 0,98.

#### **1.4.4.3 Turnover Intention Scale/Intention to leave (TI) (Sjöberg and Sverke, 2000)**

The TI (*Turnover Intention Scale/Intention to leave*) developed by Sjöberg and Sverke (2000), consists of a three-item scale devised to measure an overall turnover propensity. The three items (responses) are measured on a five-point frequency scale, ranging from one (“*strongly disagree*”) to five (“*strongly agree*”). High scores indicate an employee's intention to leave his or her current position (e.g. “I am actively looking for others jobs”).

#### **1.4.5 Statistical analyses**

The Statistical Consultancy Services of the North-West University: Vaal Triangle Campus will be consulted for assistance in the capturing, analysis and interpretation of the data collected.

The statistical analysis will be carried out with the SPSS program, 16.0 (SPSS, 2008). Descriptive statistics, (e.g. means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) will be used to analyse the data. Cronbach alpha coefficients will be used to determine internal consistency, homogeneity and uni-dimensionality of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995:315). Coefficient alphas contain important information regarding the proportion of variance of the item of a scale in terms of the total variance explained by that particular scale.

Exploratory factor analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001:584) will be used to determine the validity of the PEQ, LEBQ and the IL. Firstly a simple principal components analysis will be conducted. The Eigenvalues and screen plot will determine the number of factors. Secondly factors rotation will be conducted to make the solution more interpretable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001:584).

Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients will be calculated to specify the relationship between the variables. In terms of statistical significance, it

was decided to set the value at a 99% confidence interval level ( $p \leq 0,01$ ). Effect size will be used in addition to statistical significance to determine the practical significance of correlation coefficients. A cut-off point of 0,30, which represents a medium effect (Steyn, 2005:20) was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

Regression analysis will be carried out to determine how effectively one variable (independent) will predict the value of another (dependant) variable (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101). "The  $R^2$  tell us how much variance in the dependant variable is explained by the independent variable in the calculation" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007:538). In this research the regression analyses will determine the percentage variance in the dependent variable (intention to leave) that is predicted by the independent variables (leader empowering behaviour and psychological empowerment).

## **1.5 ETHICAL ASPECTS**

When people are the focus of research, the researcher should look at the ethical implications of what he/she is proposing to do. The participants should give informed consent to participate and they should also be informed about the research. They have to know what is going to happen with their information after recording. They need assurance that their privacy will be protected. The researcher should take great care and remain accountable for the ethical quality of the enquiry (Henning, 2004:73). The participants should be informed about the process; they should know what will happen and how they will be affected by the process (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101).

The researcher should take time to go through procedures and get the approval of the institution or organisation in whose name the inquiry will be conducted (Henning, 2004:73). For ethical approval, formal application will take place according to the North-West University's (NWU) prescribed form. The study will be concluded after permission has been granted by the relevant institution (Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Department of Education), principals and educators from primary and secondary schools, the school of Educational Sciences at the NWU Vaal Triangle Campus and the Ethical

Committee of the focus area of the NWU, i.e. according to the prevailing ethical standards as set out in Strydom (2005). The researcher will submit an application to the North-West University's Ethical Committee. The research will be conducted after formal approval from the Ethical Committee. The data, as well as the names of the participants who will participate in the research, will be treated as confidential, and before they enter into the research project, the aims and objectives will be explained to them.

The following needs to be taken into consideration:

- **No harm to participants**

Participants, who will take part in the research, will not be exposed to harmful physical, emotional or psychological activities and participants will not be subjected to undue stress or embarrassment (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101).

- **Informed consent**

The principle of informed consent arises from the respondent's choice to participate based on the following elements: competence, that implies that responsible individuals will make correct decisions; voluntarism, participants freely choose to take part; full information, participants are fully informed and comprehension, refers to the fact that participants fully understand the nature of the research (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:52). Participants need to give informed consent to participate which means that all stakeholders and participants will be completely informed about the aim, the process and the benefits of the research or any risks that they could be exposed to (Henning, 2004:73; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101).

- **The right to privacy of participants**

Participants need to know that their privacy and sensitivity will be protected and they should know what is going to happen with their information after recording, guaranteeing anonymity (Henning, 2004:73). Results in this research will be strictly confidential by reporting them in an



anonymous manner (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:102). The researcher will obtain voluntary participation of the participants and will treat all information as highly confidential.

- **Actions and competence of researcher**

A competent researcher should evaluate all possible risks and advantages of the project. Throughout the duration of this research, no value judgements will be made while cultural aspects of participants involved will be dealt with very sensitively (Strydom, 2005:65).

- **Release of findings**

“The researcher should compile the report as accurately and objectively as possible” (Strydom, 2005:65). The researcher will endeavour to report results without bias, give recognition to people and sources that have been consulted and admit shortcomings. Plagiarism must be seen as a serious offence (Strydom, 2005:66). Care will be taken to avoid duplication that could be regarded as plagiarism. The research report will be subject to assessment on Turn-it-in and a report will be submitted where required.

### **1.5.1 Statistical techniques**

For assistance in the capturing, analysis and interpretation of the data collected, the researcher will consult the Statistical Consultancy Services of the North-West University: Vaal Triangle Campus.

## **1.6 FEASIBILITY OF THE STUDY**

The researcher has a very good network (principals, GDE and SGB) within schools in the Sedibeng West area. Standardised and well-researched measuring instruments will be used.

### **1.6.1 Contribution of the study**

The research will make the following contribution to educational management as a science:

- An assessment of the level of educator wellness (psychological empowerment) and school wellness (intention to leave) in selected schools will exist.
- Recommendations for interventions to enhance empowerment, leading to individual (educator) and organisational (school) wellness will be made.
- Scientific information on the relationship between leadership behaviour, psychological empowerment and intention to leave will be valuable in the development of strategies to manage talent and performance.

#### **1.6.1.1 To the subject**

Retention of competent educators is and will be one of the most important challenges that will face principals the next ten years. Valuable information will be provided that will enable principals to manage their talent within schools more effectively.

#### **1.6.1.2 To the research focus area**

Research on these constructs within the educational field is limited in South Africa.

### **1.7 OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter 1:	Introduction, problem statement and objectives
Chapter 2:	Empowerment and educational leadership
Chapter 3:	Intention to leave and the relation with leadership and empowerment
Chapter 4:	Empirical research
Chapter 5:	Data interpretation and analysis
Chapter 6:	Summary, findings and recommendations

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The previous chapter outlined the concepts leadership, empowerment and educators' intention to leave. The problem statement, the aim, objectives and empirical research design were also discussed. This chapter will focus on conceptualising 'empowerment' and 'leadership'. The focus will be on psychological empowerment and leader empowering behaviour.

#### **2.2 EMPOWERMENT**

##### **2.2.1 Defining and conceptualising empowerment**

In the discussion that follows, 'empowerment' will be conceptualised. Secondly, the researcher will discuss the advantages of empowerment and then the process of empowerment will be discussed briefly.

Kanter (1977:166) in her landmark work on empowerment, defines power as "the ability to get things done, to mobilize resources, to get and use whatever it is that a person needs for the goals he or she is attempting to meet". The use of the term 'power and control' appears to be common in most definitions of empowerment, for example, *control* over decision-making, *control* over work processes, *control* over performance goals and measurement and *control* over people (Appelbaum, Hébert & Leroux, 1999:233; Cunningham, 2007:201; Greasley, Bryman, Price, Soetanto & King, 2005:41).

Greasley *et al.*, (2005:41) state that empowerment creates a greater degree of freedom and flexibility for employee decisions. This is in contrast to traditional management that focused on control, hierarchy and rigidity. Empowerment has been defined by Conger and Kanungo (1988:474) as "a process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organisational members through the identification of conditions that foster *powerlessness* and through the removal of both formal organisational practices and informal techniques of



providing 'efficacy' information". For Kanter (1977:166) *power* is more about mastery, energy and autonomy than control and domination. According to Thomas and Velthouse (1990:667), *power* also means energy, thus to empower is to energise.

Cunningham (2007:201) accentuates the manager's role in influencing the thoughts, behaviour, needs, goals and feelings of others in order to empower them. Werner (2007:385) defines empowerment as the shifting of responsibilities to even the lowest levels of the organisation. Thus, it implies that employees are provided with the necessary skills and abilities to make decisions and that their potential is utilized in such a manner that they can solve the problems presented to them within the workplace.

Steyn (2001:152-156) explains the concept empowerment as the fundamental "transfer" of authority and ownership of a task. It includes the process whereby the staff is entrusted with the *power* to make decisions with the necessary authority and to decide and take actions regarding assigned tasks. Empowerment therefore means that traditional and non-traditional decision-making opportunities are given to people who in the past did not have the authority to make decisions. People should understand that decision-making involves responsibility for their actions and decisions, and trust needs to be built into the empowerment process. Dee *et al.* (2003:258) conceptualize empowerment as a mind-set that employees have about the organisation, rather than as something that management does to the employees.

Steyn (2001:149-150) identifies the following characteristics of empowerment that are effectively implemented:

- It serves as an energising tool that motivates staff to be open
- It increases staff satisfaction and morale due to a more positive orientation towards their work roles
- It is associated with productivity at both the team and individual levels
- It creates problem-solving skills

- It creates a shared purpose among staff members, creates co-operation and enhances values of learners and parents
- It leads to discovering creative solutions to different issues by means of group synergy
- It saves management time, assigns responsibilities, develops people, builds trust and influences and expands the manager's scope
- It improves quality of delivery by providing better information and delegating authority
- It leads to organisational commitment. A staff member's experience of empowerment may account for more variances in his or her organisational commitment.

Chen, Kanfer, Kirkman, Allen and Rosen (2007:332) mention that individuals that are empowered are also motivated to perform well, because they believe they have the capability and autonomy to participate in meaningful work where they can influence their organisations in the way that they operate.

Empowerment may provide the conditions that are necessary to build organisational commitment (Dee *et al.*, 2003:259), and by enhancing organisational commitment, the levels of burnout and turnover can be reduced (Dee *et al.*, 2003:272). Konczak *et al.* (2000:301) found that psychological empowerment influences the relationship between leader behaviour and organisational commitment. Empowerment increases trust in the manager as well as commitment towards the organisation.

Greasley *et al.* (2005:43) divide advantages of empowerment into benefits for the organisation and benefits for the individual. Table 2.1 summarises the advantages of empowerment for the organisation and for the individual (Buckle, 2003:29; Cunningham, 2007:215, 216; Kanter, 1977:281; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997:42; Spreitzer, 2007:16-18).

**Table 2.1: Advantages of empowerment**

<b>Advantages for the organisation</b>	<b>Advantages for the individual</b>
Increased productivity	Higher job satisfaction
More effective work	Higher organisational commitment
Performance and motivation	Career progression intentions
Quality products and services	Energy
Lowered absenteeism and turnover	High performance
More creative and innovative employees	Willingness to learn
Higher morale	Become better leaders
Less territorial control	Improved motivation
Speedy decisions	Increased personal strengths
Develop better leaders	Added accountability
Strategic guidance and implementation at work unit level	Increased personal power
Increased efficiency	Increased sense of self-efficacy
Increased customer focus on line level	Achieving personal potential
Greater emphasis on problem solving and prevention	
Managers are transformational in their leadership ability	
Others experience leaders as charismatic	
A greater level of respect and trust	
Increased managerial effectiveness	
Proactive behaviours	
Quicker newcomer role performance	
Improved cross-functional co-ordination of work units.	

Matthews, Diaz and Cole (2003:299-301) identify three organisational factors that are conceptually linked to empowerment. Firstly, a dynamic structural framework where the company provides a clear set of guidelines that will assist in employee decision-making. The second factor is control of workplace decisions where employees are allowed input into their careers. The third factor is the availability of information to all employees.

Empowered staff needs a clear view of the organisation's mission, its values and priorities and these have to be communicated effectively by its leaders (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997:45; Steyn, 2001:158).

Menon (2001:157) conceptualises empowerment as an act, a process or a state. She classifies empowerment into three broad categories, based on underlying thrust and emphasis, namely structural or situational empowerment, motivational or psychological empowerment and leadership empowerment.

From the above discussion the importance and advantages of giving people control and power to do their job is clear. When one allows educators ownership and keeps them accountable for results, it could lead to more productive and happy employees. It is the opinion of the researcher that in the current school culture most principals do not optimise the potential of deputy principals, heads of departments and educators. This can be seen in the centralisation of decision-making, the lack of sharing information and the principal taking all initiative in the educational, cultural and sport areas. In many cases highly intelligent educators, heads of departments and deputy principals won't, for example, be allowed to manage even a small budget. It is further the researcher's opinion that heads of departments merely fulfil an administrative function without the authority to make decisions. This rubs down on educators who experience feelings of disempowerment and not really having a say. One of the challenges facing the education system is to ensure that people operate on the correct work levels, for example, the principal must concentrate on alignment with the education department's strategy and policy and the strategic positioning of the school and not try to run the day to day activities of every educator. By setting clear and



measurable objectives and clarifying expectations and boundaries, the principal should allow the heads of departments to decide how to reach objectives within the set boundaries or parameters.

The focus in this study is mainly on psychological and leadership empowerment. In this context, it is however, necessary to give a brief explanation of situational empowerment.

### **2.2.2 The situational approach to empowerment**

Empowerment as a situational construct emphasises redistribution of authority and granting decision-making authority and power down the organisational hierarchy so that the employee has the ability to influence organisational outcomes, be creative and have flexibility to take risks (Greasley *et al.*, 2005:41; Menon, 2001:156). This enables employees to impact on organisational outcomes (Menon, 2001:156).

The organisational structure influences individual employees' perceptions of empowerment. Dee *et al.* (2003:259) further state that empowerment characterises the employee's relationship with the organisation. Empowerment may lead to a sense of connectedness and it may affect the employee's decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organisation.

According to the situational approach, empowerment is also influenced by external factors. Conger and Kanungo's (1988:474) model of empowerment entails that management conducts a diagnosis of organisational conditions that are responsible for feelings of powerlessness among employees. Various authors argue that managers are able to empower employees when they enhance employees' self-efficacy, share information, provide structure, develop a team-based alternative to hierarchy, offer relevant training opportunities and reward employees for risks and initiatives they are expected to take (Conger & Kanungo, 1988:474; Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997:40).

Kanter (1977:292) identifies six structural organisational conditions that will ensure empowerment, namely access to information, support, resources,

learning opportunities, formal power and informal power. Cunningham (2007:203) regards knowledge, resources, decision-making, networks and expert power as the structural bases of power. For individuals to feel empowered they must perceive their working environment as being liberating rather than constraining. They have to trust that they will not be penalized for taking initiative (Appelbaum *et al.*, 1999:240). Employees who have access to these empowerment initiatives are more likely to be motivated and committed (Faulkner & Laschinger, 2008:215).

Structured empowerment is the process by which a manager shares his or her power with subordinates. Work environments of schools may often not be empowering, especially where educators' work roles are repetitive and routine; where educators are isolated from peers; and where pressure of time and understaffing leave minimal time for doing anything new or different (Dee *et al.*, 2003:259).

Conger and Kanungo (1988:477) identify a number of contextual factors that could contribute to the lowering of self-efficacy or personal power amongst employees. Table 2.2 summarises some of these factors.

**Table 2.2: Contextual factors leading to potential lowering of self-efficacy belief (Conger & Kanungo, 1988:477)**

Organisational factors	<p>Significant organisational changes</p> <p>Start-up ventures</p> <p>Competitive pressures</p> <p>Bureaucratic climate</p> <p>Poor communication</p> <p>Highly centralised organisational resources</p>
Supervisory style	<p>Authoritarian - high control</p> <p>Negativistic - emphasis on failures</p> <p>Lacking of reason for actions</p>

Reward systems	Arbitrary reward allocations Low incentive value of rewards Lack of competence-based rewards Lack of innovation-based rewards
Job design	Lack of role clarity – role conflict Lack of training and technical support Unrealistic goals Lack of appropriate authority Low task variety Limited participation in programs, meetings, decisions that have a direct impact on job performance Lack of appropriate/necessary resources Lack of network-forming opportunities Highly established work routines High rule structure Low advancement opportunities Lack of meaningful tasks Little challenges in the job Limited contact with senior management

According to research done by Spreitzer (1996:489), a participative work climate can be significantly related to perceptions of empowerment. Quinn and Spreitzer (1997:45-46) identify four key elements that are important for empowering employees:

- Empowered people feel that they understand the company vision and strategic direction of the organisation
- Openness and team work where employees are part of an organisational culture that focuses on value of the organisation's human assets

- Highly empowered people report that their clear but challenging goals are in line with the vision of the organisation
- Individuals need a sense of social support from their managers, colleagues and subordinates

Based on the evidence from the literature studied, the researcher is of the opinion that it is important for the school as an organisation to adapt to the structural basis of the school conditions that will ensure empowerment. The principal must not be selective regarding information that is shared with the deputy principal, heads of departments and educators. He/she must create a supportive environment for the staff whereby the staff will be allowed to take initiative to come up with ideas. By allowing educators initiative, it will not only increase their level of efficacy and satisfaction, but it will allow the principal to focus on his/her own areas of responsibility. It is the responsibility of the Department of Education, school governing bodies and principals to give educators access to the necessary resources. These resources can include teaching aids, sound administrative support, a supportive environment, good relationships between the department, educators and parents and opportunities for personal growth and development. Educators should know the scope of their levels of decision-making.

Psychological empowerment is conceptualised in the following paragraphs.

### **2.2.3 The psychological approach to empowerment**

Psychological empowerment exists when employees wish and feel that they exercise some control over their work life (Spreitzer, 1995:1444). Menon (2001:156) conceptualises motivational empowerment as psychological enabling. Enabling implies increasing the sense of self-efficacy by creating conditions for heightening motivation for task accomplishment (Conger & Kanungo, 1988:474). Quinn and Spreitzer (1997:41) state that empowerment is a mindset or an active orientation that an employee has about his/her role in the organisation. Managers can create a context that is more empowering, but people must choose to be empowered.



Menon (2001:159) defines the three main dimensions of psychological empowerment as a sense of perceived control, perceived competence and power, and as being energised towards achieving goals (goal internalisation). Thomas and Velthouse (1990:672) and Spreitzer (1995:1443) define empowerment more broadly as increased intrinsic task motivation manifested in a set of four cognitions reflecting in an individual's orientation towards his/her work role. The set of four task-related cognitions pertaining to an individual's work role consists of: *meaning, competence, choice (self-determination) and impact*. Spreitzer (1995:1460) found in her research that the four dimensions of empowerment combine to form a gestalt of empowerment in the workplace. Menon and Hartmann (2002:140) found similarities between Spreitzer's dimensions of self-determination and impact and Menon's dimension of perceived control. Each dimension will now be discussed.

### **Meaning**

According to Spreitzer, Kizilos and Nason (1997:681), meaning "serves as the engine of empowerment". They describe meaning as the mechanism through which people get energised. A typical statement dealing with meaningfulness (Spreitzer, 1995:1464) is: "My job activities are personally meaningful to me". Quinn and Spreitzer (1997:41) state that empowered people have a feeling that their work is important and they care about what they are doing. Thomas and Velthouse (1990:672) describe meaning as "the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards".

Employees experience meaning when they feel that they are on a path that is worth their time and energy, that they pursue a valuable mission and that the purpose matters in the larger scheme of things (Appelbaum & Honeggar, 1998:31). Spreitzer *et al.* (1997:683) argue that meaning is primarily related to work satisfaction.

### **Sense of competence**

Employees tend to avoid situations that exceed their skills and get involved in tasks that they believe will be within their power to do (Menon, 2001:160).

Competence is measured by the person's confidence in his/her ability to do tasks skilfully, the degree of self-assurance about abilities to perform work activities and a sense of mastery (Thomas & Velthouse 1990:672), "they have what it takes to do a job well" (Spreitzer *et al.*, 1997:682). Quinn and Spreitzer (1997:41) state that competence involves confidence about ability and the sense that one is doing good quality work. A typical statement dealing with competence (Spreitzer, 1995:1465) is: "I am confident about my ability to do my job".

A feeling of self-worth is positively related to feelings of psychological empowerment. Through a feeling of self-worth (self-esteem), employees see themselves as valued resources and are thus more likely to assume an active orientation with regard to their work (Gist & Mitchell as quoted by Spreitzer, 1995:1446). Thomas and Velthouse (1990:672) refer to competence as Albert Bandura's self-efficacy or personal mastery concepts. Self-efficacy is the individual's belief in his/her personal capabilities (Bandura, 1997:1) and the belief in one's competence to manage difficult tasks and to cope with demanding situations (Luszczynska, Gutiérrez-Dona & Schwarzer, 2005:81). Self-efficacy expectations will determine how much effort and time people will expend in the face of difficulties or obstacles (Bandura 1977:194).

According to Bandura (1997:1), "self-efficacy beliefs determine the goals people set for themselves, how much effort they expend, how long they persevere and how resilient they are in the face of failures and setbacks". Conger and Kanungo (1988:478) are of the opinion that jobs with little challenges and meaning, role ambiguity, role conflict and role overload will impact negatively on employees' feelings of self-efficacy.

Perceived competence is the employee's belief that he/she can successfully meet demands and challenges that might arise in the course of work, thus self-efficacy and confidence with regard to role demands (Menon, 2001:161). Perceived competence is the cornerstone of Conger and Kanungo's (1988:479) empowerment strategy as well as a major component of Thomas and Velthouse's model of empowerment (1990:672).

Bandura (1997:1, 2) and Luszczynska, Scholz and Schwarzer (2005:441,442) found that individuals with a strong sense of self-efficacy are:

- more likely to have high aspirations;
- less distressed by threats;
- able to relax, calm themselves and seek support from friends;
- able to prepare themselves better for different careers;
- deeply interested in what they do;
- able to concentrate on the task and not on themselves;
- willing to set challenging goals and be persistent in goal pursuit despite its complexity;
- more flexible to adapt strategies to meet contextual conditions;
- more committed to planning, focus on their future and develop success scenarios;
- able to perceive more positive outcomes of future actions and fewer negative ones;
- able to remain calm and confident in difficult situations and tasks;
- able to recover after setbacks;
- experiencing a low level of negative emotions in a threatening situation;
- coping more actively with pain;
- persisting longer with actions than others; and
- able to overcome obstacles and focus on opportunities.

Bandura (1997:95) states that strong efficacy expectations will develop through repeated success. By helping employees to feel more assured of their

ability to perform well, empowerment can result in positive individual and organisational payoffs (Buckle, 2003:22). Spreitzer *et al.* (1997:684) believe that competence is primarily related to higher effectiveness and work satisfaction and less job-related strain.

### **Self-determination**

Thomas and Velthouse (1990:673) prefer “choice” in stead of “self-determination.” A typical statement dealing with self-determination (Spreitzer, 1995:1465) is: “I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job”. Quinn and Spreitzer (1997:41) state that self-determination relates to the opportunity that employees have to select how to do tasks and to perform them in ways that seem appropriate. They are not micro-managed. Leaders that strengthen this sense of self-determination of employees will make them feel more powerful (Conger & Kanungo, 1988:73). Thomas and Velthouse (1990:673) are of the opinion that a lack of choices leads to tension and decreased self-esteem within employees.

Where competence is a sense of mastery, self-determination is a sense of having a choice in initiating and managing actions (Buckle, 2003:38). Conger and Kanungo (1988:477 ) as well as Thomas and Velthouse (1990:673) stress the importance of perceived control, that can be defined as autonomy in the planning and execution of activities, availability of resources and authority in decision-making. Spreitzer *et al.* (1997:684) believe that there is a relationship between self-determination, higher effectiveness and work satisfaction and less job-related strain.

### **Perceived impact**

Impact is defined as the extent to which an individual can influence outcomes at work. It often manifests in the employees’ belief that they can make a difference, or that they have significant influence over what happens in their work environment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990:672). Empowered people will feel that other people will listen to them (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997:41). Menon (2001:159) supports this by saying that a sense of perceived control is vital for

feelings of power. She further states that control is one of the basic psychological states constituting the feelings of empowerment.

A typical statement dealing with impact is: "My impact on what happens in my department is large" (Spreitzer, 1995:1465). Impact involves a sense that one is accomplishing something. This means that people believe they have autonomy in the scheduling and performance of work, sources are available and they have impact on decisions (Menon, 2001:161).

Spreitzer (1995:1446) proposes that individuals who have an internal locus of control will feel more empowered than those who are external in their locus of control. Individuals with an internal locus of control believe that they have control over their work experiences, whereas those with an external locus of control feel the system, luck, fate or others determine their decisions, successes and failures (Spreitzer, 1995:1447).

Impact represents the degree to which individuals perceive that their behaviour makes a difference and as a result produce the intended effect (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990:672). According to Spreitzer *et al.* (1997:686), there is a positive relationship between self-determination, performance and work satisfaction.

Based on the above research findings from the literature, it is evident that people want to be in control of their work life. It is therefore important that school managers create an empowering work environment, but equally important is that the educator must choose to be empowered. Educators must feel that their job is meaningful and that it adds value to others. It is important that they care about what they are doing. It will be helpful if they perceive their role in the bigger educational environment as positive. For most educators it will be important that they have the skills and competences to do a good job as it will create feelings of self-confidence. Feeling good about oneself could lead to feelings of competence and personal mastery. This confidence should enable educators to take initiative and to be more proactive in their day to day work life. Educators who experience autonomy will feel empowered to select how to perform a task. In the opinion of the



researcher, educators want control in their work environment and want to see that their actions make a difference. They don't want to be passive in the sense that others decide for them what to do, but they prefer to actively influence the environment and the achievement of results.

In the next paragraph the researcher will discuss leadership in an educational environment and then concentrates on the leadership approach to empowerment.

## **2.3 THE LEADERSHIP IN AN EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT**

### **2.3.1 Introduction**

Demands from parents, learners and principals on schools and educators are increasing and so does the occurrence of stress in the teaching profession. Although some pressure is necessary for people to perform effectively, too much pressure and excessive stress may lead to distress, poor teaching, lack of commitment in terms of remaining in the profession, poor decision-making, lowered self-esteem and low job satisfaction (Schulze & Steyn, 2007:691). In South Africa, previous studies linked educator stress to unmotivated learners, lack of discipline, large learner-educator ratios, redeployment and retrenchment of educators (Schulze & Steyn, 2007:691). Educator stress is an ongoing important issue. Recent transformations in the South African education system include a change to an outcomes-based education (OBE) curriculum, inclusive education, new policies and rules around structures of governing bodies for schools and alternative ways of dealing with disciplinary problems. In addition, educators have to deal with children with learning problems in their classrooms (Schulze & Steyn, 2007:692).

After the introduction of the South African Schools Act in 1996, strategic management became an important issue in South African schools and the shift to school self-management required a proactive leadership approach by the school principal (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006:84). Education plays a fundamental role in South Africa and a high premium is set on accomplishing a range of critical objectives such as individual empowerment, technological innovation and social transformation (Wentzel, Buys & Mostert, 2009:1).

In order to cope with the new demands and to lead schools towards a better future, more emphasis is currently placed on strategic management, strategy implementation and strategic leadership (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006:86). The school principal as “chief executive officer” within the school plays an important role with regards to strategic leadership that aims to secure the long term future of the school (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006:88).

The first task of a strategic leader is to ensure that the organisation has an inspiring vision. Through envisioning actions, the organisation can focus on a common goal. Within the framework of the organisation’s vision, it should be important to also allow followers to create their own smaller visions for the organisation (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006:90).

The second task of a strategic leader is to empower followers to perform. Firstly, training and development are important to equip them with the knowledge and skills that are directly related to perform the job effectively, and secondly, the psychological needs of the follower must be attended to. When the follower is psychologically developed, it creates a more mature worker with an ability to take responsibility and ownership. It also creates opportunities for the development of leaders within the organisation. Once the leader has a team of capable followers, it becomes important to empower these followers and to utilise their knowledge and skills to the benefit of the organisation (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006:90). The leader should allow the followers the necessary authority and responsibility in order to work independently. Once the followers are empowered, they should know that the leader will be available to assist and support them when needed. When followers are empowered and developed in this way, they will be able to perform their tasks competently (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006:91).

The principal, as strategic leader, should create an environment where staff and followers can excel through value management, envisioning and communication of the vision. Training and development, empowerment, communication, value management and envisioning are strategic or long term leadership tasks. The principal has to take action to ensure that training and development take place and to empower staff to take up the challenges that

link with the training they received (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006:91). When the vision of the school is in line with this core function, the long term leadership of the principal will also be in line with it (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006:92).

The vision of a school needs to be both challenging and realistic. A truthful analysis of the school's current position in relation to accomplishment in the field of learning and teaching will ensure a realistic vision. However, an analysis of the environmental opportunities and threats will affect this realistic perspective. Envisioning is a very important leadership task for building a capable organisation and is an important aspect in the process of implementing strategy. The leader has to adopt the leadership behaviours that are associated with the visioning task (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006:92).

Successful leadership demands one ability above all others - to be able to energise and organise staff members (Steyn, 2001:158). Principals and schools should resist adopting a bureaucratic orientation, which can be labelled 'distrust'. "They would be better served by exercising their administrative authority with a professional orientation, extending adaptive discretion to educators in the conduct of their work and adopting practices that lead to strong trust among school leaders, educators, students and parents" (Tschannen-Moran, 2009:218).

Principals that are interested to develop a strategy for empowering educators, should plan ways to model empowered behaviours to educators, should encourage co-operative behaviours among educators, but most importantly, should demonstrate firm trust in the school staff. The foundation of a dynamic school is created by empowered educators that are task motivated, have enhanced feelings of meaning and strong organisational commitment (Dee *et al.*, 2003:273).

### **2.3.2 Defining leadership**

Spector (2008:356) describes leadership as the influence that one person has over others. In organisations, leadership is associated with managerial

positions. Van Niekerk and Van Niekerk (2006:92) support this statement by defining leadership as inspiring persons or groups in such a way that they will enthusiastically and willingly work in order to accomplish set aims. The broader leadership challenge will be in line with this definition and in the context of schools it will be to influence staff and other followers to work towards attaining the vision of the school. Strategic leadership will also fit in with this argument, because strategic goals/intent will of necessity be linked to the vision and core function of the school (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006:92).

People identify and remember effective behaviours of school leaders. Principals have both direct and indirect effects on teaching and student achievement. Research supports the fact that there is increasing pressure on principals to ensure that instruction is improved (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008:459).

Wahlstrom and Louis (2008:461) define shared leadership as educators' influence over and their participation in school decisions. Earlier studies on leadership identified trust in the decision-making capacity of the organisation's leadership as the predictor of overall satisfaction with the organisation, rather than employee participation in decision-making. In more recent studies it was found that the perceived ability of colleagues is a strong predictor of trust and that trust is a very strong predictor for risk-taking behaviours (Serva, Fuller & Mayer in Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008:462).

Schools with higher levels of engaged educators (including commitment to students), have higher levels of trust in colleagues. Principals can build trust indirectly through supportive behaviour (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008:462). Bryk and Schneider (as quoted by Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008:462) found that personal integrity, principal respect, personal regard for educators and competence in core role responsibilities are associated with trust among the adult members of the school. A leadership practice where power is shared creates higher levels of motivation, increases trust and risk taking and builds community and efficacy amongst its members (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008:467).



Principal leadership has a consistent effect on educators' engagement in teaching practices.

A bureaucratic or command-and-control leadership style demonstrates a low regard for the capability of educators as positional power is concentrated in the office of administrators who use their positions to discipline educators by enforcing compliance with organisational directives. In such schools, principals create distrust because they believe that without close supervision, educators won't execute their duties and will reduce their efforts, because they are motivated by their salaries and not by the mission of the organisation (Tschannen-Moran, 2009:221). Giba (as quoted by Dee *et al.*, 2003:273) claims that a primary responsibility of the school principal is to create an empowering work environment for educators.

In the next paragraphs the role of the educational leader, with specific focus on leadership empowerment, is discussed.

### **2.3.3 Role of the educational leader**

Zame, Hope and Respress (2008:122) state that as a leader, the principal is required to engage in multiple tasks and has to perform many roles, however, administration and management demands often prevent principals to focus on leadership activities.

Hoadley and Ward (2009:30) identify the following tasks or functions on which principals spend most of their time:

- Disciplining learners
- Liaising with parents
- Overseeing teaching and curriculum
- Teaching
- Dealing with issues in the community
- Administration and departmental reporting



- Supervising educators
- Financial management
- Liaising and meeting with the district/department

Three percent of the principals that participated in a study done by Hoadley and Ward (2009:30), reported that they spend most of their time on supervising educators. The single category that most principals reported as taking up most of their time (29%) was dealing with administration and departmental reporting. Discipline was found to be the second largest category that principals indicated as taking up most of their time.

Zame *et al.* (2008:122) rank the proficiencies required for effective school principals as follows:

- Managing and organising the school's day to day functions
- Exercise of leadership
- Supervising the adaptation and implementation of curriculum and instruction
- Using communication skills
- Facilitating group processes
- Assessing programs and services, student achievement and staff performance
- Financial management
- Political management

Although Zame *et al.* (2008:122) rank 'exercising leadership' as the second most important activity of the school principal, Hoadley and Ward (2009:30) argue that principals only spend 2,8% of their time on supervising educators. With administrative tasks absorbing most of the time, principals should exercise their administrative authority with a professional orientation, should

#### **2.3.4.2 Accountability of outcomes**

Educators must know exactly what is expected from them. According to Schulze and Steyn (2007:693), role conflict occurs when information regarding the educator's role and responsibilities is in contrast with the educator's reality of daily professional life. Educators often feel that they have too many roles to fulfil, for example, that they have to be managers, examiners, secretaries, social workers, counsellors and creative educators that influence the performance of learners (Schulze & Steyn, 2007:693).

Tjeku (2006:60) describes accountability as a situation where subordinates are made responsible and accountable for performance, results and decisions. This would build a level of confidence among employees and between the leader and subordinates.

#### **2.3.4.3 Encouragement of self-directed decision-making**

A self-directed decision-making process will allow employees' space with regard to making their own decisions about how work gets done and how problems get solved. This would help employees to arrive at solutions with which they feel comfortable and to make decisions that will improve the trust relationship between the employee and the leader (Tjeku 2006:60).

Leaders must foster opportunities where subordinates can participate in decision-making (Conger & Kanungo, 1988:474), as this will lead to a sense of ownership (Tjeku 2006:60). Sauer (2003:40) states that involvement of subordinates in decision-making and creating opportunities for them to participate in the management process will lead to quality decisions, acceptance and greater identification with the organisation.

Sackney, Noonan and Miller (2000:53) point out that educational leaders should establish good employee relationships by involving educators in the decision-making processes and by allowing them input to ensure that they feel valued. The leader plays an important role in determining the intellectual and emotional wellness of employees.

#### **2.3.4.4 Information sharing**

According to Slater (2008:67), principals that employ various communication skills and strategies, promote leadership opportunities; build capacity in others; and create trusting relationships. In order to build human and organisational capacity, several communication strategies and skills such as listening, verbal and non-verbal behaviour, openness and empathy to encourage shared leadership are important.

Information must be shared with employees as soon as it is available. "Clarity must be given where employees do not understand, especially on issues of performance and profit, organisational vision and goals and the strategic initiative of the organisation" (Tjeku, 2006:60; and Roodt, 2009:6).

Managers can create learning organisations by adopting an influencing style based on a common shared vision (Cunningham, 2007:216).

#### **2.3.4.5 Skills development of people**

According to Schulze and Steyn (2007:693), inadequate educator training programs fail to provide educators with the required skills to meet the demands of teaching, lead to a lack of self-confidence, create doubt about the ability to communicate effectively with learners, make educators feel disempowered and cause stress.

Bergiel, Nguyen, Clenny and Taylor (2009:208,214) state that training opportunities constitute a crucial part of the fulfilment of the informal contract between the organisation and its employees. Training deepens the employee's sense of attachment to the organisation and has a positive effect on retaining employees. Chew and Chan (2008:505) postulate that effective training is one of the top five human resource practices that are considered to be relevant for the retention of employees.

#### **2.3.4.6 Coaching**

Managers, who are strong in the development of people, recognise and cultivate potential in others. They have the ability to observe small

developments and derive satisfaction from these developments (Rath & Conchie, 2008:155).

Cunningham (2007:216) mentions that there is a shift away from the command and control management style of the manager towards a more coaching and sharing of expertise approach. Coaching and developing of subordinates can contribute to employees becoming more self-reliant (Sauer, 2003:42). Fourie (2009:58) describes coaching as a development strategy where a knowledgeable coach assists employees to direct their own learning in order to achieve developmental objectives.

Caplan (2003:6) postulates that coaching is a new leadership model that is supposed to be prominent in an organisation. She further states that the leader must enable, facilitate and encourage employees so that they can take control of their work and can identify solutions to their problems (Caplan, 2003:20). Holliday (2001:1) defines coaching as “motivating, inspiring, taking people to greater heights. It is a directive process by a manager to train and orient an employee to the realities of the workplace and to assist in removing the barriers to optimum work performance”. According to Valerio and Lee (2005:12), coaching helps the employee to become more self-aware through action learning methods. They regard coaching as a process to develop skills, improve performance and to develop competencies for the future.

Biswas-Diener and Dean (2007:2) support the above view by stating that coaching is about harnessing the best in people and to optimise their potential. Concentrating on peoples’ strengths is more effective than addressing weaknesses. Caplan (2003:134,135) identifies active listening, building and maintaining trust, giving feedback and personal development planning, as some of the more important skills and competencies needed by coaches. Holliday (2001:79) adds involvement and creating trust, clarifying expectations, encouragement, praise and motivation as roles of a coach.

Abbott and Beck (2008:1) identify the following steps that managers must follow to coach employees:



- 
- Step 1: Identify the need to improve
  - Step 2: Observe and gather evidence of current performance
  - Step 3: Motivate to set development goals
  - Step 4: Plan how to achieve goals
  - Step 5: Create opportunities to practice desired skills
  - Step 6: Observe behaviour and give feedback
  - Step 7: Support and work through setbacks

A principal who concentrates on educators' strengths can create a positive climate within which educators would want to optimise their potential and in the process, empower themselves.

## **2.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused on conceptualising 'empowerment' and 'leadership'. The focus was mainly on psychological empowerment and leader empowering behaviour. In the next chapter intention to leave and the relationship between intention to leave, leadership and empowerment are discussed.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **INTENTION TO LEAVE AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH LEADERSHIP AND EMPOWERMENT**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 2 conceptualised the constructs 'empowerment' and 'leadership'. Specific attention was given to psychological empowerment and the kind of leadership behaviour that will empower employees. In the discussion that follows, the concept 'intention to leave' is firstly discussed. Secondly, the relationship between leadership, empowerment and intention to leave is explained.

Xaba (2003:287) states that educator turnover is a reality and a global phenomenon. His concerns about educator shortages in South Africa indicate a clear link between educator demand and supply and educator turnover. High turnover creates a shortage of educators, additional cost in recruiting new staff, re-investment in training and development, poor learner performance due to disrupted planning programs and continuity and also overcrowded classes" (Xaba, 2003:287).

Kearney (2008:625) states that the best and brightest educators must not only be attracted to education, but must be retained as well. It is important to determine what satisfies and matters to educators. Supporting and encouraging them, will lead to happy, satisfied and positive educators that will provide excellent instruction to learners.

Retaining talent in South Africa is currently a macro challenge for the country. South African companies simultaneously face the micro challenge of retaining top talent (Kerr-Philips & Thomas, 2009:2). Today's educators have higher expectations of their employers; they need different support structures; and have more professional experience than previous generations of educators (Kearney, 2008:625).

The expense involved in replacing people who quit their jobs is a costly issue for organisations (Spector, 2008:270). Taplin and Winterton (2007:5) support the above statement and add that labour turnover is a concern for managers, because it disrupts production schedules and creates a costly process of recruiting and training competent new workers in time. Retaining employees means better profits, happier and more productive employees and more satisfied customers (Kaye & Jordan-Evans, 2000:29). The authors further state that retaining key employees is the number one problem of organisations in the United States of America and is a major challenge for most countries and organisations worldwide.

South African schools face the challenge to keep their best educators, especially in the so called “scarce” subjects. “Because shortage of qualified educators is upon us, school management should treat this matter as a priority” (Kearney, 2008:626). In order to retain educators, the state must approach education as a strategic priority and must attach genuine importance to education and educators (Changying, 2007:9).

According to Xaba (2003:287), educator turnover manifests itself in many ways and is attributed to many different causes. The education system should take cognisance of this and should develop plans of action to address this situation pro-actively before it reaches critical proportions.

Kerr-Philips and Thomas (2009:1) state that South Africa is currently experiencing a general skills crisis, especially referring to the retention of its top talent or “knowledge workers”.

It is the opinion of Spector (2008:271) that “the unemployment rate, which reflects the availability of alternative employment, affects whether dissatisfaction and intentions are translated into turnover”.

In the following paragraphs, the concept of ‘retaining educators’ is defined and conceptualised by firstly focusing on antecedents that lead to intention to leave and secondly antecedents that lead to the retention of educators.

## **3.2 RETENTION OF EDUCATORS**

### **3.2.1 Defining and conceptualising Intention to Leave**

Spector (2008:270) defines turnover as the process where employees in organisations quit their jobs from time to time. Where the turnover rate becomes excessive, the workforce tends to become inexperienced and untrained, which results in inefficiency, making it more difficult to achieve the organisation's objectives. The best people in the organisation might also quit because they are the most attractive to other organisations.

Carmeli (2005:179) mentions the following distinctive, but yet related constructs which influence withdrawal behaviour; absenteeism; actual turnover; thinking of quitting; intention to search; and intention to quit.

People who are not happy in their jobs are likely to intend to quit (Spector, 2008:271). While actual quitting behaviour is usually the primary focus of employers and researchers (Firth, Mellor, Moore & Loquet, 2004:170), intentions are often a strong indicator of behaviour that leads to quitting (Spector, 2008:271). For Carmeli (2005:181), intention to leave is considered to be the final stage before actual quitting.

The result of turnover can be damaging to a school. Brown and Schainker (2008:13) stipulate that educator turnover is costly and has negative effects on the school level, whether it is through attrition or migration. Educator turnover makes it difficult to build learning communities and to sustain reform.

Brown and Schainker (2008:14) reveal that high educator turnover rates result in:

- a shortage of quality educators and education;
- loss of continuity and commitment; and
- the need to devote time, attention and funds to the recruitment of new educators while this time and energy could have been spent on existing educators.



In the next paragraphs the antecedents that lead to educators' intention to leave the profession are discussed.

### 3.2.2 Antecedents of intention to leave

Employee turnover can be linked to personal factors, to the workplace itself and to situational aspects (Kerr-Philips & Thomas, 2009:2). Among the **personal factors** that mediate between stressors and intention to quit are aspects of personal agency (sense of powerlessness, locus of control and personal control), self-esteem and social support. Research results strongly suggest that a greater sense of personal agency leads to a reduced risk of negative outcomes following major negative life events and role-related stress (Firth *et al.*, 2004:171).

Firth *et al.* (2004:171) identify the following variables that relate to intention to quit:

- The experience of job stress
- Factors that lead to job-related stress
- Lack of commitment to the organisation
- Job dissatisfaction

The following workplace structures and environmental conditions have been identified as possible causes for people to quit the school: lack of participation, lack of social support, material rewards, organisational culture and specifically job challenge, professional working conditions, educator's remuneration, status, job satisfaction, preferred lifestyle, job involvement and occupational commitment.

Since intentions to quit have a direct impact on turnover, certain job attitudes are believed to be causally related to intentions to quit. **Job satisfaction and occupational commitment** are considered as two of the primary causes of intention to leave a job or profession (Ladebo, 2005:358). Sjöberg and Sverke (200:250) found a negative relation between organisational

commitment and job involvement on the one hand and turnover intention on the other hand.

**Remuneration**, promotional opportunities, working conditions, intrinsic satisfaction, loss of passion for the job and professional commitment were associated with an intention to leave the profession (Ladebo, 2005:355).

In terms of **workplace structures**, Angermeier, Dunford, Boss and Boss (2009:127) provide evidence that in organisations where employee perceptions of their work climate is more participative than authoritarian, it positively impacts on their job attitudes. Where the work climate is more authoritarian, the employees have a higher tendency to leave the organisation.

Firth *et al.* (2004:172) state that **social support** plays an important role to alleviate the employees' intention to quit. Supervisory support not only reduces the symptoms of burnout, but also directly and indirectly affects the intention to quit. The lack of supervisory support predicts job dissatisfaction and intention to leave a job.

Carmeli (2005:183) examines the effects of five dimensions of the **organisational culture** and identifies the following daily practices that define organisational culture:

- *Job challenge* refers to diversity and complexity in the work
- *Communication* refers to the effectiveness of communication between management and employees, and between the employees themselves
- *Trust* refers to the trust that exists between employees and their managers and among the employees themselves. This kind of trust will enable free discussion as well as an open-minded environment
- *Innovation* refers to a supportive environment for creativity, problem-solving, new ideas and continuous improvement



- *Social cohesion* refers to the essence of interrelationships between the organisation's members and to the extent that these interrelationships feature in a sense of co-operation and solidarity.

According to Carmeli (2005:183), job **challenge** is the stronger predictor and it causes the most variance in employees' intentions to leave. Employees in general prefer interesting, challenging, and high-standard work that demands a wide range of skills (Taplin & Winterton, 2007:10). Carmeli (2005:191) provides preliminary evidence that employees' withdrawal behaviour and intentions are products of the organisational culture. In order to retain employees, it is particularly important to stimulate an organisational culture that emphasises challenges for employees in their jobs.

Loab and Darling-Hammond (2005:47) postulate that educators' perceptions of **professional working conditions** such as administrative support, availability of the necessary materials, participation in decision-making and collegial relationships, is the most significant predictor of entry level educators' morale, commitment to their career choice and their willingness to stay in the teaching profession.

Swars, Meyers, Mays and Lack (2009:176) state that a **lack of transparency** and shared **decision-making** will impact on the employees' consideration to leave the organisation. Employees experience a feeling of disempowerment when they lack influence in the decision-making processes of the organisation.

Spector (2008:271) argues that unhappiness is not the only reason why people quit their jobs and adds that drastic changes in people's **lifestyles** can also lead to employees quitting their jobs. Some people prefer to have more time for themselves, while others prefer to become entrepreneurs. Health reasons can also cause people to quit the teaching profession.

From the research done by Kerr-Philips and Thomas (2009:6), four themes emerged as reasons for considering alternative employment:

- Bureaucracy that stunt an entrepreneurial mindset

- Dominant senior level leadership with an “old boys’ club mentality”
- An organisational culture that allows for mediocrity and poor performance to prevail, obstructing organisational progress
- Limited career opportunities as a result of affirmative action

Firth *et al.* (2004:171,172) adds status, professional development, adequate resources, advancement opportunities, pleasure, supportive communication, and participative-management as reasons why educators will stay at a school or in the profession.

Based on the above discussion it is clear that the working environment can play an important role in the educator’s intention to stay or leave the school or profession. The following workplace structures and environmental conditions have been identified as possible causes for people to quit the school:

- Lack of participation
- Lack of social support
- Material rewards
- Organisational culture and specifically job challenge
- Professional working conditions
- Educator’s remuneration
- Job satisfaction
- Preferred lifestyle
- Job involvement
- Occupational commitment

The following paragraphs discuss the antecedents that lead to educators’ intention to stay in the profession.

### 3.2.3 Antecedents of retaining educators

According to Xaba (2003:288), a number of measures have been taken to address educator turnover in various countries (for example, aggressive recruitment, lowering standards to enter the teaching profession and providing incentive allowances). He emphasises the importance to manage the effects of educator turnover as most management measures only seem to focus on the attraction of people into the teaching profession and not on retaining them. A more holistic approach is needed to manage educator turnover effectively. Critical sources of turnover, namely organisational characteristics, have to be addressed. An approach that focuses on the school as an organisation is needed and in essence this can be categorised into commitment to the organisation, long-term prospects and job satisfaction (Xaba, 2003:288).

Working conditions, educators' remuneration, status, professional development, satisfaction, adequate resources, material rewards, advancement opportunities, pleasure, supportive communication, organisational commitment and participative-management are some of the factors that will influence educators' decisions to either stay at a school or in the profession or to quit (Firth *et al.*, 2004:171,172).

Research done by Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2000:30) indicates that participants from diverse industries and functions give career growth, learning and development, exciting work and challenges, meaningful work, making a difference and a contribution, autonomy and sense of control over work as some of the most common reasons to stay with a company. Birt *et al.* (2004:28) identify challenging and meaningful work, advancement opportunities, manager integrity and quality, empowerment and responsibility, and new opportunities as the most important reasons for employees staying in a company. Wentzel and Geldenhuis (2005:53) state that to keep the best employees, organisations need to offer them freedom of choice and greater participation.

Changying (2007:9) states that educators play a prominent role in education and must therefore be retained in the profession. Management should mobilise their professional enthusiasm to ensure the following “three highs”:

- Educators’ remuneration should be high – their salaries should be higher than those of other professionals with similar academic credentials
- Educators’ income should be high and should include good welfare benefits and working conditions
- Educators’ prestige should be high and society should foster more respect for educators

Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2000:29), Loeb and Darling-Hammond (2005:65) as well as Rosser and Townsend (2006:135) highlight professional development as one of the more important factors that will convince employees to stay with an organisation.

Loeb and Darling-Hammond (2005:65) mention some conditions that impact on a school’s ability to retain educators. These conditions include the quality of **professional development**, involvement of parents as well as the quality and applicability of tests that educators are required to administer. “There’s a relationship between intention to resign and unmet **career expectations** and a definite link between **job enrichment strategies**, employee commitment and turnover intentions” (Kerr-Philips & Thomas, 2009:2).

Bogler and Somech (2004:278) identify professional growth (the employee’s perception that he/she has opportunities to learn and grow) as an important dimension of empowerment. Chew and Chan (2008:505) state that training and career development are considerable predictors of intention to stay and identify training as one of the top five practices to retain employees in the organisation. Kelley (2004:445) found in a study over a 10 year period, that 100% of principals and 146 out of 147 educators regard professional growth and efficient mentoring as aspects that lead to the retention of staff.



Kelley (2004:439) adds that **induction programs** have a positive influence on educator retention. Insufficient mentoring is a reason why people quit their jobs (Kersaint *et al.*, 2007:777).

According to Ladebo (2005:355), educators' **satisfaction** is characterised by material rewards (with pay and benefits) and advancement, work conditions, job apathy, intrinsic satisfaction and professional commitment. Educators with higher satisfaction levels are strongly committed to their jobs and less likely to leave the profession. Kerr-Philips and Thomas (2009:2) state that employees that experience job satisfaction are committed to their organisations. They add in saying that other events such as stress and work commitment also influence the employees' final decision to leave (Kerr-Philips & Thomas, 2009:2).

Ladebo (2005:358) postulates that the employee who nurtures the thought of leaving his /her profession is more likely to do so if the right conditions exist, for example an alternative job or employment. The adverse conditions will be applicable where the thought of intent persists.

When employees have **adequate resources** to perform their expected duties, they are more likely to be satisfied. A satisfied employee tends to be more committed to the organisation and less likely to consider leaving the job or profession (Ladebo, 2005:358). Kerr-Philips and Thomas (2009:2) reveal that remuneration, career opportunities, unmet career expectations and conflict with colleagues and/or supervisors affect the employees' intention to leave and may lead to resignations.

Schools should provide logistical support, improve educators' welfare benefits and resolve matters that affect educators' vital interests. Evaluation and appointments of educators should be done according to their professional skills and therefore the best educators who are dedicated to education, who work conscientiously, who produce good results and work with enthusiasm, should be selected and promoted (Changying, 2007:9).

A strong faith in the employers' brand as well as a high **performance organisational culture** will contribute to the retention of employees (Kerr-Philips & Thomas, 2009:5).

According to Angermeier *et al.* (2009:127), a **participative-management** climate strongly relates to employees' intentions to stay in the organisation as these employees are provided with more access to information, and better support and opportunities to influence management decisions that affect them. Employees, who are exposed to a participative management climate, have lesser intentions to leave the organisation. Nedd (2006:16) states that managers must allow employees to participate in work groups and organisational projects. In this way managers can create organisational structures that will influence employees' intention to stay.

It becomes increasingly difficult to recruit, locate and maintain educators and it also becomes increasingly important and valuable to approach the future changes for the teaching environment of schools in a positive way. A positive approach to recruiting and maintaining educators will provide continuity and direction for future generations of learners (Angermeier *et al.*, 2009:127).

Taplin and Winterton (2007:9) argue that employees will stay in the organisation where they experience their managers as **accessible, approachable, respected and trusted** – that is typical behaviour of the empowering leader. Taplin and Winterton (2007:9) also state that managers in low turnover organisations are pro-active in creating a workplace to minimise staff turnover, whereas in high turnover organisations managers see turnover as normative, a situation which they cannot change or do anything about.

Borman and Dowling (2008:390) indicate that regular and **supportive communication** with administrators and better **opportunities for advancement** are associated with lesser attrition rates. Higher levels of bureaucracy are related to greater attrition rates. Kahumuza and Schlechter (2008:16) state that leader and co-worker support has a negative relation to intention to quit. The research results of Pienaar, Sieberhagen and Mostert (2007:64) support this statement in that it indicates that a significant negative



relationship exists between supervisor support and intention to quit. Firth *et al.* (2004:181) reveal that management support can reduce employees' intention to quit, and can lead to considerable cost effectiveness for recruitment, induction and training of new staff. Mardanov, Heischmidt and Henson (2008:170) report that lower quality of leader-member-exchange leads to a higher predicted turnover of staff.

Ladebo's (2005:366) research regarding intentions to quit indicates that educators who derive **pleasure** from teaching young children are willing to continue with the profession and are committed to the profession. This statement underscores the importance of being in a satisfying profession or job situation, which is crucial to the development of a positive affect leading to willingness to remain in the profession.

Ladebo (2005:367) states that enhanced educator satisfaction has positive effects on educators' **professional commitment** and reduces the urge to quit the profession. A well-socialised and committed educator would be less intended to leave the profession.

Grant (2006:53) identifies the following actions to develop **educator self-efficacy** that will lead to persistence and a lower turnover rate:

- Persistent staff development as educators need to feel competent
- Constant mentoring and peer-coaching from experienced educators to manage stressful work situations
- Sustainable feedback and encouragement through instructional coaching as well as formal and informal assessments
- Development of competence in dealing with difficult emotional work situations

Kerr-Philips and Thomas (2009:5) determined common themes that influence employees' intentions to stay in the organisation:

- Quality and depth of company leadership development programs that include personal growth and development opportunities
- High-performance workplace cultures that offer challenging and invigorating work opportunities
- An attractive company brand with a culture that intensely encourages people development
- An ethical business approach
- Reasonable, competitive remuneration packages

It is this researcher's opinion that professional development, job satisfaction, availability of resources, participative practices and quality of management are the main reasons why educators will stay in the profession. Educators want to experience professional growth and optimise their potential. Participative management, where educators have a say in decision-making, will elevate the feelings of job satisfaction, ultimately leading to intention to stay. Educators want to feel empowered and want to experience meaning in what they do, knowing that they create an impact on the work environment. The quality of management, communication and support will influence the educator's decision to stay in the profession or to quit.

The role of the leader (principal) in retaining educators in the profession is discussed in the next paragraphs.

### **3.2.4 The role of leadership in the retention of educators**

Kearney (2008:626) encourages school districts to examine their educator retention rates and to manufacture proper action plans to maintain and improve their current corps of educators. Taplin and Winterton (2007:6) argue that managers can play a crucial role in neutralising the problematic aspects of the job and in creating a pleasant work environment. Takase, Maude and Manias (2006:1078) state that managers must create an environment where employees use more of their skills and are allowed to be involved in decision-making in order to reduce turnover intentions.



Managers in organisations with a low staff turnover ratio, view turnover as a costly problem, they are pro-active towards the problem and they give extensive training to new staff entrants. These managers are serious about their investment in training and they focus on continuous training and cross-trained employees for multi-task performance (Taplin and Winterton, 2007:9, 15).

Taplin and Winterton (2007:9) reveal workers' responses to questions about their reasons for staying with their organisations as follows:

- Good working conditions
- Management styles that provide open communication with workers
- Managers that understand the worker's day-to day problems
- Managers being "accessible and approachable", "respected and trusted" and "help you out if you have a problem"
- Organisations that provide flexible schedules, for instance allowing a worker with a sick child to come in several hours late for a few days

Brown and Schainker (2008:14) identify the following types of **induction support** that should inspire new educators in their continuous learning as well as in their growth and professional development:

- Shared decision-making on substantive issues
- Collaborative work with others to reach shared goals
- Expanded educator leadership capacity

Workers in low turnover environments generally feel that managers seem to care about what happen to workers and that they keenly observe employee needs (and complaints) (Taplin & Winterton, 2007:10).

Principals should provide nurturance, guidance and leadership when needed. They should maintain an open door policy, a visible presence throughout their

schools and encourage and support collegiality among all educators. Principals can reduce educator isolation by fostering official or unofficial professional learning communities; by increasing educator responsibility and understanding; and by improving educator satisfaction, morale and commitment (Brown & Schainker, 2008:14).

Brown and Schainker (2008:14) argue that the principal's support for mentoring and induction programs, particularly those related to collegial support, plays a major role in educators' decisions to quit or remain in the profession. "In order to prepare South Africa's future leaders to be successful in a dynamic work environment, leaders must serve as role models. This involves the active coaching and mentoring of talent (Kerr-Philips & Thomas, 2009:2).

Organisations that provide well-structured leadership development programs to their employees, contribute to retaining these employees. Support and guidance from mentors are critical tools in retaining employees and are at the same time invaluable in people's growth (Kerr-Philips & Thomas, 2009:5).

Van Dick, Christ, Stellmacher, Wagner, Ahlswede, Grubba, Hauptmeier, Höhfeld, Moltzen and Tissington (2004:353,357) postulate that an employee's organisational identification (membership in the organisation) is closely related to staff turnover. They further state that leaders, who provide a vision and allow employees to participate in goal setting, create positive employee identification with the organisation. Organisations with a high degree of communication between managers and employees are characterised by a low staff turnover ratio and such management behaviours can be seen as empowering leadership (Taplin & Winterton, 2007:9). Sjöberg and Sverke (2000:248,250) found a negative relation between job involvement or psychological identification and turnover intention.

Brown and Schainker (2008:11,12) recognise the problems that educator turnover cause in schools and identify the following steps that the principal can follow to resolve this problem:

- Add classroom educators to the schools interview/hiring committee

- Appoint a mentor for all new educators
- Conduct a special 3-day orientation programme for 1st-year educators
- Mandate a monthly 2 hour workshop that focuses on the development of effective classroom management strategies for 1st- and 2nd-year educators
- Provide substitute coverage days for 1st-year educators to enable them to visit educators in their own school or in other schools to learn how to handle classroom management problems
- Ask 1st- and 2nd-year educators to submit a two page report per month regarding the types of problems they encounter and how they deal with them
- Require a submission of a video-taped demonstration lesson from new educators
- Accommodate educator preferences for extramural activities and add an extra amount to their remuneration
- Assign less demanding students to 1st-year educators in order to relieve them from the stress of dealing with the most critical parents
- Evaluate new educators quarterly and give proper feedback that concentrates on development and growth
- Relocate additional budgeted funds to new educators for purchasing supplemental classroom materials
- Relieve entry level educators from supervision responsibilities during their first year, for example during the school break time

Kerr-Philips and Thomas (2009:6) regard these factors as critical for retaining staff:

- Develop employees according to merit and not race

- Create a high performance work culture in which mediocrity and poor performers are not tolerated
- Stimulate personal growth associated with participation in leadership development programs
- Expose employees to all aspects of the business
- Have a high value for skills and ability
- Recognise contributions to the organisation
- Have a respected employer brand

Xaba (2003:289) argues that although the basis of educator turnover is situated in either the school as an organisation or in those factors over which the department has control, the conditions that lead to high educator turnover are mostly situated within the school. If this is the case, the principal can play a direct role in the retention of staff members.

Borman and Dowling (2008:379) identify the following variables that influence educator turnover:

- Location of the school
- School subdivision
- Size of the school
- Administrative support
- School mentoring/development programs for beginning educators
- Partnership and educator network
- Communication with administrators
- Opportunities for development
- System of government / bureaucracy



The previous paragraphs discussed the retention of educators by conceptualising their intention to leave the profession and the role that leadership plays in retaining educators in the school. From the above discussion it is clear that the principal must empower his/her staff in order to retain them. Delegation of authority, accountability for outcomes, self-directed decision-making, information sharing, skills development and coaching for innovative performance are typical leader behaviour that will empower people (Arnold *et al.*, 2000:260; Conger & Kanungo, 1988:479; Konczak *et al.*, 2000:303).

Finally an overview on the relationship between psychological empowerment and intention to leave is provided in the next paragraphs.

### **3.2.5 The relationship between psychological empowerment and intention to leave**

Nedd (2006:16) indicates a considerable positive correlation between empowerment and intention to stay. Grant (2006:53) links self-efficacy, which is also one of the dimensions of psychological empowerment, to employee turnover. She states that staff development, mentoring, coaching, feedback, encouragement and building competence will lead to feelings of self-efficacy and lower staff turnover. In order to keep the best employees, organisations should offer them better participation and freedom of choice (Wentzel & Geldenhuis, 2005:53).

Swars *et al.* (2009:175) found that when employees experience disempowerment and when they don't have enough influence on and control of the organisational practices, these feelings of disempowerment act as reasons to consider leaving the organisation.

Chew and Chan (2008:505) mention autonomy as one of the important reasons for people to stay in an organisation. Autonomy can be linked to self-determination as one of the dimensions of psychological empowerment.

Another dimension of psychological empowerment and meaningfulness is a statistically significant predictor of intention to leave (Baird, 2006:59). People

that experience that they are doing meaningful work and add value to their organisation will be less intent to quit.

The research of Birt *et al.* (2004:27) on retention of staff, reveals that empowerment is one of the top five variables (empowerment, challenging and meaningful work, advancement opportunities, manager integrity and quality, responsibility and new opportunities) that employees regard as important in a job.

Empowered people will remain in the organisation. Experiencing meaning in what they are doing will make educators rethink their intentions to quit as they will feel that they have some power when they are allowed to make decisions and have an impact on their work environment.

The question that should then be asked is: what is the relation between psychological empowerment and intention to quit? From the above it is clear that managers can create work environments that will lead to people staying in the organisation.

Empowering leaders, that is leaders that share information; allow self-directed decision-making; develop and keep people accountable for results; will influence the level of psychological empowerment of educators. The feeling of psychological empowerment will lead to educators staying in the profession.

### **3.3 CONCLUSION**

This chapter focused on retaining educators by conceptualising their intention to leave the profession with specific focus on the antecedents that lead to educators' intention to leave the profession as well as antecedents that lead to educators' intention to stay in the profession. The role of leadership in the retention of educators was discussed and finally the relationship between psychological empowerment and intention to leave was highlighted.

In the next chapter the empirical research design is discussed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **EMPIRICAL RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, the literature study was undertaken with regards to the definition, conceptualisation and relationship between empowering leadership behaviour, psychological empowerment and intention to leave. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the design of the empirical research in order to determine the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment and intention to leave of educators in selected schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.

In this chapter, the empirical research design is discussed. The population, the sample, measuring instruments and methodology regarding the scoring and interpretation of the instruments, as well as the relevant statistical analysis are discussed. The research hypotheses are also presented.

The literature study in chapters two and three formed the basis for the empirical research design. In Chapter 1 the objectives of this study were stated as:

- To conceptualise leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment and intention to leave and the relationship between these constructs from literature.
- To determine the relationships between leader empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment and the intention to leave of educators in selected schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.
- To determine the extent to which leader empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment predict intentions to leave of educators in selected schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.

The empirical investigation therefore aims to gather information about the relationship between leader empowerment behaviour, psychological



empowerment and intention to leave of educators in selected schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.

## **4.2 METHOD OF RESEARCH**

The research for this study was conducted by means of a literature review and an empirical investigation.

### **4.2.1 Review of literature**

Primary and secondary literature sources were studied to gather information about leader empowering behaviour, empowerment, psychological empowerment and intention to leave of educators. ERIC, Emerald, Sage and EBSCO HOST searches were undertaken to obtain relevant literature. Key words that were used included the following: leader empowering behaviour, empowerment, psychological empowerment, intention to leave and educators.

The information gathered from primary and secondary literature sources were utilised to identify standardised questionnaires for gathering information on leadership empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment and educator's intentions to leave the profession in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.

### **4.2.2 Empirical research**

Empirical research was conducted to determine the relationship between leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment and intention to leave of educators in selected schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.

The purpose of a research design is to plan and structure a research project in such a way that it enhances the ultimate validity of the research findings (Mouton & Marais, 1993:32). The research design is quantitative in nature. A cross sectional survey design was utilised to reach the research objectives. This design can be used to assess interrelationships among variables at one point in time, without any planned intervention. Shaughnessy and

Zechmeister (1997:129) state that this design is ideally suited when the aim of the study is predictive and descriptive in nature.

#### **4.2.2.1 The questionnaire as measuring instrument**

Fraenkel and Wallen (2008:112) identify two basic ways for a researcher to decide on a research instrument: Firstly, find and administer a previously existing instrument of some sort; or secondly, administer an instrument that was personally developed or had been developed by someone else. In this research option one was chosen.

Struwig and Stead (2004:89-90) state that it is important to keep in mind that the response to a questionnaire is voluntary and therefore should be designed to preserve the attention of the respondent. To develop a "good" instrument has its problems and takes time, effort and skill, and therefore researchers prefer to select an already developed instrument when appropriate (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008:112). In this study, the researcher administered previously existing instruments.

A questionnaire is a self-report instrument used for gathering data and consists of a number of items that a respondent answers (Best & Kahn, 1993:230). In a questionnaire, the participants respond to questions by writing or by marking an answer sheet. Fraenkel and Wallen (2008:123) state that an advantage of questionnaires is that they can be mailed or given to a large number of people. However, disadvantages of questionnaires are that unclear or seemingly indefinite questions cannot be clarified and the respondent has no chance to increase on or reply verbally to a question of particular importance. According to Tuckman (1994:216), a questionnaire is ultimately dependent on the purpose of the study. Researchers use questionnaires to convert participants' responses into research data. In this sense the questionnaire is appropriate to gather data for this research in that it would elicit factual data about how leadership and empowerment will influence the educator's intention to leave the profession.



## **The design of the questionnaire**

Struwig and Stead (2004:89-94) mention two main types of questionnaires that can be developed, namely interviewer-administered questionnaires and self-administered questionnaires. They propose the following guidelines for questionnaire design:

- enclose exact and comprehensible instructions on how to answer questions;
- separate into rational sections by subject;
- start with questions that are uncomplicated to answer;
- proceed from universal to detailed questions;
- ask delicate or perceptive questions last;
- avoid subject-related or mechanical terminology;
- utilize the respondent's vocabulary;
- minimise the number of questions to evade respondent exhaustion.

In this study self-administered questionnaires were used.

Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990:422-424) state that it is a difficult and time-consuming task to construct a questionnaire that will obtain good responses. This should be a well-organised and thorough process. The following factors are important in preparation of questionnaires:

- The questionnaire should be as brief as possible so that answering it requires a minimum of the participants' time
- The questionnaire should not include unnecessary items
- All items should be understandable

- Items in the questionnaire should be phrased in a way that will ensure unambiguous responses
- Items should be phrased in such a manner that it avoids bias or prejudice
- Questions that might elicit embarrassment, suspicion or hostility in the participants should be avoided
- If both general and specific questions are included, the general should precede the specific
- The questionnaire should be attractive, neatly arranged and clearly printed
- Questions should allow for participants to review their own relevant experiences in order to arrive at accurate responses
- Questionnaires should clearly communicate the process of answering in order to reduce complexities
- Questionnaire items should measure a specific aspect of the study's objectives or hypotheses

For the purpose of this research standardised, reliable and valid questionnaires were selected as measuring instruments. When conducting research it is of vital importance that the instruments that are used comply with psychometric properties. The following two characteristics are important in conducting research:

### **Validity**

Fraenkel and Wallen (2008:148) define validity as “referring to the *appropriateness, correctness, meaningfulness, and usefulness* of the specific *inferences* researchers make based on the data they collect”.

Struwig and Stead (2004:138) state that “the validity of a measuring instrument’s scores refers to the extent to which the instrument measures what it is intended to measure.” Different types of validity include:

- **Face validity**

Face validity refers to whether the items of the test measure what the test claims to measure (Struwig & Stead, 2004:139). If this is not the case, the participants may question the purpose of completing the questionnaire. Face validity is a desirable characteristic of an instrument (Wolfaardt & Roodt, 2006:33).

- **Content validity**

This refers to the extent to which the items cover the theoretical domain of the construct being measured (Wolfaardt & Roodt, 2006:33). The content validity of a test is determined by specialist judgement in which the items are compared with a detailed description of the area of the construct. It is also helpful to assess the internal consistency reliability of the test in that a high internal consistency coefficient indicates that the items measure a particular construct (Struwig & Stead, 2004:139).

- **Criterion-related validity**

Fraenkel and Wallen (2008:148) state that criterion-related validity refers to the process where scores obtained in an instrument are compared with one or more other measures that appear to be similar (Struwig & Stead, 2004:140). No criterion can be a perfect measure of a construct. Criterion-related validity does not indicate whether a test is measuring a particular construct, but merely indicates that a test is unrelated or related to some degree to another measure.

Criterion-related validity comprises predictive validity and concurrent validity. Predictive validity refers to the relationship between the scores of a test (predictor) with the scores of another test (criterion). Concurrent validity examines the extent to which there is a relationship between the predictor and the criterion, where both tests are administered at the same time (Struwig & Stead, (2004:140).

- **Construct validity**

Construct validity was used in this study. Wolfaardt and Roodt (2006:35) define construct validity as the degree to which the test measures the theoretical construct it is proposed to measure. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2008:148) construct-related verification of validity refers to the nature of the construct being measured by the instrument. Fraenkel and Wallen (2008:153) further indicate the following three steps that are involved in obtaining construct-related evidence of validity:

- The variable that will be measured should be clearly defined
- Based on theory underlying the variable, hypotheses are formed about how people who possess a lot versus a little of the variable, will behave in a particular situation
- Hypotheses are tested both rationally and empirically.

Techniques that are commonly associated with construct validity are exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). In EFA, variables are correlated with or independent of each other. The researcher has not decided beforehand how many factors will be present. The items that are strongly correlated with each other form a factor. A factor of a test usually comprises at least two, but preferably more, items. A test may include one or more factors that mirror the fundamental structure of the data matrix (Struwig & Stead, 2004:142).

“CFA is used to determine whether theoretically grounded models fit the data. Specifically, items of a measure are theoretically assumed beforehand and then loaded onto the number of expected factors” (Struwig & Stead, 2004:142). CFA therefore confirms or disconfirms the predicted factor structure. The factors obtained through this process should be in agreement with the underlying characteristics of the construct (Struwig & Stead, 2004:142).



- **Convergent and discriminant validity**

Convergent and discriminate validity can shed light on both criterion-related validity and construct validity. "Convergent validity is realised when a test is shown to relate reasonably well to other tests that are considered to measure the same or similar constructs" (Struwig & Stead, 2004:140).

In terms of discriminant validity, it should be expected that a test should have a low correlation with a test that measures different constructs.

In this research factor analysis was done. Fraenkel and Wallen (2008:334) describe factor analysis as a technique that allows a researcher to determine if many variables can be described by a few factors. The technique essentially involves a search for "clusters" of factors, all of which are correlated with each other (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008:334).

### **Reliability**

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2008:147) as well as De Bruin (2006:159), reliability refers to the consistency of scores from one test-administration to another, and from one set of items to another, while Struwig and Stead (2004:130) define reliability as the extent to which test scores are consistent (Wolfvaardt & Roodt, 2006:28) or stable. A test score's validity is dependent on reliability (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008:154).

Consistency implies a certain error in measurement (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008:154; Wolfvaardt & Roodt, 2006:28). A reliability coefficient (which generally varies from 0 to 1) indicates the extent to which 'true' variance, rather than 'error' variance, comprises the observed score variance (Struwig & Stead, 2004:131). In this research the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient will be used to indicate reliability.

Struwig and Stead (2004:131) mention various ways to establish the reliability of the test scores namely:

- **Test-retest reliability**

Test-retest reliability determines the extent to which a test score is reliable after a certain time interval, if administered on the same test-takers (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008:155; Wolfaardt & Roodt, 2006:29). If the scores from the two test sessions are similar, the scores are said to be reliable or stable. If the time interval is too short, the participants may remember the questions, however if the period is too long, participants may develop, thus affecting their responses to the test items (Struwig & Stead, 2004:131).

- **Parallel-forms reliability**

Parallel-forms or equivalent-forms reliability reduces the problem of the participants remembering responses from the first testing. More than one version of a measure are constructed, each comprising differently worded items. The item domain remains the same. The results of the two tests are correlated to provide a reliability coefficient (Struwig & Stead, 2004:132).

- **Internal-consistency methods**

Internal consistency calculates the extent to which the test items all reflect the same attribute. It comprises the average correlation among the items and the length of the test (Struwig & Stead, 2004:132).

The internal consistency of a test can be increased by adding appropriate items to the test. On the other hand, a test with too many items can cause that the participants become less interested in the test and this can reduce the inner consistency of the test (Struwig & Stead, 2004:133).

**“Split-half reliability** focuses on the internal consistency of the test score” (Struwig & Stead, 2004:132). The test is split into two halves by randomly allocating each item to one of the halves. After a single administration of the test, the reliability coefficient is obtained by splitting the measure into two equivalent halves (Wolfaardt & Roodt, 2006:29).

For example, the one half of the test may contain the even numbered items and the other half the odd numbered items (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008:156). "The test should not just be divided into the first and second parts as the participants may not be as motivated to complete the second part of the test as they were for the first part and this could affect the reliability of the test score" (Struwig & Stead, 2004:132).

The **Kuder-Richardson approach** is based on the consistency of responses to all the items in the measure (Wolfaardt & Roodt, 2006:29). The KR20 and KR21 formulas are applied by using three sets of information, namely the number of items in the test, the mean, and the standard deviation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2008:156).

In this research the **Cronbach alpha coefficient** is used to determine the internal consistency of each of the questionnaires used in this study. This coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) is a general form of the KR20 formula that is used in calculating the reliability of items. This index indicates the extent to which all the items in the questionnaire measure the same characteristics constantly (Huysamen, 1996:27).

Struwig and Stead (2004:94) distinguish between two scales, namely the Likert-type scale and the semantic differential scale. The Likert-type scale usually links to a number of statements to measure attitudes or perceptions and 5-point or 7-point scales are often used. This Likert-type scale was used in this research study.

#### **4.2.2.2 Administering the questionnaire**

Three standardised measuring instruments were used in the empirical study, namely the Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire (LEBQ) (Konczak *et al.*, 2000), Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (PEQ) (Spreitzer, 1995) and the Intention to Leave Questionnaire (Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000).

*The Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire (LEBQ)* (Konczak *et al.*, 2000) provides leaders with feedback on behaviour relevant to employee empowerment. The six-factor model provides behavioural specific feedback

for coaching and development purposes. The six dimensions in the questionnaire are: delegation of authority, accountability, self-directed and participative decision-making, information sharing, skills development and coaching and developing for innovative performance. The original questionnaire consists of 17 items. Two items from Arnold *et al.* (2000:269) ("My manager explains his/her decisions and actions to my work group" and "My manager explains company goals to my work group") have been added to improve the 'information sharing' dimension as these are only measured by two items in the original questionnaire. Konczak *et al.* (2000:312) recommend that for future investigation, additional items should be explored to further assess the dimensions of empowering leader behaviour. In a South African sample of 388 employees in the gold mining industry, Maré (2007:42) finds alpha coefficients ranging from 0,57 to 0,78. A South African study obtained an alpha coefficient of 0,92 (Tjeku, 2006:43).

The *Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (PEQ)* (Spreitzer, 1995) contains three items for each of the four sub-dimensions of psychological empowerment, for example, *meaning*: "the work I do is meaningful to me"; *competence*: "I have mastered the skills necessary for my job"; *self-determination*: "I have significant autonomy in determining how to do my job"; and *impact*: "I have a great deal of control over what happens in my department" (Spreitzer, 1995:1465). Participants indicate the extent to which they agree with each statement on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 ("*strongly disagree*") to 7 ("*strongly agree*"). Convergent and discriminate validity of the empowerment measures in the sample indicate an excellent fit [(AGFI) (adjusted goodness-of-fit index)] = 0,93, RMSR (root-mean-square residual) = 0,04, NCFI (non-centralised normal fit index) = 0,98.

The *Turnover Intention Scale/Intention to leave* (Sjöberg & Sverke, 2000), consists of a three-item scale devised to measure an overall turnover propensity. The three items (responses) are measured on a five-point frequency scale, ranging from one ("*strongly disagree*") to five ("*strongly agree*"). High scores indicate an employee's intention to leave his or her current position (for example, "I am actively looking for others jobs").



## **Population and sample**

A population is the set of elements that the research focuses on and to which the results obtained from the research should be generalised (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:87). The Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province consists of 101 primary and 47 secondary schools. To ensure a final sample of at least 10%, it was decided to identify 14% primary and 17% secondary schools. Schools were mainly selected for pragmatic reasons (having some form of contact with principals, schools known to researcher, etc). The population for this study can be defined as all educators teaching in selected primary and secondary government schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province (N=3600). Because of pragmatic reasons a non-probability sample was used. The disadvantage of this method will be reduced by enlarging the sample (Bless & Higson-Smith: 1995:88) to 500 educators (n=500).

In this study standardised questionnaires that previously have been used in South Africa and/or other educational environments were utilised. Formal and informal discussions related to the research have been conducted with the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province, members of school governing bodies, principals and educators.

### **4.2.2.3 The questionnaire distribution**

The final questionnaire was distributed to the different schools. The cover letter that accompanied the questionnaire intended to orientate the participants to the questionnaire as well as to assure them of confidentiality and anonymity.

The researcher distributed the questionnaires in person in order to minimise the disadvantages of postal questionnaire surveys and to ensure a high return rate as well as to exercise control over the time for returning the questionnaires.

#### **4.2.2.4 Response rate**

A total of 500 questionnaires for educators were distributed in 22 schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province Education Department.

Of this number 319 (64%) were returned. Since a response rate of 64% provides a quantity of data large enough to draw valid and reliable conclusions (Ary *et al.*, 1990:453), generalisations can be made about the perceptions of educators in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province Education Department.

#### **4.2.2.5 Statistical techniques**

The Statistical Consultancy Services of the North-West University: Vaal Triangle Campus were consulted for assistance in the capturing and analysis of the data collected.

The statistical analysis was carried out with the SPSS program, 16.0 (SPSS, 2008). Descriptive statistics, (including means, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were used to analyse the data. Cronbach alpha coefficients were used to determine internal consistency, homogeneity and the unidimensionality of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995:315). Coefficient alphas contain important information regarding the proportion of variance of the item of a scale in terms of the total variance explained by that particular scale.

*Exploratory factor analyses* (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001:584) was used to determine the validity of the PEQ, LEBQ, OCQ and the IL. Firstly, a simple principal components analysis was conducted. The Eigenvalues and screen plot will determine the number of factors. Secondly, factor rotation was conducted to make the solution more interpretable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001:584).

*Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients* will be calculated to specify the relationship between the variables. In terms of statistical significance, it was decided to set the value at a 99% confidence interval level ( $p \leq 0,01$ ).

Effect size was used in addition to statistical significance to determine the practical significance of correlation coefficients. A cut-off point of 0,30, which represents a medium effect (Steyn, 2005:20), was set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients.

Regression analysis was carried out to determine how effectively one variable (independent) will predict the value of another (dependent) variable (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005:101). "The  $R^2$  tell us how much variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable in the calculation" (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:538). In this research the regression analyses determines the percentage variance in the dependent variable (intention to leave) that is predicted by the independent variables (leader empowering behaviour and psychological empowerment).

#### **4.3 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the research design was presented. The next chapter will present the data analysis and interpretation.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DATA INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous chapter, the research design, the research method and the pilot study were outlined. Chapter 4 focused on the design of the empirical research in order to determine the relationship between leader empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment and intention to leave of educators in selected schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.

In this chapter, the hypotheses are formulated; the characteristics of the participants are discussed; and the validity and reliability of the measuring instruments are presented. Lastly the research results are analysed and interpreted.

#### **5.2 HYPOTHESES**

In the light of the empirical objectives of this study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: A significant relationship exists between leader empowerment behaviour, psychological empowerment and educators' intention to leave the profession.

H2: Leader empowerment behaviour predicts psychological empowerment: influence.

H3: Leader empowerment behaviour predicts psychological empowerment: attitude.

H4: Leader empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment predict educators' intentions to leave the profession.



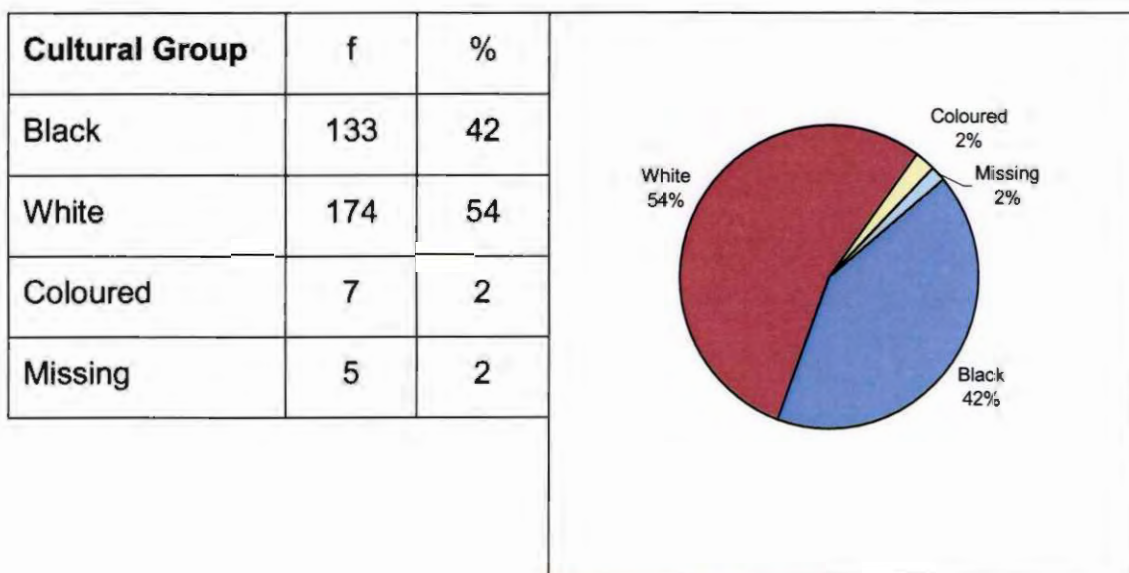
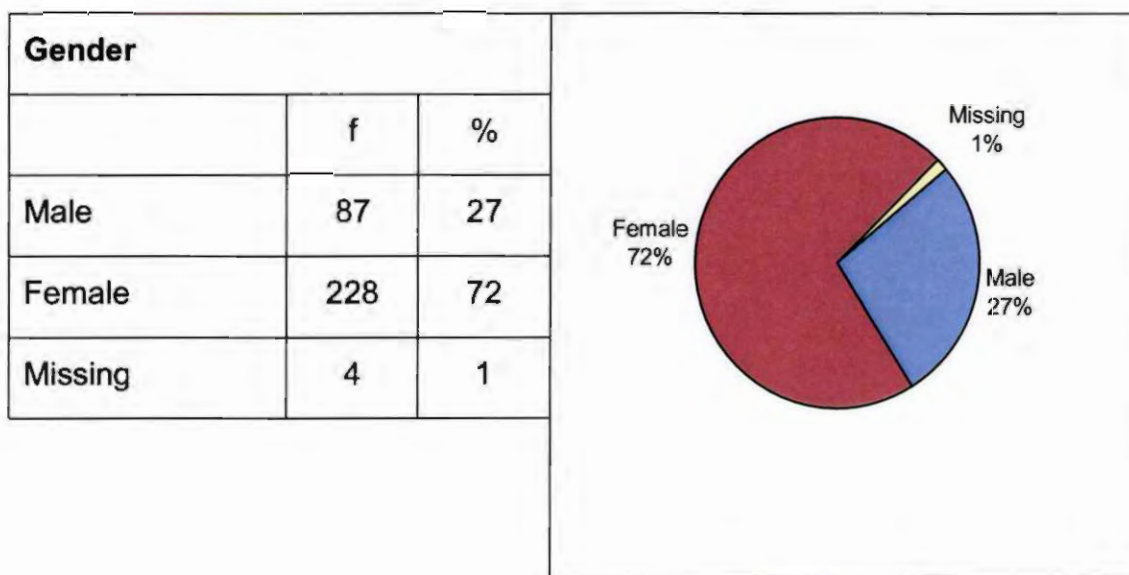
### 5.3 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS

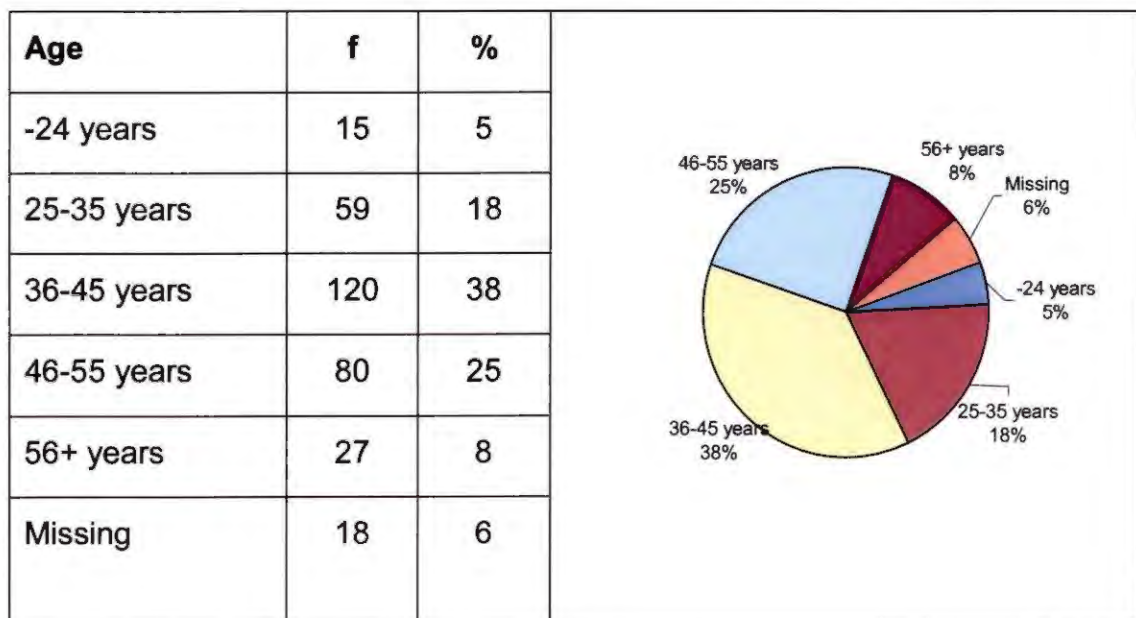
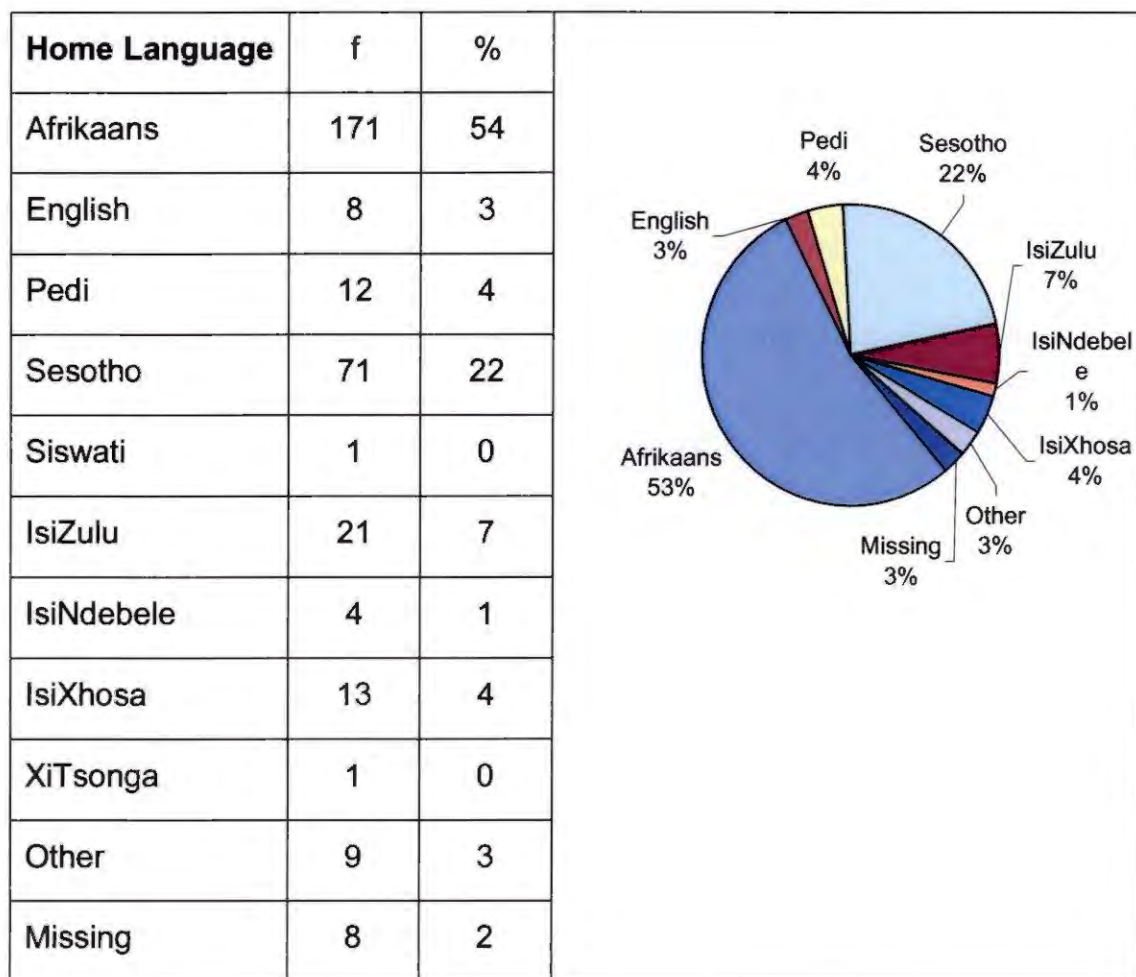
Firstly the general characteristics of the participants are discussed and secondly the focus is on the participants' qualifications and work experience.

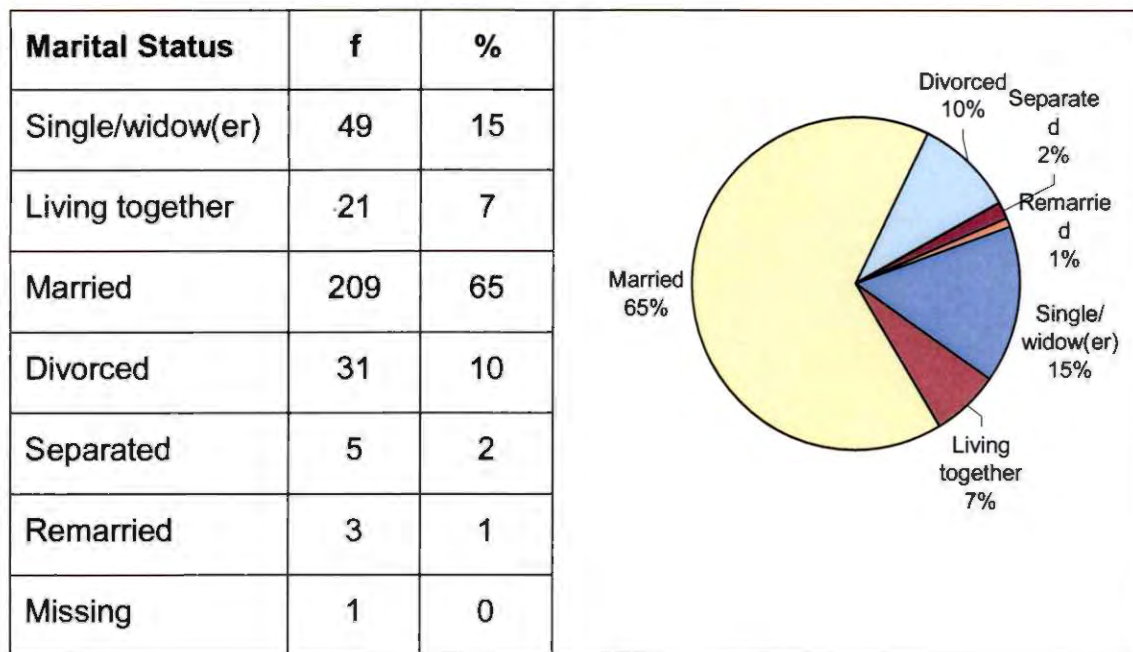
#### 5.3.1 General Characteristics of participants

In Table 5.1 the general characteristics of the participants are presented.

**Table 5.1: General characteristics of the participants**







The participants (presented in Table 5.1) are educators in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province. The Sedibeng West District consists of schools in Boipatong, Bophelong, Evaton, Sebokeng and Vanderbijlpark. The population for this study can be defined as all educators teaching in selected primary and secondary government schools in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province (N=3600). Because of pragmatic reasons a non-probability sample was selected and a total of 500 educators were targeted. A response rate of 64% was achieved, of which 319 responses could be utilised.

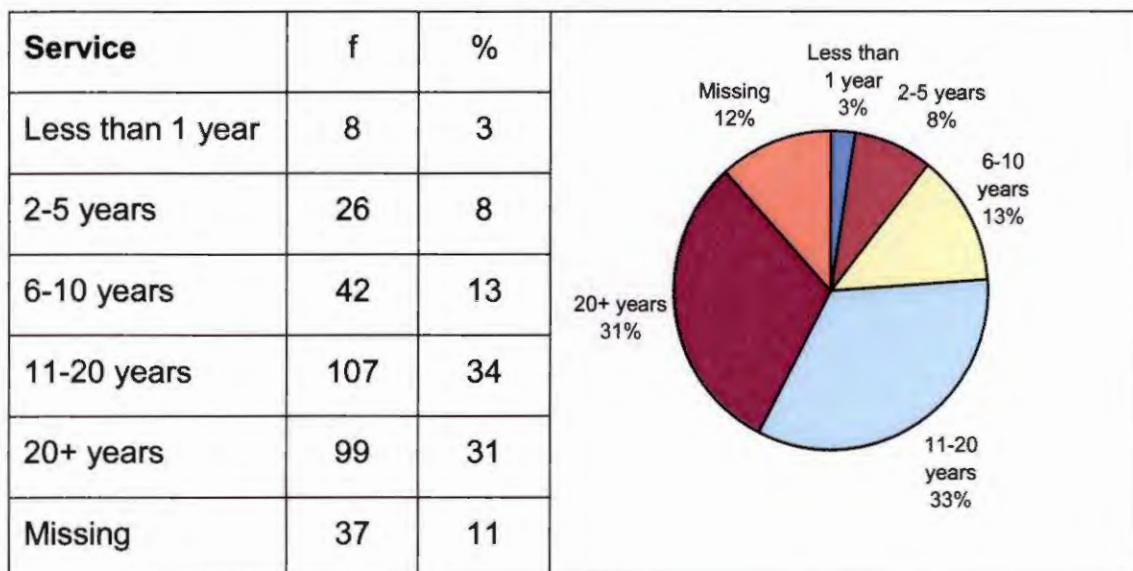
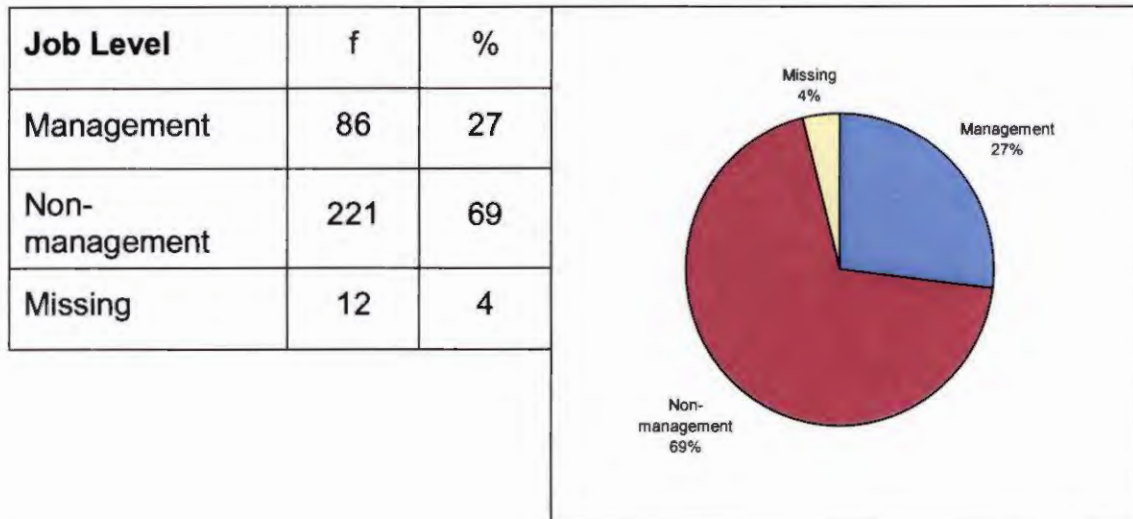
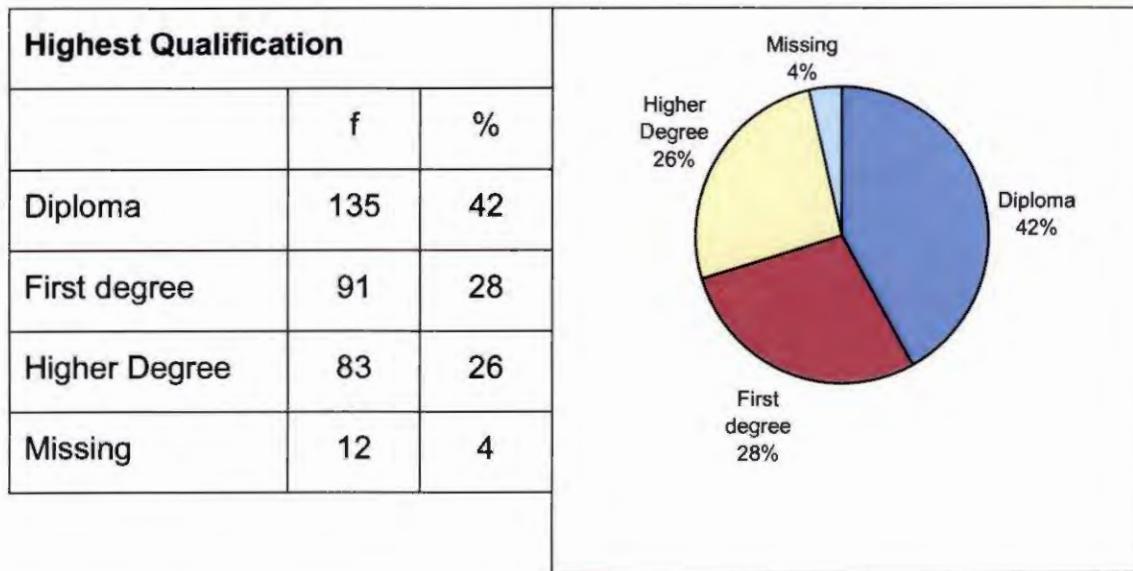
Table 5.1 indicates that 72% females participated in this study. 54% of the study population represents the white cultural group and their home language is Afrikaans. The largest group (38%) of participants is between 36 years and 45 years old and 65% of the participants are married. Only the highest percentages are reported which indicate that the majority of participants were female, Afrikaans speaking educators in their mid-years (between 36-45).

### 5.3.2 Qualifications and work experience of participants

In Table 5.2 the qualifications and work experience of the participants are presented.



**Table 5.2: Qualifications and work experience of the participants**





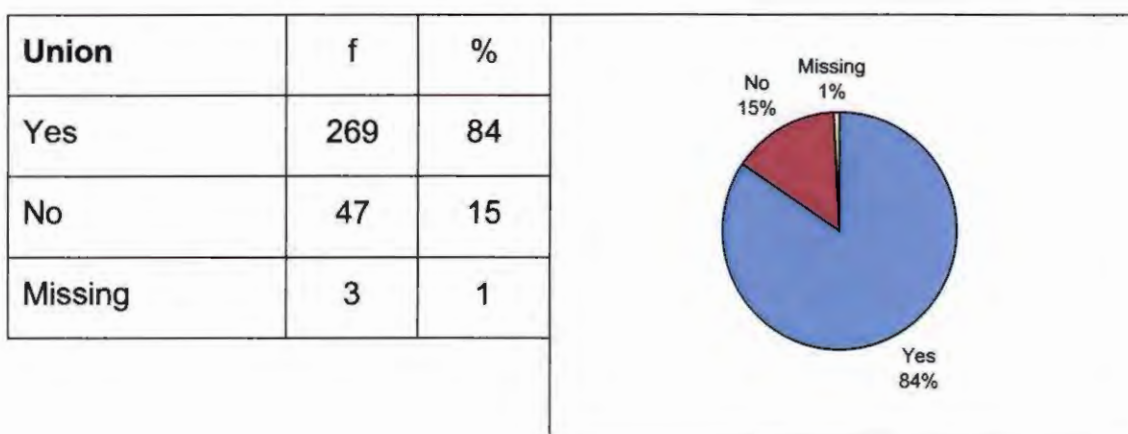
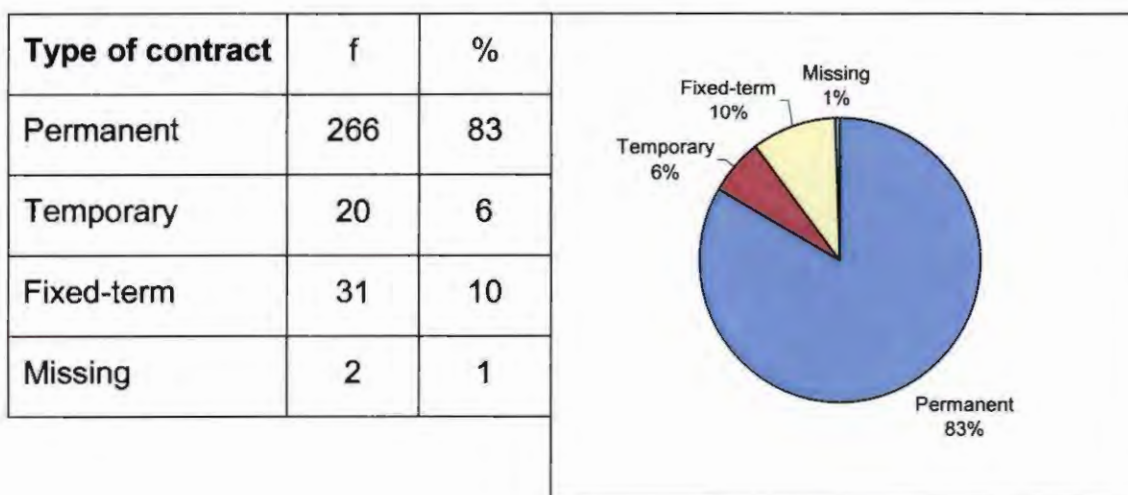


Table 5.2 indicates that 42% of the participants obtained a diploma/occupational certificate in education. 69% of the participants are non-management educators. The majority of the study population has been employed by the Department of Education for eleven to twenty years (34%) and 31% has been employed for longer than twenty years. Participants who are in permanent contract positions are 83% of the study group. Table 5.2 also indicates that 84% of the participants are members of a union. The highest percentages reported in this table indicate that the majority of participants that participated in this research are qualified educators with an adequate qualification and that they form part of the first post level (non-management) position in the school environment in a permanent capacity.

In the next paragraph the validity of the measuring instruments is presented and then reliability and descriptive statistics are discussed.

## 5.4 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE MEASURING INSTRUMENTS

### 5.4.1 Validity of the measuring instruments

The statistical analysis was carried out by utilising the SPSS program (SPSS Institute, 2006). Exploratory factor analyses (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001:584) were used to determine the construct validity of the LEBQ (*Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire*), PEQ (*Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire*) and the IL (*Intention to leave Questionnaire*).

Construct validity was determined by using the following procedure:

- Firstly, a simple principal components analysis was conducted
- Secondly, factors rotation was conducted to make the solution more interpretable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001:584)
- Thirdly, the Eigenvalues and screen plot determined the number of factors.

A simple principal components analysis was conducted on the 19 items of the LEBQ. An analysis of Eigenvalues (larger than 1) and the screen plot indicated that 2 factors (as opposed to the original six factors – Delegation of Authority, Accountability, Self-Directed Decision-making, Information Sharing, Skills Development and Coaching for Innovative Performance) could be extracted, explaining 71% of the total variance. These factors are: *Leader Empowering: Development* and *Leader Empowering: Decision-making*.

In the first factor there is a strong presence of people development, information sharing and coaching items. This factor will be named *Leader Empowering: Development*. Examples are:

- “My manager ensures that continuous learning and skills development are priorities in our school”;
- “My manager is willing to risk mistakes on my part if, over the long term, I will learn and develop as a result of the experience”;

- “My manager provides me with the information I need to meet educational needs”;
- “My manager tries to help me arrive at my own solutions when problems arise, rather than telling me what he/she would do”;
- “My manager focuses on corrective action rather than placing blame when I make a mistake”;
- My manager provides me with frequent opportunities to develop new skills”; and
- “I am encouraged to try out new ideas even if there is a chance they may not succeed”.

The second factor loading indicates a strong presence of decision-making and authority. This factor will be named *Leader Empowering: Decision-making*. Examples are:

- “My manager (principal) relies on me to make my own decisions about issues that affect how work gets done”;
- “My manager gives me the authority I need to make decisions that improve work processes and procedures”;
- “My manager encourages me to develop my own solutions to problems I encounter in my work”; and
- “My manager gives me the authority to make the changes necessary to improve things”.

Konczak *et al.* (2000:306) argue that these items can load on fewer factors. According to Konczak *et al.*, a prudent model (e.g. three to four factors) was not considered in their research because they were confident that the six-factor model provided managers with sufficient and very prescriptive feedback. In South African studies Mare (2007:42) used a six factor model



and Stander (2007:80), Jordaan (2007:48) and Hunter (2009:37) found the questionnaire to consist of one factor.

A simple principal components analysis was conducted on the 12 items of the PEQ. An analysis of Eigenvalues (larger than 1) indicated that 2 factors (as opposed to the original four factors) could be extracted, explaining a high percentage (59%) of the total variance. Self-determination and impact loaded as one factor in contrast to the two factors of the original questionnaire of Spreitzer (1995:1457). This factor will be named *Influence*. Items relating to Meaning and Competence loaded as a single factor and this factor will be named *Attitude*. This two factor structure is in line with the research of Hancer and George (2003:9) that also report two factors, namely Attitude (Meaning and Competence) and Influence (Self-determination and Impact). Stander and Rothmann's (2009:4) research in selected organisations found a four structure model that is in line with the original study of Spreitzer. For the purpose of this study the two-factor structure was adopted in the statistical analysis.

A simple principal components analysis was conducted on the 3 items of the IL. An analysis of Eigenvalues (larger than 1) indicated that 1 item could be extracted, explaining a high percentage (69%) of the total variance.

#### **5.4.2 Descriptive statistics and reliability of measuring instruments**

Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were computed for each item of the LEE3Q, PEQ and the IL questionnaires. The descriptive statistics and Cronbach alpha coefficients of the instruments are presented in Table 5.3.



**Table 5.3: Descriptive Statistics and Alpha Coefficients of the Measuring Instruments**

Component	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	$\alpha$
LE Development	5.56	1.19	-1.17*	1.00*	0,94
LE Decision	5.35	1.21	-1.00*	0.80	0,92
PE Influence	5.21	1.14	-0.81	1.00*	0,84
PE Attitude	5.96	0.94	-1.34*	1.77*	0,86
Intention to leave	2.66	1.35	0.25	-1.14*	0,85

\* High skewness and kurtosis

According to Garson (2009:6), a normal distribution of data is represented by a relatively low skewness and kurtosis that fall within a +2 to -2 range. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were used to assess the internal consistencies of the measuring instruments (Clark & Watson, 1995:315). The information in Table 5.3 indicates that acceptable alphas were obtained on all the scales. The internal consistencies of all the constructs are satisfactory according to the guidelines that show a coefficient reliability of 0.70 as set by Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:135). These results indicate high reliability of the instruments and this is consistent with the findings of other researchers.

## 5.5 RESULTS

In order to specify the relationship between variables, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used in this study. The level of statistical significance is set at  $p < 0,01$  and the effect sizes were computed to assess the practical significance of the relationships. According to Steyn (2005:20), a cut-off point of 0.30 which represents a medium effect, and 0.50 which represents a large effect, is set for the practical significance of correlation coefficients. The correlation coefficients between Leader Empowerment Behaviour (LEB), Psychological Empowerment (PE) and Intention to Leave (IL) were analysed and the results are presented in Table 5.4.

**Table 5.4: Correlation Coefficients between the Measuring Instruments**

Item	LE Development	LE Decision	PE Influence	PE Attitude
LE Development	-	-	-	-
LE Decision	0.78*††	-	-	-
PE Influence	0.40*†	0.46*†	-	-
PE Attitude	0.43*†	0.34*†	0.58*††	-
Intention to leave	-0.31*†	-0.32*†	-0.32*†	-0.38*†

\* Correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

†Correlation is practically significant  $r \geq 0,30$  ( medium effect )

††Correlation is practically significant  $r \geq 0,50$  ( large effect )

Table 5.4 indicates that there is a statistically significant correlation between all the constructs, namely Leader Empowering Development, Leader Empowering Decision, Psychological Empowering Influence, Psychological Empowering Attitude and Intention to leave.

A practical significant correlation of large effect was found between Leader Empowering Development and Leader Empowering Decision. This could be expected because they are two constructs within the same questionnaire. The data indicated a practical significant correlation of medium effect between Leader Empowering Development and Psychological Empowering Influence. This is an indication that educators who are developed by their leaders will feel that they have an influence in the school. Higher levels of Leader Development are therefore associated with higher levels of perceived self-determination and impact. Self-determination is a sense of having a choice in initiating and managing actions (Buckle, 2003:38). Leaders that strengthen this sense of self-determination of employees will make them feel more powerful (Conger & Kanungo, 1988:73). Thomas and Velthouse (1990:673) are of the opinion that a lack of choices will lead to tension and decreased self-esteem within employees. Conger and Kanungo (1988:477 ) as well as Thomas and Velthouse (1990:673) stress the importance of perceived control, which they define as autonomy in the planning and execution of activities,

availability of resources and authority in decision-making. Spreitzer *et al.* (1997:684) believe that there is a relationship between self-determination, higher effectiveness and work satisfaction and less job-related strain.

Impact is defined as the extent to which an individual can influence outcomes at work. It often manifests in the employees' belief that they can make a difference, or that they have significant influence over what happens in their work environment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990:672). Empowered people will feel that other people will listen to them (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997:41). Menon (2001:159) supports this by saying that a sense of perceived control is vital for feelings of power. She further states that control is one of the basic psychological states constituting feelings of empowerment.

Leaders who ensure continuous learning and skills development, who provide the employees with information, who focus on corrective action rather to place blame on the employee and who encourage their staff to explore new ideas, will impact positively on educators' perceptions that they can influence the school environment.

There is a practical significant correlation of medium effect between Leader Empowering Development and Psychological Empowering Attitude (as measured by meaning and competence). Employees that are developed by their leaders will have a positive attitude towards their own level of competence and the meaning of their job. Competence is measured by the person's confidence in his/her ability to do tasks skilfully, the degree of self-assurance about abilities to perform work activities and a sense of mastery (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990:672). Quinn and Spreitzer (1997:41) state that competence involves confidence about ability and the sense that one is doing good quality work. Through a feeling of self-worth (self-esteem) employees see themselves as valued resources and are thus more likely to assume an active orientation with regard to their work (Gist & Mitchell as quoted by Spreitzer, 1995:1446). Thomas and Velthouse (1990:672) refer to competence as Albert Bandura's self-efficacy or personal mastery concept. Self-efficacy is to believe in one's competence to manage difficult tasks and to cope with demanding situations (Luszczynska *et al.*, 2005:81). Self-efficacy

expectations will determine how much effort and time people will expend in the face of difficulties or obstacles (Bandura, 1977:194).

Spreitzer *et al.* (1997:681) describe meaning as the mechanism through which people get energised. Quinn and Spreitzer (1997:41) state that empowered people have a feeling that their work is important and they care about what they are doing. Thomas and Velthouse (1990:672) describe meaning as “the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual’s own ideals or standards”. Employees experience meaning when they feel that they are on a path that is worth their time and energy, that they pursue a valuable mission and that the purpose matters in the larger scheme of things (Appelbaum & Honegger, 1998:31). Spreitzer *et al.* (1997:683) argue that meaning is primarily related to work satisfaction.

School leaders, that allow their staff to make their own decisions on issues that will influence how they do their work, will contribute to the educators’ perception of meaningfulness. Leaders that grant their staff authority and develop their staff to discover their own solutions to problems will create feelings of self-worth in the educator. Such leaders will create an environment where educators experience their teaching task as precious and meaningful.

There is a practical significant negative correlation of medium effect between Leader Empowering Development and Intention to Leave. Principals who focus on educator development create a positive attitude and educators will be less likely to leave the school. Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2000:29); Loeb and Darling-Hammond (2005:65); as well as Rosser and Townsend (2006:135); highlight professional development as one of the more important aspects that will convince employees to stay with an organisation.

South African schools face the challenge to keep their best educators, especially in the so called “scarce” subjects. “Because a shortage of qualified educators is already upon us, school management should treat this matter as a priority” (Kearney, 2008:626). According to Xaba (2003:287), educator turnover manifests itself in many ways and is attributed to many different causes. The education system should take cognisance of this and should



develop plans of action to address this situation pro-actively before it reaches critical proportions. Seen against this challenge of retaining educators, development must be prioritised as one of the Principal's most important plans of action in order to prevent educators from leaving the school or profession.

A practical significant correlation of medium effect was found between Leader Empowering Decision, Psychological Empowering Influence (as measured by impact and self-determination) and Psychological Empowering Attitude (as measured by meaning and competence).

Principals that allow educators to make their own decisions, give staff members the authority to make decisions that improve work processes and procedures and encourage people to develop their own solutions to problems, will add to educators' perceptions of self-determination, experiences of having an impact in the school and seeing their task as meaningful whilst having perceptions of competence.

A practical significant negative correlation of medium effect was found between Leader Empowering Decision and Intention to Leave. Principals that allow the educator to be part of decision-making processes will encourage a positive attitude and this will decrease the educator's intention to leave the profession.

A practical significant correlation with a large effect was found between Psychological Empowering Influence and Psychological Empowering Attitude. This could be expected because they are two constructs within the same questionnaire.

There was a practical significant negative correlation of medium effect between Psychological Empowering Influence (self-determination and impact) and Intention to leave. Employees that have access to empowerment aspects are more likely to be motivated and committed (Faulkner & Laschinger, 2008:215). Self-determination is a sense of having a choice and will lead to educators to be less likely to quit their jobs. Leaders that empower educators, share information, allow self-directed decision-making, develop people, and

keep people accountable for results, will influence the level of making an impact in the school. This feeling of psychological empowerment will lead to educators staying within the school or profession. Impact manifests in the employees' belief that they can make a difference, or that they have significant influence over what happens in their work environment (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990:672). Menon (2001:159) supports this by saying that a sense of perceived control is vital for feelings of power. Impact involves a sense that one is accomplishing something. This means that people believe they have autonomy in the scheduling and performance of work, that sources are available and they have an impact on decisions (Menon, 2001:161).

Table 5.4 indicates a practical significant negative correlation of medium effect between Psychological Empowering Attitude and Intention to Leave. According to Baird (2006:59), meaningfulness as a dimension of psychological empowerment, is a statistically significant predictor of intention to leave. People that experience that they are doing meaningful work and add value to their environment will be less likely to leave the school. Working conditions, educator's remuneration, status, professional development, satisfaction, adequate resources, material rewards, advancement opportunities, pleasure, supportive communication, organisational commitment and participative-management are some of the reasons why educators will stay at a school or in the profession (Firth *et al.*, 2004:171,172). It is the researcher's opinion that educators want to feel empowered and want to experience meaning in what they do. Educators who know that they have an impact on the work environment experience a higher level of competence. Educators who feel that they are making a meaningful contribution will stay in the profession.

The above findings support Hypothesis 1: "A significant relationship exists between Leader Empowerment Behaviour, Psychological Empowerment and Intention to Leave of educators in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province".

In the next paragraph regression analyses will be carried out to determine how effectively an independent variable will predict the value of a dependent variable.

## **5.6 REGRESSIONS**

Regression analyses were conducted to determine the percentage variance in the dependent variable which was predicted by the independent variables. Regression analysis determines how effectively one variable (independent) predicts the value of another variable (dependent) (Field, 2005:143; Leedy & Omrod, 2005:101). The square of correlation indicates how much variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable in the calculation (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:538). In this research the regression analyses will determine the percentage variance in the dependent variable (psychological empowerment and intention to leave) that is predicted by the independent variables (leader empowering behaviour and psychological empowerment).

Multiple regression analyses were performed to test whether Leader Empowerment Behaviour (independent variable) predicts Psychological Empowerment (Influence) as dependent variable (see Table 5.5).



**Table 5.5: Regression Analysis with Leader Empowerment Behaviour as independent variable and Psychological Empowerment (Influence) as dependent variable**

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
		B	SE	Beta						
1	(Constant)	16.51	1.69		9.75	0,00*	42.36	0.46	0.21	0.21
	Leader Empowering Development	0.06	0.05	0.11	1.39	1.39				
	Leader Empowering Decision	0.26	0.06	0.37	4.64	0.00*				

\**p* < 0,05 – statistically significant



The data in Table 5.5 indicates that Leader Empowering Development ( $\beta = 0.11$ ;  $t = 1.39$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) and Leader Empowering Decision ( $\beta = 0.37$ ;  $t = 4.64$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) predicted 21% of the variance in Psychological Empowerment (Influence), ( $F = 42.36$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ,  $R^2 = 0.21$ ). Leader Empowerment Behaviour Decision-making was a significant contributor. Results further showed that Leader Development did not statistically significantly predict *Influence* when entered into the regression equation.

These above findings indicate the importance of school leaders creating a relationship with educators where they have a say in decision-making. This will empower them by generating a feeling that they can make a difference in their environment.

The findings depicted in Table 5.5 partly support Hypothesis 2: "Leader Empowerment Behaviour predicts the Psychological Empowerment of educators' in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province".

The following multiple regression analyses were performed to test whether Leader Empowerment Behaviour as Independent Variable predicts Psychological Empowerment (Attitude) as Dependent Variable (see Table 5.6).

**Table 5.6: Regression Analysis with Leader Empowerment Behaviour as independent variable and Psychological Empowerment (Attitude) as dependent variable**

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
		B	SE	Beta						
1	(Constant)	24.394	1.412		17.27	0.00*	35.54	0.43	0.18	0.18
	Leader Empowering Development	0.19	0.04	0.41	5.03	0.00*				
	Leader Empowering Decision	0.01	0.05	0.03	0.34	0.74				

\**p* < 0,05 – statistically significant

The data in Table 5.6 indicates that Leader Empowering Development ( $\beta = 0.41$ ;  $t = 5.03$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) and Leader Empowering Decision ( $\beta = 0.03$ ;  $t = 0.34$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) predicted 18% of the variance in Psychological Empowerment (Attitude) scales ( $F = 35.54$ ,  $p \leq 0.05$ ,  $R^2 = 0.18$ ). Leader Empowerment Behaviour (Development) was a significant contributor to educators' *Attitude*, namely perceptions of competence and meaning. Results further showed that Leader Decision-making did not statistically significantly predict *Attitude* when entered into the regression equation.

The findings indicate the importance of school leaders creating a relationship with educators where they spend time and energy on the development of education. By having discussions on development, the principal can enhance feelings of meaning and self-efficacy. These two constructs play a major role in people's experience of job satisfaction and commitment to the school.

The findings depicted in Table 5.6 partly support Hypothesis 3 stating that "Leader Empowerment Behaviour predicts Psychological Empowerment (Attitude) of educators in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province".

Lastly multiple regression analyses were performed to test whether Leadership and Psychological Empowerment (independent variable) predicts Intention to Leave (dependent variable).

**Table 5.7: Regression Analysis with Leadership and Psychological Empowerment as independent variables and Intention to Leave as dependent variable**

Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	$\Delta R^2$
		B	SE	Beta						
1	(Constant)	14.42	1.07		13.50	0.00*	19.32	0.33	0.11	0.10
	Leader Empowering Development	-0.05	0.03	-0.14	-1.68	0.09				
	Leader Empowering Decision	-0.88	0.04	-0.21	-2.46	0.03*				
2	(Constant)	19.73	1.43		13.82	0.00*	17.82	0.43	0.19	0.18
	Leader Empowering Development	-0.01	0.03	-0.03	-0.34	0.73				
	Leader Empowering Decision	-0.07	0.04	-0.17	-2.00	0.05*				
	Influence	-0.05	0.04	-0.08	-1.25	0.21				
	Attitude	-0.19	0.05	-0.26	-3.93	0.00*				

\**p* < 0,05 – statistically significant



The data in Table 5.7 indicates that Leader Empowering Development ( $\beta = -0.14$ ;  $t = -1.68$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) and Leader Empowering Decision ( $\beta = -0.21$ ;  $t = -2.46$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) predicted 11% of the variance in Intention to Leave. When *Influence* ( $\beta = -0.08$ ;  $t = -1.25$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) and *Attitude* ( $\beta = -0.26$ ;  $t = -3.93$ ;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) were entered into the equation, 19% of the total variance in Intention to Leave was predicted. Results further showed that Development and Influence (Self-determination and Impact) did not statistically significantly predict Intention to Leave when entered into the regression equation. Jordaan (2007:56) and Mare (2007:45) found that Leader Empowerment Behaviour is a statistically significant predictor of turnover intention.

The above results indicate the very important role of the school leader in empowering people by creating feelings of meaning, competence and the ability to influence events.

Taplin and Winterton (2007:6) argue that managers can play a crucial role in neutralising the problematic aspects of the job and in creating a pleasant work environment. Takase *et al.* (2006:1078) state that managers must create an environment where employees use more of their skills and are allowed to be involved in decision-making in order to reduce turnover intentions. Brown and Schainker (2008:14) argue that the principal's support for mentoring and induction programs plays a major role in educators' decisions to quit or to remain in the profession. Organisations that provide well-structured leadership development programmes for their employees contribute to retaining these employees. Support and guidance from mentors are critical tools in retaining employees and are at the same time invaluable in people's growth (Kerr-Philips & Thomas, 2009:5).

The findings depicted in Table 5.7 support Hypothesis 4, stating that "Leader Empowerment Behaviour and Psychological Empowerment predict intentions to leave of educators' in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province."

## **5.7 CONCLUSION**

In order to specify the relationship between the identified variables, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used in this study. The correlation coefficients between PE (Psychological Empowerment), LE (Leader Empowerment) and IL (Intention to Leave) were analysed and the results indicated that there is a statistically as well as practically significant correlation between leader empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment and the intentions to leave of educators in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province

Another objective of this study was to determine the extent to which leader empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment predict intentions to leave of educators in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province. They both played a significant role.

The next chapter present conclusions, main research findings, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 INTRODUCTION**

The focus of the previous chapter was on the research data analysis and interpretation. This chapter presents the research conclusions, the limitations of the study, the recommendations to schools and the recommendations for further research.

#### **6.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

In *Chapter 1* the rationale of the study, which includes aspects such as the problem statement (*cf.* 1.1), aims and objectives (*cf.* 1.3) and the research methodology (*cf.* 1.4) were outlined. The aim of this chapter was to guide the reader through the contents of the research project which focused on determining the extent to which *leader empowerment behaviour* and *psychological empowerment* predict intentions to leave of educators in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.

*Chapter 2* focused on the definition and conceptualisation of empowerment (*cf.* 2.2.1). In the discussion, '*empowerment*' was conceptualised and the advantages of empowerment (for both the individual and the organisation) were discussed. The importance and advantages of giving people control and power to do their jobs were outlined. The chapter revealed that leaders, who allow educators to take responsibility and keep them accountable for results, create more productive and happy employees. The situational approach to empowerment was discussed (*cf.* 2.2.2), focusing on organisational factors, supervisory style, reward systems and job design that influence self-efficacy or personal power amongst employees. The psychological approach to empowerment (*cf.* 2.2.3), where meaning, sense of competence, self-determination and perceived impact played important roles, was also explained.

The second part of chapter 2 defined leadership in an educational environment (*cf.* 2.3.2) and focused on the role of the educational leader (*cf.* 2.3.3). Lastly the leadership approach to empowerment (*cf.* 2.3.4) was discussed with specific reference to delegation of authority (*cf.* 2.3.4.1), accountability of outcomes (*cf.* 2.3.4.2), encouragement of self-directed decision-making (*cf.* 2.3.4.3), information sharing (*cf.* 2.3.4.4), skills development of people (*cf.* 2.3.4.5) and coaching (*cf.* 2.3.4.6).

*Chapter 3* focused on *intention to leave* and its relationship with leadership and empowerment (*cf.* 3.2). A conceptualisation of intention to leave (*cf.* 3.2.1) was followed with emphasis on antecedents of intention to leave (*cf.* 3.2.2) and antecedents of retaining educators (*cf.* 3.2.3). The role of leadership in retaining educators (*cf.* 3.2.4) was then discussed and lastly the relationship between psychological empowerment and intention to leave (*cf.* 3.2.5) was presented.

*Chapter 4* detailed the empirical research design (*cf.* 4.2). The questionnaire as measuring instrument was presented with specific reference to the design of the questionnaire, its validity and reliability. The different types of validity, namely face validity, content validity, criterion-related validity, construct validity and convergent and discriminant validity were discussed. A discussion of reliability and the methods to establish reliability including test-retest reliability, parallel-forms reliability and internal-consistency methods followed.

An explanation of the three standardised measuring instruments that were used in the empirical study, namely the Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire (LEBQ) (Konczak *et al.*, 2000), Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire (PEQ) (Spreitzer, 1995), and the Intention to Leave Questionnaire (Sjöberg and Sverke, 2000) was given (*cf.* 4.2.2.2).

*Chapter 5* presented the data analysis and interpretation by means of tables, frequencies and discussions. Firstly, the different hypotheses were stated (*cf.* 5.2). The characteristics of the participants (*cf.* 5.3) followed and the validity and reliability of the measuring instruments (*cf.* 5.4) were discussed.



Exploratory factor analyses were used to determine the construct validity of the LEBQ (*Leader Empowering Behaviour Questionnaire*), PEQ (*Measuring Empowerment Questionnaire*) and the IL (*Intention to Leave Questionnaire*) in order to test the validity of the measuring instruments (cf. 5.4.1).

Descriptive statistics and reliability of the measuring instruments (cf. 5.4.2) followed where descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis) were computed for each item of the LEBQ, PEQ and the IL questionnaires. In order to specify the relationship between variables, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used in this study for discussing the results (cf. 5.5). Lastly, regression (cf. 5.6) analyses were conceded to determine the percentage variance in the dependent variable which was predicted by the independent variables.

The following section deals with conclusions in accordance with the stated research objectives.

### **6.3 FINDINGS FROM THE RESEARCH**

The general objective of this research was to determine the extent to which leader empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment predict intentions to leave of educators in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province.

Findings regarding the specific theoretical objectives and the results of the empirical research will now be presented.

#### **6.3.1 Findings regarding the specific theoretical objectives**

In line with the first objective of this study leader empowering behaviour, psychological empowerment and intention to leave and the relationship between these constructs were conceptualised from the literature.

**Leader empowering behaviour** was conceptualised from the literature as the influence that one person has over others (Spector, 2008:356). Leader empowering behaviour is where the leader inspires people in such a way that they will enthusiastically and willingly work in order to accomplish set aims

(Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006:92). The challenge will be to influence staff and other followers to work towards attaining the vision of the school and the shift to school self- management requires a proactive leadership approach by the school principal (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006:84). The leadership approach to empowerment focuses on leaders who energise followers to act with them in providing future vision (Menon, 2001:156).

The leader plays a very important role in creating and maintaining an environment where people can optimise their potential and can add value to the organisation (Stander & Rothmann, 2008:12). For Menon (2001:174), goal escalation represents the energising aspects of empowerment and forms the core power of a leader's approach to empowerment.

Matthews *et al.* (2003:299-301) reveal the three organisational factors that are conceptually linked to empowerment. Firstly, a dynamic structural framework where the company provides a clear set of guidelines that will assist in employee decision-making. The second factor is control of workplace decisions where employees are allowed input into their careers. The third factor is the availability of information to all employees.

Stander and Rothmann (2008:12) are of the opinion that in order to empower employees, managers must be empowered to become 'people developers'. "To be able to be a good developer of people, managers must be coached and developed to delegate authority, make employees accountable for outcomes, lead by example, encourage subordinates, show concern for others' feelings, allow participative decision-making, share information, coach, mentor and develop people" (Arnold *et al.*, 2000:260; Conger & Kanungo, 1988:479; Konczak *et al.*, 2000:303; Stander & Rothmann, 2008:12). The long-term leader empowers followers to perform by focusing on training, development and empowerment (Van Niekerk & Van Niekerk, 2006:94).

**Psychological empowerment** was conceptualised by Dee *et al.*, (2003:258) as a mind-set that employees have about the organisation, rather than as something that management does to the employees. Psychological empowerment influences the relationship between leader behaviour and

organisational commitment. Empowerment increases trust in the manager as well as commitment towards the organisation (Konczak *et al.*, 2000:301).

Menon (2001:157) conceptualises empowerment as an act, a process or a state. She classifies empowerment into three broad categories, based on underlying thrust and emphasis, namely structural or situational empowerment, motivational or psychological empowerment and leadership empowerment. Empowerment as a situational construct emphasises redistribution of authority and granting decision-making authority and power down the organisational hierarchy, so that the employee has the ability to influence organisational outcomes, be creative and has flexibility to take risks (Greasley *et al.*, 2005:41; Menon, 2001:156).

The dimensions of psychological empowerment were viewed by Spreitzer (1995:1443) as improved intrinsic task motivation that manifests in a set of four cognitions reflecting an individual's orientation to his/her work role. The set of four task-related cognitions pertaining to an individual's work role consists of: *meaning, competence, choice (self-determination) and impact*. Spreitzer (1995:1460) found that the four dimensions of empowerment combine to form a gestalt of empowerment in the workplace.

**Intention to Leave** was conceptualised as people who are not happy in their jobs are likely to intend to quit (Spector, 2008:271). While actual quitting behaviour is usually the primary focus of employers and researchers (Firth *et al.*, 2004:170), intentions are often a strong indicator of behaviour that leads to quitting (Spector, 2008:271). Intention to Leave is considered to be the final stage before actual quitting (Carmeli, 2005:181).

Sjöberg and Sverke (2000:248,250) found a negative relation between job involvement or psychological identification and turnover intention. Educators' feelings of disempowerment and not enough influence on and control of the organisational practices act as reasons to consider leaving the organisation (Swars *et al.*, 2009:175). Birt *et al.* (2004:27) reveals that empowerment is one of the top five variables (empowerment, challenging and meaningful work, advancement opportunities, manager integrity and quality, responsibility and

new opportunities) that employees regard as important in a job that will direct staff retention.

Where educators experience meaning in what they are doing, they will feel that they have some power when they are allowed to make decisions and have an impact on their work environment which will make them rethink their intentions to quit.

From the above it is clear that managers can create work environments that will lead to people staying in the organisation.

### **6.3.2 Findings regarding the specific empirical objectives**

- A simple principal components analysis was conducted on the 19 items of the LEBQ and indicated that 2 factors could be extracted. These factors are: *Leader Empowering: Development* and *Leader Empowering: Decision-making*.
- A simple principal components analysis was conducted on the 12 items of the PEQ. Two factors were extracted. Self-determination and impact loaded as one factor in contrast to the two factors of the original questionnaire. This factor was named *Influence*. Items relating to Meaning and Competence loaded as a single factor, namely *Attitude*.
- A simple principal components analysis was conducted on the items of the intention to leave questionnaire. One construct was extracted.
- The internal consistencies of all the constructs were satisfactory according to the guidelines for a coefficient reliability of 0.70.
- There is a practical significant correlation of medium effect between *Leader Empowering Development* and *Psychological Empowering Influence*. This is an indication that educators that are developed by their leaders will feel that they have an influence in the school.
- There is a practical significant correlation of medium effect between *Leader Empowering Development* and *Psychological Empowering Attitude*.



(as measured by meaning and competence). Educators that are developed by their leaders will have a positive attitude towards their own level of competence and the meaning of their job.

- School leaders that allow educators to make their own decisions on issues that will influence how they do their work, will contribute to their perception of meaningfulness.
- There is a practical significant negative correlation of medium effect between Leader Empowering Development and Intention to Leave. Principals who focus on educator development create a positive attitude and these educators will be less likely to leave the school.
- A practical significant correlation of medium effect was found between Leader Empowering Decision, Psychological Empowering Influence (as measured by impact and self-determination) and Psychological Empowering Attitude (as measured by meaning and competence).
- A practical significant negative correlation of medium effect was found between Leader Empowering Decision and Intention to Leave. Principals that allow educators to be part of decision-making processes will encourage a positive attitude and this will decrease educators' intention to leave the profession.
- There was a practical significant negative correlation of medium effect between Psychological Empowering Influence (self-determination and impact) and Intention to Leave. Principals that allow educators to take control of their own environment will create a climate of retaining educators.
- A practical significant negative correlation of medium effect was found between Psychological Empowering Attitude and Intention to Leave. Educators that feel competent and experience meaning in what they are doing, will have a lower tendency to leave the profession.

- Leader Empowering Development and Leader Empowering Decision predicted 21% of the variance in Psychological Empowerment. Leader Empowerment Behaviour Decision-making was a significant contributor. Results further showed that Leader Development did not statistically significantly predict Influence when entered into the regression equation. This result indicates the importance of school leaders to create a relationship with educators where they have a say in decision-making. This will empower them by generating a feeling that they can make a difference in their environment.
- Leader Empowering Development and Leader Empowering Decision predicted 18% of the variance in Psychological Empowerment (Attitude). Leader Empowerment Behaviour (Development) was a significant contributor to educators' Attitude that is perceptions of competence and meaning. Results further showed that Leader Decision-making did not statistically significantly predict Attitude when entered into the regression equation. This result indicates the importance for school leaders to create a relationship with educators where they spend time and energy on the development of education. By having discussions on development, the principal can enhance feelings of meaning and self-efficacy. These two constructs play a major role in people's experience of job satisfaction and commitment to the school.
- Leader Empowering Development and Leader Empowering Decision predicted 11% of the variance in Intention to Leave. When Influence was entered into the equation, 19% of the total variance in Intention to Leave was predicted. Results further showed that Development and Influence (Self-determination and Impact) did not statistically significantly predict Intention to Leave when entered into the regression equation.

#### **6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The following limitations regarding the research were identified:

- The cross-sectional study design allows for the existence of relationships between variables that can be identified, but also implies that more complicated forms of infrequent connections could not be examined. In the view of the researcher, this study must be viewed as a starting point for a prospective longitudinal research project to further validate the interpreted relationships within this study and to focus on leader empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment over a period of time. Longitudinal data will allow for a better understanding of the true nature of psychological empowerment and will also enable the development of causal models.
- Measurements that were based on self-report are another limitation of this study because of the subjectivity of self-assessment.
- The fact that the questionnaires were presented in one language only (English), could be another limitation. The possibility that some participants who speak English as their second, third or fourth language, could have influenced the results.

## **6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The aim of this research was to investigate the extent to which leader empowerment behaviour and psychological empowerment predict educators' intentions to leave the teaching profession in the Sedibeng West District of the Gauteng Province. In order to realise this aim, a literature study was undertaken that served as the foundation of the empirical research. Based on the findings of this research and the challenges to retain educators in the profession, it is important that the school pro-actively develops strategies to improve leadership as well as the levels of perceived empowerment. It is the researcher's opinion that this will influence the employees' intention to leave and that it will ultimately reduce turnover rates of talented people. Leaders/principals should create an environment where educators can optimise their potential and where they can add value. The researcher is of the opinion that the principal (as leader) should play a primary role in creating such a culture within a school.



### 6.5.1 Recommendations for the school as an organisation

In the school as an organisation, leadership empowerment behaviour is essential as it directly and indirectly relates to educator's psychological empowerment and intention to leave. It is recommended that the leaders/principals integrate empowerment behaviours in their management style and practise them constantly. The dimensions of leadership empowerment behaviour should be employed (Konczak *et al.*, 2000:303):

- Delegation of authority – The leader/principal should share power with educators in the school.
- Accountability of outcomes – The leader/principal should transfer responsibility for results to educators.
- Self-directed decision-making – The leader/principal should persuade educators' independent decision-making.
- Information sharing – The leader/principal needs to share information and knowledge with educators as this will allow them to optimally contribute to school performance.
- Skills development – The leader/principal should promote skills development and secure appropriate training.
- Coaching – The leader/principal should support intended risk taking, new ideas and should provide performance feedback to educators. Mistakes and setbacks should be treated as opportunities to learn.

Principals that are not comfortable with the above behaviours should receive training in order to develop the necessary skills.

Secondly, the results of the research at the schools involved in this study indicate that leadership empowerment will increase the level of psychological empowerment and these constructs were found to be indicators of the educators' intention to leave the profession. With the set of four task-related cognitions pertaining to an individual's work role which consists of: *meaning*,



*competence, choice (self-determination) and impact* (Spreitzer, 1995:1443), the educator's intrinsic motivation and orientation towards his/her work role will improve. To empower the educator effectively, it will be necessary to focus on improving educators' sense of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact:

- **Meaning** – The leader/principal should consider the work of the educator as a meaningful contribution and should afford educators opportunities to possess a sense of purpose and personal connection to the profession. This can be achieved when educators are allowed to set team targets and by doing so they will understand how their own work goals can link with the department of education's objectives. In this way educators will have a better sense of identity and personal ownership of the work that they produce as well as a higher level of accountability.
- **Competence** – Competent educators will believe that they have the skills and abilities that are necessary for doing good quality work and a personal sense of efficacy will exist. Regular individual and team feedback sessions from the leader/principal will open communication channels. Feedback can be enhanced through reward and recognition programs for celebrating the educators' success and acknowledgement for their contributions.
- **Self-determination** – Educators should be given more opportunities for voicing their opinions in conducting tasks. An idea generation session can be arranged between the leader/principal and staff. This could lead to positive implications towards more effective work and a greater sense of autonomy. It can also create an opportunity for the leader/principal to provide educators with support where they lack experience and the individual educator can be motivated towards action.
- **Impact** – Educators should feel that they possess the ability to influence the school environment. The leader/principal should initiate sessions where the team key performance indicators can be reviewed. Here, action plans to accomplish goals can be discussed and the collision of individual

educator inputs be scrutinised. In doing so, educators may experience a greater sense of being involved in decision-making.

Finally, Xaba (2003:289) states that the conditions that lead to high educator turnover are mostly situated within the school and the principal can play a direct role in the retention of staff members. From the above discussion and the results of this research, leader empowering behaviour and psychological empowerment will impact on the educators' intention to leave the profession. According to Kerr-Philips and Thomas (2009:6); Brown and Schainker (2008:14); and Borman and Dowling (2008:379); some final recommendations can be made that will reduce educators' intention to leave:

- The leader/principal should focus on the development of educators.
- The leader/principal should create a high performance work culture.
- The leader/principal should stimulate educators' personal growth with participation in leadership development programs.
- The educators should be exposed to all aspects within the profession.
- The educators' skills and abilities should be acknowledged.
- The leader/principal should stimulate collaborative work with others in the profession to reach shared goals.
- The educators' leadership capacity should be expanded.
- The leader/principal should provide guidance and leadership to the educators when needed.
- The leader/principal should maintain an open door policy, a visible presence in their schools and should encourage and support collegiality among all educators.
- The leader/principal can reduce educator loneliness by developing official or unofficial professional learning communities.

- The leader/principal can increase the educators' responsibility and understanding.
- The leader/principal can improve educators' satisfaction, morale and commitment.
- The leader/principal can provide administrative support.
- The leader/principal can encourage school mentoring/development programs for beginner educators.
- The leader/principal can create partnerships and educator networks.
- The leader/principal can improve communication with administrators.

#### **6.5.2 Recommendations for further research**

Based on the limitations of this research, the following topics might be considered for further research:

- The factor structure of leader empowerment behaviour.
- The evaluation of interventions to improve the principals' leader empowerment behaviour/competencies.
- Longitudinal studies to research the causal relationship between the constructs of this study.
- The importance of meaning of work for the educator.

#### **6.6 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the summary, findings and recommendations regarding the literature review and empirical investigation were presented. The limitations of the research were outlined and recommendations for organisation/schools, as well as for future research were made. All theoretical and empirical objectives for this research have been reached.

The overall purpose of this research was to conceptualise, define and determine whether there is a relationship between leadership empowerment, psychological empowerment and intention to leave.

The research concentrated specifically on the school principal's competence and willingness to empower educators in such a way that they experience meaning in their work and feel that they can influence their work environment. From the research it was clear that leader behaviour was an impact on the educators' sense of empowerment and at the same time influences educators' intention to leave or stay in the profession.

In summary, it is clear that leadership and the levels of empowered educators are important challenges that influence intention to leave and that could ultimately reduce turnover rates of talented people. The empowerment and retention of staff are not only important challenges for schools, but also for the growth and prosperity of the country. This research will hopefully contribute in assisting other researchers to develop strategies for improving leader empowerment behaviour and educators' meaning of work.



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