

The Caring Responsibility within the Pedagogical Environment

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Abstract In modern-day times, there is a continuing debate concerning how much responsibility school leaders and educators have in terms of caring for students' necessities whilst they grow up. While some individuals believe that the responsibility of parentage lies in parents nurturing their children and the sole duty of educational establishments is to provide education, others feel that educators serve as subordinate parents to students. The fundamental legal criteria are outlined in education laws, along with the numerous caring obligations and leadership duties that school administrators must recognize in order to adequately meet students' needs. Being aware of children's demands for care and the viewpoints that many different roles are imposed on them presents school administrators with a variety of difficulties. These difficulties include not having enough time owing to administrative obligations, not having enough money or resources for education and not having the support of students' parents. The theoretical framework includes the ethics of caring theory, which explains how educators and school administrators can carry out their caring mission. The objective of this article was to investigate and report on the correlation between the responsibilities school leaders and educators carry, next to the accountability of parents when it comes to raising their children as students through acts of caring. It is seen that cooperation between parents and educators is ideal for serving students' best interests instead of shifting responsibilities between the two groups. This research was done in the interpretivist paradigm within the qualitative approach. A phenomenological strategy was followed. The research subjects were eight principals and 16 teachers, and

data were collected by means of interviews. The data were transcribed, and thematic analysis was done. The investigation revealed that the school leaders had a lot of caring obligations resting on their shoulders, especially when it comes to contributing to the formation of establishing a school climate and culture with an emphasis on caring. Furthermore, the researchers show that both school leaders and educators viewed the role of caring for themselves as a vocation embedded in their teaching careers and preferred it for a living.

Keywords Caring, Educators, Parents, Raising, Responsibility, School Leaders

1. Introduction

Schoeman [1] states that global interdependence, in which interstellar things coexist not only through code but also in action, is healthy cooperation among these interstellar things, as well as between people and their loved ones. It enables symphonic achievements for people and families, as well as schools, churches, nations and other common relationships. Taking this statement into account, it is no surprise that education at home and education at school are not independent of each other. However, the pedagogical responsibilities of parents are often confused with the education provided by schools. A school is resolved on logically, pedagogically and rationally prepared students to separate distinguishable

realities [2]. On the other hand, Millum [3] believes that parents have a moral duty towards their children in that they take care of their children, provide for their vital needs and create opportunities for them to develop holistically.

Education and pedagogy are often debated. According to Dewey [4], the main purpose of education is to provide children with the tools they need to grow in an orderly, progressive manner as members of society. Knowing the meaning of pedagogy will determine the essence of education, where the core responsibilities of the leader, educator and parent lie. "Pedagogy" is an all-encompassing term concerning what educators do to influence learning within people [5]. The concept of pedagogy is observed as a complex phenomenon encompassing a variety of practices supported by the philosophies that are acquired through guidance because of personal understandings and professional experience [5]. This means that an individual's professional experience and personal understanding are regarded as indispensable factors that are taken into consideration in understanding the significance of meaning and pedagogy. Thus, the importance of pedagogy is paramount when it comes to the application thereof to students in their formative years.

Parenting can be defined as a "primary mechanism of socialization, that is, a primary means of training and preparing children to meet the demands of their environments and take advantage of opportunities within those environments" [6]. Thus, the main responsibilities of parents are to enculturate their progenies and make them ready for economic, social, physical and psychological situations. Parenthood demands substantial time, money and emotional investment [7]. Looking deeper into parenting, Baron [8] argues that a child must be sustained through a specific standard of care, whether that care is provided by the individual him- or herself. On the other hand, parents have pointedly more all-encompassing and substantial commitments to their children, some of which may not be vicarious, also encompassing the responsibility to offer nurturing, emotional provision and direction in the formation of identity [9].

The family is the first social system that the child deals with and should be a healthy starting point for the child's further socialization with the community and the wider society [9]. It serves as a foundation and preparation for when the child will start his or her school career in the future.

The role that educators play through the guidance of the leader and the parents determines how well students are nurtured. As parents know their children since birth, their professional experience and personal understanding of their offspring are more and better than those of educators. However, in modern times, the school leader and educators are expected to take care of students and are trained to do so on almost the same level as parents, as students spend a great portion of their time at school during their developmental years.

In order to help school leaders to communicate with

students, this study aims to define the nature of the caregiver role of school leaders and to comprehend and characterize the tasks and responsibilities of school leaders. Thus, the aim is to determine how school leaders can improve their caring role. In addition, its purpose is to determine how school leaders perceive the role of care, to develop guidelines to strengthen the role of care and to define the roles and responsibilities of school leaders in relation to care.

In this article, the researchers argue that the responsibility of raising children has been shifted from parents to educators. The problem is that more and more parents today are pursuing careers. The main role of the woman as the caregiver of her family has changed to that of a professional woman. The care of her children is now placed in the hands of the school. Furthermore, the researchers argue that the responsibility of the woman as the caregiver is fading and that the responsibility of care is now placed in the hands of the school leader and educators. The remainder of the article focuses on an overview of the literature and a short discussion of the methodology of the study, after which the findings, discussion and conclusion are put forth.

2. An Overview of the Literature

2.1. Basic Principles of School

When it comes to the question of "Why is schooling important?" or "Why should children go to school?", the answers and reasons vary from individual to individual. Within modern-day Western egalitarianism systems, three interconnected foremost components of academic and governmental thinking on instruction objectives exist: economic productivity; social unity and the addition (or regulation) of dissimilar assemblies within civilization; and personal growth, accomplishment and expression [10]. It goes without saying that these three components carry the responsibility of both parents and educators, but the extent or ratio of these components between parent and educator varies from person to person.

In order to determine the sole responsibility of schools, one should look at the essential obligations of educational institutions from the beginning and how these have changed over the years. Most children across the world receive a specific form of schooling, whether it is through gaining knowledge from relatives, attending an educational institution or even receiving home schooling. At first, for centuries, children taught themselves through self-absorbed experience and investigation [11]. Thus, schools and parents did not play a major role in education and only became more prominent later on. Broome [12] claims that the idea of passing knowledge to children dates back to the primary people on planet earth. Hundreds of years before educational institutions existed, close relatives and seniors would convey their information

(e.g. hunting expertise, self-protection strategies and basic everyday tasks) to their offspring, usually in one-on-one sessions [12]. Therefore, in the beginning, the responsibility of education (or teaching children the essentials of life) lay with parents and the leaders of groups and tribes. In order to create a positive school climate that goes along with the principles of taking care of students' needs, it is important for parents and the community to be welcomed at the school, for parents to be evocatively involved in the school affairs and for school rules to be formulated with participation from the parents, school personnel and students [13]. These aspects allude to the fact that the school leader and the educator do not carry the sole responsibility of raising students, but the responsibility also rests on the shoulders of parents within the community.

2.2. The Role of Parents and Educators in Raising Students

The term "home education" encompasses the educational influence of the family on children [14]. Parents have a big and very difficult responsibility, as they have to take good care of their children's health, physical growth and general education, as well as the development of their knowledgeable affinities and the creation of good moral values, convictions and attitudes in their children [14]. However, in contemporary times, the caring role of parents also falls under the accountability of the school leader and the educator. Mampane [15] argues that the *in loco parentis* principle fundamentally changes the means by which educators should discern the performance of their duties. Through the principle of being substitute parents, educators have become more aware of their school responsibilities. Educators' duty of care is, for the most part, constitutional and progressive in recognizing the rights of students and educators. Governments and educational institutions should emphasize this responsibility as a shared responsibility of parents and educators. Educators and parents should work together to ensure that students are cared for. Educators are legally responsible for the protection of their students and ought to act like parents when educating students on appropriate behavior. To achieve a system of holistic support for students, schools need to work with parents to develop mutual responsibility for students' success within the education system and to make a direct and positive contribution to the success of the education system [16]. This means that parents, educators and school leaders should work together in the best interests of students, rather than expecting one party to carry all the responsibility.

2.3. Caring Cooperation between Educators and Parents

Effective partnerships between parents and schools contribute to the best interests of students within the school

community and ensure that schools, homes and community businesses fulfil the important responsibility of educating students. Parental involvement offers schools a significant opportunity to improve current school programs by involving parents in school processes [16]. Improved parental involvement has been shown to improve learning outcomes, parental and educator satisfaction and the school environment [16]. Practices to support family and community involvement include schools that can foster engagement in areas such as parenting, home learning, volunteerism, communication, decision making and community partnerships. Effective parent engagement programs are based on a careful understanding of the unique needs of the community. To build trust between schools and parents, effective parent engagement methods rely on strengths-based methods that emphasize positive relationships. While details may vary, all parent engagement programs share a common goal of improving parent-school collaboration to promote healthy parenting and safe school environments [16].

Sikes [17] argues that educators who have children of their own are more willing to attend to students' needs within the school environment. Thus, the degree of empathy educators has for students' needs correlates with their parenting situation. Educators' knowledge, skills and understanding of children accumulate and have a positive impact on their education compared to educators who do not have children [17]. Thus, there is a marked difference in how much educators (and school leaders) with their own children care about student needs beyond basic educational responsibilities. In educational settings, parental cooperation with school leaders and educators is evident when parents show support for and loyalty to the school and supervise their children's homework [18]. However, a well-planned school administration program is mandatory to manage and maintain parental support in education. In addition, educators have a responsibility to encourage parental cooperation by encouraging parents to monitor their children's school attendance and guiding them in social and emotional challenges [18]. Similarly, educators reporting to parents on their children's development at the end of each school year and reporting to parents on good and bad student behavior facilitate collaboration with parents. Parents should ensure that the school infrastructure is safe and that the school is in a well-maintained building with a well-stocked library, adequate furniture, science laboratories, adequate exercise facilities and a healthy eating plan. Moreover, parents are responsible for raising their children. In addition to the obligation to send children to school, children should be able to attend school and study every day during school hours [19].

Parents who regularly visit their children's school to review educator progress, attend parent-educator conferences as needed and are concerned about decisions about their children's education can easily facilitate, monitor and manage their children's school attendance.

Moreover, the South African Schools Act commands parents to dictate the governing body membership by 50 plus one, a total of all other members. As such, South African school legislation recognizes the importance of educators and parents working together to serve the best interests of students. In many families today, both mothers and fathers are the source of income. As a result, they are often too overloaded with work to properly attend to their children's needs [20]. On the one hand, dual-income parents can be positive role models for their children and, of course, the income they generate can enrich their children's lives in many ways. Working can interfere with the development of bonds between parents and children in school. The anxiety and pressure that parents bring home from work can undermine their parenting skills, spoil the home atmosphere and, as a result, add stress to their children's lives [20]. In particular, low-income parents work in stressful, substandard jobs with low wages, little independence, fixed hours and little or no benefits. As a result, their children can grow up with inadequate child care since they are more likely to be unsupervised [21]. Many parents suffer from a lack of time, especially as many mothers and fathers both work outside the home environment. Educators are expected to educate these children when their parents are not educating them because of a too large workload. By maintaining relationships with school leaders and educators, parents are encouraged to remain accountable. Schools can use six types of participation to engage parents, despite busy lifestyles and professional responsibilities [22]. This engagement includes schools that encourage and motivate parents to provide parental support, communicate with parents, provide opportunities, support home learning, participate in school decision making and seek help from the community [22].

2.4. Care Ethics Theory

The theory of care ethics was updated to include the findings of this study. The concept of moral behavior focusing on compassion and interpersonal relationships, or compassion as a virtue, is at the basis of the collection of standardized ethical theories known as "care" [23]. Two elements that Noddings [24] attributes to the theory of care ethics that she helped develop are listening and creating an atmosphere of care. By listening to a caregiver's concerns, the caregiver can find out what can be done, what should be done and how to respond to address the individual's needs. Establishing a caring atmosphere is another factor. A caring environment is one in which loving relationships flourish, personal needs are best satisfied, information is shared and individuals are encouraged to develop. By focusing on attention, Toronto [25] outlines approach to the care ethics theory and adds some characteristics to Noddings' original idea. Recognizing the needs of others and knowing how to meet them are key components of mindfulness. This acknowledges the need for care and

comes to the conclusion that this need must be supplied [25]. Toronto [25] states that caring for people is "stepping into someone else's shoes to meet their needs"; so, neglecting or ignoring needs is a moral evil. Individual care and attention are very important parts of education. Karren [26] encourages students to learn more independently by focusing on their health and giving them personalized attention through continuous assessment of their progress. In addition, Toronto [25] concentrates on the accountability component; by building a loving relationship, one is acting on one's own behalf. A set of derived cultural practices, rather than a list of assurances or a list of formal laws, serves as the foundation for responsibility from the standpoint of care ethics. As a result, it is believed to go beyond statutory responsibilities and, instead, concentrate on what should and should not be done as a contribution to a specific scenario [25]. Regarding this assertion, one of the educational duties of educators to students is to mentor and support their academic and social development within the context of their learning environment.

3. Methodology

This study set out to determine the duty of care in a learning environment. The research was designed and conducted in an interpretivist paradigm, as interpretivism emphasizes the meaning that individuals place on their experiences. Intersubjective meaning is essential to achieving understanding and meaning. Behavior is structured by social conventions and, therefore, requires interpretation. Facts do not speak for themselves. Interpretivism allows researchers to not only describe the social context, customs, norms and standards of each research subject but also to reflect on the factors that are important in assessing and understanding the behavior of the research subject. A qualitative approach was appropriate to understand the central phenomenon shared by the study subjects. The nuances and complexities of the specific situations in which subjects performed their daily tasks were explored. Qualitative researchers tend to understand experiences, emotions, social situations or phenomena as they occur in the real world, observing them in their normal or natural surroundings. A phenomenological strategy of inquiry was implemented to comprehend the research subjects' insight into, views on and comprehension of the caring role of the research subject.

3.1. Research Subjects

A non-probabilistic and appropriate research topic was used in this qualitative study. Six schools closest to the researchers were selected to determine the role of the school leader in guiding students. The research subjects consisted of six primary schools located in one of the 11

provinces in South Africa. Six school leaders and 12 educators were requested to participate in the survey, as they are influencers in roles directly related to students' lives and students' needs.

3.2. Data Collection, Analyses and Ethics

Semi-structured interviews lasting from 45 minutes to 1 hour were conducted. After the interviews were transcribed, the data were analyzed. Data analysis started with reading the transcripts to get an overview of the data. The analysis included thematic analysis to uncover salient themes. The data were then coded, and the codes were grouped into categories. Thematic analysis allowed the researchers to describe the subjects' perceptions of care roles. The researchers followed a process of developing themes and categories using codes from a theoretical and conceptual framework and developing sub-themes from the

information gathered. Because reliability is the focus of research, researchers should ensure reliability, which means self-assurance that focuses on certainty about research results and the communication of how the results of qualitative research are affected. It can be used in many situations or settings with various study focuses. In addition, reliability was used to describe the stability and robustness of the data, and relevance to describe the objectivity and neutrality of the data. In the study, the researchers used member validation and ensured compliance by giving the research subjects the opportunity to review their results and their analyses. The necessary ethical measures were taken, and approval was obtained from all stakeholders, including the Scientific Committee, the Ethics Committee and the Department of Basic Education.

Table 1. Biographical information of research subjects

Research subject number	Detailed explanation of the research subjects (gender, age, years of experience)	A succinct explanation of the school (public, high- or low-income, local location, etc.)
PA	Male, middle-aged, 5 months of experience as leader.	Large public school with good, middle-class socioeconomic background. Quintile 4. Total of 870 students and 60 employees. City location.
TA1	Female, young, 1 and a half years of teaching experience.	
TA2	Male, young, 6 years of experience as a school educator.	
PB	Female older leader with 9 years of experience.	Large public school with poor, low-income socioeconomic background. Quintile 3, but the leader thinks it should be Quintile 1. A total of 937 students and 27 educators. Rural location.
TB1	Male, young, 7 years of experience as a school educator.	
TB2	Female, young, 4 years of teaching experience.	
PC	Male middle-aged leader with 16 years of experience.	An average, middle-class socio-economic background small school. Quintile 4, but the leader thinks it should be Quintile 3. Located in an agricultural community. A total of 9 students and 7 educators. Rural location.
TC1	Female, middle-aged, 16 years of teaching experience.	
TC2	Female, young, almost 6 years of teaching experience.	
PD	Male older leader with 26 years of experience.	A sizable school with a typical, underprivileged socioeconomic background. Quintile 3. A total of 1 813 students and 51 employees. City location.
TD1	Female, young, 4 years of teaching experience.	
TD2	Female, young, 10 years of teaching experience.	
PE	Male middle-aged leader with 7 years of experience.	A large school with a good, middle-class socioeconomic background. Quintile 4. About 700 students and 40 employees in total. City location.
TE1	Female, young, 8 months of experience as a school educator.	
TE2	Male, young, 5 years of experience as a school educator.	
PF	Male, young, 5 years of experience as a school educator.	Average size school with poor, low-income socioeconomic background. Quintile 3. A total of 453 students and 29 employees. Rural location.
TF1	As a male, senior assistant leader, he has 8 months of experience. Male, older, 40 years of teaching experience (before retirement last year).	
TF2	Female, middle-aged, 24 years of teaching experience.	

4. Discussion and Findings

To ensure the validity of the findings of this study, the researchers adhered to specific aspects, such as fieldwork and preliminary data analysis, to ensure consistency between the results and the reality of the research topic. In addition, the method strategy allows triangulation in the data generation process and the data analysis. The verbatim statements of the research subjects and detailed descriptions of their background and situation allowed the researchers to validate the findings. The use of audio recording resulted in the perceptions of the research subjects being captured. The accuracy of the transcribed data was checked by the research subjects, and they were asked to review the researchers' synthesis of the interviews for accuracy of representation. In light of this, the findings are discussed next.

4.1. The School Leader's Vocation as a Caretaker

The conclusion can be drawn that the school leader is called upon to act as caretaker but does not have enough time to justify the part of caretaker. Therefore, the fact that school leaders perceive their teaching occupations as destiny, where students are shaped into accountable adults who will one day add value to society, adds to the insight that school leaders are frustrated as a result of feeling insufficient as caretakers as a result of having little control over their duties as instructed by the Department of Basic Education. Having the duty of being called upon as a caretaker within the educational environment is a deep-rooted certainty among school leaders and educators, as they have a continuing calling for supporting children in their specific community. Research subject TD2 made the following statement: "If you studied in the field of education, caring for students should automatically be part of your nature and passion." Educators' playing a crucial role as caring figures in students' lives helps students develop the necessary attitude and aptitude for leading responsible lives, aids in student development and contributes to the effectiveness of the caring role in school leaders' destiny as education leaders, which, in turn, contributes to educators' ability to fulfil their teaching vocation [28]. School leaders step into their managerial role, and educators embrace their educational role within society because their occupations are aligned with the understanding that they have been called upon to make a positive difference in students' lives. When school leaders or educators decide to dedicate their lives to educating and supporting students, caring qualities automatically become part of them because their job is to help others. A caring nature is, therefore, and should be the main reason why school leaders and educators spend so much energy and time on preparing students for the future. As a result, education is one of the most successful and enduring ways to positively influence future members of civilization because of the burning desire to improve the lives of

students.

The role of school leaders in their particular responsibility to ensure educational success is contagious because educators also understand the importance of their mission. Moreover, the sense of mission of school leaders stems from their passion for making education fruitful, encouraging students to decide their own futures and giving due consideration to the school environment. The development of students' education and learning process takes place through the guarantee of caring. This stems from the personal curiosity and interest of school leaders and educators to work with students with special needs and provide them with better opportunities by recognizing their needs. This also applies to school leaders, because one of her leader's responsibilities is to ensure effective instruction in the classroom. Research subject PF explained as follows: "It is the leader's mission to take care of students and ensure that their basic needs are met." Improving a healthy school environment and school governance by the leader as the head of the school is important [29].

Due to limited time, school leaders and educators are unable to adequately care for students. In this regard, PA explained: "School leaders do not always have enough time to adequately care for students. School leaders and educators neglect their care responsibilities not because they want to, because there is not enough time to care for students due to administrative responsibilities." Administrative tasks take up too much time, time that can be used more efficiently to teach students. In South African classrooms, teachers spend only about 66% of their time actually teaching and learning, compared to 78% in other countries [30]. Difficulties in terms of insufficient time, excessive work stress and overwhelming administrative tasks all contribute to the failure to provide proper tutoring for students. Quintile 1 and 2 schools (and perhaps 3) typically face more challenges than Quintile 4 and 5 schools; so, school leaders and educators in these schools require more time due to a lack of money and resources. The parts of the school that could indirectly affect the needs of students are another area of emphasis. School administrators and educators in the South African educational system struggle with not having enough time to properly carry out their caring obligations as they have an excessive number of administrative responsibilities. Further decline in the standard of education in South Africa may be unavoidable if alternative caring approaches to address these issues are not found.

4.2. The School Leader's Responsibility as a Parent

There is a direct link between school leadership appointment and a career as an educational administrator because their appointment is closely related to their role as surrogate parents for students through schooling. Research subject TA2 said: "The leader takes the place of the guardian as soon as the student enters the school grounds;

therefore the leader has parental duties. Thus, all social, psychological, academic and emotional duties that are fulfilled in the parental home at the school must be fulfilled by the leader." School leaders and educators must nurture and guide students in the same way wise parents do. This means taking responsibility for the psychological, physical and emotional wellbeing of students to prevent their dissatisfaction [15]. However, the responsibility of South African school educators in educating students is growing, while that of social organizations, such as families, churches and communities, has diminished [15].

Legal responsibilities of parental authority, as indicated by the Department of Basic Education [19], outline the law for educators in terms of having an obligation to care for students. While the caring role is the parents' responsibility, in contemporary times, school leaders and educators are forced to go beyond their main educational obligations. School is an extension of the home, not an independent entity. Needless to say, in modern times, especially in South Africa where children face many challenges and problems as they grow up, schools act as accommodation to meet the needs of students. As a result, school leaders and educators must not only provide the prescribed schooling requirements but also support parents, as indicated by the Department of Basic Education. School leaders and educators clearly have a parental responsibility to care for students, but parents expect schools to help students grow into responsible adults. It is also becoming clear that the extent of parental responsibilities at school and within the home varies according to demography and geography.

Student safety is an important component of mentoring. Ensuring the safety of students is not only about personal physical health but also about feeling safe. Feelings of safety directly affect how the responsibilities of school leaders and educators in terms of students are carried out in and out of the classroom and on school grounds. Therefore, if students feel insecure at school, they are less likely to care about their school obligations. In agreement with this statement, Research subject PD pointed out that students felt safe if they felt cared for and gave the following explanation: "At school, the leader should make sure students are well fed, the school grounds are safe and teaching and learning commence successfully. Also, that students' emotional wellbeing is cared for. Much more is achieved with students if they are cared for, because they feel cherished, safe and as if they belong. Students want to feel happy and safe at school. The leader must create trust and security in students so that they feel safe and want to come to school." In South African schools, educational safety associated with incorporating perceived preferences into educational learning styles is enhanced when teaching and learning methods are not consistent with each student's instructional requirements and basic human rights [31]. In this study, student safety was identified by many research subjects (both school leaders and educators) as an important component of care. Ensuring a safe school

environment is critical to the academic success of students. The safety of all students is important in recognizing a caring environment, especially since the school aims to be a haven for students who do not feel safe due to family circumstances. In fact, school may be the only place where students feel safe. The risk of emotional or psychological damage from the overwhelming perception that students have nowhere to go if they feel insecure at school because their home environment is less than ideal is a problem that cannot be ruled out.

Empathy as a means of fully caring for students is a prerequisite for creating a caring environment in schools. The degree to which a student feels safe depends on how well the emotional brain feels protected. However, school leaders and educators should not become overly emotionally involved with students but should maintain a professional distance to protect themselves. Empathy should be part of proper care by school leaders and educators without putting themselves in danger by getting too close to the students. Empathy education helps students to identify how they learn best and provides them with expanded concepts about themselves and their peers that are directly related to caring [32]. Research subject PE was of a similar opinion and said: "An unsympathetic ear results in a lack of trust between the leader and educators, which, in turn, also affects the students. The leader and educators must be emotionally involved in the students' wellbeing. If the leader cares for students and shows empathy, they will care too."

Love is also part of the caring nature of a leader's or educator's career when it comes to taking care of student welfare. Informing or reminding students about punishment also acts as a form of love that shows students the right path through loving guidance. To learn kindness, students must experience kindness, compassion, tolerance and acceptance. These are all central to love-based leadership [33]. Educators who use love-based leadership seek to balance student competencies with school-related opportunities, perspectives, and challenges [33]. Research subject TE2 acknowledged: "Educators need to know how to work with students and identify their needs. It contributes to their wellbeing and mood because some students seek love. Psychologically and emotionally, it holds benefits for them." There is a correlation between developing students and providing education through love. This is because it counteracts the student's situation at home, where appropriate loving care may not be present. Identifying areas of student need is related to the virtual feeling of being and feeling loved at school. When students feel loved, they feel satisfied because they feel cared for.

The concepts of love and compassion coexist in maintaining a caring school culture and climate within the school environment. Caring and supporting students through acts of love have a positive impact on students. This is to improve the psychological health of students and helps them to feel valued and valued, especially if

they are not feeling loved and valued at home. Love also serves as a teaching tool for students, demonstrating to them what it is to love and how to behave appropriately through acts of love. Finally, because love and discipline are the same environments in which students exhibit acceptable behavior and do not feel the need to behave inappropriately to attract attention to fill gaps due to lack of love, teaching and learning are enhanced. In this regard, Research subject TC1 stated: "Effective student guidance at school cannot take place where love and discipline, which are synonymous, are not imprinted on students. Without discipline, there is no love. Negative reactions in students as a lack of love is [sic] also a reaction to a search for love. Many students do not get the necessary love and care at home. Therefore, the leader and staff often have to fulfil those parental duties."

4.3. The Principles of Ensuring Caring at School by the Leader

Certain ideals or standards have been identified that are essential for both educators and school leaders to ensure that a caring school ethos and climate are recognized in the school environment. A subject that recognizes caring as a fundamental feature of the school requires that caring in general has a valuable utility [34]. Incorporating particular principles is important for students to feel cared for. These values or principles are standards or rules that both school leaders and educators can establish and enforce in the school environment if they wish to ensure that the school culture serves the purpose of creating a caring school environment.

The example of compassion embodied by school leaders is the first of these identified principles of caring. It is very important that school leaders set an example of compassion. When they embody the value of compassion, it automatically influences educators to do the same. The extent to which school leaders instill authenticity into their schools shows that they care about the wellbeing of students in relation to the success of the school through a caring school culture and climate. When students are given the impression that the leader is inconsiderate, they will automatically reciprocate the inconsiderate behavior, leading to an inconsiderate cycle at school. School management is central in providing orientation, establishing a positive school culture that brings positive perspectives to the school, supporting and enhancing staff motivation and improving and promoting school success in challenging situations [35]. In conjunction with the literature study, Research subject PF highlighted the importance of the school leader setting as an example of caring as follows: "The leader must set the example by caring for the educators so that the educators also care for the students." Therefore, school leaders who do not set an example of caring for students and educators through their actions will, in turn, affect the educators in that they too will not care sufficiently for their students and, as a result,

do harm to their psychological, social and emotional wellbeing. This contributes to an unhealthy and negative school setting that penetrates all corners of the school.

The second principle is accessibility. Schools are typically the center of the community, both physically and figuratively, and as a result, integrating accessibility into schools benefits not only students, but the community as a whole [36]. Research subject TE1 explained that the friendliness of school leaders is as important as communication and visibility and is vital for creating a sense of engagement and care for students. Research subject TE1 added: "School leaders must be accessible to educators as well as students. Regular and adequate communication with students and educators must also be maintained. There are school leaders who have gaps in these mentioned examples, which is a disadvantage for students in need of care." Inculcating the idea in educators and students that school administrators are always available to deal with all sorts of problems is important to ensure that school administrators establish a caring and optimally functioning school environment. School administration should be accessible to both students and educators. In addition, consistent and sufficient communication with students and educators should be maintained, which would improve accessibility. If students and educators do not feel cared for by school leaders, school leaders are likely to come across as aloof, and educators and students will feel unimportant. School leaders who listen to, help with and respond to the needs of educators and students contribute to creating a caring school environment.

The third principle is the attitude of school leaders, which also influences students. Recognizing or valuing a student means seeing and treating the student as a person, not just as a number or another paycheck. Evaluating students as a result of effective care is also a result of a caring attitude on the part of school leaders. Moreover, underestimating educators can indirectly harm students because the way educators feel cared for affects their productivity at work by influencing how they feel when they go about their work. Improving students' attitudes through motivation plays an important role in their academic success regardless of the difficulties they face at home if they come from a disadvantaged background. Students and educators may behave inconsiderately if they feel that school leaders are not interested in them. Work productivity is affected when students feel neglected. In addition, educators who feel uncared for by school leaders may bring negative attitudes into teaching practice, which may, in turn, have a negative impact on students. All these factors form an unhealthy cycle. Research subject TB1 expressed a belief that the way in which educators' feelings are cared for affects their work performance by influencing their disposition in approaching their work. The research subject explained: "Educators would have a negative attitude which would impact their job and, in turn, negatively affect the students if they feel

underappreciated and not cared for.” Fessehatsion [37] believes that school leaders tend to focus on the knowledge, attitudes and skills of educators to bring about constructive changes in the learning progress of students.

The fourth principle is caring equals action. Through their actions and words, school administrators should foster a school culture that upholds a high standard of everyday professionalism and caring [38]. Research subject PA agreed with this statement and said: “It is very difficult and takes years to create a caring school culture and climate. It is all about the actions of the leader and educators. The school personnel’s deeds speak louder than words. The actions and deeds of the leader and educators must be sustainable to contribute to a caring school climate and culture.” Being concerned is a kind act, and concern that is not accompanied by acts of kindness is inherently hollow. The motivation of the school leader and the care philosophy of the school are useless without measures taken to meet students’ needs. Only when school administrators ensure that the necessary action is made to establish a successful school culture and climate can the principles of caring be put into practice. The concepts and values of care that are put in place to build a caring foundation in the school environment are intimately tied to the policies and practices, which is why they are always crucial. The connection between a person’s (e.g. the leader’s) actions and words symbolizes honesty, which is related to the leader’s caring nature [39].

The fifth and final principle identified is student motivation. Motivating students is a caring act because it contributes to their attitudes towards school. Research subject TA1 explained the positive effects of motivation as follows: “Caring for students makes them feel part of a community. It motivates them to participate and to be more successful.” Consistent with this, Bojovic and Antonijević [40] argue that students may be motivated to complete homework because they are curious and focused, receiving praise and recognition from school leaders can increase their motivation. Motivating and caring actions by school leaders and educators have a huge impact on students’ behavior and mood, also when they come to school depressed because of adverse circumstances at home. An educator’s lack of enthusiasm can affect student performance and lead to pessimism among students. When students are motivated and taught that they do not have to deal with complex family problems and can thrive regardless of their family circumstances, it can make a positive contribution to their attitudes towards problem management. In addition, educators may feel demoralized and even wonder why they took on the mantle of an educator in the first place when the leader is not giving them the attention they deserve. As a result, they may lose their passion for teaching. Students are more open to communication if they are motivated. The motivational factor affects how one feels taken care of. Motivated students learn more, learn better and learn independently

[41]. Feeling motivated also influences behavior, which, in turn, influences students’ academic commitment. Depressed students will lag behind in academic progress. Motivational acts by school leaders and educators are compassionate acts because they help motivate students to do their best, even those from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds. Moreover, it is important to recognize that when educators become discouraged, they may neglect their teaching responsibilities. This can have an undesirable effect on student performance. In particular, it can discourage students by resulting in a lack of attention to their work due to educator disappointment. It is, therefore, the duty of school leaders to ensure that all school personnel always feel motivated, as feeling motivated is crucial.

5. Conclusions

Parents may neglect home caring and assume that the school serves as the primary parenting milieu in which their children thrive. In addition, many schools suffer from a lack of funding, resources and provision from the education sector and parents, which has an undesirable impact on the efficiency of the individual attention provided by school leaders and educators. Challenges and prospects, along with alternative stimuli, underpin the roles and responsibilities of school leaders and educators in caring for students, managing the school and performing their tasks to the best of their ability. School leaders and educators can use a variety of care approaches and tactics to address student needs, but care responsibilities are often limited due to the complexity of the setting. Support students in areas of need to eliminate or reduce the challenges faced by school leaders as functional caregivers for student needs within the school system to educate students.

The contribution that this research makes is that awareness is created of how important the caring role of the leader and educators is, especially in the South African context. For many children in South Africa, school is a place of refuge where they are fed, not only with food but also with security and care. It is precisely for this reason that school leaders must take their role of care seriously.

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