

Moral Values and Moral Purpose: The Missing Links in Failing Schools?

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ABSTRACT School principals today face a number of challenges in their schools. More often, they need to try various strategies to improve the performance in their schools. While many critics can argue for the bringing back of morality and ethics in “messy work places”, others do not concur. Yet, effective principals learn to lead with their staff members. Moreover, it is also crucial for staff members to be involved in bringing about solutions, for this helps them learn that they can address some of their challenges. In this case study a principal of a dysfunctional school used a people-centred approach that emphasised morals, ethics and values to bolster the school’s effectiveness. Using *ubuntu* philosophy, the principal encouraged building of character through values among her teachers. The study showed that school leaders should not overlook working with the people as they create a community of leaders.

INTRODUCTION

Notman (2012) points out that there is a link between school effectiveness, school improvement and the educational leader. Furthermore, Branson and Gross (2014) contend that there is a need for leadership that focuses on values. These authors also declare that the values of the leader will determine the direction of the school. In this regard, Bush (2007) also asserted that school success is dependent upon the person at the helm; thus a weak school principal will have a poorly performing school. However, Notman (2012: 470) maintains that there have been few studies that focus on principals as people, “in particular, knowledge of intrapersonal elements of school leadership may inform our understanding of what makes principals resilient and what helps them sustain success in a complex and demanding job”. Conscientious teachers know what they want to achieve in schools. They want to see the success of their pupils, to work with the children’s families and help society minimise its ills. These commitments illustrate the moral purpose. Robertson (2011) points out that classroom teachers work with many pupils in their lifetime as they seek to make a positive difference. The moral purpose has to do with the motivation that comes from within; to help the pupils succeed. Leaders with a moral purpose wish to realise classrooms where teaching and learning are conducted effectively. Fur-

thermore, they want to lead teachers who are committed and pupils are goal focused.

The above arguments underscore the importance of values in schools. Bilimlari (2011) argues that organisations such as schools have been under the influence of positivist approaches that prioritised the technical and functional cores of the organisation. Yet, there is a growing awareness that the cultural, emotional and value based qualities are becoming important as well. Bilimlari also claims that those who are managing schools should act to appeal to societal and cultural expectations and consider the values of the society they live in. Johnson and Campbell-Stephens (2012: 26) highlight pertinent arguments when they aver:

Lumby (2006) argues there has been little discussion about social justice-oriented leadership development in England because transformational and distributed leadership approaches tend to dominate and homogenise the field. In particular, there is a paucity of research that examines the leadership philosophies and practices of black, headteachers and other school leaders of color, how they respond to their unique cultural contexts, and leadership preparation programs that might help nurture and support their self-defined perspectives on leadership.

This paper will among others, explore some of the unique cultures in predominantly Black African schools in South Africa. The Black Afri-

can teachers bring much from their cultures in running schools. Evers and Katyal (2007) cite Hallinger who pointed out that it is meaningless to study principal leadership without reference to the school context. Furthermore, they suggest that principals and other school stakeholders should be actively involved in their own knowledge building in order to solve the challenges of practice and to place their work in a context that may give it meaning and purpose (Evers and Katyal 2007).

The main question asked in this study was: In their attempts to attain school effectiveness, how can principals be guided by moral values and moral purpose as they create effective teachers?

The sub-question asked was:

- ♦ How can a philosophy such as that of *ubuntu* enhance morality and effectiveness in schools?

Objectives of the Study

This researcher engaged in a study that sought to:

- ♦ Investigate the role of moral values and moral purpose in schools;
- ♦ Examine the role of character education in building working schools;
- ♦ Explore the role that an African philosophy such as *ubuntu* can bring in school improvement and school effectiveness; and
- ♦ Investigate whether some values are more effective in engendering aspects such as shared leadership and team work.

Theoretical Background

Branson (2014) emphasises the power of the leaders' personal values in influencing their leadership practice. "The formation of any intuitions, instincts, feelings, and emotions is in response to a given situation are formed within educational leaders from their own personalised values" (Branson 2014:195). Wharton (2000) also points out that immoral behaviour persists in organisations because of two things: a failure to see that the essence of leadership is moral behaviour and a misunderstanding of how moral actions arise and are inculcated in the workplace. This immoral behaviour needs leaders who will be strong and resilient. Steward (2014) argues for the need for school leaders to embrace high

levels of emotional resilience. He defines resilience as a virtue of having moral purpose, having persistence in the face of difficulty, maintaining hope against odds, being optimistic, courage and having the capacity to recover quickly from setbacks. Furthermore, Kirshenbaum (1995) affirmed that morals and values are embodied by character education. Moreover, Kirshenbaum states that character traits and goals of character education include respect, responsibility, compassion, self-discipline and loyalty. Another goal of morality is to produce autonomous individuals who know those moral values and are committed to acting in a manner consistent with them (Kirschenbaum 1995).

"Leadership is not about 'technical' (or job) knowledge, it is about having followers, those who willingly work their hearts out to get great work done" (Wharton 2000: 9). Besides, Wharton contends that moral leadership is about engendering respect within the organisation top to bottom. According to Wharton four qualities are contributors to immoral leadership behaviour:

- (i) **Behavioural drivers** – sometimes leaders have this need to want to win, to be loved, avoid conflict, to be perfect and be successful.
- (ii) **Style** – style factors affect leadership negatively when leaders impose their leadership styles on others to get things done rather than as a way to understand and better work with others
- (iii) **Habit** – a leader can act immorally by utilising habits. These may be positive or negative. Small habits can be destructive to organisations.
- (iv) **Intention** – here a leader acts consciously and intentionally in ways that harm others.

There are many qualities that need to be adopted by school leaders which display positive values about leadership. Hoffman and Burrello (2002) emphasise morality in effective leadership by arguing for a need for leaders to be moral agents as well. Respect of traditions, equal consideration of all as well as instilling a sense of global citizenship is some aspects that leaders as moral agents would engender. Bilimlari (2012) points out that school leaders should adopt values such as professional honour, honesty, courtesy, objective participation and reconcile these values with own standards.

Literature Review

Excellence and effectiveness in many schools is affected by many factors and some of these include enforcing the rational approach to management all the time. Peters and Waterman (1982) state that professionalism in management is regularly equated with 'hard headed rationality'. However, these authors argued that although the rationalist approaches teach people that well-trained professional managers can manage anything; this rational approach misses some arguments (Peters and Waterman 1982). Bottery (2004) writes about the need to have moral leaders to guide institutions if people are to have a moral society. Furthermore, Bottery (2004: 207) maintains:

Such a person is in most ways the antithesis of the opportunist, for this leader, rather than inventing an image, and constructing a persona calculated to appeal to followers, instead sees the school as a community and embraces and reflects back to the core educational and moral values of that community. School life, then, is defined at its core as the public celebration of certain values, and it is the leader's role to articulate and provide leadership in the attempted resolution by the school community.

Having moral leaders implies having leaders who want to make a difference in their organisations. Steward (2014) asserts that values play an immense role in sustaining people in their work. Furthermore, he points out that it is values that need to be used in an organisation when people want to make a difference.

There is growing literature that accentuates Bottery's arguments above. People are beginning to realise the importance of values in society. McLennan and Thurlow (2003) state that the recent changes to the system of school governance have resulted in the majority of principals being under-prepared for their new roles. These authors also add that the collapse of culture of learning and teaching (COLT) in many schools has eroded the confidence in education managers. "They have little idea of what would be required to restore the culture, especially as they have consistently been at the receiving end of a top-down management system, working in a structured milieu and receiving direct instructions from departmental officials" (McLennan and Thurlow 2003: 5).

Aspects such as culture and norms have sometimes been underscored by many leaders.

Others have seen such informal qualities as spirituality as important aspect in guiding effective schools. Successful school leaders state that getting culture right and paying attention to how other stakeholders define and experience meaning are two widely accepted rules for creating effective schools (Sergiovanni 2000: 1). Sergiovanni (2000: 1) posits:

Culture is generally thought of as the normative glue that holds a particular school together. With shared visions, values, and beliefs at its heart, culture serves as a compass setting, steering people in a common direction. It provides norms that govern the way people in a common direction. It provides norms that govern the way people interact with one another. It provides a framework for deciding what does or does not make sense.

Some research has shown the importance of certain African models in guiding not only successful but also highly moral organisations. Mbigi (2005), Msila (2008), highlight the need for a value such as *ubuntu* in leadership. Mthembu (1996) describes *ubuntu* as the key to all African values and that it involves humanness, a good disposition towards others, and a moral nature. Furthermore, Mthembu states that *ubuntu* describes the significance of group solidarity and interdependence in African culture. Mbigi (2005) supports this by pointing out that *ubuntu* is a metaphor that describes the significance of group solidarity on survival issues that is so vital to the survival of African communities. The constant calls for a moral society are desperate calls for society to embrace this solidarity as society changes for the better.

In a society that has been made complex by a number of social issues the philosophy of *ubuntu* encounters many social currents that flow in various directions. Ntuli (1999) points out that the spirit of *ubuntu* has long disappeared and he states that that is the reason why we need an African renaissance. Furthermore, Ntuli opines that in the face of the present cultural and moral collapse in South Africa, there is a need to strive for a rebirth. Yet, Dandala (1996) states that *ubuntu* requires a great deal of learning and sharing, and that institutions can achieve this through the training of people to practice greater interaction. Schools and the societies around them need to learn the values of *ubuntu*. Msila (2008) also highlights these dynamics in his article but agrees that when led

effectively educators can learn the values of *ubuntu* and subsequently use these to enhance the running of the school in an effective manner. Schools need not to tinker with failing strategies but to transform the leadership culture by focusing on innovative ways that would ensure their success.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The Study's Context

This was a case study conducted in a historically Black (township) school where a new principal had just inherited a school labelled by many as a 'dysfunctional organisation'. Among causes cited for resulting into this dysfunctional nature were low moral values among pupils and teachers. Pupils were said to be violent and some allegedly used drugs on the school premises. According to the principal and five of her staff members, she inherited a school "that was fraught with mismanagement, low morale of teachers, disobedient learners and aloof parents."

The school had 29 educators excluding the principal. The researcher had gone to the school whilst conducting a comparative study of managerial challenges in township schools. The principal was trying to turn the school around by introducing the general moral values as well as *ubuntu* philosophy to transform the school. The researcher with two co-researchers interviewed and observed the educators in the school. The ethnographic study spanned a total of 10 months. Goetz and LeCompte (1984) described the purpose of educational ethnography as providing rich, descriptive data about the contents, activities and beliefs of participants in educational settings. Bailey (1987) pointed out that in ethnographic research; the observers attempt to become part of the culture or subculture that they are studying. The researchers visited the school at least twice a week. In most visits the researchers were complete observers as they adopted a passive role thus minimising contaminating the natural setting.

In the school (which will be named, Liso High School, teachers were visited in their classrooms, in staff meetings and attended four Teacher-Parent meetings. In two separate occasions, the researchers observed meetings between the School Management Team (SMT) and the Learners Representative Council (LRC).

Research Design

The principal and 24 of her educators were interviewed during the course of the study. Of these 24 teachers 13 are male and 11 are female. The researchers asked open ended questions and the participants were accorded a chance to comment on a number of issues including values, norms and culture in the school, teaching as well as the impact of all these in the culture of learning and teaching. While the research results became rich and a number of themes and topics resulted eventually one of the aspects that came through clearly was the enhancement of morals and values in the school. Observations took place in a number of places including the school grounds as well as classrooms. The principal was shadowed for a total of three weeks during the study. She was shadowed for a week at the beginning and five days in the fourth month and then for the last time just before the conclusion of the study. In a period of four months, 16 teachers were visited in their classrooms. Among other aspects, that the research team was interested in was teachers were reflecting the Department of Education's (DoE's) policy in teaching aspects of *ubuntu* in the classroom. Mrs. Molo (not her real name) had many challenges in the school and many were there because she was new to the school.

FINDINGS

Right from the beginning, Mrs. Molo wanted to lead a school where all the teachers were involved in 'some form of shared leadership'. When she was shadowed on all three occasions, she tried hard to delegate many duties to her colleagues. Yet she noticed that not many teachers wanted responsibility. In a journal that she kept, she wrote about various excuses that teachers had in not wanting to take part in many school activities. In one journal entry, she had written:

Mr J won't be part of the assessment team because he is comfortable as a soccer coach.

Mr W wants to rather work with the Arts and Culture group and not the entertainment committee because there are number of people who have a vendetta against him there.

Molo also perceived that the staff members were divided into cliques and when there were meetings, it was clear that there were opposing

sides in the school. The researcher also witnessed the latter when he observed meetings where teachers supported one another depending on which side others belonged. There was also a tendency for the teachers to use very strong language, which was frequently unprofessional, when addressing one another. The principal started addressing some of these issues by suggesting how teachers should conduct themselves during school hours. She also convened a few meetings where the staff members were forced to work together in solving some of the school's problems. She made many teachers uncomfortable initially when she joined them during lunchtime. On certain days, she would task one of them to take up a topic to discuss while the staff members relaxed or ate their lunch. Molo also ran monthly workshops on what could be expected in a school where there is distributive leadership. She also showed people why staff members needed to display the *ubuntu* values. She also began to instil a sense of celebration in the school; birthdays, personal achievements are some of the things that were celebrated. She made it part of professional development that all teachers needed to be part of the school's success. The change within the teachers was very slow and gradual as many did not appear to want to move away from the positions where they were comfortable.

Breaking down teacher isolation and selfishness was also one aspect that Molo wanted to change immediately when she arrived. It was also interesting to see how different the teachers were at the end of the study when compared to the first time they were interviewed and observed. At the beginning of the study, they were pessimistic and did not see their role in changing the school. In fact, the majority of the teachers maintained at the beginning "the entire staff needed to be changed if the school was to succeed". Yet, only two were still pessimistic by the end of the study as most said they were beginning to see the vision of the principal when she said she "wanted to revamp the school's values".

Molo also started a few new committees in the school and much success of these committees was dependent upon the close collaboration of those involved. She also magnified the vision of the school as she repeatedly reminded the role of the teachers in the community. Therefore, teachers were required to work together as

they strived to achieve the goals and the vision of the school. Molo also latched on the spirituality of many of the staff members. She constantly told them of the need to respect and cherish one another in a team. Furthermore, she also constantly told them how profane it was to despise another team member. It was also then that she stressed the importance of *ubuntu* as well as its nearness to spirituality and moral living. While she was wary of attributing the general improvement in pupils' success to her vigilant intervention, Molo was certain that it was strengthening the move towards the school's unified vision. The mid-year results were as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Mid-year results in Liso High School

Grade	Current year (pass rate)	Previous year (pass rate)
Grade 8	58	36
Grade 9	60	52
Grade 10	58	50
Grade 11	60	56
Grade 12	52	30

Below the findings of the study are discussed under three different headings. They all show the challenges experienced by Molo in trying to entrench the spirit of moral and ethical leadership in the school. The discussion begins with Molo facing the challenges as an outsider in a group that had internalised cultures.

DISCUSSION

Changing an "Inherited Team"

The principal in the study arrived from another school and district and inherited the challenges in Liso High School. It can be challenging to arrive at an environment where performance is not as it should be to advance organisational effectiveness. Rowling (2003:49) states that business and industry are far more unforgiving than educationalists could be when they discover that they have the wrong people on the bus. However, when she arrived at the school, she realised something needed to be done to transform it. Rowling avers:

It is essential to avoid the 'It's them, not me' complex. This is a situation where it is most easily felt; yet most transformational leaders attempt to make change to their senior leader-

ship teams with genuine belief that it is possible, indeed transformation of a leadership team is as good a place to start at any.

The process begins by sensing the need for significant change; a recognition that things are not as they should be and that if matters are left unattended transformation simply will not happen.

The principal did well when at the beginning she tried to understand what was happening in the school. It was crucial for her to gather facts as she put the pieces of the bigger picture together. The principal however, tried to be impartial at all times even when she shared lunchtime with the rest of the staff. Glanz (2006) contends that good principals are impartial for bias undermines good leadership. Furthermore, Glanz (2006) highlights the need for caring as congruent with moral and ethical leadership.

In trying to change the culture in the school, the principal needed to highlight the problem areas where progress was being stalled. Moreover, Rowling (2003) mentions four ways of ensuring that transformation is not hindered in any way and these are re-energising; retraining; redefining and removing. All these appear to have surfaced in Liso as the principal attempted to transform the school while trying to implement moral leadership. Within the context of Liso the four ways above can be briefly described as follows:

Re-energising

This is about finding new energy, which is sometimes referred to as 'a new lease of life' (Rowling 2003: 50). Rowling states that this often happens to demotivated colleagues when there is a change of leadership in a school. Molo constantly motivated the educators by bringing in new interests and underscoring personal importance and highlighting the importance of moral values.

Retraining

Molo had a clear action plan, where the educators were accorded time for introspection. Many of the teachers did not see themselves as transformational leaders who could uphold the qualities of moral leadership. Molo's support was crucial in this regard, as she guided the teachers, magnifying the importance of *ubuntu* and other moral values.

Redefining

One of the most crucial aspects that Molo achieved was redefining the roles of the team's members. Rowling argues:

Getting the right people on the bus may be achieved simply by moving their seat. Where it is possible to agree what their strengths are and redefine their role to maximise them, these strengths would be a blessing to everybody. It is desirable to ensure that there is no loss of self-esteem in this process.

While it was not easy for many educators to assume roles as transformative leaders, this is something they learnt as they gradually matured professionally.

Removing

While Molo could not fire any staff member from the school, the removing that happened in the school was removing people from their positions of comfort. The majority of the staff members were used to be idle as they looked at the school falling apart.

Moral Leadership Within the Context of a Team

As Molo introduced a culture of upholding values, she also built a team that saw the ideals of moral leadership in the building of the school. Bolman and Deal (2002:66) point out that when leaders try to do everything, they leave everyone else frustrated and disempowered. "The school bogs down because nothing gets done unless the boss does it or approves it" (Bolman and Deal 2002: 66). Zaheer (2014) declares that leaders become moral managers by recognising and accepting their responsibility for acting as moral and ethical role models. Zaheer states that moral managers demonstrate ethical leadership through being open, fair, trustworthy and caring. Molo arrived at a school with a weak culture where the teachers did not have any responsibilities. Collaboration was absent and the principal maintained that this is where she needed to start. Involving the teachers as she built the morality and culture in the school, the principal became empowered as her teachers also became empowered.

As highlighted above, the principal arrived at a school with no teamwork, weak cultures, negative beliefs, values and practices. Bolman

and Deal (2002) aver that weak cultures often call out for change and they are an invitation to strong leadership. This is the strong leadership that Molo tried to introduce. Values and culture need to be celebrated by leaders who want to build their schools. Molo highlighted the importance of ceremony in the school when she arrived and this was very beneficial towards her leadership.

The beginning of school, the end of tenure, or the death of a student all cry out for cultural events. The military learned long ago that a change of command has to be marked with pomp and circumstance. Otherwise, the unit suffers, and the new person in charge has a hard time. In most schools, principals come and go without any special event. This leads to cultural sterility. The ups and downs, comings of life in schools need cultural attention and support. (Bolman and Deal 2002: 105).

What was crucial in Molo's change initiatives was her timing. She introduced changes when she saw that there was despondence from some members of staff as well as parents. The district office was also talking about the school. Ramsey (1999) states that ideas fail and leaders fail because of bad timing and that when a time is right one can accomplish wonders and when it is wrong one can forget it. It was crucial for Molo to understand the culture of the school as she tried to transform it. The norms, values and beliefs of the employees who make up the school can be very subtle but they add up to what is referred to as culture (Servais and Sanders 2006). Furthermore, these writers contend that the culture of an organisation is essential to its success. In trying to achieve an organisational purpose, Molo employed cultural leadership. Cultural leadership is the opportunity to guide, develop, and sustain the culture of an organisation (Servais and Sanders 2006). Furthermore, Servais and Sanders point out that the transformational leader owns a cultural compass to facilitate relationship building in a way that contributes to a shared vision and a healthy organisational culture.

Molo did the various experiments on *ubuntu* because she not only wanted a high performing school, but also to act ethically, spiritually and morally as she led the school. Glanz (2006: xvi) posits that ethical and spiritual leaders are concerned with a number of areas. These include:

- ♦ Examining one's personal and innermost beliefs and values to ensure that one acts with compassion and affirms justice for all people;

- ♦ Realising the impact of one's actions on others within the school organisation;
- ♦ Making well-reasoned decisions to moral dilemmas that do not have easy solutions;
- ♦ Leading others by example;
- ♦ Attuning one to personal convictions and organisational norms.

These are all crucial for leaders who wish to employ moral values in leadership. Molo utilised *ubuntu* ideals to be able to include some of these pertinent aspects. She incorporated a set of values and beliefs she had about leadership in her transformation plan. The latter reflects the crucial role played by the principal. Sergiovanni (1992) stated that the school principal is the high priest who seeks to define and strengthen the enduring values, beliefs and cultural strands that give the school its identity. In search of an identity, Molo used *ubuntu* values to build the school.

Through the introduction of the *ubuntu* philosophy, the principal was also trying to affirm some form of moral way of living through her leadership. Glanz (2006) points out that living and leading moral purpose does not occur naturally hence principals need to consciously decide to lead morally. Glanz (2006) also cites Starrott who states that morality flows from one's humanity and that there are three qualities of a fully human person. These are autonomy, connectedness and transcendence. *Ubuntu* philosophy embodies all these qualities. Morality deals with a system of values that undergirds ethical behaviour. A moral leader might value social justice and equity for all people (Glanz 2006). Molo was striving to ensure that the staff members embrace all these qualities. It was not easy in a school where the culture and climate had always been negative. However, good leadership and ethical leadership bring no contradictions between leading effectively and practising moral leadership (McDowelle and Buckner 2002). These writers also add that the exercise of moral behaviour and the articulation of ethical educational values are an essential part of educational leadership (McDowelle and Buckner 2002).

Ethical and Moral Leadership: Overlooked Panacea in Ineffective Schools?

McDowell and Buckner (2002) state that many failures in educational leadership are due to the lack of understanding of human nature. Furthermore, McDowelle and Buckner (2002)

contend that principals do not fail because they do not understand school policy—they fail because they cannot make reasonable predictions about human behaviour. One of the most important aspects in *ubuntu* is the building of relationships. The sense of interdependence is emphasised. A school such as Liso had always been plagued by suspicion, individualism and low morale of staff members. Managers and teachers in the school had been impeached in a number of professional misdemeanours; from poor performance in the classroom to mismanagement of school funds.

By utilising *ubuntu*, Molo was shedding some of these moral dilemmas endemic in the school. Her sense of purpose proved effective as teachers began to realise their potential and purpose in the school. Isaacson (2007) writes about the need for leaders to have continuous introspection, which include the moral, the ethical and purposeful leadership beliefs. The moral leader makes difficult decisions all the time and when leaders understand their moral and ethical positions on educational issues, they can be able to make hard choices (Isaacson 2007).

Moral and ethical leaders demonstrate ways to care for each other: pupils, colleagues, parents and community members (Isaacson 2007). In fact, moral leadership is encouraged by the post-apartheid education system, which seeks to perceive the propinquity between schools and society. Based on democratic principles, the South African School's Act (SASA) of 1996 expects teachers to work closely with other stakeholders in school governance. Moral leaders are more likely to use moral beliefs to bring about ethical decisions. School leaders who are moral leaders have a sense of purpose and the school is a top priority in their lives. Others might refer to some effective moral and ethical leaders as servant leaders. The latter is an idea shared by Ghamwari and Al-Jammal (2014) who point out that moral leaders are also strong servant leaders. A servant leader whose guidance is morality and ethical living will encompass values, vision and mission of the school as he attempts to lead it to success. Zohar (1997) highlights the need for servant leadership in organisations facing change. Zohar points out that these leaders change the system and are able to invent new paradigms.

In a time of many managerial challenges, schools need moral and ethical leaders who will

be exemplary models for colleagues, servant leaders who will serve the interests of the organisation. Isaacson (2007) emphasises that when led by a moral leader, the school becomes an institution where a culture of moral, ethical and purposeful behaviour exists. Moreover, Isaacson (2007) lists a number of traits evident in a purposeful school led by a moral and ethical leader:

- ♦ Continuing to focus on the needs of the teachers and the students as pupils;
- ♦ Treating teachers and students with consideration and support;
- ♦ Living truthfully is fundamental to a moral leader, even when we may be wrong. This forces us to acknowledge the data and to take the important first step of recognising reality;
- ♦ Considering the well-being of others is at the core of ethics;
- ♦ Relying on ethical and moral values will not solve the problem, but gives direction and points the way.

All the above traits are part of the *ubuntu* philosophy tried out by Molo in the study. They are qualities that became pivotal in the transformation of Liso High School.

Clearly, there are hardly any formulae or panaceas in education. However, moral leadership has an immense role to play at a time when truthful, visionary model leaders are necessary to lead organisations. Making moral and ethical judgements might not be an option for rational leadership theorists. Yet the continuous reflection and the evolving of purposeful leader in the process cannot be underestimated. Many schools need purposeful, role models who will enhance staff development as well as the meaning of the school to the community. A moral leader is likely to embrace school wide goals and cherish what the schools stands for. Moral leaders might not redeem all schools from their quagmire, moreover, morality and ethics are not necessarily universal constructs. It is also challenging to use morality and ethics to guide institutions, “yet leading with conviction and integrity means making the tough choices even in the face of staunch opposition, personally and socially. We need principals with deep-seated convictions, a strong sense of morals, and an unwavering commitment to doing the right things” (Glanz 2006: 3). School need committed servant leaders to uphold these values. As pointed out above, being a moral lead-

er also implies being a servant leader. Ghamwari and Al-Jammal (2014) declare that those who lead with a strong sense of moral purpose are servant leaders who thrive in troubled times. Today, in face of myriad challenges, schools need moral leaders.

CONCLUSION

In line with contingency theories, this study showed that moral and ethical leadership are among the strategies that can be utilised by principals trying to improve their schools. School principals are exposed to the complexities of constant educational changes. Additionally, veteran school leaders will concur that there is no single strategy for rescuing dysfunctional schools. The school principal in this study demonstrated that values based on ethical and moral leadership can be instilled to staff members and in turn, these could enhance school effectiveness. Moreover, a philosophy such as *ubuntu* has a potential to work effectively when members of staff are prepared for interdependence and the engendering of a moral purpose. However, even a philosophy that is as effective cannot work if teachers are not motivated intrinsically and are not ready to change their organisation for the better.

Below, the focus is on the recommendations drawn after the completion of the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Firstly, schools need to understand their unique circumstances and utilise what they have for their improvement. Effective leaders will know what strategies to employ and when. All leaders need to be perceptive, understand the culture, climate and values that exist in their organisation. When they are able to do these, they will be able to understand the “people-side” of the organisations. It is effective individuals that make a working organisation.

Secondly, in this time of advancement, it will always help to have leaders who understand the strategies that they are using. Leadership should not be an activity guided by coincidences. Effective leaders should be able to know exactly what they need to use at a particular time and why. It might take years of practice and professional development. Those leaders who are lifelong learners will be in control of what hap-

pens in their schools. When a leader does not know the developments in leadership, chances of success are reduced.

Finally, school leaders and their followers should understand that it is no longer the technical approaches linked to transformational leadership that matter. More research should be conducted as to how school leaders can understand their followers as people. One cannot understand the culture and values in a school without understanding the people who embrace these. It should be an everyday effort for school leaders to understand their followers or else their schools will never grow as effective organisations.

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