

# **Teachers' experiences of caring school leadership in the South African context**

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## **Structure**

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## Introduction

- The management/leadership style of the principal is one of the factors that determines the climate in the school and influences the educator's experience of the quality of his/her working life.
- The emphasis in school educational management is moving from a planning, organising, guiding/leading and control function to also include a more supportive role.
- Teachers and students alike work better when they are **cared about**. Educators also experience greater levels of job satisfaction when they are **cared for** and supported by the principal.

## Problem and Purpose

The caring role of the principal specifically with regard to the educator have not been researched, and there is very little literature or documentation on this topic.

This research pivoted around the problem:

Do all educators experience caring leadership in primary schools in the North-West province of South-Africa?

## Research Aims

From the problem, the research aims crystallised, namely:

1. To describe the nature and the determinants of the caring role of the principal with regard to the educator.
2. Secondly, to determine empirically to which extent school principals fulfill their caring role with regard to educators in primary schools of the North-West Province
  - 2.1 To determine whether there were practical significant differences between the teacher's experience of care and the principal's care giving.
  - 2.2 To determine whether there were specific determinants which were not addressed adequately by the principal or experienced optimally by the educators.

## Research Design and Methodology

- Quantitative approach: Embedded in the Post-Positivist paradigm
- Non-Experimental: Survey
- Instrument:
  - A questionnaire was developed using the determinants as identified with the literature study.
  - 66 items, which allowed for four response options.
  - Separate questionnaires for principals and educators

Validity:

- Content validity
- Face validity
- Construct validity
  - » Pilot Study
  - » Factor analysis (3 factors identified correlated with the 3 main determinants identified from the literature)
- Reliability: Cronbach-alpha coefficient ranged between 0.83 and 0.91 (> 0.7)

## Research Design and Methodology (Continue)

- Population:  
Educators & principals of primary schools in North-West Province, RSA
- Sampling:
  - A systematic stratified cluster sample of primary schools in the North- West Province
  - Subjects:
    - Principals: n = 65
    - Educators: n = 1041
- Data analysis:
  - Descriptive statistics:
  - Inferential statistics:

## Results/Findings

Research aim 1

To describe the nature the caring role of the principal with regard to the educator.

- the following became evident from the literature:
  - The caring role is embedded in love for others. *“An unlimited loving kindness towards all others”*
  - The caring role finds its roots in the human capital theory.
  - The caring role only manifests in management/leadership styles where people in the organisation is regarded as important.

To identify and describe the determinants of the caring role of the principal with regard to the educator.

- identified from literature and classified as:
  - Psychological determinants
  - Organisational (workplace) determinants and
  - Management determinants

## Results/Findings (Continue)

DETERMINANTS OF THE CARING ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL			
CONTEXT:			
CARING RELATIONSHIPS CARING COMMUNITY			
DETERMINANTS:			
PSYCHOLOGICAL	ORGANISATION\WORKPLACE	MANAGEMENT	
Emotional intelligence Interest in person: Sympathy Empathy Concern Attention Compassion Gathering information Addressing Psychological Needs Intrinsic Inspiration/motivation Respect Honesty Spirituality/ Morality Love for others Accepting others	Safe working environment Buildings and terrain Job security Behaviour in relation to educator Secure climate Providing Resources Establishing a caring environment/community	Trust Empowerment Recognition Protection of rights Fairness Communication/Listening/ Giving information Subservience Availability Leadership effectiveness Altruism Commitment Participating decision making	Support Staff development Cheerfulness Transforming influence Integrity Humility Responsibility Mentorship Vision Perseverance Sacrifice

## Results/Findings (Continue)

2.1 To determine whether there were practical significant differences between the teacher's experience of care and the principal's care giving.

Determinants		AVG	S/D	p - Value	d - Value
Psychological	Principals	3.512	0.272		
	Educators	3.039	0.393	<0.0001	1.20***
Workplace	Principals	3.646	0.296		
	Educators	3.185	0.412	<0.0001	1.12***
Management	Principals	3.674	0.264		
	Educators	3.104	0.405	<0.0001	1.41***
Caring role	Principals	3.611	0.238		
	Educators	3.111	0.385	<0.0001	1.30***

## Results/Findings (Continue)

2.2 To determine whether there were specific determinants which were not addressed adequately by the principal or experienced optimally by the educators.

- The following table shows the 10 items contributing the least to a positive experience of care by educators
- The majority of items that contributed the least to a positive rating of care by teachers addressed psychological determinants of care (B2; B13; B4; B6; B10; B19; B8)
- The other three addressed management determinants (B63; B44; B58).
- From this it can be deduced that teachers' rated the psychological care that they experience, more negative than the workplace/organizational and management aspects of care.

## Results/Findings (Continue)

Rank	Item no.	Item My principal.....	Mean	SD	Response							
					Not at all		To a small extent		To some extent		To a large extent	
					f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1	B2	Understands my feelings	2.95	0.866	75	7.4	186	18	478	46.9	281	27.5
1	B13	Is interested in my experiences	2.95	0.87	69	6.8	199	20	451	44.7	291	28.8
3	B63	Supports me personally	2.93	0.927	99	9.7	179	18	436	42.8	305	29.9
4	B4	Imagines him/her in my situation	2.93	0.927	99	9.7	177	17	436	42.8	307	30.1
4	B6	Is conscious of others' feelings	2.93	0.841	65	6.4	200	20	490	48.1	263	25.8
4	B10	Sees my ideas as important	2.93	0.839	67	6.6	199	20	499	48.8	257	25.1
7	B44	Empowers me through participative decision-making	2.92	0.888	79	7.8	208	20	447	43.9	285	28
8	B58	Makes an effort to defend me	2.91	0.903	92	9	187	18	457	44.8	283	27.8
8	B19	Protects my self-interest	2.89	0.851	69	6.8	218	22	475	47	249	24.6
10	B8	Takes an interest in my personal life	2.69	0.938	133	13	255	25	425	41.7	207	20.3

## **Recommendations**

### **National level**

- **Education/Training institutions**

Determinants should be addressed in specific training programmes eg. ACE in School leadership.

Short courses should be developed for principal training, addressing determinants of the caring role.

### **Provincial level**

## **Recommendations**

### **School level**

- With the appointment of principals, the SGB should also use the results of personality evaluations.
- If personality evaluations shows specific development areas, the principal should receive guidance or psychotherapy.
- Principals should annually do a self evaluation, to determine if they address their caring role with regard to educators optimally.
- Principals should annually undergo a 180°-evaluation to determine if they address their caring

