

**THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS IN THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
OF LEARNERS IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

by

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DECLARATION

I, *Mkansi Twananani Lindy*, declare that the thesis entitled “*The role of instructional leaders in the learners’ academic performance in rural primary schools*” is my own work. All the sources that I have used or quoted in the thesis have been rightfully acknowledged by means of complete references.



Signature.....

Date

MKANSI TWANANANI LINDY

DEDICATION

I am dedicating this thesis to my late fabulous and graceful father, Wilson Gezani Tzaneen Nkuna and my mother, Mphephu Nwaxandlamuka Mashele, who worked hard and tirelessly to motivate me to continue with my studies. Your inspiration is highly acknowledged.

A ndzi ta va mani mina? Ndza mi rhandza!

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ABSTRACT

Instructional leadership is crucial for learners' academic success at all levels of schooling internationally. In South Africa most underperforming schools are in rural areas and townships making an investigation into the instructional leadership role in learners' academic success in these schools imperative. The topic was explored by means of a literature review and an empirical investigation. Informed by attribution theory, distributive theory and transformational theory, a qualitative study collected data from four purposively selected primary schools located in Khujwana Circuit, Mopane West District, Limpopo Province. Participants included the four principals and the four deputy principals and 16 departmental heads (four per school) who comprise the School Management Teams in the respective schools. Data were collected through observation, document analysis, individual interviews with principals and focus group interviews with departmental heads and deputy principals. Data were analysed by thematic data analysis. Findings indicated that instructional leaders are curriculum drivers in the school phases, ensure equal work allocation to teachers and ensure that their subordinates know their roles and perform them as specified by the Personnel Administrative Measures determined by the Minister of Basic Education. The three main responsibilities of departmental heads and curriculum advisors entail monitoring teachers' work, teacher professional development and administrative responsibilities. Challenges to instructional leadership in rural primary schools include poor resources, lack of knowledge and skills on instructional leadership, and poor learner discipline. It is recommended that the instructional leadership embodied in School Management Teams be supported by professional development and collaboration in rural primary schools.

Key words: Instructional leadership, academic performance, leadership, management, principals, teachers, learners.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

This study is aimed at exploring the role of instructional leaders in the academic performance of learners in rural primary schools. Since the demise of the apartheid regime and the establishment of a democratic society in South Africa in 1994, numerous educational changes have been instituted (Van der Vyver, Fuller & Khumalo, 2023). These changes created a wide range of demands on the leadership and management of schools. These included the effective implementation of the school curriculum, the reinforcement of a culture of learning and teaching in schools and the effective monitoring of classes to enhance learners' academic performance (Van der Vyver et al., 2023). Thus, principals, deputy principals, Departmental Heads (DHs), teachers and other stakeholders are called upon to focus primarily on instructional leadership instead of concentrating solely on administrative responsibilities. According to Vogel (2018), instructional leadership is geared towards ensuring that quality education is offered in schools. This leadership task further encourages teachers to be lifelong learners in order to improve their teaching practices and enhance learners' academic performance (Vogel, 2018).

Instructional leadership, which aims to foster a teaching and learning community, is therefore seen as a key component of successful teaching and long-term school improvement. According to Maponya (2020), the effectiveness of the members of School Management Team (SMTs) who are instructional leaders determines how well schools function. The key elements of instructional leadership include motivating and inculcating positive attributes among learners, managing instruction, creating a positive teaching and learning culture, providing learner support, promoting parental involvement and ensuring the interchangeable and flexible implementation of leadership styles (Maponya, 2020). Metcalfe (2018) adds that instructional leadership includes regularly checking teachers' coverage of the curriculum content (curriculum tracking) and learners' books, working collaboratively with teachers to improve curriculum coverage and assisting teachers with curriculum coverage challenges they

may be experiencing. These tasks demonstrate that instructional leaders play a significant role in determining the academic performance of learners in schools.

Instructional leadership is relatively new in South Africa as such the current leadership in schools requires training for effective implementation. However, instructional leaders in South African schools, experience challenges such as lack of time, poor communication, inexperience and lack of work skills and knowledge, professional underdevelopment, ongoing changes in education policy and curriculum and lack of departmental support (Tapala, Van Niekerk & Mentz, 2020). The Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2018) identified the following key instructional leadership challenges in schools in South Africa which are discussed in the ensuing sections.

1.1.1 Poor school management and leadership

The main challenge facing most South African schools especially those located in poor rural areas and townships are poor school management skills, lack of effective instructional leadership expertise and ineffective Representative Councils of Learners (RCLS) (DBE, 2018). Molina and Wilinowski (2018) opine that this is more than a lack of resource capacity but indicative of system failure which does not provide principals with robust management training nor holds them accountable to the required standards.

1.1.2 Lack of curriculum planning and management

Most underperforming schools in the country are characterised by lack of proper curriculum planning (DBE, 2018). In such environments teachers tend to work in silos instead of working collaboratively. They therefore plan their lessons individually resulting in poor lesson planning which could have been enhanced through inputs from their colleagues. Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018) assert that most teachers feel unsupported and ill-equipped to face the challenges presented by curriculum reforms.

1.1.3 Lack of instructional leadership knowledge and skills

Instructional leaders in underperforming schools lack instructional leadership skills as they are not trained to be instructional leaders. As a result, they do not know how to support their teachers in these schools. Their responsibilities include managing the curriculum, supervising teaching, developing teachers professionally, improving teaching and learning environment, guiding learners in learning, monitoring and assessing learner progress, creating positive school climates, motivating teachers and learners and effectively managing resources to enhance instructional practices. Lack of training in performing these tasks compromises learners' academic performance and requires that instructional leaders be provided with the necessary support to perform their tasks effectively.

The challenges alluded to in the section above indicate that the quality of education offered in most underperforming schools is indicative of the systemic challenges within the schooling system. This study investigated role of instructional leaders in the academic performance of learners in rural primary schools in the Khujwana Circuit, Mopani District, Limpopo Province.

1.2 RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

The main motivation for this study is the gap in knowledge regarding the important role of principals and other members of SMTs as instructional leaders in South African schools. In particular, this pertains to schools located in poor socio-economic areas such as township and rural schools. Learners' lack of academic success in these schools is indicative of poor learning taking place, alluding to poor school leadership (Shava & Tlou, 2018). This is evidenced by Grade 4 and 6 learners' poor performance in reading in international standardised tests (PIRLS, 2023). It is important to note that the 2023 results reveal a decline in learners' achievement due to the COVID pandemic. Again, the worst performing learners are those located in poor communities, making it imperative to investigate instructional leadership in these areas to improve learners' academic success.

Therefore, the findings and recommendations proffered in this study will strengthen the instructional leadership role of SMTs, improve professional development of teachers and enhance learners' academic performance. It is hoped that the study's recommendations will improve knowledge and understanding of the instructional leadership roles of the SMTs. The findings will advance knowledge and promote good practice enabling instructional leaders to relate more effectively to their work environments, to accomplish their purposes and resolve challenges.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Most learners in rural and township schools are underperforming academically (Munyaradzi & Manyike, 2022; Thaba-Nkadameng, 2020). This lack of academic success is mostly attributed to poor leadership in most of these schools (Memela & Rarathan, 2022; Ogina, 2020; Thaba-Kadimeng, 2020). The same findings are confirmed by Grade 4 and 6 South African learners' dismal performance in the recent internal standardised test on Progress in International Reading Literacy (PIRLS) results (PIRLS, 2023). According to the PIRLS (2023), learners' dismal performance is mostly in Quintile one schools which are non-fee-paying schools. This study was thus conducted in rural non-fee-paying schools where most of these learners are enrolled in order to make evidence-based recommendations to improve practice.

Since the attainment of democracy, the South African education landscape has been plagued by poor learner performance due to ineffective leadership in most schools (Memela & Rarathan, 2022). The advent of democracy in 1994 resulted in many changes in school policies resulting in implementation challenges. Furthermore, school leaders are confronted with interference from unions in the running of these schools (Memela & Rarathan, 2022). Democracy in most of the poor and township schools is perceived by both teachers and learners to be associated with lawlessness and a neglect of responsibilities such as punctuality, which contributes to poor teaching and learning (Ogina, 2020). Ogina's (2020) results revealed the 'hands-on' and 'hands-off' approaches of the principals in managing low performing teachers, while high-performing teachers were recognised, motivated and encouraged to both develop leadership skills and work collaboratively to improve the performance of low-performing teachers. This study was conducted in selected schools in Khujwana

Circuit of Mopani District, Limpopo. As one of the school leaders in Khujwana Circuit, I have observed that there is poor leadership and management of most schools located in the Khujwana Circuit. Within the Khujwana Circuit, I have also observed that most teachers appear to be demotivated because principals as instructional leaders, fail to support them because of lack of relevant knowledge and skills.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions that directed this study consist of the following primary and secondary research questions:

1.4.1 Primary research question

This study was guided by the following primary research question:

What is the role of instructional leaders in learners' academic performance in rural primary schools?

1.4.2 Secondary research question

- (a) Which theories and models inform instructional leadership and its implementation in schools and how are they critiqued?
- (b) What education reforms with particular reference to instructional leadership have been implemented in South African schools since 1994?
- (c) How is instructional leadership implemented by a purposeful sample of principals, deputy principals and DHs with the view to improving learners' academic performance in four selected rural primary schools in the Khujwana Circuit, Limpopo?
- (d) What recommendations can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools?

1.5 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study will be guided by the following aim and objectives:

1.5.1 Aim of the study

The main aim of this study was to explore the role of instructional leaders in learners' academic performance in rural primary schools.

1.5.2 Objectives of the study

- (a) To explore and critique theories and models informing instructional leadership and its implementation in schools;
- (b) To discuss the education reforms with particular reference to instructional leadership implemented in South African schools since 1994;
- (c) To conduct a qualitative investigation on the implementation of instructional leadership by a purposeful sample of principals, deputy principals and DHs with the view to improving learners' academic performance in four selected rural primary schools in the Khujwana Circuit, Limpopo;
- (d) To recommend strategies for enhancing and sustaining instructional leadership in the schools.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is of significance given the role of instructional leaders in improving learners' academic performance in primary schools. The findings of the study will assist school principals and SMTs with school management and leadership practices to improve their instructional leadership strategies in schools. This will enable the instructional leaders to design and implement effective strategies of improving instructional leadership, which will improve teaching and learning and the academic performance of the learners in the schools. The study's recommendations will suggest ways of improving instructional leadership policies and practice in schools. This research will therefore, provide pedagogic knowledge, skills and principles which will contribute to effective teaching and learning in general.

1.7 DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

The demarcation of the study refers to the process of drawing boundaries or the borders of the research problem area within which the research will be conducted (Naar, 2021). Similarly, Babbie (2020) describes demarcation of the study as the creation of the borders of the research problem area within which the research will be conducted. The focus of this research was to explore the role of instructional leaders in teaching and learning and the academic performance of learners in rural primary schools. This study was conducted in four selected rural primary schools in the Khujwana Circuit of Mopani West District, Limpopo.

1.8 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This section will focus on the summary of the methodology and research design of the study which includes the research paradigm, research design, research approach, population of the study, sampling strategies, data collection and data analysis. A comprehensive discussion of the methodology and research design is provided in Chapter 4.

1.8.1 Research paradigm

The concept 'research paradigm' is a pattern of belief and practice upon which the research is based. It is a model, pattern, or method of conducting research (Sujan, 2023). Thus, a research paradigm is a group of perspectives about the universe and how it should be comprehended and researched. There are three types of paradigms in research, namely, the positivist or experimental paradigm, the constructivist or interpretative paradigm and critical theory (Creswell, 2019). This study will be based on the constructivist research paradigm.

1.8.2 Research design

The concept research design refers to a strategy for answering the research question using empirical data (Bhandari, 2023). Therefore, creating a research design means making decisions about the researcher's overall research objectives and approach,

sampling methods, data collection methods, data collection procedures and data analysis methods (Bhandari, 2023). The concept research design is also described by Thakur (2021) as the overall strategy that the researcher chooses to integrate the different components of the study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring that the research problem will be addressed effectively. It constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. According to Creswell (2019), there are eight different research designs used by researchers: correlational designs, narrative research designs, experimental designs, grounded theory designs, mixed method designs, survey designs, action research designs and ethnographic designs. This study is based on a phenomenological research design.

1.8.3 Research approach

The concept '*research approach*' refers to plans and the procedure for research that span the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Creswell, 2019). According to Hassan (2023), research approach refers to the systematic and structured ways that researchers use to conduct research, and they differ in terms of their underlying logic and methods of inquiry. There are three main types of research approaches used in data collection, namely, quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approach; the integration of the first two approaches is called the mixed method research approach (Creswell, 2019). This study is based on a qualitative research approach. In general, a qualitative research approach aims to address society's scientific and practical issues through naturalistic and interpretative approaches to different subject matter (Taherdoost, 2022). This approach uses various empirical data gathered by means of case studies, life experiences, and stories that show the routines and problems that individuals are struggling with in their lives through focusing on their in-depth meaning and motivations which cannot be defined by numbers (Taherdoost, 2022). Qualitative research is rooted in research that originated in anthropology, sociology, and psychology, is an inductive process, is not experimental, is subjective in nature and seeks to understand meaning and the lived experiences of humans (Fawns, 2023).

1.8.4 Population and sampling

A population of a study is the set or group of all the units on which the findings of the research are to be applied (Shukla, 2020). Similarly, a population is described by Bhandari (2023), as the entire group about which the researcher wishes to draw conclusions. In other words, the population is a set of all the units which possess a variable characteristic under study and for which findings of the research can be generalised (Shukla, 2020).

In this study, the population was all the rural primary schools, principals, deputy principals and DHs in Khujwana Circuit, Mopani West District, Limpopo. After identifying the population of this study, purposive sampling procedures were used to sample the four primary schools (Schools A, B, C and D), their principals as well as their deputy principals and four DHs per school, all of whom are members of the SMTs. Thus, the total sample comprised four school principals, four deputy principals and 16 DHs ($n = 24$). In this study, a combination of well performing, moderate performing, as well as poor performing schools were selected. All the selected schools are Quintile 1 schools, which means that parents of learners do not pay school fees in these schools. Instead the school receives funding from the DBE. All the selected schools enrol learners from Grade R to Grade 7 and these schools are also located in close proximity to my residence which enabled me to visit them with ease.

1.8.5 Data collection methods

According to Bhandari (2023), data collection is the systematic process of gathering observations or measurements. Collection of data in a qualitative study is described as the accurate, methodical collection of qualitative data which is relevant to the research sub-problems, by means of strategies such as focus group discussions, interviews, participant observations, case histories and narratives (Creswell, 2016). In this research, four techniques were used to collect data, namely, document analysis, observation, individual interviews and focus group interviews. The data were collected in two phases, namely, phase 1 (document analysis and observation) and phase 2 (individual interviews and focus group interviews). In this study I also examined two types of documents, namely; national policies and school documents.

1.8.5.1 Phase 1: Document analysis and observation

a) Document analysis

In this study, document analysis was used to collect data from national policies and school documents. The documents analysed were the time and attendance register, work allocation and minutes of school meetings. These documents were requested from the principals of the four participating schools. The analysis process involved a careful, more focused reading, re-reading and review of the time and attendance register, work allocation and minutes of school meetings.

b) Classroom observation

In this study, both principals, deputy principals, DHs and teachers were observed during school hours to determine the effectiveness of principals as instructional leaders. As a researcher, I was a non-participant observer. The first two observations sessions in each of the four participating schools was conducted on different days and I spent the whole day in each school observing the school's activities from commencement to closing time. Each school was observed for a period of five days.

1.8.5.2 Phase 2: Individual interviews and focus group interviews

a) Individual interviews

Beside document analysis and classroom observations I further conducted individual interviews with the research participants. An interview allows a researcher to gather rich information and draw more detailed conclusions than other research methods, taking into consideration nonverbal cues, off-the-cuff reactions, and emotional responses (George, 2023). I used an interview schedule (Creswell, 2014) to conduct these individual interviews with the four school principals in their respective offices after school in order not to interrupt the academic project. Each interview was scheduled for an hour and all interviews were digitally recorded with the principals' permission. The recording of interview sessions allowed me listen to the interviews after interview sessions. Furthermore, I took notes during interviews which enabled

me to remember and reflect at a later stage and shed more light to the recorded information as I analysed data. All participants were interviewed once.

(b) Focus group interviews

Four focus group interviews were also held with the SMT members of each of the four participating schools respectively. Each focus group comprised the deputy principal and four DHs of each respective school. Focus group interviews were conducted in the classrooms in the four selected schools after school hours. An interview guide (Creswell, 2014) was used during focus group interviews and the focus group was digitally recorded with the participants' permission. Each focus group interview lasted for a period of two hours.

1.8.6 Data analysis and interpretation

The aim of analysing data is to narrate the information distinctly, recognise what is similar and dissimilar, disclose the differences, relationships and other regular patterns that are found in the information and finally respond to research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). In this study, the Tesch method of qualitative data analysis, was used to analyse the data collected through observation, document analysis and individual interviews (Creswell, 2019). After the transcription of the interviews, possible categories were jotted in the margins and similar topics were put together and abbreviated as codes. Then interpretations of the findings were conducted and the report drawn up.

1.8.7 Ethical considerations

Permission for the study was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, University of South Africa as well as the DBE Limpopo. Principals of the four selected schools gave written consent to participate in the study as did the deputy principals and DHs. Participation was voluntary and anonymity and confidentiality of all participants was upheld. Participants had the right to withdraw at any time or to refuse to answer any questions without bias. Full detail of ethical considerations is given in Chapter Four.

1.9 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

This section will focus on the clarification of the main concepts of the study in order to ensure that the research is understood by the readers.

1.9.1 Instructional leadership

The term 'instructional' is derived from the verb 'to instruct', which means to teach someone about something (Cambridge Essential Dictionary, 2023). The term 'leadership' is essentially a continuous process of influencing behaviour in the context of mutual relations between a leader and his followers (Truptimayee, 2022). Therefore, the broad view of the concept instructional leadership includes all leadership activities that indirectly affect student learning such as school culture and timetabling procedures (Ng, 2019). These might be considered to be aspects of leadership that have impact on the quality of curriculum and instruction delivered to learners (Ng, 2019).

1.9.2 Management

Management is the process of planning and organising the resources and activities of a business to achieve specific goals in the most effective and efficient manner possible (Indeed, 2023). Similarly, management is described by Diksha (2023), as a distinct ongoing process of allocating inputs of an organisation (human and economic resources) by typical managerial functions (planning, organising, directing and controlling) for the purpose of achieving stated objectives, namely output of goods and services desired by its customers (environment). There are five parts to a definition of management as a process: first, the co-ordination of resources; second, the performance of managerial functions as a means of achieving co-ordination; the third, establishing the objective or purpose of management process, that is, it must be purposeful managerial activity; the fourth aspect is that management is a social process, and the fifth is its cyclical nature (Diksha, 2023).

1.9.3 Teacher

A teacher (or educator) is a person who serves as an instructor and guide in the transmission of knowledge, skills, and values, typically in an educational setting (Oxford Advanced English Dictionary, 2023). The fundamental premise of being a teacher is to add value to the learning of each student in their care (Corrigan, 2016). A teacher is also described as a person who delivers an educational programme, assesses student participation in an educational programme, and/or administers or provides consistent and substantial leadership to an educational programme (Lal, 2016). These definitions indicate that a teacher is any person who imparts knowledge, trains or provides educational support to another person in any institution of learning. In this study the term teacher refers to people responsible for providing new knowledge and skills to the learners and who are supported by instructional leaders.

1.9.4 School Management Team (SMT)

According to Mathipa, Magano, Mapotse and Matlabe (2014), the School Management Team (SMT) refers to a structure with the sole function of giving leadership guidance, direction and assistance in the teaching and learning situation. The SMT is also described as the group of appointed, acting and/or co-opted teachers who hold management positions within the school, including principals, deputy principals and DHs (DBE, 2021). According to the Business Dictionary (2015), the SMT is a group of administrators (teachers) assembled to work on a particular project or to perform a particular function within a school. As a team of instructional leaders, the main activities of the SMT is supporting, guiding, monitoring and evaluating the core activities of teaching and learning in the school (DBE, 2021).

1.9.5 Learning

According to Cherry (2022), learning is the acquisition of information, knowledge, and skills. Learning is a relatively lasting change in behaviour that is the result of experience (Cherry, 2022). This definition is supported by Van Vulpen (2023) who defines learning as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These definitions indicate that learning means to make particular contents one's own and to

master valuable skills for any event. In this study learning refers to a process whereby learners and teachers acquire new experience and knowledge.

1.9.6 Professional development

Professional development is defined as gaining new skills through continuing education and career training after entering the workforce (Parsons, 2023). Professional development includes taking classes or workshops, attending professional or industry conferences or earning a certificate to expand your knowledge in your chosen field (Parsons, 2023). According to Pelta (2023), professional development is the continuous process of self-awareness, application, and reflection on how to best apply your strengths and skills to the world of work. Professional development is when you learn new skills while enhancing your existing skill set and can be formal (like attending training and classes) or informal (like working with a mentor or reading books) (Pelta, 2023). In the context of this study, professional development refers to all activities conducted by instructional leaders which are aimed at addressing the needs of the individual educator by enhancing his or her knowledge and skills and thus the quality of student learning. Therefore, professional development is on-the-job teacher training or the learning process that supports and fosters instructionally effective educators.

1.10 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis consists of six chapters. The summary of the contents of each chapter is now discussed.

Chapter one: Orientation to the study

This chapter is the orientation of the study which focuses on introducing the study. This chapter includes the introduction and background to the study, rationale of the study, problem statement, aims and objectives, research questions, demarcation of the study, significance of the research, summary of research design and methodology and chapter outline.

Chapter two: Theoretical framework of the study

Chapter two provide the theoretical framework of the research. The role of theoretical framework is to provide the blueprint or guide of this research. This chapter will explain the way in which this research will be conducted and the theoretical principles which will guide this study. This chapter includes conceptual framework, theoretical framework, instructional leadership role of the principal, instructional leadership role of the deputy principal, the challenges of instructional leadership and the professional development of instructional leaders. This chapter will inform the research findings.

Chapter three: Literature review

Chapter three offers a review of literature of the study. The literature review concentrates on a wide review of relevant writings such as the latest articles, journals, and major books on the subject, monographs, thesis and dissertations published nationally and internationally. This chapter focuses on the analysis of instructional leadership in the South African education system. In this chapter, primary and secondary sources in relation to instructional leadership are used. This chapter includes discussion of leadership in South African schooling system prior to and after 1994, the importance of instructional leadership in schools, the instructional leadership role of the principals, deputy principals, DHs and curriculum advisors. Further discussed in this chapter are challenges faced by principals, deputies and DHs in implementing instructional leadership. Lastly the chapter discusses the various measures put in place to address the challenges of instructional leadership in the South African schooling system.

Chapter four: Research design and methodology

This chapter focuses on research design and methodology which was used to collect empirical data for this study. This chapter includes the research paradigm, research design, research methodology which includes qualitative research, research approach, researcher profile, selection of the site, selection of the participants, data collection methods, document analysis and classroom observations, interviews, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Chapter five: Presentation, analysis and interpretation of data

Chapter five is an analysis and an interpretation of the data. This chapter includes the analysis of data collected by means of document analysis, observation, individual interviews and focus group interviews. In this chapter the responses of the participants will be presented and elucidated by means of tables and will be accompanied by a detailed analysis and interpretation.

Chapter six: Major findings of the study, recommendations and conclusions

This is the last chapter which serves as a synthesis of the whole investigation. This chapter includes a summary of findings from the literature study, a summary of findings from the empirical investigation, my own reflections, research contributions, recommendations of the study, limitations of the study and conclusion.

1.11 SUMMARY

The aim of this study is to explore the role of instructional leaders in teaching and learning and the academic performance of learners in primary schools. This chapter focused on the orientation of the study, which included introduction and background to the study, rationale of the study, problem statement, research questions, aim and objective of the study, demarcation of the study, summary of research design and methodology, significance of the study, clarification of concepts and research outline.

The next chapter (Chapter 2) focuses on the theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER 2

A THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on background of the study, rationale of the study, literature review, research questions, aims and objectives of the study, research design and methodology, credibility and trustworthiness of the study, limitation and delimitation of the study, definition of concepts and chapter outline of the study. The aim of this chapter is to review various literature sources to gain a better understanding of instructional leadership and management in schools. The concept 'literature review' refers to a survey of scholarly articles, books and other sources relevant to a particular issue, area of research or theory. This is done in order to provide a description, summary and critical evaluation of these works (Ramdhani, Ramdhani & Amin, 2014). It is therefore, a description of the literature relevant to a particular field or topic in order to give an overview of the research conducted in a particular field. Similarly, Creswell (2014) describe a literature review as a search and evaluation of the available literature in a given subject or topic and it forms the theoretical base for the research (Creswell, 2014). The literature review includes conceptual framework, theoretical framework, instructional leadership role of the principal, instructional leadership role of the deputy principal, the challenges of instructional leadership and the professional development of instructional leaders.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Instructional leadership is the fundamental concept of this study. The concept 'instructional leadership' consists of two terms, namely, instructional and leadership. The first term 'instructional' originates from the term 'instruct', which has two main definitions: to give information about how something should be done and the practice of teaching (Mestry, 2013). In this study instruction refers to teaching, which is defined as an engagement with learners to enable them to understand and apply knowledge, concepts and processes (University of Stellenbosch, 2013). Instruction or teaching engages learners in learning and to be effective, teachers require knowledge of the subject matter and knowledge of how learners learn. Instruction or teaching includes

design, content selection, delivery, assessment and reflection. The term 'leadership' on the other hand, refers to the influence that a particular individual exerts upon the goal achievement of others (Mestry, 2013). According to De Matthews (2014), leadership deals with social influence and procedures in which leaders require voluntary participation of subordinates to achieve the aims and objectives of the organisation. Amy and Graham (2015) describe leadership as the ability to direct, influence, guide, or conduct one's followers to achieve common aims and objectives or tasks. This implies that the leaders possess the ability to influence others to achieve the required results. Effective leaders exert influence in a way that achieves organisational goals by enhancing the productivity, innovation, satisfaction and commitment of employees. A leader is therefore, anyone who engages in these activities based on tasks and not position. An effective leader is an individual with the ability to influence, motivate and inspire others. In practice any person in an organisation can exert influence over others thus, engaging in leadership. This implies that any person at school can be a leader because a person can be a leader in one situation and a follower in another.

Combining the terms 'instruction' and 'leadership', produces the concept *instructional leadership*. Instructional leadership aims at improving the academic performance of learners (Esa, Muda, Mansor & Abraham, 2017). Instructional leadership originated in the United States of America (USA), during the 1950s and 1960s as a practice-based prescription rather than theory-driven construct (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013). Various educational researchers and scholars have conceptualised instructional leadership in various ways (De Matthews, 2014; Mestry, 2013). During the 20th century, teachers, principals, parents and superintendents shared a common perception that good schools can only be managed by good principals (Harris, 2014). From the 1960s onwards, instructional leadership was understood as any activity in which principals are engaged in order to improve instruction (Harris, 2014). Yusof, Ibrahim and Rahim (2017) describe instructional leadership as the creation of a conducive environment for teaching and learning which takes place in pursuit of academic and social school goals. Robert (2019), however, refers to instructional leadership as a type of leadership that puts an emphasis on managing teaching and learning as the core activity of educational institutions. The role of instructional leadership was debated by school professionals in meetings, conferences and workshops and subsequently

motivated scholars to conduct studies on instructional leadership in schools. The first research on instructional leadership was conducted by Edwin Bridges in 1967 (Harris, 2014). According to Harris (2014), instructional leaders provide direction, resources and support to teachers and learners to improve teaching and learning.

2.3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The focus of this section is the theoretical framework of instructional leadership. The concept 'theory' is defined as a statement that clarifies the mechanics of the world around people and frequently explains relations among phenomena. A 'theoretical framework' is the blueprint or guide which serves as a foundation upon which research is conducted (Adom, Yeboah & Ankra, 2016). This theoretical framework will assist the me in contextualising the study and choosing the research paradigm, research design, research approach and research methodology. This study is underpinned by three theories, namely, the attribution theory, distributive theory and transformational theory. Figure 2.1 illustrates the three instructional leadership theories.

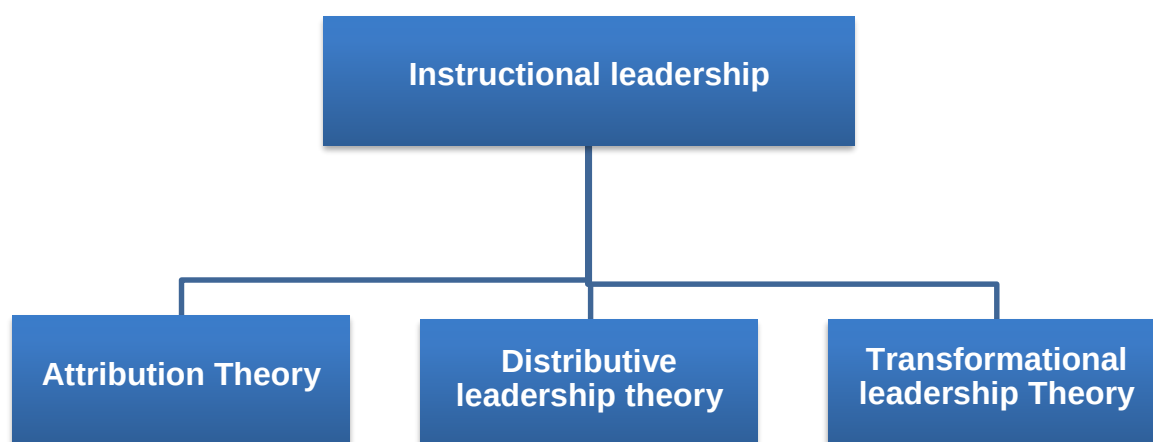


Figure 2.1: Theoretical framework instructional leadership (Weiner, 2010:560; Gedik & Bellibas, 2015:105; Juneja, 2015:01).

2.3.1 Attribution theory

The attribution theory was advanced by Fritz Heider in 1958 in his book entitled: The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations. He was an Australian psychologist and is considered the father of the attribution theory (Graham, 1991). The theory was subsequently developed by Harold Kelley and Bernard Weiner (Hewitt, Shantz, Mundy

& Alfes, 2017). Attribution is a concept which address the processes by which individuals explain the causes of behaviour and events. Heider (1958) distinguishes between two types of attribution, namely, explanatory attribution and interpersonal attribution. People make explanatory attribution to understand the world around them and to seek reasons for a particular event. For example, if the educators experience problems in teaching learners, they may attribute that to a lack of instructional guidance. The interpersonal attribution happens when the causes of the events involve two or more individuals. According to Heider (1958), when people experience a particular outcome, attributions assist them to understand what caused the event so that if the outcome is desirable, they can do their best to experience it again. In other words, the event becomes positively reinforced. Alternately, if the event is unpleasant or undesirable, they cannot avoid the behaviour that caused it. Heider's attribution theory was further refined by Weiner, a professor at the University of California (Weiner, 2010). The following table illustrates the attribution theory of Weiner.

Table 2.1: Overview of Wiener's (1986) general attributional process (Zelner 2020:9)

Antecedent conditions	Perceived causes	Causal dimensions	Psychological consequences	Behavioural consequences
Environmental factors	Attributions for	Stability	Expectancy for success	
Specific factors	Ability			Choice
Social norms	Effort			Persistence
Situational features	Luck	Locus	Self Efficacy	Level of effort
Personal factors	Task difficulty			Achievement
Causal schemes	Teacher			
Attributed bias	Mood			
Prior knowledge	Health	Control	Affect	
Individual differences	Fatigue			
Attribution process		Attributional process		

According to Weiner (1980), attribution theory is concerned with how people interpret success and failure and how this relates to their thinking and behaviour. For example, in schools, teachers investigate the main causes of learners' lack of academic success. Attribution theory assumes that people determine why they do what they do; they attribute causes to behaviour (Weiner, 1980). This implies that a person seeking to understand why someone did something may attribute one or more causes to that

behaviour. In schools, teachers seek to understand why the principal and heads of department conduct instructional leadership. According to Weiner (1974), humans feel the need to explain both success and failure, although this need is more prevalent in situations in which the outcome was not unexpected. Weiner (1974) indicates that people attribute their successes and failures to the following four important factors:

(a) **Ability:** A person's performance is determined by how he or she feels about his or her ability. For example, a principal may feel that he or she had always been a competent instructional leader.

(b) **Effort:** This factor is related to feeling of pride and self-esteem. People feel the sense of pride in their accomplishment especially when they believe that it was their effort which led them to success. For example, a principal may say that he or she studied instructional leadership and worked very hard to equip his or her teachers with the necessary teaching knowledge and skills.

(c) **Task difficulty:** For example, the principals may say that it was easy to improve the performance of their staff members.

(d) **Luck:** For example, the principals may remark that they were lucky to have highly motivated teachers during the professional development sessions. `

Therefore, the perceptions of the people of their success or failures influence how they perform their tasks in future. It is also evident that their attributes serve as a valuable source of motivation, especially in terms of performance. This indicates that attributes are significantly driven by emotional or motivation drives. According to the attribution theory, people's explanations of their success or failure can be classified based on the following three sets of dimensions:

2.3.1.1 Locus of causality

The locus dimension refers to the perception of the cause of any event as internal or external. Attributes are classified along locus of causality dimension from internal to external. If a particular behaviour is attributed to an internal locus of causality, it is

assumed that outcomes resulted from something within those particular individuals (Shrestha, 2017). Internal attribution refers to the inference that a person is behaving in a certain way because of something about the person (Shrestha, 2017), for example, poor performance of learners in mathematics may be due to their negative attitude towards learning the subject. External attribution on the other hand is the inference that persons are behaving in a certain way because of something about the situation they find themselves in (Shrestha, 2017). If people attribute the outcomes to external locus of causality, they view it as caused by something outside themselves (Shrestha, 2017). For example, the educators whose learners are not able to read will blame this on lack of instructional leadership. Attributions to permanent factors or stable causes are more likely to lead towards success if success is experienced but in case of failure, attributions to stable causes are likely to decrease the morale and expectations in the future.

2.3.1.2 Stability

Attributions are also classified in terms of stability, from the stable to the unstable dimension (Shrestha, 2017). Stable causes are those that are difficult to change such as intelligence and unstable causes can be changed. For example, teachers may teach ineffectively because of insufficient content knowledge of the subject they are teaching. An instructional leader may change the situation by providing support to the teacher. In case of unstable attributions, this dimension is related to feelings of hopelessness. For the stable causes, a person believes that there can be different outcomes in the future.

2.3.1.3 Controllability

Controllability dimension refers to whether or not people involved have control over the cause of any event (Shrestha, 2017). For example, if people believe that they could have done better with more practice than they will be able to control the situation in future by putting more effort to the tasks at hand. On the other hand, if they are in doubt of their abilities, they will not be able to control the situation in future. Uncontrollable traits will result in people losing faith and developing a feeling of helplessness. According to Weiner (1974), the controllability dimension is also

associated with emotional responses. Guilt and shame are the kind of emotions experienced in this dimension. People, who believe that they failed because of their lack of effort, experience a sense of guilt (Weiner, 1974). On the other hand, those who deem themselves unworthy are more likely to develop a feeling of shame or similar emotions. Attribution can also be used to explain the difference in motivation between high and low achievers. According to attribution theory, high achievers will rather avoid tasks related to succeeding, because they believe that success is due to high ability and effort (Heider, 2010). Some educators appear to blame other people to avoid personal recrimination and they always make attributions to defend what they perceive as attacks.

Despite the significance of the attribution theory in education, this theory is also critiqued as will be discussed in the section below.

2.3.1.4 Critique of the attribution theory

According to Shrestha (2017), a major criticism of the attribution theory is its assumption of people as logical and systematic thinkers. The attribution theory is thus criticised for being mechanistic and reductionist in nature. The second criticism identified by Shrestha (2017), is that attribution theory also fails to take social, historical and cultural factors into consideration which shape attributions of cause. The fact that most people always attempt to preserve their self-image and thus attribute their successes to controllable variables and failures to uncontrollable ones, introduces subjectivity in their analysis which could lead to a wrongful interpretation of either their or other people's motives. The translation process of taking causal attributions and transposing them onto the causal dimension has its degree of error (Shrestha, 2017). Despite these criticisms, I believe that the theory provides an explanation on the functioning of instructional leaders in schools. The attribution theory is relevant to this study as it gives insight into the relationship between poor academic performance and leadership effectiveness in schools.

2.3.2 Distributive leadership theory

This study is also based on distributive leadership theory. Distributive leadership theory dates back to 1250 BC, making it one of the most ancient leadership notions recommended for fulfilling organisational goals through people (Gedik & Bellibas, 2015). This section will focus on the definition, creation, functions and critique of distributive leadership. There are various definitions of distributive leadership at times it is called, team leadership, collaborative leadership, shared leadership or democratic leadership. Distributive leadership refers to the organisational leadership functions which are shared by members within an organisation to strengthen its effectiveness. Through distributive leadership, institutions are able to engage their members creating a shared responsibility while making the workload more manageable (Jones & Harris, 2013:18). This definition is supported by Harris (2014) who describes distributed leadership as mobilising leadership expertise at all levels in the school in order to generate more opportunities for change and to build capacity. Distributed leadership is therefore based on the premise that all teachers can and must lead. According to Whitby (2014), the emphasis of distributed leadership is on interdependent interactions and practices rather than individual and independent actions associated with those occupying formal leadership roles. In distributed leadership those in positions of authority work collaboratively with their subordinates to co-perform leadership roles based on their subordinates' areas of expertise. In simple terms, distributed leadership means mobilising leadership expertise at all levels in the school in order to generate more opportunities for change and to build the capacity for improvement. The emphasis of distributed leadership is upon interdependent interaction and practice rather than individual and independent actions associated with those with formal leadership roles or responsibilities. Thus, distributed leadership allows individuals to decide how they want to accomplish their objectives as opposed to simply executing the commands of their superior.

2.3.1.5 *Types of distributed leadership*

According to Lumby (2013), there are three main types of distributed leadership, namely, authorized, dispersed and democratic distributed leadership. Figure 2.2 below illustrates the three types of distributed leadership

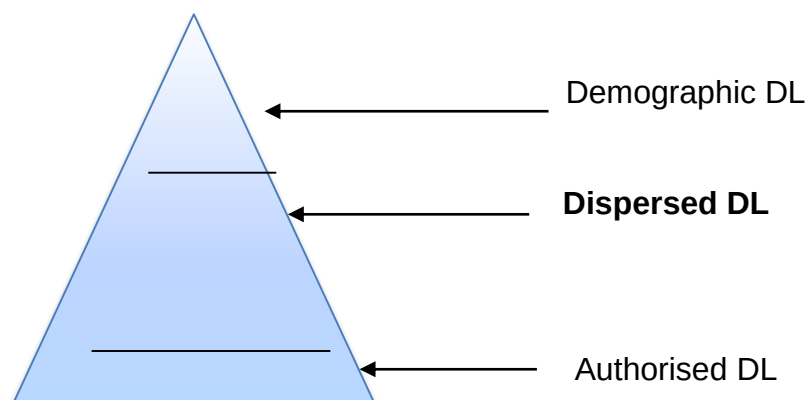


Figure 2.2: Types of Distributed Leadership (Lumby, 2013:543)

(i) **Authorised distributed leadership**

Authorised distributed leadership concerns itself with the distribution of work from the principal to the others who are also in authority such as the deputy school principal or DHs. Such delegation of duties is viewed as acceptable and legitimate within the hierarchical system of relations and affords status to the person who takes on the work (Grant, 2017). In authorised distributed leadership power is viewed as an attribute owned by the principal and evident when the principal is able to encourage others to act in ways that they would not otherwise have done (Lumby, 2013). This type of leadership is also called delegated leadership and is evident where there are teams, informal work groups and committees. In Figure 2.2, authorised distributed leadership is occupying the lowest but broadest level.

(ii) **Dispersed distributed leadership**

The second type of distributed leadership is called dispersed distributed leadership. In contrast to authorised distributed leadership, dispersed distributed leadership is not bound by the organisational hierarchy of a school. Instead, is evidenced in flatter

structures, teacher agency and co-leadership (Lumby, 2013). In dispersed distributed leadership there is a formal hierarchy which is accompanied by job descriptions for the various management roles, and people work together outside of these vertical relations to their advantage (Grant, 2017). Woods and Gronn (2010) refer to these more spontaneous, fluid and horizontal working relations as 'heterarchical' relations and argue that a heterarchical division of labour can co-exist with a hierarchical division of rights and authority. Dispersed distributed leadership is more autonomous, bottom-up and emergent and is accepted because of the knowledge, skills and personal attributes of organisational members either individually or in autonomous work groups (Grant 2017). In dispersed distributed leadership, teachers are supported effectively as integral part of the school.

Their leadership can be described as *emergent* because they embrace new initiatives and innovate in a climate of trust and mutual learning (Grant, 2017).

(iii) Democratic distributed leadership

Democratic distributed leadership is the third, final and highest but smallest level of distributed leadership. Democratic distributed leadership is similar to dispersed distributed leadership in that both have an emergent character where creativity and resourcefulness circulate widely and both have the potential for concerted action (Grant, 2017). However, democratic distributed leadership is different in that it does not assume political neutrality, but instead engages critically with organisational and societal values and goals. Democratic distributed leadership encourages individuals and groups to challenge issues of power and privilege, inclusion and exclusion, in relation to leadership (Grant, 2017). Democratic distributed leadership calls for leaders, regardless of organisational position to engage critically with the values, goals and mission of the organisation and to ask questions which begin to challenge the status quo and raise issues of social inclusion and exclusion (Grant, 2017). The value of democratic distributed leadership is to offer a tool to challenge the status quo in schools (Grant, 2017). The democratic distributed perspective is, therefore, an appropriate theoretical tool to investigate the leadership complexities in post-apartheid South Africa because it raises questions about the location and exercise of power

within a school and examines not only what is distributed, but also how this distribution happens and who is included and excluded.

(iv) Creation of distributive leadership

According to Robert (2019), leadership has long been viewed as the prerogative of one individual in schools, namely, the school principal but this thinking has evolved. The emphasis is now on principles of participative management where all stakeholders are involved in decision-making for schools to run smoothly. Distributive leadership theory holds the view that leadership is distributed among multiple individuals who have the skills to contribute to the success of an organisation (Robert, 2019). This perception is confirmed by Harris (2014) who asserts that distributive leadership means mobilising leadership expertise at all levels in the school in order to generate more opportunities for change and to build the capacity for improvement. Accordingly, Heystek (2015) emphasises that instructional leadership should be shared by the principal, deputy principal, heads of department and senior teachers. Each one of them is an instructional leader who is responsible for the management of various programmes of the school. For distributive leadership to flourish, everyone must understand the values and goals of the organisation, team members must provide emotional and psychological support to one another and ensure that individual needs are taken into considerations (Davis, 2015). Rather than focus on characteristics of the individual leader, distributed leadership focuses on how actors engage in tasks that are stretched or distributed across the organisation. Therefore, distributive leadership is not about dividing tasks and responsibilities amongst the teachers but is about the interactions among the leaders and teachers to improve learners' academic performance (Smith, Mihalakis & Slamp, 2019). The implication for those in formal leadership roles is that they have a key role to play in creating conducive environments for distributive leadership to flourish.

According to Solly (2018), there are three key principles of distributed leadership, namely, autonomy, accountability and capacity. The following diagram illustrates the three principles of distributed leadership model:

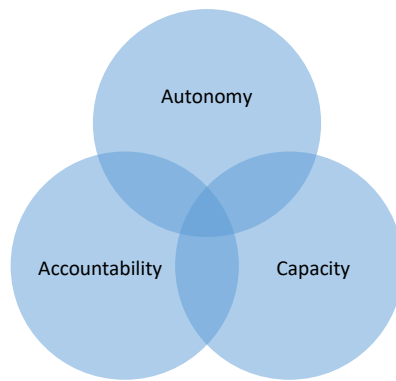


Figure 2.3: The three principles of distributed leadership model (Solly, 2018:38)

The following three principles indicate how distributed leadership works in schools.

a) Autonomy

In a distributed leadership, leaders within a school need to be given autonomy to make key decisions in their areas of responsibility (Solly, 2018). This autonomy is central to achieving the objectives of empowering and giving them ownership of their work. The people with leadership responsibilities should not be micro-managed. Giving the middle leadership team this level of autonomy requires trust and it is often outside the comfort zone of many principals of schools. However, Solly (2018) emphasises that it is important for them to earn the trust because it is dangerous to give ineffective leaders full autonomy.

b) Accountability

Accountability means the acknowledgement and assumption of responsibilities for actions, products, decisions, policies and implementation (Solly, 2018). People with leadership responsibilities have to account for their actions, accept responsibilities and to disclose results in a transparent manner. In school environments, leaders are accountable for what happens and take ownership of the results even if such results are not good.

c) **Capacity**

Capacity refers to the ability of individuals and institutions to make and implement decisions and perform functions in an effective, efficient and sustainable manner (Solly, 2018). Leadership capacity, therefore, entails the leaders' abilities to perform leadership functions efficiently and effectively, produce outputs, define and resolve problems and make informed choices.

2.3.1.6 Advantages of distributive leadership

Literature points towards a positive relationship between distributed leadership, organisational improvement and learners' academic achievements (Robert, 2019; Whitby, 2015; Harris, 2014; Botha & Triegaardt, 2014; Smith, Mihalakis & Slamp, 2019). According to Robert (2019), the difference between high performing and low performing schools can be attributed to different degrees of leadership distribution. I thus argue that the effective use of distributive leadership in schools can contribute to the effectiveness of the school and enhance teaching and learning. The purpose of distributive leadership is to increase the leadership capacity within a school to enable leaders to improve and grow. Distributed leadership can have positive effect on schools as organisations and enhance learners' academic performance (Bush & Glover, 2016). It allows schools to be more effective educational institutions because of leaders who are collectively pulling in the same direction, guided by the same vision and goals. This view is supported by Whitby (2015) who asserts that effective involvement of all stakeholders in the running of a school enables the principals to devote more time to those leadership functions, which have a significant strategic impact on the life of the schools. For distributed leadership to be effective, professional collaboration is of importance. Solly (2018) emphasises that distributed leadership should be geared towards increasing leadership capacity within schools. It also it provides leadership with opportunities to take initiative and certain responsibilities within the school environment. As such it creates an encouraging environment which assists in the professional development of individual teachers. The staff morale and attitudes as well as the academic performance of the learners are also enhanced by distributive leadership. Distributed leadership is therefore a more appropriate

leadership approach for today's complex school leadership challenges (Naicker & Mestry, 2011).

2.3.1.7 Critique of distributive leadership

Although distributive leadership theory contributes significantly to understanding instructional leadership, the theory is critiqued due to its application challenges in various organisations. According to Torrance (2013), distributed leadership is risky because it is sometimes designated to incompetent people. According to Lizotte (2013), most teachers feel incompetent and are unprepared to lead due to lack of the necessary leadership training. Lizotte (2013) also stresses that most teachers feel forced to perform administrative tasks which are outside their job description and as such some teachers might not be ready to take on extra responsibilities. Liljenberg (2015) argues that the usage and application of distributed leadership in the school context is a challenge to implement. Teachers' negative attitudes and deputy principals who are unwilling to share their power with other teachers pose another challenge in the implementation of distributive leadership (Musah, Said, Jaffri & Yasin, 2016). According to Botha (2014), distributed leadership is used loosely in South African literature and lacks conceptual clarity. Botha describes how it attracts a range of meanings and is associated with a variety of practices. This view is confirmed by Botha and Triegaardt (2015) who indicate that distributed leadership is often used as a blanket phrase to describe any form of devolved or shared leadership and it means the same as dispersed leadership, collaborative leadership and democratic leadership. Another critique of distributed leadership is that it has grown into a theory and frequently prescribed practice which promotes a "fantasy apolitical world" (Lumby, 2013:592). Lumby (2013) emphasises that if distributive perspective is to be useful as a conceptual lens for school leadership questions needs to be raised about the location and exercise of power within an organisation. There need to be an examination of what it is distributed and how it is distributed. In other words, is it only technical tasks that are being distributed or is authority and responsibility also distributed?

2.3.2 Transformational leadership theory

This study is also based on transformational leadership theory. The concept transformational leadership was first introduced by James MacGregor Burns when studying political leaders but this concept is also used when studying organisations (Juneja, 2015). Transformational leadership theory is a relatively new approach to leadership where a leader works with teams to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration and executing the change with committed members of a group (Burns, 1978). According to White (2018), transformational leadership refers to a leadership style in which leaders encourage, inspire and motivate employees to be innovative and create changes to grow and shape the future success of the organisation. Transformational leadership focuses on how leaders create valuable and positive change amongst their followers (Burns, 1978). This leadership approach can result in a positive change within organisations as it deals with the development of workers into leadership positions. Transformational leaders focus on transforming others as such the development of everyone within the organisation is of outmost importance. In a school context, the principal uses a transformational leadership approach to change teachers to become instructional leaders and also to change the functioning of the school (Burns, 1978). Transformational leadership assists in developing junior and seasoned teachers' confidence, morality, motivation and self-esteem. The followers of a transformational leader respond as they trust, admire, respect and are loyal to their leader. These traits motivate them to work harder to achieve the organisational goals (Burns, 1978).

(a) The advantages of transformational leadership

Transformational leaders are able to lead by inspiring followers and motivating them to improve on their expectations and perceptions and to work towards common goals. According to Juneja (2015), the functions of transformational leadership consist of four components illustrated in Figure 2.3:

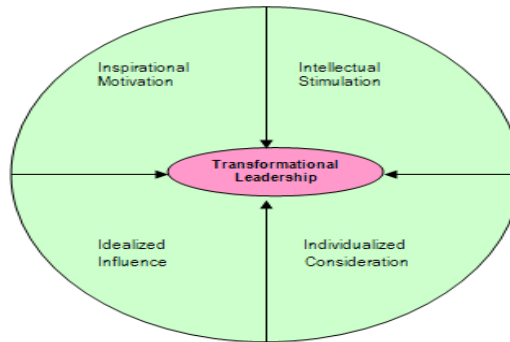


Figure 2.4: The functions of transformational leadership (Juneja, 2015:12)

(i) Intellectual stimulation

Intellectual stimulation is the first category of transformational leadership and it refers to the extent to which leaders challenged assumptions, take risks and solicit the ideas of their followers (Burns, 1978). This implies that a leader always nurtures and develops people who think independently and stimulate followers to be creative in order to implement changes within organisations. Furthermore, such leaders allow followers to ask questions, think critically and independently about issues and strategise on the best ways to execute their tasks. Transformational leaders encourage new ideas from their followers and never criticise them publicly for errors committed (Juneja, 2015). The leaders focus on problem solving rather than blaming others and they are always ready to change their old ways of doing things which proved to be ineffective.

(a) Individualised consideration

Transformational leaders are also characterised by focusing their attention on individual followers. Individualised consideration means the extent to which the leader attends to the needs of each subordinate, acts as a guide or mentor to the subordinate and pays attention to the concerns and requirements of the subordinates (Juneja, 2015). In other words, the leader is prepared to attend and listen to all employees in the organisation, respects and celebrates individual contribution to the team. Transformational leaders are able to give empathy and support and keep communication open. They provide support to their subordinates and recognise the unique contributions of each follower (Juneja, 2015). They mentor their followers and

reward them for creativity and innovation. The followers also respond positively, by working hard and independently to reach organisational goals.

(b) Inspirational motivation

The instructional leaders are also responsible for motivating their subordinates. Inspirational motivation refers to the degree to which the leader articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to the followers (Burns, 1978). This implies that transformational leaders always challenge their subordinates with high standards, encourage them to believe in their abilities and develop optimism about future goals. The foundation of transformational leadership is, therefore, the promotion of a consistent vision, mission, and a set of values for the members (Burns, 1978). This is achieved through articulation of a clear vision of what needs to be achieved. The vision of transformational leaders is compelling, enables followers to know what they want from the interactions they encounter and is able to provide effective guidance to their followers.

Transformational leaders foster the spirit of teamwork and commitment. As a result, a sense of identity among the subordinates is enhanced (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders are also able to develop new insight and morality and alter expectations and aspirations of the workers. All these activities motivate the subordinates to work independently and to be able to realise their strengths and weaknesses.

(c) Idealised Influence

Idealised influence means to be a role model for high ethical behaviour, by instilling pride and gaining respect and trust (Burns, 1978). Another function of transformational leadership is to enable the leaders to influence most of their subordinates. This implies that a transformational leader is always exemplary to all the subordinates in order to influence them to become leaders themselves rather than followers. Transformational leaders serve as role models for all their followers and always win the trust and respect of their followers through their action (Burns, 1978). Transformational leaders believe in the philosophy that leaders can influence their followers only when they are able to practise what they preach. Such leaders always win the trust and respect of their

followers through their actions. Transformational leaders are able to place their followers needs over their own, sacrifice their personal gains for them, and demonstrate high standards of ethical conduct. Burns (1978) indicates that all the instructional leaders are also transformational leaders and therefore, should be able to encourage the motivation and positive development of followers. Instructional leaders should exemplify moral standards within the school, encourage the same of the teachers and foster an ethical work environment with clear values, priorities and standards (Burns, 1978). They should also build a school culture by motivating teachers to move from an attitude of self-interest to a mindset where they are working for the common good, emphasise authenticity, cooperation and open communication and provide coaching and mentoring but allowing employees to make decisions and take ownership of tasks (Burns, 1978).

(d) Critique of transformational leadership

As an instructional leader of a primary school, I strongly support transformational leadership theory because it is capable of developing teachers into instructional leaders. Despite the significance of the transformational leadership theory, there are some criticisms levelled against it. According to Juneja (2015), a criticism is that transformational leadership makes use of impression management and therefore lends itself to a moral self-promotion by leaders. He further argues that followers might be manipulated by leaders, as such they might lose more than they gain. My criticism of the theory is that some schooling systems are highly politicised. In such environments school principals, deputy principals or DHs, who are not affiliated to the South African Democratic Teacher's Union, are not respected as leaders. As a result, in most provinces of South Africa, teachers who are promoted into principalship or as circuit managers and district managers are also members of the South African Democratic Teacher's Union. It is therefore, difficult for any principals who are not members of the South African Democratic Teacher's Union to manage and to become change agents. Another criticism of the transformational leadership theory is that the loss of such a charismatic leader impact on the employees' or teachers' morale. Teachers' hard work is not based on their own conviction to work hard but mostly to please their leader. This implies that when all the teachers have been transformed into leaders, then the transformational leadership theory will cease to exist.

In this study, transformational leadership theory will assist me to understand the functions of instructional leaders. I am of the opinion that instructional leaders must also be responsible for inspiring motivating, intellectual stimulation, and taking the employee's individuality into consideration. Instructional leaders should attend to the needs of each teacher, encourage the teachers to be innovative in their teaching, motivate the teachers to achieve educational goals and become role models for the teachers.

2.4 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Studies on instructional leadership emphasise that instructional leadership is the only major strategy which improves the quality of teaching and learning in schools (Esa, Musa, Mansor & Ibrahim, 2017; Ahmad & Ghavifekr, 2014; Amin, Yusnita, Ibrahim & Muda, 2013). According to Amin et al. (2013), instructional leadership contributes significantly to teachers' teaching competence. Thus, the role of instructional leaders such as the principals and DH's is to equip the teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills which improve quality teaching and learning. This perception is confirmed by Ahmad and Ghavifekr (2014) who assert that the instructional leadership of principals contributes significantly to the teaching competence of the teachers. Effective curriculum implementation by competent teachers results in improved learners' academic achievements (Hallinger, 2011; Esa et al., 2017). Esa et al. (2017), opine that the role of the principals is to improve teaching and learning and to manage curriculum changes. Thus, the instructional leadership function of the principal and HoDs is to equip teachers with the relevant skills for implementing the curriculum.

Instructional leadership also assists teachers to resolve challenges they experience in implementing the curriculum. The concept 'content knowledge' refers to the knowledge that teachers need to effectively engage in critical tasks of teaching (Olfos, Goldrine & Estrella, 2014). This implies that the principals as instructional leaders should lead the implementation of the curriculum by organising professional development sessions, assisting the teachers in designing instructional programmes and effective teaching of learners. The principals are also responsible for mediating educational policy, providing direction and motivating, monitoring, supporting and energising teachers in

their schools (Mason, 2014). The instructional leadership processes entails guiding teachers on lesson preparation and presentations.

Hallinger (2012) argues that instructional leadership requires powerful, committed leadership from the principals which is aimed at effective curriculum implementation. This definition suggests that instructional leadership refers to all the principal's activities which are aimed at empowering teachers to improve their teaching and academic performance of learners. Instructional leadership provides the principals with opportunities to observe and assess the instructional practices of teachers and provide feedback, guidance, support and incentives for teachers and learners.

According to Sanzo (2014), there is a need for instructional leaders to set the tone and give direction for effective teaching and learning. This requires them to be more visible, assist with difficulties involving parents and learners, respond to concerns and the individual instructional needs of teachers and develop new strategies of improving their instruction.

Lastly, Osman and Mukuna (2013) describe the role of instructional leadership as the formulation and implementation of pace setters or scheme of work, assessment of improvements made, supply of instructional resources, conducting and coordination of staff in-service training, advising and assisting teachers involved in instructional programmes, procuring funds required for instructional purposes and receiving community feedback about school programmes.

2.5 THE LINK BETWEEN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Traditionally, principals were regarded as managers and leaders who were responsible for the management and leadership of schools (Sindhi, 2013). Different experts have defined the concept 'management'. Brazer and Bauer (2013) describe the concept 'management' as the day-to-day tasks required to run the operation of a school. According to Kaehler and Grundel (2019), the concept 'management' refers to a process or series of activities which include planning, organising, leading and control that gives the necessary direction to the organisation such as the school, so that its

objectives can be achieved by the use of people and resources. Kaehler and Grundel (2019) describe management as a steering influence on market, production and resource operations in an organisation and its units may address both people and non-people issues and it is exerted by multiple organisational actors with the aim of achieving the unit's objectives. Sapre (2015) emphasises that educational management is a set of activities directed towards efficient and effective utilisation of organisational resources in order to achieve organisational goals. The above definitions imply that management entails the process of decision-making and control at various levels of organisation over people's actions in order to accomplish the organisation's goals. According to Bohoris and Borria (2014), there are four fundamental functions of management, namely, planning, organising, actuating and controlling. Kaehler and Grundel (2019) identified planning, organising, leading and control as the four functions of management.

Planning is the prerequisite for all other functions of management because it refers to the making of decisions about the goals to be achieved and activities or actions needed to achieve them (Kaehler & Grundel, 2019; Bohoris & Borria, 2014; Hartzell, 2019). According to Kaehler and Grundel (2019), planning entails analysing the current situation, anticipating the future, determining organisational objectives, deciding activities to be involved, choosing strategies and determining resources to be utilised to achieve the objectives. Hartzell (2019) describes planning as the first managerial function responsible for creating a detailed action plan of the organisational goal. Planning is done by all managers at every level of the organisation. The first step in the planning process is the selection of goals for the organisation. Goals are then established for each of the organisation's divisions or departments. Thereafter, programmes are established for achieving goals in a systematic manner.

The second management function is organising. Organising refers to assembling and coordinating human, financial, physical information and other resources needed to achieve organisational goals (Kaehler & Grundel, 2019). After completing the development of plans to achieve the objectives, the managers must design and develop an organisation that will be able to accomplish the objectives. This function requires the manager to determine how they will distribute resources and organise

their employees according to the plan (Hartzell, 2019). Its activities include specifying grouping jobs into work units, identification of activities required for the achievement of objectives, implementation of plans, work allocations, delegation of authority, distribution of resources needed to accomplish the identified tasks establishment of networks coordination of relationships, (Hartzell, 2019). The organising function to create a structure of task and authority relationships that serves this purpose.

Leading or directing is the third management function which requires the manager to spend time connecting with the employees at interpersonal level and it includes directing the workforce, motivating subordinates and communicating with employees (Hartzell, 2019). Leading is the function of directing the employees to perform their assigned tasks efficiently and contribute optimally to the achievement of organisational objectives. The managers' roles are to explain and clarify, provide guidance in job performance and motivate the employees to contribute with zeal and enthusiasm (Hartzell, 2019). Leadership in this context is therefore, the process whereby a work environment is created in which employees do their best work to meet organisational objectives.

The fourth responsibility of the managers is that of control. Controlling involves monitoring the progress and making the needed changes to ensure that the organisational goals are achieved (Kaehler & Grundel, 2019). Controlling entails setting performance standards, monitoring staff performance through performance data evaluation, comparing this performance to the established standards, identifying the challenges experienced by the employees and taking corrective actions. If all the activities are properly planned, organised and directed but there is no control on the activities by the manager, the organisation might fail to achieve its planned goals.

According to Amy and Graham (2015), as a manager, a school principal has three main roles to fulfil, namely:

- *Interpersonal role*: The principals are liaison officers, leaders and ceremonial heads, responsible for giving speeches, directing, motivating, inspiring and networking with various people.

- *Informational role:* The principals are school representatives, they monitor and distribute information. In this regard they are responsible for evaluating and giving information to all stakeholders.
- *Decision-making role:* The principals are responsible for the allocation of resources, negotiation, maintenance of order and development.

The above functions indicate that leadership is part of management and that there is a strong relationship between instructional leadership and management (Mestry, 2013). As explained in section 2.2 (conceptual framework), instructional leadership refers to making suggestions, giving feedback, soliciting opinions, supporting collaboration, providing professional development opportunities and ensuring that effective teaching take place (Amy & Graham, 2015). Therefore, the purpose of instructional leadership is to improve learners' academic achievement. The principals' roles as managers and instructional leaders imply that they need to fulfil both roles equally. Research shows that most principals ignore their instructional leadership roles and concentrate on their management roles. (Noor, Don, Hussin & Khalid, 2018). Before the 1990's, more emphasis was placed on the administrative functions of the principal but after 1990's the role of the principal has changed to instructional leadership (Sindhi, 2019). Recently there is a strong emphasis on instructional leadership, with increasing importance placed on academic standards and the need for teachers to be accountable (Sindhi, 2019). According to Noor et al. (2018), the changing role of the principals has sparked major debates in South Africa and throughout the world. This is mainly because principals are faced with workload challenges which are becoming unmanageable. Furthermore, principals are not trained for management roles. In South Africa they are promoted because of their effectiveness as teachers as evidenced by the good results they produce as well as their teaching experience (Noor et al., 2018). I therefore argue that in order for principals to be effective instructional leaders and effective managers they need to be trained on how to execute the two tasks. Despite these debates, the role of the principal is still regarded as instructional leadership. Principals are classified as instructional leaders because they are responsible for improving the academic performance of both teachers and learners. Despite this shift of emphasis to instructional leadership, principals appear to be inundated with work resulting in the lack of time to execute instructional leadership activities; increased paperwork and

community's expectations make them more managers than instructional leaders (Mestry, 2017).

2.6 THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL OF HALLINGER AND MURPHY (1985)

The instructional leadership model of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) will be used as a basis of the functions of the principal as an instructional leader. According to Hallinger and Murphy (1985), there are three dimensions of the principals' functions as an instructional leader, namely, defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme and promoting a positive school learning climate. The three dimensions of instructional leadership are further delineated into ten instructional leadership functions. Leadership experts emphasise the importance of principals the main instructional leaders in schools (Hallinger, 2012; Brazer & Bauer, 2013; Hallinger & Heck, 2010). According to Brazer and Bauer (2013), instructional leadership commences when the school principal chooses an appropriate curriculum to improve instruction while managing the school context and improving learners' academic performance (Brazer & Bauer, 2013). Figure 2.4 reveals the major functions of the principals as instructional leaders which are discussed in the section below.

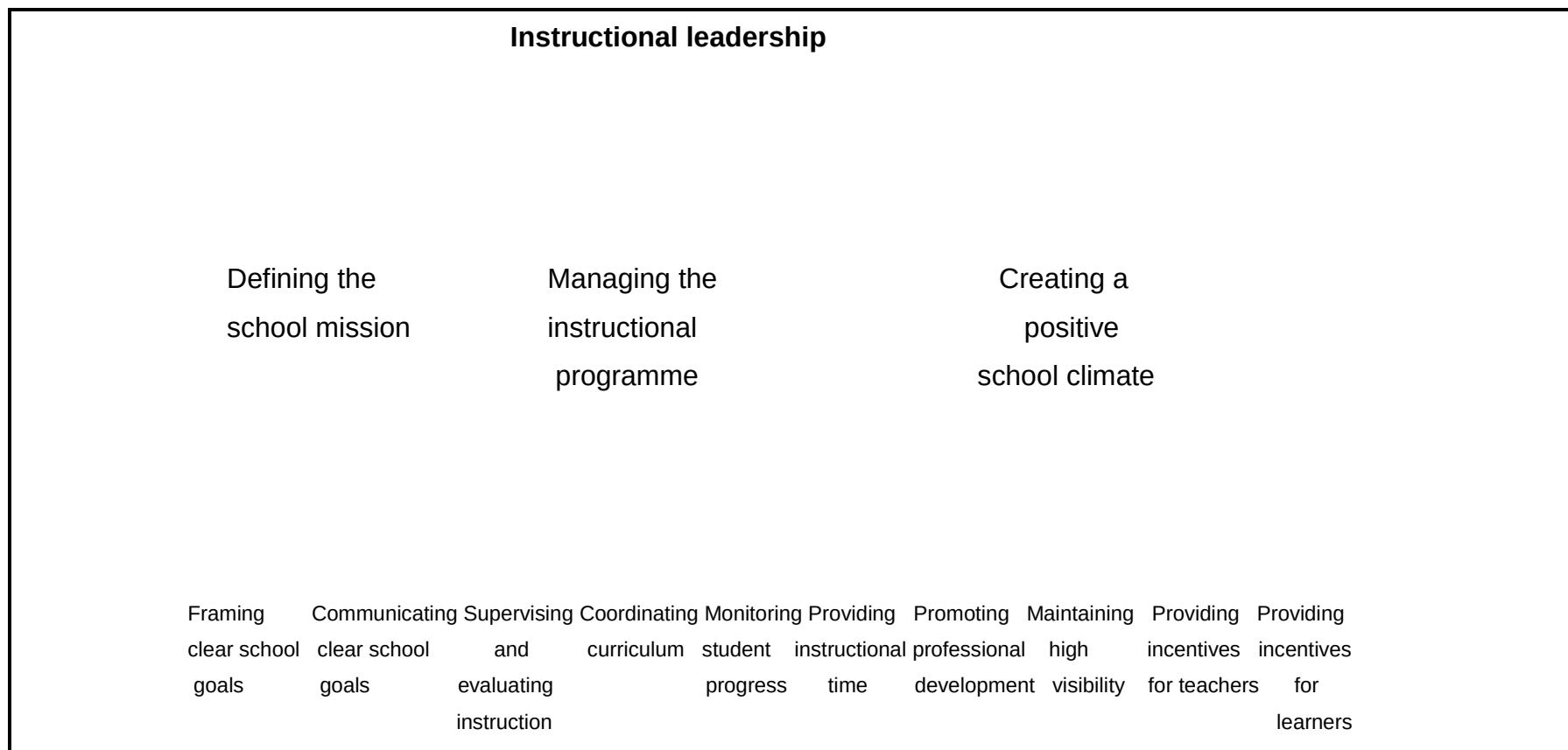


Figure 2.5: The functions of instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985: 221-239)

a. Defining the school's mission

According to Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and Hallinger (2012), the first major function of the principals as instructional leaders is to define the school's mission or purpose. A mission statement is a written declaration of a school's core purpose and focus that remains unchanged over time. Defining a school mission entails writing the mission statement of the school. This consist of framing the school's goals and communicating the school's goals.

(i) Framing the school's goals

School principals are responsible for determining the central purposes, goals and agenda of the schools to ensure a clear understanding to the all stakeholders of what schools intend to achieve in order to create a shared purpose (Hallinger, 2012). Hallinger (2012) recommends that the following questions must be answered when framing the goals of the schools: *What do we do? How do we do it? Whom do we do it for? What value are we bringing?* The principals must ensure that schools have clear, measurable, time-based goals focused on the learners' academic progress.

(ii) Communicating the school's goals

After framing the goals of the school, principals must ensure that all the stakeholders are provided with the mission statement of the school in a consistent fashion (Hallinger, 2012). The stakeholders of the school are the teachers, learners, parents, community and the DBE. It is the principals' responsibility to communicate these goals to ensure that these are widely known and supported throughout the school community (Hallinger, 2012).

(b) Managing the instructional programmes

This is the second major function of the principals as instructional leaders and it focuses on the coordination and control of instruction and curriculum (Hallinger, 2012). According to Bayer (2016), principals are responsible for promoting effective teaching as well as the success of the learners and they are the first accountable people in

schools. In order to be successful instructional leaders, they should possess adequate leadership knowledge, skills and dispositions which will improve teaching and learning (Brazer & Bauer, 2013). Principals must therefore be able to manage all instructional programmes effectively through their involvement in the instructional programme (Hallinger, 2012). This major function has the following secondary functions:

(i) Supervising and evaluating instruction

The principals and DHs serve as instructional leaders and supervisors. Instructional supervision entails ensuring that the school mission and vision is implemented by overseeing, equipping and empowering teachers to provide meaningful learning experiences to learners (Brazer & Bauer, 2013). Principals and DHs are further responsible for evaluating instruction. Instruction evaluation is an administrative process of assessing the performance of teachers for the purpose of helping them and for making administrative decisions about the teachers' performances (Brazer & Bauer, 2013). Principals should be deeply engaged in stimulating, supervising and monitoring teaching and learning in the school.

(ii) Coordinating the curriculum

Curriculum coordination includes assisting teachers in the development of the school curriculum through observing them while they are teaching, organising professional development sessions for them, ordering new instructional materials and ensuring that the school curriculum meets the stated policy guidelines (Hallinger, 2012). A curriculum coordinator is an educational professional whose job is to assist the teachers to develop a better school curriculum (Hallinger, 2012).

(iii) Monitoring learners' progress

Monitoring learners' progress refers to activities pursued by instructional leaders and teachers to keep track of learners' learning for purposes of making instructional decisions and providing feedback to the learners on their progress (Hallinger, 2012). The monitoring activities include questioning learners to check their understanding, engaging in one-to-one contacts with learners about their work, assigning, collecting

and correcting homework and conducting periodic reviews with learners to confirm their understanding of the subject matter.

(c) Creating a positive school climate

One of the instructional leadership functions of the principal is to create a school culture and climate which promotes effective teaching and learning (Hallinger, 2012). The principal must create a culture which promotes teachers' collaboration and support for (Pogodzinski, 2015)., The principal should create a culture which is warm, friendly and respectful for the staff and learners. A conducive school environment ensures that teaching and learning takes place resulting in learners achieving their potential. According to Slegers, Wassink, Van Veen and Imants (2016), school principals can play a key role in transforming teachers' instructional practices and fostering teachers' learning by creating collaborative workplace conditions and providing support. Thus, principals should distribute responsibility to all the teachers and the other stakeholders of the school (Urick & Bowers, 2014). This major function consists of the following five sub-functions:

(i) Protecting instructional time

The instructional time is the time that the state, district, schools or teachers provides the learners for instruction. The primary purpose of the schools is to provide instruction to learners according to the allocated time and any infringement upon time designated for instructional activities is a failure to achieve that purpose (Hallinger, 2012). It is the duty of the instructional leaders to protect the instructional time of all the subjects by better planning, buffering distractions, creating efficient procedures, eliminating free time, ensuring quick transitions, giving clear directions and having a back-up plan (Hallinger, 2012).

(ii) Promoting professional development

Instructional leaders are also responsible for conducting professional development workshops (Hallinger, 2012). The primary purpose of professional development in the schools is to increase the effectiveness of all who are engaged in the teaching-learning

process. The instructional leaders must provide a positive environment which encourages and establishes the necessary development machinery for each professional staff member to participate. In order to implement the curriculum effectively, all the teachers must develop their knowledge and skills to the maximum.

(iii) Maintaining high visibility

All instructional leaders must ensure that they are visible to all the teachers and learners. The instructional leader of the school must not be office bound and invisible but should always be in contact with them (Hallinger, 2012). The principal as an instructional leader must also create and maintain positive relationships with staff, parents and learners. Highly effective principals are able to create a positive school climate, an orderly atmosphere and high expectations for learners and staff (Rigby, 2014). This view implies that principals who have very close ties with their staff are able to share more information for improving teaching and learning (Moolenaar & Slegers, 2015).

(iv) Providing incentives for teachers

The principal as an instructional leader is also responsible for providing incentives to the teachers. The incentives are rewards for the outstanding work that was performed by the teachers based on how well they improve their own learners' performance (Hallinger, 2012). Provision of incentives greatly improves the overall quality of teaching and learning in the school.

(v) Providing incentives for learning.

The instructional leader should also provide rewards to the learners. The learners' incentives motivate the learners to be more productive because they create a feeling of pride and achievement (Hallinger, 2012). Being successful makes the learner happy, proud and self-confident and they are encouraged to achieve another successful result.

2.7 THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP MODEL OF WEBER (1996)

The instructional leadership model of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) is supported by Weber (1996), who identified five major functions of the principal as an instructional leader, namely, defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme, promoting a positive school learning climate, observing and improving instruction and assessing the instructional programmes. According to Weber (1996), principals are the main instructional leaders who perform leadership functions that are sometimes shared and sometimes not. The first function of instructional leadership is to set academic goals for the school principals, through providing guidance and sharing their leadership responsibilities with other teachers. Weber (1996) emphasises that principals as instructional leaders are responsible for the formulation of school goals and objectives, monitoring classroom practice, promoting a positive school learning climate, observing and improving instruction and assessing the instructional programmes. This implies that the principals as an instructional leader must motivate, monitor and utilise each staff member fruitfully for the attainment of the school goals.

Table 2.2 below illustrates the functions of the principal as an instructional leader.

Table 2.2 Weber's (1996) instructional leadership framework

Defining the school's mission	Managing the instructional programme	Promoting a positive school learning climate	Observing and improving instruction	Assessing the instructional programme
The instructional leader collaboratively develops a common vision and goals for the school with stakeholders.	The instructional leader monitors classroom practice alignment with the school's mission, and also provides instructional resources.	The instructional leader promotes a positive learning climate by communicating goals, establishing expectations and establishing an orderly environment.	The instructional leader observes and improves instruction through the use of classroom observation and professional development activities.	The instructional leader contributes to the planning, designing, administering and analysis of assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum.

In all schools, principals are generally assisted by the deputy principals and DHs as instructional leaders. According to Ismail, Don, Husin and Khalid (2018), principals are no longer accountable mainly for inputs but are accountable for the performance outcomes of teachers and learners.

Hallinger (2005) emphasises that principals as instructional leaders should focus on coordinating and developing the curriculum, while Halim (2015) asserts that the principals as instructional leader should pay more attention to creating a favourable teaching environment. According to Mestry (2013) and De Matthews (2014), the concept instructional leadership refers to the actions of the principals which include various procedures and resolutions that are related to teaching and learning in the

schools. This implies that the principal implements instructional leadership by providing direction, teaching and learning resources and also providing assistance to the teachers and learners in order to improve the academic performance of the learners. Principals who excel in these functions positively impact learners' performance by improving the quality of the instruction they receive from teachers (Taole, 2013). However, the enactment of instructional leadership requires principals to be equipped with the following multifaceted skills which form the prerequisites for instructional leadership (De Matthews, 2014).

- (a) **The ability to empower teachers and cultivate leadership skills:** To be a good instructional leader, the principals must be able to support the teachers through professional development, to become leaders themselves.
- (b) **Utilisation of data and resources:** Principals must be able to use data, including standardised and school-based assessments, to drive continuous improvement through site-based decision-making.
- (c) **Instructional leaders have a vision and plan:** Good instructional leaders are also visionaries. They have a goal that they unite their teams around, a plan to assist them to reach the set goals and the ability to articulate their school vision and goals.
- (d) **Creation of collaborative and inclusive learning environment:** Successful instructional leaders are able to create inclusive learning environments in which all learners have access to flexible learning choices and effective paths for achieving educational goals.
- (e) **Encouraging risk taking:** Principals should encourage teachers to learn from their mistakes. Thus, they need to create a supportive environment that rewards successful ideas and effort.
- (f) **Leading by example:** Principals need to be good role models to their teachers. The leaders who lead by example position themselves as role models.
- (g) **They must be lifelong learners:** The most important skill is that school leaders must possess is the unquenchable thirst for knowledge. The best learners always know that they will never know it all and therefore they never stop questioning and learning.

A lack of depth in the training of principals to be effective instructional leaders and an increase in paperwork appears to be the rationale for the lack of instructional leadership in most schools (Du Plessis, 2013). In South Africa, the potential principal must have been a teacher for a minimum of seven years, with a Relative Education Qualification Value (REQV) 13 qualification and must be of sound character. Hallinger and Heck (2010) emphasise that principals should mainly direct their energies on improving learners' outcomes and the pursuit of other goals should be regarded as secondary.

An analysis of the instructional leadership models of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and Weber (1987) reveal that both models emphasise the designing of the school's mission statement, management of effective instructional programmes and creation of positive school climate. I strongly believe that these two models are contributing to the transformation and improvement of teaching and learning within the South African schooling system. I opine that principals must guard against failure to take teachers' individual needs into considerations, isolating teachers, withholding teachers' resources, spying on teachers, overloading teachers, criticising teachers, threatening teachers, giving teachers unfair evaluations and obstructing teachers' advancement.

2.8 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

2.8.1 Definition of deputy principal

In most school systems, the principals of schools are assisted by deputy principals, who are also called vice-principals or assistant principals (Grobler, 2013). The term 'deputy' means a person appointed to act as an assistant of another (Oxford Advanced English Dictionary, 2014). A deputy is the second most important person in an organisation such as a school because that person often acts on the principal's behalf when they are not there.

2.8.2 The role of the deputy principal in schools

The position of deputy principal was developed in the early twentieth century in response to changes in the responsibilities of principals as a result of increased enrolments in schools (Grobler, 2013). As a result, principals were no longer able to manage their assigned tasks (Naidoo & Petersen, 2015). According to Kwan (2015), the role of deputy principals was to free principals from the dull routine tasks associated with running the schools. Deputy principals were assigned tasks such as disciplinary control, management of sport, pastoral care, keeping of records, office management and acting on behalf of the principals during their leave of absence. They were not tasked with the professional development of staff instruction and evaluation of staff (Kwan, 2015). The rationale for the creation of deputy principals' positions was for them to be mentored to be future principals. Due to lack of clearly defined goals tensions arose between principals and their deputies (Kwan, 2015).

The education reforms in the schooling system resulted in an increase in responsibilities assigned to the principals and their deputies both in scope and complexity. As a result, a new position is created for the DH. The main roles of the deputy principals include professional development of staff, setting directions, redesigning the organisation and managing the instructional programme (Kwan, 2015). The deputy principals are also regarded as instructional leaders because of their primary professional responsibility of introducing scientific teaching practices into the classrooms by collaborating with educators. Barnett, Shoho and Oleszewski (2016) confirm that both school principals and deputy principals are also regarded as instructional leaders of educational institutions. However, deputy principals have more extensive daily interaction with teachers and learners than principals. The deputy principals as instructional leaders, provide planned guidance and support to teachers to acquire relevant knowledge and skills. This view is confirmed by Niewenhuizen and Brooks (2013) who emphasise that the duties of assistant principals focus on mundane, yet necessary, managerial tasks, including learner discipline, supervision of grounds and lunchrooms, chaperoning dances and co-curricular activities, scheduling assemblies, meeting with parents, and when the principal is away from the building, performing the duties of the principal. Niewenhuizen and Brooks (2013)

indicate that principals may even have two or more assistant principals, depending on the type of school, size of school, or the number of students enrolled.

According to Hilliard and Newsome (2013), deputy principals are responsible for supervision, management, establishing learning communities with a focus on learner achievement, demonstrating skills and knowledge of being a strong instructional leader, expanding resources and supporting the teachers. This implies that deputy principals are directly responsible for instructional leadership of the school because they are vital resources who support teachers in numerous ways. Deputy principals are involved in the day-to-day operations of the school because they work closely with faculty and staff to improve safety, supervision and learning (Hilliard & Newsome, 2013). In South Africa, schools are faced with challenges of improving learners' academic performance due to underperformance. According to Herrington and Kearney (2013), the assistant principal generally has five major responsibilities, namely, disciplining learners, distributing textbooks, supervising learners, assigning lockers, and attending learner activities. Teachers should be empowered and motivated to teach the learners effectively and to continuously improve their own learning. Hilliard and Newsome (2013) indicate that, as an instructional leader, the deputy principal should assist the principal and SGB to set a positive school climate and promote academic growth. All these duties imply that deputy principals should possess strong pedagogical content knowledge, subject matter expertise, knowledge of teaching and learning, social skills and be able to plan, teach and assess effectively. The main challenge is that a deputy principal cannot be an expert in all the subjects that are taught in a school. In other words, the role of the deputy principals as an instructional leader is challenging as they lack content knowledge in some of the subjects offered in their respective schools.

2.9 THE CHALLENGES OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

As indicated in the previous sections, instructional leadership has many advantages for the teachers and learners. Instructional leaders set and communicate academic goals, provide relevant teaching and learning resources, support the teachers to design teaching programmes, support the learners, evaluate the implementation of the curriculum, conduct professional development of teachers and ensure a safe school

environment for both staff and the learners (Spillane & Lee, 2014). Despite these advantages, instructional leadership presents challenges and difficulties for the instructional leaders. According to Spillane and Lee (2014), Olfos, Goldrine and Estrella, (2014) and Fink and Silverma (2014), principals, deputy principals and HoD's are not able to perform instructional leadership functions effectively because of lack of subject content knowledge, lack of knowledge and skills for providing support and guidance and increasing task demands on them. Each of these identified challenges are addressed in the section below.

2.9.1 Lack of subject content knowledge

The first challenge experienced by instructional leaders is the lack of subject content knowledge. The concept 'content knowledge' refers to the knowledge that instructional leaders need to effectively engage in critical tasks of teaching and to guide and support the teachers (Olfos et al., 2014). Knowledge of the subject content is the knowledge of the subject and how to prepare and present the lessons in the classrooms. Teachers with inadequate conceptual knowledge will have poor grasp of content of their subjects resulting in a range of errors made such as the misinterpretations of the content (DBE, 2017). Principals should therefore lead the implementation of the curriculum by organising successful instructional programmes, creating a harmonious school climate and through effective management, implementation and handling of the inputs provided by the community.

According to Olfos et al. (2014), instructional leaders are unable to mediate educational policy, provide direction and motivate, monitor, support and energise all team members because of lack of content knowledge. Instructional leaders who do not possess sufficient subject knowledge and teaching methods are usually reluctant to assess teachers and provide feedback to them (Fink & Silverma, 2014). Instructional leaders can only make a difference in learner outcomes if their practices are informed by defensible and evidence-based understanding of teaching and learning (Spillane & Lee, 2014). This perception is confirmed by Estrella (2014) who identified feelings of inadequacy as a major challenge experienced by instructional leaders. Supporting teachers in teaching is synonymous with being a curriculum

expert, but many principals are not familiar with the content of subjects offered in their schools.

2.9.2 Lack of knowledge and skills for providing support and guidance

The second challenge to effective instructional leadership is the lack of relational knowledge and skills required to assist teachers to improve their practice. According to McCarthy (2015), effective school leadership positively influences learning and school improvement. Although Instructional leaders may know the importance of instructional leadership, they may not understand how to implement it effectively in their school contexts (Spillane & Lee, 2014). They may be aware of the challenges experienced by teachers in implementing the curriculum, but lack relevant skills to support them (Spillane & Lee, 2014). It is one thing to know the importance of instructional leadership and quite another to know how to be an instructional leader in school contexts where long established norms and routines run counter to this type of leadership style (Le Fevre & Robinson, 2014). Some instructional leaders are unable to conduct professional development workshops due to the lack of relevant knowledge. Instructional leaders will only be able to influence and motivate their staff members when they are well-informed and persuasive (Alegado, 2018). Consequently, instructional leaders should possess essential characteristics such as expertise and skills in engaging others in their respective work environments. Due to lack of knowledge and skills for providing support and guidance, many instructional leaders are unsure of how to implement this leadership style effectively in schools (Fink & Markholt, 2013). Relational skills are also required to build trust which needed to improve teaching and learning. This includes engaging parents, integrating new instructional roles and responsibilities, challenging teacher culture or addressing particular problems in teacher performance (Le Fevre & Robinson, 2014). According to Fink and Markholt (2013), there is also a lack of common standards for the professional practice of instructional leadership, which results in poor instructional performance such as poor lesson plans, ineffective teaching and failure to complete the curriculum. All these challenges are caused by instructional leaders' lack of knowledge and skills for providing support and guidance to the teachers.

2.9.3 Increasing task demands on principals

Another major challenge which inhibits instructional leadership in many schools is the increasing task demands on principals and other instructional leaders. Spillane and Lee (2014) reveal that principals usually experience challenges in managing and prioritising the multiple tasks expected of them. Furthermore, not all staff members are cooperative, principals have to contend working with ineffective and resistant staff members who also pose significant challenges. Spillane and Lee (2014) are of the opinion that the principals' responsibilities have drastically increased over the years. Principals' workload has increased over the years. Their responsibilities include amongst others managerial responsibilities, administrative tasks, learners' issues, personnel management, dealing with external agencies, conflict resolution, resource management and working with parents. According to Carraway and Young (2015), school administrators are often overwhelmed by the daily demands that has nothing to do with instructional improvement. Administrative tasks distract instructional leaders from the core business of improving teaching and learning (Le Fevre & Robinson, 2014). The school size, school context, and methods used to assess, time management and increased time on instructional leadership are challenges to both instructional researchers and practitioners. Sharing instructional leadership roles alleviates some of the challenges and reduces the pressure on principals.

Shortage of staff also contributes to the increasing task demands on principals and other instructional leaders. Teacher shortages are common, especially in rural areas (Gurley, Anast-May & Lee, 2015). Teachers are responsible for facilitating learning and providing learners with necessary information and tools to learn the subject matter effectively. Teachers are also responsible for evaluating learners' abilities using both formal and informal assessments. However, many teachers resign from the teaching profession, particularly in poor communities and low-performing schools (Gurley, Anast-May & Lee, 2015). According to Darling-Hammond, Goldhaber, Strunk and Sutchter (2018), many teachers leave the teaching profession, while others move from one school to another in search of better working conditions. For example, in 2014 there were nearly 19 000 vacant teaching posts in South Africa, and most of them were in the Eastern Cape (DBE, 2014). According to the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angie Motshega, in 2014, 6 641 schools had fewer than six teachers and more

than 20 000 teachers were forced to practice multi-grade teaching, in some cases teaching as many as four grades in one class (DBE, 2014). In 2015, more than 2 800 classes and subjects were without teachers in schools across KwaZulu-Natal (Mthethwa, 2017). The movement of teachers out of the teaching profession and their movement from one school to another have a negative effect on the instructional leadership of instructional leaders. The shortage of staff forces the instructional leaders to have more periods, which makes it difficult for them to have time to practise instructional leadership.

2.10 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

Professional development of instructional leaders is regarded as the major strategy of improving instructional leadership in schools (Carraway & Young, 2015). Professional development refers to the formal and informal development of professional skills in the workplace (Gurley, Anast-May & Lee, 2015). Carraway and Young (2015) describes professional development as the continuous, voluntary, self-motivated, collaborative and learner-centred pursuit of knowledge aimed at promoting the learner academic performance. In the 1970s, professional development was generally referred to as *in-service training*; while during the 1980s it was called staff development of teachers and in the 1990's it was called professional development. The primary purpose for professional development of instructional leaders is to increase the effectiveness of principals, deputy principals and DH's in their support and guidance of the teachers.

Principals, deputy principals and DH's need professional development to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to successfully guide the teachers to promote student learning (Carraway & Young, 2015). According to Hutton (2013), principals, deputy principals and DHs should receive professional development on data-based decision-making, effective school leadership, and general management. They are responsible for their own professional development to perform their new roles and responsibilities. Professional development includes workshops, conferences, in-service training-advance studies, research and development and pilot programmes.

The DBE is responsible for organising external experts to conduct professional development of instructional leaders (Darling-Hammond, Hyler & Gardner, 2017).

According to the Kennedy (2016), the principals are responsible for the professional development of deputy principals and DHs. They provide guidance to deputy principals and DHs to improve their instructional leadership practices (Kennedy, 2016). They need the principal to motivate, mentor and guide deputy principals and DHs through professional development sessions at conferences and provide them with individualised support.

2.11 SUMMARY

The literature review focused on the conceptual framework, theoretical framework, instructional leadership role of the principal, instructional leadership role of the deputy principal, the challenges of instructional leadership and the professional development of instructional leaders. The reviewed literature reveals that instructional leadership is a key to effective teaching and learning and learners' academic success. According to the South African Standard for Principals, principals are endowed with the responsibility for developing as well as implementing plans procedures and policies that allow schools to achieve their objectives (DBE, 2016). The deputy principal and DHs are also responsible for providing leadership and direction to ensure that the mission and vision of the schools are fulfilled (DBE, 2016).

The implementation of instructional leadership in the South African education system since 1994 is discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter two presented conceptual and theoretical frameworks on instructional leadership. I reviewed various literature sources in order to understand how other experts and scholars conceptualised and theorised instructional leadership Chapter three focuses on instructional leadership within the South African education system in order to situate the study in context. There is an increasing recognition that instructional leadership is an appropriate approach to school improvement within the South African schooling system (DBE, 2018).

This chapter includes a discussion of leadership in South African schooling system prior to and after 1994, the importance of instructional leadership in schools and the instructional leadership role of the principals, deputy principals and DHs. Further discussed in this chapter are challenges faced by principals, deputy principals and DHs in implementing instructional leadership. Lastly the chapter discusses the various measures put in place to address the challenges of instructional leadership within the South African schooling system.

3.2 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP SYSTEM IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLING SYSTEM PRIOR 1994

Before 1994, South Africa was under apartheid government. The concept 'apartheid' which means apartness is an ideology which was supported by the National Party government and was introduced in South Africa in 1948 (DBE, 2015). During apartheid, South Africa was divided into four racial groups, namely, black, Indian, Coloured and white. Similarly, in the apartheid dispensation, South African schooling system was divided along racial lines, where there were separate schools for Coloureds, whites, Indians and blacks (Sibanda, 2017). The disparity in teaching experienced in white and black classrooms and the fact that blacks were usually taught in their second (or third) language, rather than their primary one, meant that black

children were much more likely to fail the end-of-year assessments (Boddy-Evans, 2020). Learners were compelled to attend racially segregated schools located in their exclusive residential areas (South African History Online, 2019). Rights and benefits were allocated according to this hierarchy, with whites being most advantaged and black Africans being most disadvantaged (Teeger, 2015). Learners attending these racially segregated schools used different curricula and received unequal distribution of resources (Weiner, 2014). In 1974, the Afrikaans Medium Decree was issued, which made the use of Afrikaans and English compulsory in black secondary schools, and greatly reduced the time spent receiving instruction in the native languages (Radcliffe, 2016). During the apartheid era, whiteness was associated with achievement at an individual and institutional level (Lewis, Diamond & Forman, 2015). Most black, Indian and Coloured learners were excluded from white educational spaces (Ispa-Landa & Conwell, 2015). Three decades into democracy, the life chances of the average South African learner is still determined not by ability or hard work and determination, but instead by skin colour, the province of birth and the wealth of parents (Spaull, 2019). During the apartheid regime the different black ethnic groups were located in different rural homelands (South African History Online, 2019). The provision of education in racially segregated schools was contained in the Education for Indians Act of 1969, the Education for Coloured People's Act of 1965, the Christian National Education Act of 1962 for white South Africans, and the Bantu Education Act of 1953, which later became the Education and Training Act of 1978, for Africans (South African History Online, 2019). In terms of the apartheid principle, nineteen education departments were established based on racial and ethnic lines but these departments were centrally administered. This meant that South Africa had several education departments, one for black pupils in each of the respective homelands, an Indian education department, a Coloured education department and a white education department per province (Mering, 2022). The segregated education system was maintained institutionally by having a different department of education for each of the four racial groups (that is, blacks, Indians, Coloureds, and whites) and ethnic groups (that is, Zulus, Pedis, Tswanas, Sothos, Shangaan, Venda and Ndebele) (Thobejane, 2013). The education departments of the ethnic groups were found in the homelands of South Africa, namely, Bophuthatswana, Ciskei, Transkei, Gazankulu, KwaZulu-Natal, KaNgwane, KwaNdebele, Lebowa, Qwaqwa and Venda (Thobejane, 2013).

Apartheid (or Bantu) education in South Africa perpetuated hierarchical views of society and fostered an ideological consciousness of superior-inferior, master-servant, and ruler-ruled structure among all groups in South Africa (Thobejane, 2013). In the new post-apartheid South Africa, a unified education system is served by one education department (Mering, 2022).

Prior to 1994, the education system was characterised by hierarchical and authoritarian relations and its main purpose was to restrict wider participation and to ensure political control by the top echelons of the education departments (Bush & Glover, 2016). This implies that the education departments were administered through a top-down management system with principals and educators being at the receiving end. During the apartheid era, white schools had a network of committees and sub-committees consisting of teachers, parents and trustees. The committees and sub-committees were responsible for the support of the school functions (Sibanda, 2017). The committees and sub-committees were also supported and monitored by the respective Department of Education. Black rural and township schools on the other hand, did not have the functioning school committees (Sibanda, 2017). The authoritarian nature, rigid bureaucracy and rule-bound hierarchy of the various education departments were often replicated at school level (Bush & Glover, 2016). As such the leadership style of school principals was rigid and domineering, with close and constant control over teachers and school activities. In this regulated work environment, principals were accustomed to receiving instructions from departmental officials. In black schools, the principals were responsible for a substantial teaching load in addition to some managerial functions and the support and monitoring from the department was casual and sometimes absent (Sibanda, 2017). Black schools, including those of Indians and Coloureds, were managed and controlled by men, and particularly white Afrikaner men. Women occupied fewer than 10% of school management positions, and their salaries were less than those of their male counterparts. Female principals for example did not receive housing subsidies, pensions and were heading primary schools instead of secondary or high schools. I therefore, argue that because most primary school teachers are females it is for this reason they were actually promoted into principal positions as there were no males (Bush & Glover, 2016).

I am of the opinion that the racial inequality in schools resulted in their dysfunctionality as well as the collapse of the culture of teaching and learning in most of them. The poor infrastructure in most of these schools, overcrowding and lack of well qualified teachers demotivated the teacher corps. The need for change in the communities resulted in people prioritising political freedom at the expense of education. I also believe that the predominantly authoritarian nature of the schooling system we currently have in South African schools is attributed to the apartheid system. Even after apartheid was revoked in 1994 and the African National Congress (ANC) took power, the effects of years of segregation and inferior education remained intact (Kanjee & Sayed, 2013). The negative impact of apartheid on the current education of South Africa is confirmed by Chisholm (2012) who indicates that deep structural historical continuities, and contradictions between intentions and outcomes of more recent policies are evident in continuing racially unequal learning outcomes, overall poor quality of education and high youth unemployment. In South Africa, there are currently 11 official languages, and English is popular both in secondary schools and tertiary institutions of learning (Thobejane, 2013). Most learners favour English over indigenous languages because it offers an opportunity for them to become members of the global community and some educationists argue that indigenous languages are unscientific and lacking in expression of other kinds of knowledge (Thobejane, 2013). It is therefore, evident that the former apartheid education still exerts a negative impact on the current education system of the democratic South Africa. During the apartheid era, former white and so-called Model C schools had more money and resources to build a solid foundation for children, whereas schools in townships did not, and this legacy lives on (Villette, 2016).

3.3 SCHOOL LEADERSHIP IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLING SYSTEM AFTER 1994

The main focus of this section is to conduct an analysis of school leadership in South Africa after 1994. In 1994, with the advent of democracy, the segregated education system was overhauled. The main focus of the new democratic government was to abolish apartheid policies and implement new ones in all the sectors of the country (Booi, 2018). After 1994, the national Department of Education was established and the South African School Act (SASA, 1996), Green Papers, White Papers, new

legislations, new policies and norms and standards were introduced in order to initiate reforms within the South African schooling system. These are discussed in the section below.

(a) The South African Schools Act 1996

The South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996 is aimed at ensuring that all learners have access to quality education without discrimination and makes schooling compulsory for children aged seven to fifteen. It provides for two types of schools namely, independent and public schools. The provision in the Act for democratic school governance, through SGBs, has been implemented in public schools countrywide. The school funding norms, outlined in SASA, prioritise redress and target poverty regarding the allocation of funds for the public-schooling system (RSA, 1996).

(b) White Paper on Education and Training

The first White Paper on Education and Training was promulgated and published in 1995 (DBE, 2016). The White Paper was a fundamental policy framework of the Ministry of Basic Education in a democratic South Africa. The first White Paper on Education and Training set out an ambitious design for the new system, signaling a range of different policy initiatives to bring about change in South Africa (DBE, 2016).

(c) The National Education Policy Act of 1996

The National Education Policy Act (NEPA) of 1996 established structures for decision-making in the new system. This Act focuses on legal and monitoring responsibilities of the Minister of Education. It laid the foundation for the establishment of the Council of Education Ministers (CEM), as well as the Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM), as intergovernmental forums that would collaborate in the development of a new education system. NEPA of 1996, therefore, provides for the formulation of national policy in general, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) policies for curriculum, assessment, and language and quality assurance (RSA, 1996).

(d) Education Labour Relations Council Act No. 66 of 1995

The Education Labour Relations Act, No. of 1995 was promulgated by the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) (RSA, 1998). The ELRC is a statutory council which serves the public education sector nationally. The main purpose of the council is to maintain labour peace within public education through processes of dispute prevention and resolution. These include collective bargaining between the educator unions and the Department as the employer. The ELRC also conducts various workshops to increase the level of awareness and understanding of sound labour-relations procedures (RSA, 1998).

(e) The Employment of Educators Act, No. 76 of 1998

The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 regulates the professional, moral and ethical responsibilities of educators, as well as teachers' competency requirements. The Act and the South African Council for Educators (SACE) regulate the teaching corps (RSA, 1998). According to the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998, teachers may apply to be absent from work due to among other factors such as sickness, family responsibility and examinations. When teachers apply for leave of absence it is the principal's responsibility to ensure that there is a substitute in order not to compromise the school time-table. However, within the South African education system the leave policy for educator appears to be unclear about the number of leave days for the teachers. In terms of the Employment of Educators Act (RSA, 1998), family responsibility leave is granted to educators under the following circumstances: when a child is born into their families, for illness be it their own or that of their spouses and deaths in the family. Moletsane, Juan, Prinsloo and Reddy (2015) emphasise that it is the principals' responsibility to design teachers' leave policies, which should be followed by all the teachers. The teachers' leave policies are meant to enhance teachers' conditions of service, their objective is also to safeguard the rights of learners to quality education by ensuring that teachers remain on task, and that teaching and learning is not disrupted. I am of the opinion that the less time spent on teaching and learning activities in schools is among the reasons for low quality education provision in South African schools. These legislations, policies and other

measures were major strategies for ending the apartheid legacy and establishing a new education system in South Africa.

The post-1994 government was therefore, faced with the tasks of dismantling apartheid structures and designing and implementing a new education system. Nineteen departments of education were combined into a single national Department of Education and nine provincial departments of education (DBE, 2015). These laws were implemented by nine provincial departments of education of South Africa (DBE, 2016). Each of the nine South African provinces were given their respective legislature headed by the province's Premier who has a cabinet consisting of Members of the Executive Committee (MECs) (DBE, 2016).

The MEC for Education is the political head in each province and is assisted by the Head of Education (HOD) who is responsible for leading the provincial bureaucracy for education. Each province has a set of education districts and circuits which are managed by the district managers and circuit managers (DBE, 2016). The DBE works closely with the provincial Education Departments to ensure that provincial budgets and strategies are in line with and support national policies (DBE, 2016). It is however, the responsibility of each provincial Education Department to finance and manage its schools. District offices are local hubs of the provincial Education Department and provide the vital lines of communication between the provincial head office and the education institutions in their care (DBE, 2015). Their task is to work collaboratively with principals and educators in schools, with assistance of circuit offices. In fact, school districts and their leaders are appropriately located for any system-wide change venture as they have jurisdiction over all schools within their ambit (Naicker & Mestry, 2015).

Each district is further divided into circuits headed by the Circuit Managers and each circuit is the second-level administrative sub-division of a provincial Education Department (Bantwini & Morosi, 2018). It is the management sub-unit of a district responsible for the DBE in its circuits. Each circuit manager is the representative of the district director and is responsible for ensuring that all schools in the circuit are functional and stable (Bantwini & Morosi, 2018). It is the role of the Education District and Circuit Office in South Africa to work in collaboration with the schools to improve

educational access and to provide management and professional support (Van der Voort & Wood, 2016). South African schools are managed by the principals and governed by a legally established SGB, comprising of parents, teachers and learners, in the case of secondary schools (DBE, 2016). The SGB is responsible for administering school funds, opening a bank account for the school, preparing an annual budget for the school, compiling financial reports and paying for school services (Fedsas Institute for School Governance, 2016). The SGB is also responsible for designing school admission policy, the language policy of the school, the mission statement of the school and code of conduct for learners and recommends appointment of staff (Fedsas Institute for School Governance, 2016). There is, therefore, a move within the South African education system from an autocratic type of governance to the democratisation of governance where all teachers, learners as well as the school communities are involved in their smooth running (DBE, 2016).

The South African government was also expected to develop a new curriculum which would be in line with the country's democratic values (DBE, 2015). This resulted in various curriculum reforms which were revised several times due to implementation challenges. Curriculum 2005 (1997), National Curriculum Statement (NCS) (2002) and Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) (2012) were introduced in South Africa (Du Plessis, 2015).

The ANC also introduced radical transformation in all spheres of South African lives. At its December 2017 54th National Conference, in Johannesburg, the ANC adopted an economic and development policy that has come to be known as the Radical Economic Transformation Programme (Tleane, 2018). The programme encouraged, inter alia, an investment pact between government, business and labour, rooting out corruption, avoiding credit downgrades and implementing a minimum wage. The ANC government also introduced Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (Mosala, Venter & Bain, 2017). The RDP aimed at eliminating hunger, providing land and housing to all people, providing access to clean water and sanitation for all, ensuring the availability of affordable and sustainable energy sources and eliminating illiteracy. The democratic government's commitment to eliminate illiteracy and inequities in the education system although commendable is still partly unfulfilled. Other government initiatives included the establishment of an Integrated National

Primary School Nutrition Programme, and also an attempt to improve the schooling system through the construction of buildings in previously disadvantaged communities (Tshotsho, 2020). Other government initiatives implemented was the building of free houses for poor communities (Groundup, 2019). Access to free education for children from poor households has been expanded, over 9 million children attend no-fee schools, support for early childhood education has been significantly increased and every South African child is provided with textbooks (RSA, 2019). About 95.3% of the population of South Africa had access to electricity in 2017, up from 58% in 1996 (African News Agency, 2018). The ANC government also introduced the financial aid scheme called the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) which provides financial aid to poor undergraduate learners, to assist with the payment of tuition costs at tertiary education level (NSFAS, 2018). However, the post-apartheid government of South Africa inherited one of the most unequal societies in the world. According to the International Monetary Fund (2020), South Africa suffers the highest levels of inequality in the world when measured by the Gini Index and that inequality manifests itself through a skewed income distribution, unequal access to opportunities and regional disparities. Low growth and rising unemployment have contributed to the persistence of inequality. The democracy of South Africa commenced in 1994 with already elevated inequality as the policy of apartheid excluded a large swath of the population from economic opportunities (International Monetary Fund, 2020). According to Anna (2019), the World Bank says South Africa is the most unequal nation on the planet, a fact that former President F.W. de Klerk, a Nobel Peace Prize winner, called “the deepest national shame”. Anna (2019) emphasises that whites have, in fact, comfortably improved their economic status in post-apartheid South Africa because the economy channels such a big share of national income to the top 10%. Similarly, Scott (2019) emphasises that South Africa remains the most economically unequal country in the world although it has more than 25 years of democracy and South Africa’s richest households are almost ten times wealthier than poor households. According to Valodia (2023), in South Africa, wealth inequality is much worse than income inequality and the most recent data revealed that South Africa has the highest income inequality in the world, with a Gini coefficient of around 0.67. The Gini coefficient is a widely used statistical measure of how income is distributed in the population of a country. The post-apartheid education reconstruction was therefore, driven by two imperatives: firstly, the government had to overcome the

legacy of apartheid and provide a system of education that builds democracy, human dignity, equality and social justice. South Africa has increased its commitment to providing food security schemes targeted for the poor and vulnerable, which contributed significantly to the improvement in living standards (Statistics South Africa, 2017b). Food security has improved and the share of households that are vulnerable to hunger fell from 24.2% in 2002 to 10.4% in 2017 (Statistics South Africa, 2017a). Approximately one-third of households with children are covered by child support grants and without them, poverty would be 8 % higher (Posel & Grapsa, 2017). Secondly, a system of lifelong learning for South Africa had to be established (Steyn, 2016). The management of school was also reformed through the devolution of decision-making powers from central level to the school level. Although the government is credited for transforming the education system, it should be noted that education is an extremely specialised sphere that should not be dictated by political leaders.

The democratic dispensation has then introduced the notion of equal education for all citizens of the country aiming at redressing the imbalances that were created by the previous regimes (Booi, 2018). According to Gumede and Biyase (2016), there have been some commendable changes in the education landscape in South Africa since 1995. However, as Gumede (2013) argues, there remain policy questions that are yet to be addressed. The current challenges in the education system of South Africa are infrastructure, inequality in education, poor education and the cycle of illiteracy (Equal Education (EE), 2016). One of the main problems in the educational sector today is the facilities available to learners and it is of utmost importance that schools include facilities that are safe and secure for children, and the necessary equipment for learners to pursue their education. According to EE (2016) in 2013, the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, accepted a law obliging schools throughout the country to have at least water, electricity, internet, safe classrooms with up to 40 learners in class, security, and the necessary facilities to study and practise different sports. Although the target was set for 2016, today, many schools have problems far worse than a bad internet connection. Another problem in the education system of South Africa is inequality in schools (EE, 2016). The education system is still healing from the apartheid era, resulting in children being treated differently because of their background, wealth, or skin tone (EE, 2016). The Quality of Primary Education in

South Africa, a UNESCO report, states that, theoretically, all children have equal access to the three levels of education in the country (Amnesty International, 2020). However, many institutions schooling learners from low-income communities have failed to improve the quality of education they provide. According to Gustafsson (2021), the retirement of teachers in South Africa will reach a peak number by 2030, which will consequentially result in the need for newly trained educators and the restructuring of classrooms and institutions. Currently, half of the classes have 30 learners per class, but the other 50% can exceed up to 50 children in a class (Gustafsson, 2021). To reduce the numbers, it is estimated that around 100 000 new teachers enter the education system, which requires large-scale training and financing. Another challenge that the educational sector in South Africa faces today is the quality of the instructors. Over 5 000 of the current teachers are under-qualified for their profession (Gustafsson, 2021). Finally, according to the OECD Report from 2019, South Africa has the highest share of people aged between 20 to 24 years in the Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) sector (Khuluvhe, 2021). According to Khuluvhe's 2021 report, in 2019, the rate of illiterate adults (over the age of 20) was 12,1%, or around 4,4 million. This equates to a considerable part of the population not achieving a 7th grade or higher level of education and South Africa needs to tackle this issue and minimise the percentage of illiteracy as far as possible (Khuluvhe, 2021).

3.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

The focus of this section is to discuss the importance of instructional leadership in South African schools. School instructional leadership is a collaborative process between principals, teachers and other stakeholders who serve to define the school's mission, promote a positive school learning climate and manage instructional programmes through curriculum implementation (Vogel, 2018). In other words, instructional leadership is a type of leadership which is applied by principals, teachers and other stakeholders to influence or improve the quality of education in schools. Instructional leadership is geared towards ensuring that quality education is offered in schools. Instructional leadership guides and influences teachers to participate in constant learning and improving their teaching practices to improve learners' academic success.

According to Bush and Glover (2016), instructional leadership is applied to guide and support educators. It further aims at influencing educators to participate in continuous learning in order to improve their teaching practices. Bush and Glover (2016) emphasise that instructional leadership empowers instructional leaders with the ability to observe and assess the instructional practices of educators and provides feedback, guidance, support and incentives based on the performance of educators and learners. Instructional leaders equip educators with skills to succeed and align curriculum and instructional practices. According to Bush and Glover (2016), effective instructional leadership should be conducted through appropriate class visits, and phase and learning area discussions among educators. In other words, the function of instructional leaders is to assist teachers to overcome curriculum implementation challenges, respond to concerns and teachers' individual instructional needs, develop and implement effective strategies of improving their instruction. The major function of instructional leaders is therefore to set the tone, motivate teachers to learn and give direction for effective teaching and learning.

Teacher professional development is an intentional on-going and systematic process of formal and informal education, training, learning and support activities taking place in either external or work-based settings (Ravhuhali, Kutame, Mutshaeni, Matseliso, Mokhelo & Maluleke, 2017). Instructional leadership requires principals to ensure that various professional development opportunities for teachers are available. According to Ravhuhali et al. (2017), teachers should participate in continuous professional development sessions in order to acquire more knowledge and skills of the subjects they teach. Professional development sessions are geared towards enabling teachers to collaborate in resolving curriculum implementation challenges (Olfos et al., 2015). Most teachers appear to experience challenges with curriculum implementation due to their lack of content knowledge (Mouton, Louw & Strydom, 2015). The concept 'content knowledge' refers to the knowledge that teachers need to effectively engage in critical teaching tasks (Olfos et al., 2015). This implies that the principal, deputy principals and HoDs as instructional leaders should lead the implementation of the curriculum by organising professional development sessions, assisting the teachers in designing instructional programmes as well as using effective teaching strategies to meet learners' diverse learning needs.

According to Ismail, Don, Husin and Khalid (2018), school instructional leaders have the duty to plan curriculum programs, supervise and evaluate classroom instructions, implement remedial or corrective actions on problematic aspects and ensure that teaching and learning time is not disturbed. School instructional leaders also ensure that teachers teach efficiently by organising staff development programmes and monitoring learners' behaviours. Instructional leaders' responsibility indicates a strong positive correlation between instructional leadership and teachers' functional competency. Rosnarizah (2015) reports that leadership styles have a significant correlation with teachers' efficacy and competencies. In addition, research demonstrates that teaching behavioural factors such as giving feedback, praising, encouraging and using various learning and teaching approaches, emphasising learning and teaching exercises, supporting collaborative efforts, and teamwork create a conducive school climate for learning (Gu Saw Lu, 2014). Ismail et al. (2018) emphasise the importance of providing feedback, suggesting, encouraging and supporting various methods of learning and teaching and supporting collaborative efforts which are the predictors of self-efficacy and teachers' competency. The role of instructional leadership in increasing learners' academic performance is supported by Allen, Grigby, and Peters (2015) who opine that strong instructional leadership is widely recognised as a core factor in school development and plays a substantial role in improving school effectiveness and learning quality.

Wyatt (2017), on the other hand, indicates that instructional leadership facilitates the following:

1. greater uptake of the concepts of differentiated teaching and personalised learning;
2. a more explicit approach to teaching literacy and numeracy;
3. more frequent opportunities for learners to practise key concepts or skills and to receive direct feedback on their progress towards the incremental achievement of their goals, which impact positively on their engagement during learning;
4. more specific articulation of the learning intention of a particular lesson or series of lessons, ensuring that learners understand the criteria by which they could measure their mastery of the key concepts or skills involved;

5. stronger emphasis on scaffolding learning so that learners have a better understanding of the purpose of their learning and the specific reasons for undertaking particular activities.

Nor Azni's (2015) findings on instructional leadership reveals a positive relationship between instructional leadership and teachers' commitment to implement school-based assessment. Thus, instructional leaders motivate teachers to evaluate learners' academic performance effectively, which improves their academic success. Instructional leadership also enables teachers to implement educational reforms which contribute to the development of the potential and performance of learners optimally (Nor Azni, 2015; Aziz, Esa, Muda & Mansor, 2017). The role of instructional leadership in schools is confirmed by Shafinaz (2017), who claims that it increases the efficacy of teachers to manage education changes. Implementing school changes enable the instructional leaders to achieve their schools' academic goal of improving the academic quality (Aziz et al., 2017). This suggests that school leaders act as instructional leaders to mobilise changes among teachers. When the teachers' efficacy is successfully influenced by instructional leadership, their commitment improves.

3.5 THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL IN SOUTH AFRICA

This section will focus on the instructional leadership role of principals in schools. Yusuf et al. (2017) describes instructional leadership as the creation of an environment conducive for teaching and learning which takes place in pursuit of academic and social school goals. In other words, instructional leadership is a type of leadership that puts an emphasis on managing teaching and learning as the core activity of educational institutions. The concept of instructional leader emerged in the early 1980's but it is a relatively new concept in South Africa (Naidoo & Mestry, 2019). Since 1980, principals have been advised to shift their roles from being administrators to instructional leaders (Naidoo & Mestry, 2019). In South Africa, instructional leadership was introduced in section 16A of the SASA (RSA, 1996). The role of the school principals has changed dramatically since the dawn of democracy as they are now regarded as instructional leaders. The SASA (RSA, 1996) requires schools to

transform from being institutions which rely on the Department of Education to being institutions which can manage themselves (RSA, 1996). The Act requires educational managers who are able to work in democratic and participative ways to build relationships and ensure effective delivery of quality education (DBE, 2016). The school managers should have the ability to manage their schools effectively, ensure that there is participative decision-making process and also delegate authority to DH's and teachers (Steyn, 2016). In South Africa, all schools have SMTs which are involved in instructional leadership. The concept 'SMT' refers to a school structure which is responsible for leadership guidance, direction and assistance in the teaching learning environment (DBE, 2016). The SMT consists of principals, deputy principals and DHs and the principal is the head of the SMT.

According to Section 16 of SASA, the principal, as an instructional leader is responsible for ensuring that the education of the learners is properly promoted in accordance with approved policies (RSA, 1996). The SASA emphasises that principals must achieve this major function by implementing educational programmes and curriculum activities and the management of the use of learning support material and other equipment (RSA, 1996). In order to ensure quality learning, the principals must guide, supervise and offer professional advice on the work and performance of all staff in the schools and where necessary, discuss and write or countersign reports on teaching staff. The SASA also emphasises the following functions of the principal as an instructional leader to ensure that workloads are equitably distributed among the staff:

- Develop school based, school-focused and externally directed staff training programmes.
- Participate in agreed school appraisal processes in order to regularly review teachers' professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management.
- Ensure that all evaluation or forms of assessment conducted in the school are properly and efficiently organised.
- Design an annual academic performance improvement plan at the beginning of the year.

- Prepare and submit an annual report to the Head of Department at the end of the year.

The terms and conditions of employment of principals and other staff are set out in the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) of the Employment of Educators Act 1998 (DBE, 2016). According to the Employment of Educators Act 1998, as amended in 2016, the two aims of principalship is to ensure that the school is managed satisfactorily and in compliance with applicable legislation, regulations and personnel administration measures as prescribed and to ensure that the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner and in accordance with approved policies (DBE, 2016). The Employment of Educators Act 1998 of 1998 as amended in 2016 (DBE, 2016), also provides the following roles and responsibilities of the principal as an instructional leader as follows:

- Responsible for the professional management of a public school;
- Gives proper instructions and guidelines for timetabling, admission and placement of learners;
- Keeps school accounts and records;
- Use of funds for benefit of the learners in consultation with the appropriate structures;
- Make regular inspections of the school to ensure that the premises and equipment are used properly;
- Ensure that a good discipline is maintained. Ensure that departmental circulars and other information received which affect teaching and learning is brought to teacher's attention as soon as possible;
- Provide professional leadership within the school;
- Guide, supervise and offer professional advice on the work and performance of all staff in the school;
- Ensure that workloads are equitably distributed among the staff;
- Organise school-based, school-focused and externally directed staff development training programmes to assist educators in developing and achieving educational objectives in accordance with the needs of the school;

- Participate in agreed school/educator appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management;
- Ensure that all forms of assessment conducted in the school are properly and efficiently organised.

It is therefore very significant for the principals to perform all the duties effectively in order to ensure that there is effective teaching and learning in all schools. In order to understand these functions, principals should attend professional development sessions in order to be trained and acquire knowledge and skills of instructional leadership.

3.6 THE ROLE OF THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL IN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA

The deputy principal is the second in charge teacher at school who is considered to be the right-hand person or assistant of the principal (Odhiambo, 2017). In South Africa, like in other countries, deputy principals are also regarded as instructional leaders with a variety of responsibilities to perform. In this section I will review literature on the role of the deputy principals as instructional leaders in schools. According to the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998: C-65) (RSA, 1998), the duties of the deputy principal of a school are the following:

- Assist principals in managing schools and promoting the education of learners in a proper manner;
- Assist principals in their duties and to deputise them while on school leave;
- Assist principals with school administration, school finances and maintenance of services and buildings;
- Guide and supervise the work and performance of staff and where necessary discuss and write or countersign reports;
- Liaise on behalf of the principals with relevant government departments;
- Guide and supervise educators' work and implement assessment policy;
- Sign the learners' progress report cards in order to confirm that the assessment policy is effectively implemented;

- Assist DHs in the instructional leadership and management of the school (RSA, 1998).

In South Africa, the duties of the deputy principals as instructional leaders are also described in the PAM (DBE, 2016). According to PAM (DBE, 2016), the deputy principal as an instructional leader, has the following functions:

- **School administration:** The deputy principals are responsible for allocation of work, evaluation and assessment of teachers and learners, choice of textbooks, coordinating the work of subject committees and timetabling.
- **Assisting the principal:** The deputy principals assist the principals in overseeing learner counselling and guidance, careers, discipline, compulsory attendance and the general welfare of all learners.
- **Professional development programmes:** The deputy principals organise professional development programmes with DHs and participate in departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses.
- **Guidance and supervision:** The deputy principals also guide and supervise the work and performance of staff and, where necessary, discuss and write or countersign reports. Deputy Principals also supervise and advise the RCL.
- **Appraisal:** The deputy principals also participate in agreed educator appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management.
- **Liaise with parents:** The deputy principals also meet with parents concerning learners' progress and conduct (DBE, 2016).

The role of the deputy principals as instructional leaders is also described by SACE in their Collective Agreement 1 of 2008 (DBE, 2008). SACE described the following roles of the deputy principals as instructional leaders:

- Regularly visit teachers in the classrooms to provide support and advice, monitor their progress in quality teaching and learning and inform the school's professional development priorities;
- Provide support to the principal in professional leadership within the school, which involves a comprehensive understanding of the curriculum;

- Collect data which will help in improving teaching and learning activities in the school;
- Provide reports on teaching, support and other professional activities;
- Ensure that there are functional curriculum structures in the school;
- Give instructions and guidelines for timetabling, admission and placement of learners;
- Oversee mentoring, coaching and general support of novice and underperforming teachers;
- Assist the principal in ensuring that workloads are equally distributed among the staff;
- Assess and record attainment of learners and manage their progression;
- Liaise with relevant structures regarding the school curricula activities and curriculum development and ensure educator and learner involvement;
- Coordinate the use of technology in supporting curriculum delivery and in recording learner progress;
- Facilitate staff and learner counselling and guidance and ensure that vulnerable learners have access to appropriate learning experiences and are adequately supported;
- Involve parents and other community members as resources and partners in the learning process (DBE, 2008).

All the above-mentioned duties of the deputy principals as instructional leaders play a significant role in improving the quality of education, teaching and learning and academic performance of the learners in South Africa.

3.7 THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

The DHs are members of the SMT who are also involved in instructional leadership. The term ‘head of department’ applies to appointees who should perform the academic department responsibilities of managing particular phases of schooling, for example Foundation, Intermediate and Senior phases (DBE, 2016). The terms and conditions of employment of DHs are set out in the PAM of the Employment of Educators Act

1998 (DBE, 2016) and the 2008 Collective Agreement 1 of SACE. According to the PAM and the SACE, the following are the duties of the DHs as instructional leaders:

- (a) Take charge of a subject, learning area or phase;
- (b) Jointly develop the policy for that department;
- (c) Co-ordinate evaluation or assessment, homework and written assignments of all the subjects in that department;
- (d) Provide and co-ordinate guidance on the latest ideas on approaches to the subject, method, techniques, evaluation and aids in their field and effectively conveying these to the staff members concerned;
- (e) Guide teachers on syllabi, schemes of work, homework, practical work and remedial work;
- (f) Control the work of educators and learners in the department;
- (g) Control administrative responsibilities of staff members, submit reports to the principal as required;
- (h) Control test and examination papers as well as memoranda in the department;
- (i) Share in the responsibilities of organising and conducting extra and co-curricular activities;
- (j) Advise the principal regarding the division of work among the staff in that department;
- (k) Participate in agreed school and educator appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management;
- (l) Assist with the planning and management of school stock, text books and equipment for the department, timetabling, the budget for the department and subject work schemes;
- (m) Co-operate with colleagues in order to maintain a good teaching standard and progress among the learners and to foster administrative efficiency within the department;
- (n) Collaborate with educators of other schools in developing the department;
- (o) Arrange parents' meetings to discuss the progress and conduct of their children;

- (p) Participate in departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to and update one's professional views and standards;
- (q) Co-operate with further and higher education institutions in relation to learners' records and performance and career opportunities.

The role of DH's as instructional leaders is also described by the DBE (2016). According to the DBE (2016) the role of the DH's is to provide strong academic leadership, monitor the implementation of an assessment policy by all staff members and manage and develop the department to ensure that it achieves academic excellence in all its activities. The DBE (2016) also emphasises that other roles of DH's include the promotion of parental involvement in the schools. This implies that DH's should ensure that parents are free to communicate with teachers as well as to utilise school facilities.

Studies were also conducted by other researchers (Bipath & Nkabinde, 2018; Ross, 2018; Williams, 2018; Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2017; Maponya, 2015; Hattie, 2015; Wyatt, 2017) to explore the role of heads of department as instructional leaders. Bipath and Nkabinde (2018) argue that DH's have a moderate perception of their responsibilities in motivating learners, and they do not recognise the role of parents as motivators. They further argue that DH's should improve communication channels and establish a collaborative relationship with teachers, ensuring that teachers contact parents early in the school year to explain class and homework procedures and to learn about their concerns, views, talents, interest and availability (Bipath & Nkabinde, 2018). Families should ensure that they participate in the formal and informal aspect of the education of their children. Ross (2018) asserts that DH's are responsible for ensuring a fair and reasonable allocation of teaching workloads and citizenship responsibilities among department staff. They should ensure that the performance of all staff is reviewed annually (Ross, 2018). Williams (2018) adds that DHs are mentors who are responsible for supporting beginning teachers and new arrivals because every teacher has different needs and abilities.

According to Du Plessis and Eberlein (2017), DHs should conduct workshops to guide the teachers about effective teaching and assessment methods, use of technology

and other resources and how to improve the academic performance of the learners. This is confirmed by Maponya's (2015) findings which revealed that one of the roles of DHs is to hold meetings with the teaching staff and to check, monitor and control the subject files of the educators on a regular basis, including the informal and formal assessments of learners. The DHs also diagnose and analyse the learners' results on a quarterly basis. Similarly, Hattie (2015) indicates that DHs as instructional leaders focus more on learners because they look to the teachers' and the school's impact on student learning and instructional issues.

According to Wyatt (2017), DH's as instructional leaders are responsible for:

- observing a teacher's lesson and providing feedback;
- modelling a particular teaching strategy in a classroom;
- observing a teacher working with a small group of learners on a diagnostic assessment task and making a judgement about the skills and understanding demonstrated;
- working with a group of teachers on a year level or stage basis to analyse progress made on a cohort basis, and to identify learners at risk along with the appropriate tier level of intervention they may need;
- working with a group of teachers to evaluate the success of their teaching programs or specific intervention strategies at a group and individual student level, and helping teachers plan for the next period of teaching;
- providing professional learning for whole-school staff on topics of general relevance or specific needs in relation to literacy and numeracy teaching and learning, such as how to structure a literacy block and how to engage learners in ownership of their learning.

In my opinion, I believe that the DHs as instructional leaders are responsible for ensuring the participation of staff, learners, parents and the community in the school's decision-making process and in developing a culture of cooperation, accountability and commitment in order to improve the performance of learners. I also believe that the DH is also responsible for record keeping, assessment in the department and developing an appropriate culture of teaching and learning.

3.8 THE ROLE OF CURRICULUM ADVISORS IN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN SOUTH AFRICA

Curriculum advisors who are also called subject advisors or specialists are also responsible for instructional leadership (Adendorf & Moodley, 2015). A curriculum advisor is an office-based instructional leader or subject specialist based in the circuit and district, who is responsible for the provision of support, guidance and professional development of teachers (DBE, 2016). This section will focus on the role of curriculum advisors in instructional leadership in South Africa. The DBE (2016) allocates the following duties to the curriculum advisors:

- (a) Assist in equitable deployment of staff and resources to facilitate teaching and learning;
- (b) Provide pastoral support, guidance and counselling to teachers and learners whenever requested by institutions;
- (c) Maintain effective partnerships between parents and school staff to promote effective teaching and learning;
- (d) Develop systems for monitoring and recording progress made by learners towards achievement of targets set;
- (e) Support initiatives to improve numeracy, literacy and information technology as well as access to the wider curriculum;
- (f) Facilitate curriculum development at institution/district/provincial/national level;
- (g) Provide guidance/assistance in learner assessment;
- (h) Provide an environment that creates and fosters commitment and confidence among colleagues and educators, while promoting the values of fairness and equity in the workplace;
- (i) Assist educators to identify, assess and meet the needs of learners (provide professional leadership);
- (j) Disseminate and encourage the application of good practices in all areas of work;
- (k) Explain the objectives of any intervention/s to learners, educators and others;
- (l) Chair workshops, case conferences and meetings when needed;
- (m) Serve on recruitment, promotion, advisory and other committees as required;

- (n) Assess professional development needs by using questionnaires, informal methods and developmental appraisal;
- (o) Support and plan staff development programmes based on needs and which are congruent with the principles and values of the applicable policy frameworks and plans;
- (p) Evaluate staff development programmes in terms of the goals of the institutions;
- (q) Participate in agreed educator appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice.

The above functions or roles of curriculum advisors indicate that the curriculum advisors are responsible for ensuring effective implementation of the curriculum because they always support and guide the principals, DHs and teachers in order to improve teaching, learning and academic performance of the learners. The curriculum experts also confirm the above functions of the curriculum advisors. According to Robinson (2018), the following are the roles and responsibilities of curriculum advisors as instructional leaders:

- (a) Orientation and training of teachers;
- (b) To support teachers on subject content;
- (c) To develop and distribute relevant curriculum materials;
- (d) To provide teachers with on-site support;
- (e) To assist teachers in curriculum planning and delivery;
- (f) To develop effective communication strategies.

Trehearn (2015) describes professional development as the continuous, voluntary, self-motivated, collaborative and learner-centred pursuit of knowledge aimed at promoting the learner's academic performance. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) describe professional development as formal and structured professional learning directed at inexperienced and experienced professionals who wish to learn and improve their teaching skills in order to improve student learning. Curriculum advisors conduct brief training sessions, lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences in the schools, community centres and circuit offices (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). In my opinion, curriculum advisors should ensure that teachers get professional

development throughout their teaching careers. This professional training should focus on improving learning. According to Chigona (2017), professional development should also focus on the use of digital technologies to assist teachers in using such technologies in their classrooms. However, Barber and King (2016) are of the opinion that the use of digital technology is challenging as learning takes on a strong constructivist approach. Teachers therefore depend on subject or curriculum advisors whose responsibility is to facilitate curriculum delivery in schools for quality teaching and learning. Teachers need professional development that equips them with the skills necessary for effective integration of digital technologies into their teaching.

The Education Labour Relations Council's (ELRC) Policy Handbook for Educators details the roles and expectations required of curriculum advisors (Department of Education, 2003). Curriculum implementation is the major process that determines the role of the curriculum advisor. Teachers are required to work with the curriculum advisors to improve content knowledge and skills which will enable them to promote the learner's academic performance. The policy further emphasises that curriculum advisors promote effective implementation of the curriculum by conducting continuous teachers' professional development workshops. Researchers revealed that effective curriculum implementation requires effective guidance, counselling, monitoring, appraisal and curriculum development (Adendorff & Moodley, 2015; Schreuder, 2018, Daniel, 2017). According to Adendorff and Moodley (2015), curriculum advisors are responsible for the distribution of staff and teaching and learning materials, facilitation of curriculum implementation, monitoring, support and guidance to the learners when requested by the teachers and learners. From the various researches discussed above, it is evident that the role of curriculum advisors is to provide guidance and leadership to the teachers and learners, with regard to the implementation and management of the curriculum.

Schreuder (2018) indicates that the role of curriculum advisors is to give instruction and to support the teachers in curriculum implementation. The curriculum advisors should support underperforming and high performing schools. This view is supported by Daniel (2017) who indicates that the roles of curriculum advisors, include amongst others, to develop educators in order to understand new curriculum developments, monitor and support educators in the implementation of curriculum changes, design

lesson plans, provide guidance and support activities to teachers, administer assessment of teachers and monitor teaching and learning in the classrooms. Daniel (2017) also emphasise that curriculum advisors are responsible for conducting in-service training, workshops, individual training and mentoring, coordinate curriculum implementation and motivate educators to implement the curriculum, interpret the curriculum according to the policy, see to the effective use of resources and conduct class visits. Daniel (2017) further highlights the challenges experienced by subject advisors in ensuring effective curriculum delivery, namely, resistance against class visits. It is for this reason that curriculum advisors are required to first negotiate class visits with teachers. Although I fully agree with the researchers on roles of circuit managers in schools, I am concerned that they frequently do not have sufficient time to conduct school visits aimed at supporting both the teachers and the school management team. Furthermore, most curriculum advisors feel isolated, threatened and rejected by teachers who reluctantly request their support.

3.9 CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS IN THEIR INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ROLE

This section focuses on the challenges experienced by principals, deputy principals and DH's in their instructional leadership role within the South African schooling system. Many researchers and the DBE identify the following challenges experienced by instructional leaders in schools:

3.9.1 Lack of knowledge and skills of instructional leadership

The researchers revealed that principals, deputy principals and DHs face challenges in executing their roles as instructional leaders. Research conducted by Bloom, Lemos, Sadun and Van Reenen (2015) revealed a link between poor learning and weak instructional leaders because effective school management is strongly associated with better educational outcomes. According to Molina and Wilinowski (2018), most instructional leaders are inadequately prepared for instructional leadership roles because they do not have the requisite skills to be instructional leaders to lead and manage schools effectively and efficiently. Seobi and Wood (2016) emphasise that most instructional leaders struggle to interpret the prescripts of what

they should do, and to translate these prescriptions into a coherent and sustainable framework for instructional support. Lack of management knowledge and skills is also emphasised by Seabi and Nkabinde (2016), who indicate that many instructional leaders are without leadership and management qualifications or in-service training in terms of management or leadership. It can therefore be concluded that learner performance in many schools is poor due to lack of management and leadership training. According to Seabi and Nkabinde (2016) this is the leadership gap that needs to be bridged to enable instructional leaders to perform their tasks effectively. Seabi and Nkabinde (2016) recommend that instructional leaders should be empowered with instructional leadership and management knowledge and skills by attending professional development sessions.

3.9.2 Teachers' absenteeism and unwillingness to be observed while teaching

Another challenge experienced by instructional leaders in South Africa is teachers' absenteeism and unwillingness to be observed while teaching (Wood, Seobi, Setlhare-Meltor & Waddington, 2015). School visits are professional development processes where instructional leaders observe teachers in their classrooms, assessing their instructional practices and providing structured feedback (Kraft & Blazar, 2017). However, in most schools, it is a common practice for SADTU representatives to deny principals from undertaking classroom observations (Dongo, 2016). The union representatives appear to equate classroom observations with labelling and witch hunting. According to Wood et al. (2015), it is the role of instructional leaders to monitor teachers while they are teaching and also to provide guidance on their teaching weaknesses. Instructional leaders need to show teachers the best teaching methods, monitor teachers, facilitate discussions about those monitoring's, guide teachers and model new school initiatives (Wood et al., 2015). In order to perform these duties effectively, instructional leaders should be allowed to be in classrooms. Wood et al. (2015) indicate that there are, however, some teachers who are against professional development and instructional leaders find gaining access into the classroom one of their greatest challenges. Most teachers do not accept curriculum advisors in the classroom because they believe that subject advisors are there to evaluate them.

(Wood et al., 2015). This negative attitude of teachers towards instructional leaders indicates that instructional leaders are not supported by many teachers in the schools.

3.9.3 Ineffective Representative Council of Learners (RCLS)

In South Africa, another challenge facing instructional leaders is ineffective RCLs (DBE, 2018). The RCL is an integral part of the schooling system, which is responsible for improving the culture of learning and teaching but in many schools, it is not effective (DBE, 2018). Molina and Wilinowski (2018) argue that to be effective, principals should shift from being bureaucrats burdened by administrative work to instructional leaders who provide pedagogical support to teachers. I personally believe that the teachers who are appointed as principals because of their support of teacher unions and not because of their qualifications in school management, contribute to poor school management and leadership.

If properly established and well guided, the RCL can play an important role in ensuring that there is effective teaching in the school as learners' needs will be made a first priority. The ineffectiveness of the RCLs of many schools result in poor quality teaching and learning in schools (DBE, 2018). This contributes to the poor culture of learning and teaching.

3.9.4 Lack of curriculum planning and management

In South Africa, poor performing schools are characterised by lack of proper curriculum planning (DBE, 2018). In most schools teachers work in solos instead of working in teams. Teachers plan individually and as such they usually fail to produce good lesson plans. According to Nkambule and Amsterdam (2018), curriculum management is inadequate, leaving educators feeling unsupported and ill-equipped to face the challenges presented by the new curriculum reforms. Van der Berg, Spaull, Wills, Gustafsson and Kotzé (2016) opine that teacher support and supervision in curriculum implementation is uneven, fragmented and non-existent for most teachers. Some HoDs fail to check the lesson plans to ascertain whether they are relevant, fail to provide guidance to teachers and also fail to both monitor and support teachers due to lack of content knowledge (Yusof et al., 2017). Such schools do not plan for regular

assessments to track learner progress and most teachers are also unable to complete the syllabi. Most learners' work is not corrected by the teachers and as a result learners are unable to understand why they are failing (DBE, 2018).

3.9.5 Insufficient contact time

Another challenge experienced by the instructional leaders is insufficient contact time. According to Osman (2017), many schools are characterised by ill-discipline with high rates of absenteeism. A study conducted by Kubheka (2019) reveals that both learners and teachers arrive at school late and depart earlier before the schools close. The study further reveals that teachers only spend 66% of classroom time teaching as opposed to international average of 78% (Kubheka, 2019). According to Maile and Olowoyo (2017), schools in the country start at 07h30 in the morning, but in most cases, learners are observed roaming the streets until 9h00 in the morning. This view is supported by the National Education Evaluation and Development (NEEDU) Report, which indicates that late coming in the mornings and after breaks is rife for both learners and teachers (DBE, 2018). Late coming contributes to poor performance and dysfunctional schools which lead to poor academic performance of the learners. The challenge of insufficient contact time indicates that instructional leaders are not able to maintain sufficient time for effective teaching and learning by enforcing the policies and regulations of the DBE.

3.9.6 Lack of support from SGBs

Another challenge faced by instructional leaders is the lack of support from the SGB (Nwosu & Chukwuere; Netshitangani & Mohapi, 2018; Duku & Salami, 2018). According to Nwosu and Chukwuere (2017), most schools especially those located in rural and township tend to have non-functional SGBs as they lack understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Some SGBs do not support the schools because of other commitments in their communities (Nwosu & Chukwuere, 2017). This view is confirmed by Netshitangani and Mohapi (2018), who assert that most SGBs are unable to make a meaningful contribution. According to Duku and Salami (2018), the inability of SGBs to interpret and implement SASA forces them to shift their responsibilities to the principals. Another study conducted by Magano, Mohapi and

Robinson (2017) found that dysfunctional SGBs in South African schools affected learners' performance.

3.9.7 Lack of parental and community involvement

One of the challenges experienced by instructional leaders is lack of parental and community involvement in their children's learning. This perception is confirmed by Sibanda (2017), who indicates that parents in poor performing schools are often not involved in the education of their children. Most parents appear to feel marginalised by instructional leaders and teachers. In such schools, the parents believe that they are not treated fairly by teachers because they do not receive regular feedback on the progress of their children. This perception is supported by McDowall and Schaughency (2017), who assert that many teachers have a negative perception of parental involvement, often classifying it as less encouraging and less rewarding in terms of advancing children's learning. According to Munje and Mncube (2018), many schools are not initiating and implementing appropriate strategies that are genuinely inclusive, welcoming or encouraging and are thereby preventing parental involvement. Segoe and Bisschoff (2019) emphasise that active parental involvement is an essential aspect of improving learners' achievement but many parents are marginalised by the teachers. The local communities are also not involved in poor performing schools because they are not proud of dysfunctional schools and, therefore, disengage from them (DBE, 2018). In the view of Epstein (2018), teachers increasingly lack adequate knowledge about the varied characteristics of parents, which is caused by the lack of training on parent-school relationships.

3.9.8 Poor infrastructure

Another main challenge experienced by instructional leaders in the schools is poor infrastructure. There is a link between school infrastructure conditions, teaching and learning effectiveness and the academic performance of the learners (Draga, 2017). Poor learning conditions contribute to learners' irregular attendance and dropout. Learners develop a negative attitude towards the school and their ability to engage in the learning process is compromised. Schools with poor leadership and management systems tend to neglect their infrastructure. In some schools, the DBE is unable to

improve the infrastructure of the school because of poor leadership. For example, there are still thousands of learners whose schools were constructed by communities; most schools still lack sanitation and electricity and are dilapidated mud schools (Skelton, 2020). The findings of the 2017 school monitoring survey revealed that nationally, only 59% of the schools complied with minimum physical infrastructure standards, only 76% of schools had running water and 80% of the schools had sanitation (Phakati, 2019). Most schools are also still without libraries where there are libraries they are not effectively used and well maintained. According to Roodt (2018), in 2018, over 60% schools were without libraries. It is therefore not surprising that most South African learners in disadvantaged communities lack the necessary literacy skills to succeed academically (Munyaradzi & Manyike, 2022),

3.9.9 Unlawful appointments

South Africa is facing an education crisis due to the shortage of teachers in many schools because of wrong appointments (Sephton, 2018). Instructional leaders as representatives of the department work with SGBs to recommend the appointment of teachers up to deputy principal level (DBE, 2018). Teachers' shortages are caused by incorrect appointments and allocation of teachers with some schools with less while others having more teachers (Sephton, 2018). According to Gardiner (2016), unions argue that problems around the appointment of teachers are because of SGB involvement. Roodt (2018), however, indicates that the South African Democratic Union (SADTU), who have hijacked provincial education departments, are selling various posts in schools and are responsible for corruption in schools.

3.9.10 Lack of accountability

According to Mestry (2017), there appear to be lack of accountability in most poor performing schools. Although teachers in these schools are aware of challenges, they fail to provide solutions as they are not in leadership positions (Mestry, 2017). Due to the lack of support from the teachers, school principals are faced with new demands, more complex decisions to be made and additional responsibilities than ever before (Mestry, 2017). Time and resources are wasted due to lack accountability as they fail to take collective responsibility for the smooth running of schools. Kellerman (2015)

asserts that school leadership has become a high wire act that only the most skilled are able to perform successfully. According to Kiat et al. (2017) the role of the principals is to improve the teaching and learning environment by creating conditions conducive to improve curriculum management. The principals are the most influential figures in promoting reform, change and innovation (Cruz et al., 2016). They should, therefore, have confidence and the necessary skills to engage with teachers about the quality of teaching and learning (Le Fevre & Robinson, 2015). This implies that principals must be able to manage the curriculum, supervise teaching, develop teachers professionally, improve teaching and learning environment, guide learners in learning, monitor and assess learner progress, create positive school climates, motivate teachers and learners and effectively manage resources in order to enhance best instructional practices. According to Kiat et al. (2017), many principals are unfortunately not able to be effective instructional leaders because of lack of instructional knowledge and skills or competence. In other words, most principals in South African public schools lack a comprehensive understanding of their instructional leadership role because they also lack understanding of the concept of instructional leadership. This impacts negatively on learner performance and consequently, academic standards. The situation is worsened by the fact that induction, mentoring and other tangible support are usually limited and principals have to adopt a pragmatic approach to managing the day-to-day operations of schools. According to Heystek (2016), most principals lack instructional leadership and management training prior to and after their entry into principalship positions. As a result, most principals appear to be relying on past experiences and common sense in fulfilling their leadership roles. Principals' lack of instructional leadership skills contributes immensely to the dysfunctionality of schools. Cruz et al. (2016) argue that currently more emphasis is on enhancing instructional leadership and managerial competencies of school principals in order to enhance school reform, change and innovation. This is confirmed by Kellerman (2019) who asserts that school leadership can only be successful when principals are skilled to perform requisite tasks.

3.9.11 Workload related challenges

Another instructional leadership challenge experienced by principals is work overload. Principals are faced with diverse administrative and management functions such as

procuring resources, managing learner discipline, resolving conflicts with parents, lesser holidays or breaks, pressure to work overtime and dealing with unexpected teacher and learner crises (Mestry, 2017). According to Bottery (2016), other roles to be performed by principals includes procuring resources, scheduling, reporting, managing learner discipline, handling relations with parents and the broader community and dealing with unexpected multiple learner and teacher crises. Principals must also address the growing mental health issues affecting both learners and teachers while developing and maintaining a safe and positive school culture, manage people and recruit competent teachers (Harper, 2018). Due to heavy workload, many school principals experience challenges with balancing their diverse administrative duties with their curriculum leadership functions. They are forced to work extra hours under increasing pressures resulting in them developing burnout (Mahfouz, 2018). Van Deventer (2016) claims that it is impossible for school principals to be the sole leaders and suggest the use distributive leadership in schools. Therefore, if principals are to take the role of an instructional leader seriously, they will have to free themselves from bureaucratic tasks and focus their efforts toward improving teaching and learning (Feye, 2019).

3.9.12 Violence in schools

Bayer (2016) identifies violence as a challenge that is prevalent in most schools as it affects both the teachers and the learners. According to the DBE (2015), there is high rate of poor discipline of learners in many schools of South Africa, which culminate in violence against learners and teachers. Carrying of knives, guns and other weapons is part of daily school life. Furthermore, shootings, stabbings, physical and emotional violence have taken place in both public and independent schools (Zulu, Urbani & Van der Merwe 2004). This perspective is supported by Daniel (2018), who indicates that many educational institutions of South Africa have gradually turned into dangerous and violent places for both learners and teachers. The challenges of violence of learners are common in many secondary schools in the Limpopo Province (Lumadi, 2020). For example, on 26 February 2018, a 16-year-old learner of Denga Tshivhase High School, in Phiphidi Village, Thohoyandou, fatally shot an 18-year-old fellow learner and injured two others, allegedly in the middle of a heated altercation at the school premises (Ramothwala, 2018). In the same year, at Malebogo High School in

Senwabarana, an intense argument led to the fatal stabbing of an 18-year-old learner to death with a sharp object by a Grade 9 learner. In April 2021, a 15-year-old schoolgirl was arrested and charged for assaulting fellow learner at Mbilwi Secondary school in Thohoyandou, who was later declared dead (Bhengu, 2021).

In order to increase learners' academic achievement, schools need to minimise incidences of violence amongst learners and against teachers. This requires the support of the school communities, teachers and parents. The second challenge experienced by principals is parents' negative attitudes towards school activities. Schools cannot be successful without support from families. However, some parents have negative attitudes towards principals and also fail to participate in school activities. The third challenge experienced by principals is teacher unions (syndicalism). In many countries each teacher union is related to one political party. Consequently, managing and bringing them to common ground is a challenge. Since teachers belong to different unions, they may be biased against their colleagues who are the members of another teacher union.

The other challenge faced by instructional leaders is teachers' negative attitudes towards leadership. According to Bayer (2016), teachers' attitudes and behaviours towards principals deeply affect principals as their authority is undermined. In addition, some teachers tend to compare the leadership style of one principal with others in nearby schools. The final challenge experienced by principals, according to Bayer (2016), is the increase in undesired behaviours in classroom and school, such as smoking, late coming, absenteeism and drug abuse by both teachers and learners. I agree with Bayer's findings because incidences of violence in schools are reported on media on an ongoing basis. I am of the opinion that such violence reflects the increase in violence within communities. Most learners are from dysfunctional families resulting in erosion of cultural values of humility. Schools therefore reflect changes in societies as well as communities. Recently, there is an increase in learner fatalities due to teacher negligence. These incidences include, among others, a learner drowning during a school trip without anyone noticing that a learner was missing (Ngqakamba, 2020). This finding is confirmed by Brooks and Ekkarin (2015) who emphasise that violence negatively affects the work of the principals and teachers.

3.9.13 Constant changes of the curriculum

Another challenge faced by instructional leaders is the constant change of the curriculum. Dongo (2016) indicated that the instability of the curriculum is one of the main challenges experienced by the instructional leaders. Since the dawn of democracy, the school curriculum was revised at least four times: Outcomes Based Education implemented in 2000; the Revised National Curriculum Statement implemented in 2002; National Curriculum Statement of 2007 and currently in use, the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement first implemented in 2012 (Botsime, 2018). These changes presented principals with the challenge of developing teachers and providing instructional resources to meet the ever-changing curriculum (Dongo, 2016). According to Maepa (2017), teachers are still experiencing ongoing implementation challenges and are dissatisfied with the quality and quantity of professional development they receive.

3.9.14 Disruptions of teaching and learning

Dongo (2016) further claims that teaching and learning is often disrupted in the schools by advertising companies to advertise their business or products in schools, by district meetings held in some schools and by pastors who come to preach at school during school hours. According to Kearney, Burden and Schuck (2018), the use of technology also disrupts teaching and learning because many learners are not able to use it effectively. In South Africa, teaching and learning is also disrupted by misbehaviour of learners, which includes aggression, stubbornness, disobedience, lack of accountability, unauthorised talking and disturbing other learners (Maarman, 2017).

3.10 ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

The previous section focused on the challenges experienced by instructional leaders in the schools. This section focusses on the strategies that can be implemented to address instructional leadership challenges. According to Austin, Anderson-Davis, Graham and White (2018), teamwork is the major strategy of improving instructional leadership in schools. The principals should establish an instructional leadership team

to improve teaching and learning at school. An instructional leadership team is a team of teacher leaders and a principal who collaborate to focus on the improvement of teaching and learning (Austin et al., 2018). If the principals have instructional leadership teams, they can together collaborate to identify teaching and learning challenges and support teachers to resolve them (Austin et al., 2018).

The use of teamwork or collaborative leadership in schools is supported by Kraft (2015). According to Kraft (2015), principals should create a culture which promotes teacher leadership and professionalism by encouraging networking through teamwork. This implies that instructional leadership should not be confined to headship only but requires a team effort which will facilitate the creation of an environment conducive to teaching and learning.

Another strategy of improving instructional leadership is professional development of instructional leaders (Mestry, 2017; Kellerman, 2015; Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; Galaczi, Nye, Poulter & Allen, 2018). Professional development is a lifelong collaborative learning process that nourishes the growth of individuals, teams, and the schools through a daily job-embedded, learner centred and focused approach (Galaczi et al., 2018). Inexperienced and experienced Instructional leaders should attend continuous professional development training sessions in order to improve their knowledge and skills about instructional leadership (Mestry, 2017; Kellerman, 2015). According to Darling-Hammond et al., (2017), instructional leaders should also possess deep and relevant subject knowledge to guide and support educators. The DBE should organise developmental workshop sessions for instructional leaders to equip them with subject knowledge and leadership abilities (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017). Professional development sessions offer teachers an opportunity to deepen their content knowledge and assist them to be engaged in active learning of both teaching and learning (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

The DBE (2018) should organise inductions for the newly appointed principals. According to DBE (2018), newly appointed principals are expected to attend a yearlong induction programme after appointment to skill them. The induction programme exposes principals to the DBE expectations including knowledge of important legislations, good practices, non-negotiable matters and how the circuit and

district offices function. Crucial knowledge and skills that instructional leaders should acquire relate to management. Improving learning is dependent on the quality of teaching learners receive, which in turn is dependent on the teacher's capacity to consistently deliver high-quality lessons targeted at learner's individual learning needs (Wyatt, 2017). The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) (2016) highlights that the professional development programmes of teachers need to focus on the in-service training and development programmes which are specifically aimed at enhancing both content knowledge of the teachers and teaching methodology. Professional development is therefore needed to keep teachers up-to-date on developments in their subjects and on pedagogy and technology, the teachers' code of conduct and education in general (Ravhuhali, Kutame, Mutshaeni, Mokhelo & Maluleke, 2017).

The DBE (2018) also recommended the following eight strategies for improving instructional leadership:

(a) Planning

Planning is an essential process of leadership and is articulating shared direction and coherent policies, practices, and procedures for realising high standards for learners' performance (DBE, 2018). Planning contributes to the effective use of time to promote teaching and learning. Section 16A of the Education Laws Amendment Act calls for the principals of underperforming schools to draw up a school academic improvement plan (DBE, 2018). The academic improvement plan should be based on collected data for decision-making purposes.

(b) Curriculum planning and management

The DBE organises professional development sessions to guide the principals on improving the academic performance, lesson plans, Annual National Assessment procedures and developing academic improvement plans based on the data captured in schools' academic reports. Districts need to work out a system for training principals using a matrix system (DBE, 2018).

(c) Improved contact time

The SMTs must implement the Policy on Learner Attendance of the DBE. The instructional leaders should develop school policies to respond to challenges of absenteeism and improve parental involvement. They are further expected to keep records, analyse absenteeism patterns and inform teachers on the number of days available on each category of leave.

(d) Support by the SGB

The DBE ensure that principals are accountable for the SGB functionality as stipulated in the Education Laws Amendment Act of 2007. The DBE provide documents which advise SGB chairperson on their duties, provide checklists to SGBs to evaluate their own functionality and institutionalise the clustering of SGB chairperson to form a circuit functional structure.

(e) Parental and community involvement

The schools have important responsibilities to communicate effectively with parents and learners about how each learner performs at school.

(f) Infrastructure maintenance

The DBE designs a school maintenance programme for the SMT and SGB for the maintenance of school's infrastructure.

(g) Appropriate staff appointments

Management development programmes such as induction of school managers, coaching and mentoring of principals and SGB and establishment of learning networks, will be strengthened by the department to create a pool of potential managers who will fill management positions in schools when positions are available.

(h) Accountability

The department will organise workshops to capacitate all the stakeholders to be accountable in the schools. According to Sterrett, Parker and Mitzner (2018), instructional leaders have a vital role in valuing teachers' time and they must have site-based control in establishing the master schedule for the classes. Instructional leaders must promote accountability and principals must ensure that most time is spent on teaching and learning instead of non-instructional tasks. Instructional leaders must always avoid disruptions of contact time and strive to create structures that maximise instructional time, because it conveys the importance of learning to teachers (Sterrett et al., 2018). These structures must be incorporated into the daily schedule and school calendar and the instructional leaders should provide teachers with sufficient time for collaboration with colleagues to resolve problems and focus on teaching and learning. Contact time is important because teachers need time to share their practices, plan for learning, learn from each other and discuss interventions to help enhance learning (Sterrett et al., 2018). The role of instructional leaders is therefore critically important in fostering these collaborative opportunities.

The DBE have also established Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in different geographical areas for principals to share good practices under the guidance of circuit managers (DBE, 2018). The PLCs are institutionalised at district level and do not operate as social contracts for poor performing schools. These efforts are aimed at improving instructional leadership in the schools and enhance learners' academic performance.

3.12 SUMMARY

Chapter three focussed on instructional leadership in the South African education system. The chapter includes a discussion on the school leadership system in the South African schooling system prior to and after 1994, the importance of instructional leadership in schools, the instructional leadership role of the principal, deputy principal, DHs and curriculum advisors. The challenges faced by principals and DHs in instructional leadership and the strategies aimed at addressing instructional leadership challenges in South African schools were outlined.

After 1994, the racially-based 19 education departments of apartheid were restructured into a non-racial, provincially-based system, with nine provincial departments and one national department. All schools of South Africa are now governed by the Constitution of the RSA, legislations and policies and the major legislation is SASA. All schools are under collaborative leadership of the SMTs which is headed by the principal and the SGBs, which includes parent and teachers and learners in secondary schools.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the role of instructional leaders in the academic performance of learners in rural primary schools in Khujwana Circuit, Mopani District, Limpopo Province. Chapter three presented a synthesis of literature on the role of instructional leaders and the South African education policies formulated after 1994 to deal with issues of school transformation and governance. This chapter focuses on the research design and methodology used to collect empirical data for this study. Furthermore, the chapter includes the restatement of research question which guides the empirical investigation, description of the research paradigm, research design, research approach, research population, sampling, data collection methods, data analysis, limitation of the study, ethical considerations and trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

4.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Research paradigm refers to a category of elementary presumptions and principles on people's perception of the universe, which serves as a thinking framework to guide researchers' activities during empirical investigations (Wahyuni, 2016). Thus, a research paradigm is a category of principles about the universe and how it should be understood and studied. The main function of a paradigm is to create new perspectives, social environments and new sets of principles that guide new types of actions that impact on how research is conducted (Morgan, 2014). In other words, a research paradigm controls and directs how researchers conduct empirical studies.

There are three main research paradigms, namely, positivism, interpretivism/constructivism, and critical inquiry (Pham, 2018). Positivists accept that various researchers who observe a similar legitimate problem will reach similar conclusions by cautiously utilising statistical tests and administering the same research procedure in investigating a broad sample (Creswell, 2014). The post-positivism paradigms, which include interpretivism/constructivism, move positivism from a narrow

perspective into a more encompassing way of examining real world problems (Ryan, 2016). This approach therefore, is explicitly anchored in pragmatism, emphasises meanings and seeks to explicate social concerns. According to Ryan (2016), post-positivism also recognises that dualistic thinking is inadequate and that multiplicity and complexity are the reality of all human experiences.

Another type of paradigm is the critical theory paradigm. According to the critical theory paradigm, reality is shaped by cultural, political, ethnic, gender and religious factors which interact to create a social system (Rehman & Alharthi, 2018). Critical theory unlike positivist theory challenges the status quo and strives for a balanced and democratic society (Asghar, 2013). It highlights and explains social factors which result in oppressive powerful groups dominating and suppressing disadvantaged communities. It strives at creating a just and equal society amongst all communities. Critical theory is therefore, mainly concerned with power relations within the society and the interaction of race, class, gender, education, economy, religion and other social institutions that contribute to a social system.

This study was guided by a constructivist paradigm. Adom, Yeboah and Ankrah (2016) describe the constructivist philosophical paradigm as an approach that asserts that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. According to Rahi (2017), constructivism is based on the belief that reality is established by social factors and people's understanding of such factors. The constructivist paradigm is based on the analogy or basis that people form or construct much of what they learn through experience (Adom et al., (2016). The constructivist philosophy also portrays the idea that learning does not just happen from the traditional method of teachers standing in front of the class and lecturing, but it occurs only when the learner discovers knowledge through experimentation and doing.

4.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design refers to the conceptual structure within which research is conducted (Pandey & Pandey, 2015). Akhtar (2016) describes research design as a structure of research or a "glue" that holds all the elements of a research project together.

According to Babbie (2014), research design is a strategy which is used by the researchers during the research process. Research design is also defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2017) as a category of procedures and rules which should be pursued by a researcher when addressing a research problem.

In this study, the phenomenological research design was used to investigate the role of school instructional leaders in improving learners' academic performance. A phenomenological research design provides clarification of all significant issues experienced by people (McMillan & Schumacher, 2018). The role of the researcher is to interpret the phenomena as accurately as possible, refrain from any pre-given framework, but remain relevant to the information.

The phenomenon that was described in this study was 'the role of school instructional leaders in improving the academic performance of learners.' According to McMillan and Schumacher (2016) the role of the phenomenologists is to understand social and psychological phenomena or circumstances from the perspective of the people involved. Researchers who apply phenomenology are involved in analysing the lived experiences of the research participants of the problem under investigation (Beyer, 2018). In this study, the research participants were SMT members (principals, deputy principals and DHs). During the research process, I gathered information on the role of SMT members in the academic performance of learners in selected rural primary schools.

4.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.4.1 Qualitative Research

According to Bhandari (2023), there are various qualitative research approaches such as grounded theory, ethnography, action research, phenomenological research and narrative research. This study is based on a qualitative research approach. According to Anas and Ishag (2022), the term 'research' refers to a method of gathering, analysing and interpreting information which could be useful for solving a problem. It includes the manipulation of variables or concepts for the purpose of generating, expanding, correcting and verifying the knowledge which can help the building a theory

or the practice of an art (Anas & Ishag, 2022). This study is based on qualitative research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2017), the word 'qualitative' conveys an emphasis on the characteristics of entities and procedures and on explanations that are not experimentally examined or measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity or frequency. Therefore, qualitative research is an umbrella term for a diverse, expansive, and continuously evolving array of research interpretive paradigms, approaches, methods, evaluation practices, and products (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationships between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 2017). According to Bhandari (2023), qualitative research involves collecting and analysing non-numerical data such as text, video, or audio to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. This implies that qualitative research is used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. Streubert-Speziale and Carpenter (2014) indicate that a qualitative approach embraces multiple realities, is committed to the participants' viewpoints, limits disruption of the natural context of the phenomenon under study, acknowledge the participants in the research process and reports data in literary style rich with participants' commentaries. Cooper and Schinder (2014) put it succinctly when they note that qualitative research involves the researcher being immersed in the phenomena to be studied. During this process, the researcher gathers data which provides a detailed description of events, situations and interactions between people and things. To illustrate this, Cooper and Schinder (2014) show that the qualitative method informs the researcher about the process and the reason for occurrence of things as they happen in life.

According to Babbie (2016), the difference between qualitative and quantitative data in social research is the difference in the use of numerical and non-numerical data. In qualitative research, researchers use various methods to collect data. This view is confirmed by Jamshed (2014) who asserts that there are many qualitative methods which are used to obtain an in depth and extensive understanding of the issues by means of their textual interpretation and the most common types are interviewing and observation. Smith, Sparkes, Tenenbaum and Bolangin (2020) emphasise that in qualitative research, researchers focus on talking because people are heavily indebted to talk to make sense of their experiences, produce meaning, interpret their emotions,

communicate intelligibly with each other, and carry out actions. Thus, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed and how they have made sense of their world and their experiences. Yadav (2021) asserts that qualitative research tends to come from a very different paradigmatic stance and intrinsically demands distinctive and out-of-the-ordinary criteria for evaluating good research and varieties of research contributions that can be made. According to Bhandari (2023), qualitative research has the following advantages:

Flexibility: The data collection and analysis process can be adapted as new ideas or patterns emerge and they are not rigidly decided beforehand.

Natural settings: Data collection occurs in real-world contexts or in naturalistic ways.

Meaningful insights: Detailed descriptions of people's experiences, feelings and perceptions can be used in designing, testing or improving systems or products.

Generation of new ideas: Open-ended responses mean that researchers can uncover novel problems or opportunities that they would not have thought of otherwise.

In this study, qualitative research was preferred because of the above advantages as it assisted me to comprehend the role of school instructional leaders on teaching and academic performance of learners, it gave credence to diversified realities, it limited disruption of the natural environment and it allowed me to report data in a textual rich style. In this study, I used a qualitative research approach to interact with principals and members of SMTs (DHs and deputy principals), who were part of the study, through individual interviews and focus group interviews. This approach enabled me to gather what Marshall and Rossman (2016) refer to as thick description of the story from participants.

4.4.2 Researcher profile

I am currently in my fifties. After passing Grade 12, I attended a Teachers' Training College where I qualified as a teacher with a Diploma in Education specialising in all subjects. I started my teaching career at a primary school in Xihoko Circuit. A year later I enrolled for a Bachelor of Arts at University of South Africa. I completed my Bachelor of Arts in my fourth year of teaching while still at Xihoko Circuit. After

completion I furthered my studies by registering for a postgraduate degree specialising in special needs education. In the same year I enrolled for Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in Leadership at the University of South Africa which I completed in one year. After acquiring the ACE, I applied several times for a managerial position and was unsuccessful. I then enrolled for my Master's Degree in Comparative Education at the University of South Africa. The Departmental Head vacancy was advertised for which I applied and was appointed. In the same year I completed my Master's Degree. I taught at the school for one year. After serving for one year as a DH, a deputy principal vacancy was advertised, for which I applied and was appointed as deputy principal. I am currently principal of a primary school in the Nkowankowa Circuit.

4.4.3 Selection of the sites

A research site is a place where researchers conduct research, such as schools, hospitals and universities (Creswell, 2014). In this study, I used purposive sampling to select four rural primary schools in Khujwana Circuit, Mopani West Education District in the Limpopo Province.

The criteria for the selection of the four schools were as follows:

- a) In this study, a combination of well performing, moderate performing, as well as poor performing schools were selected.
- b) All the selected schools are Quintile 1 schools, which means that learners do not pay school fees in this school. As a result, the school receives funding from the DBE.
- c) All the selected schools provide schooling from Grade R to Grade 7.
- d) These schools are also located in close proximity to my place of residence which enabled me to visit them with ease.

4.4.4 Selection of the participants

The target population of this research was four primary school principals and 20 SMT members of which five were from each of the four selected primary schools. The

research participants consisted of four principals from the four selected schools and five SMTs from each of the participating schools Their criteria for selection were as follows:

The participants were all SMT members.

The participants had more than five years of experience in leadership positions.
All participants are working in the four selected primary schools.

Table 4.1 provides a description of the participants for this study.

Table 4.1: Profile of the research participants

School	Participant	Gender	Age	Experi ence	Qualifications
A	Principal	M	54	29	Honours Degree
	Deputy Principal	F	42	18	Honours Degree
	DH1	F	41	15	Matric +Teachers' Cert
	DH2	F	48	23	Bachelor's Degree
	DH3	F	40	15	Matric +Teachers' Cert
	DH4	M	37	14	Bachelor's Degree
	DH5	F	36	13	Bachelor's Degree
B	Principal	M	58	24	Masters
	Deputy Principal	M	45	20	Bachelor's Degree
	DH1	F	48	19	Bachelor's Degree
	DH2	M	42	15	Bachelor's Degree
	DH3	F	39	16	Matric +Teachers' Cert

	DH4	M	41	17	Bachelor's Degree
	DH5	F	45	17	Matric +Teachers' Cert
C	Principal	F	49	20	Honours Degree
	Deputy Principal	M	48	22	Bachelor of Education Degree
	DH1	F	47	18	Bachelor's Degree
	DH2	F	38	12	Bachelor's Degree
	DH3	M	44	9	Matric +Teachers' Cert
	DH4	F	46	18	Bachelor's Degree
	DH5	M	40	15	Matric +Teachers' Cert
D	Principal	M	53	24	Bachelor's Degree
	Deputy Principal	M	50	23	Bachelor of Education Degree
	DH1	F	50	21	Bachelor's Degree
	DH2	M	43	16	Matric +Teachers' Cert
	DH3	F	36	10	Matric +Teachers' Cert
	DH4	M	46	19	Honours Degree
	DH5	F	34	6	Matric +Teachers' Cert
4	24				

According to Table 4.1, 15 participants of the study were females, while 9 participants were males. Table 4.1 further indicates that the participants' age ranged from 34 years old to 58 years of age. Twenty-two participants were middle-aged (35-54 years old).

Table 4.1 also reveals the participants' years of experience in their various positions. Three of the research participants had between 5 and 10 years' experience as Departmental Head member or principal. Seven participants have between 11 and 15 years' experience as DH member or principal while ten participants had 16-20 years' experience as DH member or principal. Five of the research participants had an experience of between 21-25 years' experience as DH member or principal. One participant had experience of between 26 and 30 years.

Table 4.1 also indicates all participants were both well qualified with a wealth of teaching experience. Twenty-two participants have extensive experience in instructional leadership. Nine participants had Matric and Teaching Certificate; 11 participants had a Bachelors' Degree and Teaching Certificate, three participants had Honours Degree and Teaching Certificate and one participant had a Master's Degree in Education and Teaching Certificate.

4.4.5 Data collection methods

In this study data were collected in two phases and the data collection methods included document analysis, non-participant observations and individual interviews with the school principals and focus group interviews with SMTs. Data collection methods will be discussed in the section below.

4.4.5.1 Phase 1: Document analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for interpreting, reviewing or evaluating both printed and electronic documents to give voice and meaning (Bowen, 2017). According to Wach (2013), document analysis is a research method for rigorously and systematically analysing the contents of written documents, to facilitate impartial and consistent analysis of written policies. I examined two types of documents, namely; national policies and school documents. In this study, the following documents were selected for review:

Time and attendance register,
Work allocation

Minutes of school meetings.

These documents were requested from the principals of the four participating schools. The analysis process involved a careful, focused reading, re-reading and review of the minutes, school policy on learner performance and assessment policy. I then determined the relevance, authenticity, credibility and accuracy of documents in the light of the research problem and purpose. In this study, document analysis was used to triangulate results from other data sources. Documents analysis assisted me in uncovering meaning, enhanced my understanding, and uncovered insights relevant to the research problem of this study.

4.4.5.2 Phase 1: Non-participant observation

In this study, I also conducted classroom observations in each of the four selected schools. My role was that of a non-participant observer. In this study, both principals and teachers were observed during school hours. In each school, I conducted the first two observations sessions on different days and I spent the whole day at each of the schools observing the schools' activities, to see how the school day started and progressed. The other two observation sessions were also conducted the whole day at each of the schools by observing the schools' activities from start to closing time. Each school was observed for a period of five days. Observation sessions were aimed at observing principals and SMTs perform their instructional duties. I focused my observations on morning briefings and how they addressed issues related to their instructional roles. I also observed the principals' and SMTs meetings with the teachers. The final observations noted the frequency of the principals' and SMTs classroom visits and how often they monitored and controlled teaching and learning activities.

4.4.5.3 Phase 2: Interviews

(a) Individual interviews with principals

During the second phase of data collection, I conducted individual interviews with the four principals from the four selected schools. I used the interview schedule to conduct

interviews (Appendix H). The interview schedule offered a framework and sequence for the questions and helped me to maintain some consistency across interviews with different participants. During the interview, each principal was asked 15 open-ended questions. Open-ended questions allow participants to provide in depth responses (Macmillan & Schumacher, 2016). In addition, open-ended questions allow researchers to take a holistic and comprehensive look at the issues being studied because open-ended responses permit interviewees to respond in their own words, provide more options and opinions, elaborate on their thoughts, or qualify their responses, giving the data more diversity than would be possible with closed questions (Van Rensburg, 2010). Four primary school principals were interviewed in their respective offices after school, in order not to interrupt the academic project. Each interview was scheduled for an hour and all interviews were recorded with the principals' permission. The recording of interview sessions on a digital device allowed me to listen to the interviews after interview sessions. Furthermore, I took notes during interviews which enabled me to remember and reflect at a later stage and shed more light on the recorded information as I analysed data. All participants were interviewed once. Thus, a total of four individual interviews were conducted with the four school principals.

(b) Focus group interviews of SMT members (deputy principals and DHs)

Focus group interviews were also conducted with the SMT members during the second phase of data collection. A total of four focus group interviews were conducted with the SMT from each of the four participating schools. SMT focus groups consisted of one deputy principal and four DHs. Focus group interviews were conducted in the classrooms in four selected schools after school hours. I used the interview guide which consisted of ten questions (Appendix F). I also probed the participants where it was necessary. I used a digital device to record the responses of the participants with participant permission. Each focus group interview lasted for a period of two hours.

4.4.5.4 Analysis of data

Data analysis refers to a process of examining and interpreting data in order to derive meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Babbie, 2014). In this

study, I used the Thematic Data Analysis Method recommended by Creswell (2014), to analyse the data collected by means of document analysis and individual and focus group interviews. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative data analysis is an inductive process which entails organising the data into categories and identifying patterns and relationships amongst the categories.

Figure 4.1 below illustrates the seven steps that I followed when I analysed the data in this study

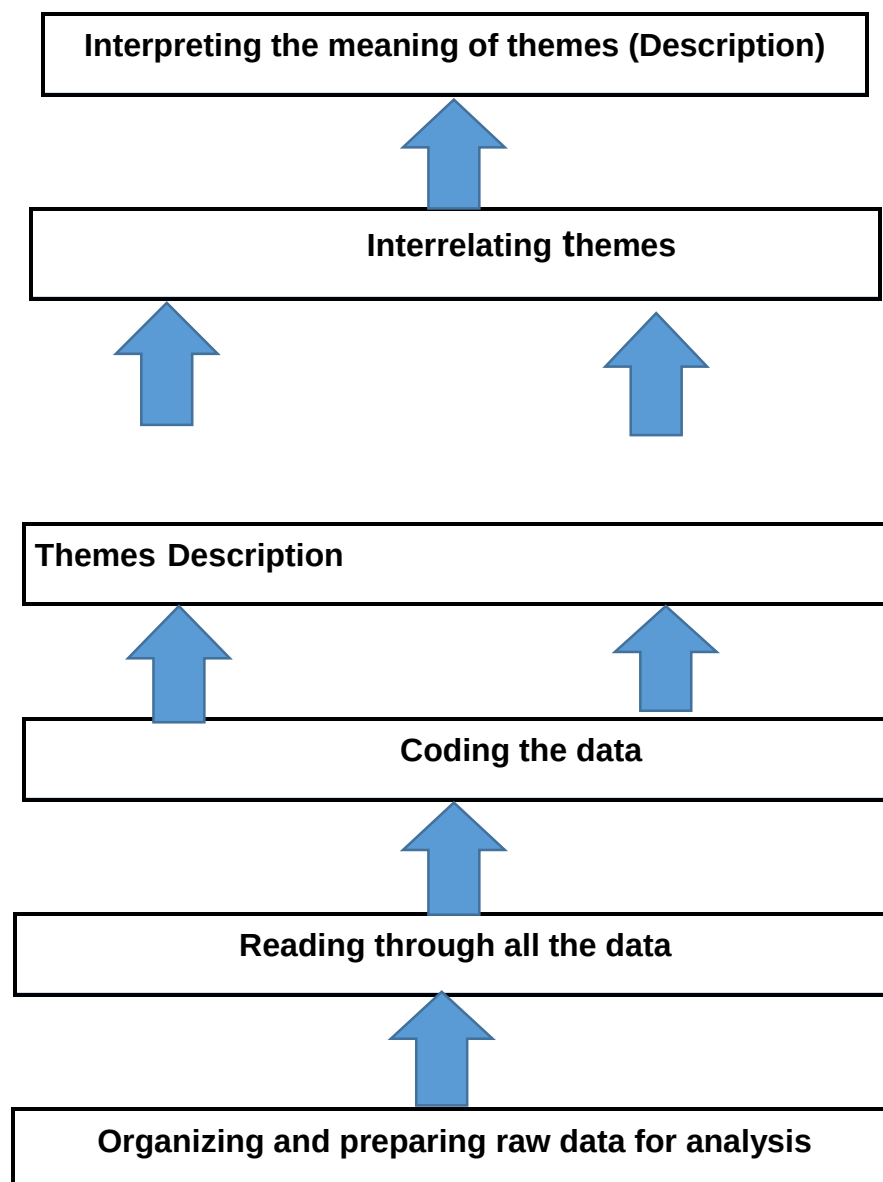


Figure 4.1: The Thematic Data Analysis Method (Creswell, 2014:57)

The purpose of data analysis is to describe the data clearly, identify what is typical and atypical of the data, bring to light differences, relationships and other consistent patterns existing in the data and ultimately answer research questions (Babbie, 2014). The Thematic Data Analysis Method is a method of analysing qualitative data by interpreting the data in the elementary sense of evaluating the data until an improved comprehension of what was meant is accomplished (Creswell, 2014).

Step 1: Organising and preparing

After collecting the data, I created the transcriptions of the interviews, which assisted me to acquire more understanding of the study. In this step I also sorted and arranged the data into different types depending on the source of the data

Step 2: Read through all the data

In this step, I studied the interview transcripts and obtained a general sense of the information. I reflected on the overall meaning of the data in order to understand the general idea of what the participants said. I then wrote notes in margins and started to record thoughts about the data.

Step 3: Coding the data

In this step, I reviewed the transcripts and gave labels or names to the component parts of the data. I picked one document, went through it and asked myself what that document was about. I wrote my thoughts in the margins. After several transcripts have been read, I made a list of topics and clustered together similar topics. I went back to the data, abbreviated the topics as codes and wrote the codes next to the appropriate segments of the text. Then I found the most descriptive wording for my topics and turned them into categories. I grouped the topics that related to each other and abbreviated each category. Then I assembled the data belonging to each category in one place.

Step 4: Generating a description and theme

Description involved a detailed rendering of information. In this step, I used the code to generate a small number of themes or categories. These themes constituted the major findings of the study and I used them to create headings and subheadings in the next chapter of the thesis (Chapter Five).

Step 5: Interrelate themes

In this step, I used a narrative passage to convey the findings of the analysis. I interconnected the themes into a story line and built additional layers of complex analysis. I used tables to aid the discussions.

Step 6: Interpretation

This was the last step of data analysis in this study. In this step I made sense or meaning of the data. I derived the meaning by comparing the findings with the information gleaned from the literature and theories reviewed in earlier chapters.

To summarise my data analysis, I studied the documents and interview transcripts, formulated categories and jotted down the categories in the margins of the transcripts. I then combined similar topics together. I also returned a list of the topics to the data, abbreviated them as codes and then wrote the codes next to the appropriate segments of the text. The most relevant terminology of the topics was written down and changed into themes or categories. All the related topics of the data were grouped together in order to decrease the number of categories. I then identified the relationships between the various categories and finally decided about how to abbreviate each category. Thereafter, I gathered all the data material belonging to each theme or category in one place and then conducted a preliminary data analysis. Lastly, I interpreted and wrote down all the research findings.

4.4.5.5 Trustworthiness of the data

The concepts trustworthiness and credibility of the study means the degree of coherence between the descriptions of the circumstances and the existence of the universe (McMillan & Schumacher, 2015). There are different criteria used by researchers in ensuring the trustworthiness and credibility of the research results. In this study, the following techniques were implemented to guarantee the trustworthiness and credibility of the study.

(a) Prolonged engagement

This entails staying in the field with the participants until data saturation is reached. The aim of spending extensive time in the field is to build trust and rapport between myself and the research participants to gather rich data (Brink et al., 2012). In this study, I stayed in the field with the participants for the whole week.

(b) Use of heterogeneous sample

The trustworthiness and credibility of this study were also ensured through the use a heterogeneous research sample. In this study, the sample included 14 females and 10 male participants. The participants included one young participant, 22 middle aged participants and only one older participant. The sample also included ten participants with 5-9 years' teaching experience, five participants with 10-14 years' teaching experience, four participants with 15-20 years' teaching experience and five participants with more than 20 years' teaching experience.

(c) Member checking

In this study, I ensured that the results were both trustworthy and credible by allowing participants to review the interview transcripts. The results were also provided to research participants to check for accuracy of interpretation.

(d) Data saturation

Data saturation is achieved when there is sufficient data to repeat the research, when the researcher reaches a point in the analysis of data that more data will not lead to more information related to the research questions and when it is no longer necessary to conduct further investigations (O'Reilly & Parker, 2012). In this study, data saturation was achieved by a prolonged engagement with the research participants and using multiple data collection methods.

(e) Triangulation

Triangulation refers to the use of more than one research method as an approach to assess the trustworthiness and credibility of data gathering (Brink et al., 2012). Triangulation is used to develop a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under study (Polit & Beck, 2010). In this study data from various sources were triangulated to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the research results.

4.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The concept of 'ethics refers to the beliefs of what is correct or incorrect from a moral view (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). This view is confirmed by Babbie (2014), who asserts that a research ethical consideration refers to any method which is used by the researcher to ensure that the research is guided by moral principles. This implies that the research findings should be reliable and relevant and the researcher should follow particular moral guidelines. In this study, the researcher adhered to the following most important ethical standards of research described by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), Babbie (2014) and Bless and Higson-Smith (2010).

4.5.1 Getting permission to conduct the study

In undertaking this research, I ensured that ethical requirements were complied with in line with the ethics policy of the University of South Africa. My role was to collect data from the participants by means of document analysis and interviews. Firstly, an application for ethics clearance was made to the College of Education Ethics Committee, University of South Africa. Before commencing the study, I wrote the following letters to request permission to conduct the study:

- A letter to the Head of Department, Limpopo DBE, Polokwane, requesting permission to conduct the study at the four selected schools in Khujwana Circuit.
- A letter to the principals of the four selected primary schools in Khujwana Circuit, requesting permission to conduct research at the schools.

After receiving permission to conduct research from the Head of Department, Limpopo DBE and the principals, I wrote a letter to the 24 participants of the study (4 principals, 4 deputy principals and 16 DHs) and requested them to participate in the study through individual interviews and focus group interviews. They completed the letter of consent to agree to participate in this study. Data collection only resumed after permission was received from all the relevant stakeholders.

4.5.2 Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation refers to a human research subject's exercise of free will in deciding whether to participate in a research activity (Babbie, 2014). In this study, all the participants were informed that they were not forced to participate in the research. Interviews were only conducted with participants who submitted their consent in writing.

4.5.3 Right to privacy and confidentiality

The term 'privacy' refers to the control over the extent, timing and circumstances of sharing oneself physically, behaviourally or intellectually, with others (University of California, 2016). Confidentiality on the other hand means the treatment of information that an individual has disclosed in a relationship of trust and with the expectation that it will not be divulged to others without permission (University of California, 2016). In this study I guaranteed the privacy and confidentiality of the participants by using pseudonyms. I used the information received only for this research and also kept the data on a password locked computer in a safe place.

4.5.4 Plagiarism

In this study, I avoided plagiarism by paraphrasing (putting in own words), proof reading, citing or duly acknowledging all the sources used in the study, quoting (using the source exactly the way it appears) and using an online plagiarism checker.

4.5.5 Promotion of honesty

In this study, honesty was promoted by ensuring that participation was voluntary and participants were informed of their rights to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

4.5.6 The researcher's role

I was the researcher of this study and my role was to collect data from the participants by means of document analysis, observation and interviews. As mentioned above, I obtained written permission to conduct the study from the Head of Department, Limpopo DBE, Polokwane and the principals of the four selected primary schools in Khujwana Circuit. Written consent was also obtained from the 24 participants of the study. When the whole data collection process was completed, I conducted data analysis using the Thematic Data Analysis Method. During data collection and analysis, I implemented various strategies to ensure the trustworthiness, credibility and ethical considerations of the study.

4.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

This chapter focussed on the study's research design and methodology. The chapter included the research questions, research paradigm, research design, research approach, population, sampling, data collection, data analysis, trustworthiness and credibility of the study, ethical considerations and limitations of the study.

Chapter five presents the research results, analysis and the interpretation of the research data.

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this study was to explore the role of instructional leaders in improving the academic performance of learners in rural primary schools. The previous chapter (Chapter 4) presented the research design and methodology for this study. This chapter focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data gathered from the empirical investigation. Data were collected using observations, document analysis, individual interviews and focus group interviews. In this chapter the research findings will be presented based on the data collection method used during empirical investigations.

5.2 RESEARCH FINDINGS

This section presents the research findings of the data collected in two phases: Phase 1 (observation and document analysis) and Phase 2 (individual interviews and focus group interviews).

5.2.1 Phase 1: Findings from observations

The aim of this section is to present, analyse and interpret data collected through non-participant observations. My objective of conducting observations sessions was to observe how principals and the SMTs performed their instructional duties. The following themes emerged from the observation sessions:

- (a) Instructional leadership strategies employed;
- (b) Conducting of morning briefings;
- (c) Addressing instructional roles; and
- (d) the effectiveness of the lessons.

In this study, observations were conducted in Schools A, B, C and D.

5.2.1.1 *Findings of observations in School A*

In this section I will present findings from School A observations according to themes listed above.

(a) Observations of principal's meetings with staff, DHs and teachers

During the school visit I observed that the principal of School A conducted daily meeting briefings with the teachers. These morning briefings usually lasted for less than 10 minutes. In these meetings the principal briefed his staff on important aspects of the day prior to the start of the lessons and they were conducted in the staffroom. I also observed that the principal conducted frequent meetings with the DHs and their active participations during these proceedings. It appears as though the principal provided his staff with opportunities to view their thoughts. These were planned meetings with an agenda issued in advance such that the participants' new items could be discussed and these meetings were timeously concluded.

(b) Observation of 1 class visit of the principal

The principal visited Grade 4C to monitor the presentation of a History lesson. My observations were guided by the observation schedule designed prior to the classroom observation visits. The teacher presented his lesson while the principal and I sat at the back and listened. During the lesson presentation the principal took notes. The teacher showed a clear comprehension and interest in the History content and presented a lively lesson. There was a clear introduction and presentation of the lesson and the learners listened attentively. I also observed that the learners participated actively during the History lesson. The teacher used formative assessment to determine learners' understanding of the content using various teaching and learning support materials. The teacher concluded the History lesson by asking few questions which were answered orally. At the end of the lesson, the principal provided the teacher with feedback on the presented lesson. He advised the teacher to use more teaching aids and to give learners ample time to work either individually or collaboratively with their peers. After 30 minutes the discussion was concluded.

(c) Observations of morning briefings by the DH

I also observed the morning briefings of the DH. The DH and four social science teachers met outside the staffroom and started to discuss the important tasks of that day. I then heard that the DH was explaining to the teachers how to conduct the monthly test of social science on that day. I realised that the DH as an instructional leader wanted to ensure that the assessment of learners should be conducted effectively.

(d) Observations of DH meetings with subject teachers

I also observed meetings of DHs and the subject teachers. These meetings took place after school at 14h:30 in the staffroom and lasted for only an hour. All subject teachers participated actively in the meeting.

(e) Observation of class visit of one DH

In each school, I observed the DH once during her or his class visit. The findings of this observations are based on the agenda of issues which appeared on the observation schedule. The teacher's timetable indicated that it was period 3 when the lesson started and the teacher was teaching the History section. According to the findings of the observations of DH, the classroom climate was constructive because all the learners enjoyed the lesson and participated in learning by providing answers and asking questions. According to my observation, the teacher was comfortable with the presence of the DH and my presence as a researcher. I observed that the principal was holding the teacher's preparation of the lesson. The teacher started to teach History to Grade 4 learners while the DH and I were seated near a table looking at the learners and listening to the presentation of the lesson by the teacher. During the presentation of the lesson, the DH never interrupted the teacher, until the end of the lesson. There was a clear introduction and presentation of the lesson and the learners listened attentively. During the lesson the learners participated in the lesson until the end of the lesson when they wrote the classroom exercise. The teacher showed very clear understanding and interest in the subject content during the presentation. I also observed that the teacher was using formative assessment to see if the learners

understood what he was teaching and used various teaching materials such as pictures and textbooks. The teacher concluded the lesson by asking the learners oral questions. All the learners participated happily in answering the questions. When the learners were writing the classwork, the principal started to discuss with the teacher. I requested to see the document of preparation of the lesson and the teacher gave it to me. After presentation of the lesson, the DH told me that we should go to his office for discussion. In the office he offered me time to explain my observation. I gave my impression that the lesson was excellent and the presentation was effective. The DH congratulated the social science teacher for the manner in which he presented the lesson and how the learners participated in the lesson. Finally, the DH asked me if I was satisfied with the observation and I acknowledged that it was a very effective observation. I thanked both the DH and the teacher for allowing me to observe the presentation of the lesson.

5.2.1.2 Findings of observations in School B

I also conducted observations in School B. The following findings emerged from observations conducted in School B.

(a) Observation of meetings conducted by the principal with staff and DHs

In May 2021, I observed the principal's morning briefings. An analysis of the findings of my observations revealed that the principal conducted effective morning briefings with five teachers. When I arrived at School B in the morning, I went to the office of the principal to explain to him about my observations. The principal welcomed me and told me to wait. After three minutes, five teachers arrived at the office of the principal. Then the principal started to conduct his morning briefing by explaining to the teachers how they should do the science practical that day. I then realised that the teachers were conducting practical work in natural science on that day. The teachers asked few questions and the principal responded to the questions. After ten minutes, the teachers left the principal's office and went to the staff room.

In May 2021, the principal organised and led a meeting of all the four DHs and deputy of School B. The meeting was conducted after school in the principal's office. All the

DHs of the school came to the office of the principal to attend the meeting and he commenced to conduct the meeting. The principal welcomed everyone, provided them with the agenda of the meeting and opened the meeting with a prayer.

The aim of the meeting was to discuss the preparation of half-yearly examinations in June. A discussion ensued about strategies to be implemented to conduct effective half-yearly examinations. My observations of the meeting were that the principal was conducting the meeting in a participatory manner allowing the DHs to share their ideas on the examination processes. Her democratic leadership style allowed for fruitful discussions and ownership of the shared ideas. This meeting was concluded after 90 minutes as prescribed in the agenda. In my view the principal was able to achieve the goals of the meeting and was conscious not to extend the meeting time unnecessarily.

(b) Observation of the principal's class visits

This observation of a class visit by the principal was conducted at 8h30 in the morning in a Grade 5C class. The teacher presented his lesson as learners listened attentively. My observations of the lesson of the Social Sciences lesson revealed that the teacher had adequate content knowledge and good presentation skills as such learners appeared to comprehend the lesson as evidenced by their abilities to respond to comprehension questions posed. The teacher consistently posed questions throughout his lessons and used varied techniques to ensure that most learners stayed attentive. The use of varied teaching aids further enhanced learners' understanding of the content presented. After the lesson we met at the principal's office for the feedback session. Firstly, the principal thanked the teacher for giving us permission to visit her class. The principal indicated that the social science lesson was a success. She however cautioned him to ensure that in all lessons there are sufficient teaching and learning materials. The principal also advised the social science teacher to provide ample time for learners to do classwork. These comments were welcomed by the science teacher who appreciated them.

(c) Observations of DHs' meetings with teachers

On that day I also observed the morning briefings conducted by the DH while briefing the social science teachers about their work outside the staff room. Three social science teachers and the DH met to discuss the implementation of monthly tests for the subject. These were regular briefings which occurred daily prior to the start of morning lessons.

The Life Orientation teachers attended another meeting after school from 14h30 and this was held in the staff room. I requested from the DH to observe their meeting as an outside observer and he accepted. The DH commenced the discussion and all the teachers participated in the discussion. The principal and Life Orientation teachers discussed the implementation of diagnostic assessment. This meeting was scheduled for 35 minutes and all participants were actively engaged in the discussions as an indication that they worked collaboratively as a team.

(d) Observation of a class visit by the DH

I also conducted my observation of a meeting of the DH and the teachers. On Wednesday at 12h10, the DH conducted a class visit of a Grade 7 Life Orientation lesson. My observations revealed that he had good grasp of the content knowledge and that the learners were well behaved. He was thus able to create a conducive classroom environment for learning. During the presentation of the lesson, the DH did not interrupt the lesson presentation and learners were actively engaged. I also observed that the teacher used formative assessment to gauge learners' understanding of the content. The presentation was very effective. The Life Orientation teacher was congratulated by the DH for the excellent lesson, appropriate manner in which he presented the lesson and how the learners participated in the lesson.

5.2.1.3 Findings of observations in School C

The researcher also conducted observations in School C and the observations revealed the following findings:

(a) Observation of the principal's meetings with staff and DHs

I conducted observations of the meetings of the principal of School C with the staff and the DHs. The observation results revealed that the principal held daily morning briefings prior to the start of school lessons daily. During these briefings his emphasis was on the maintenance of discipline. He informed teachers of the availability of newly purchased teaching and learning materials. He further informed them of the visit to school by the circuit manager to have discussions with the English teachers. These morning briefings did not follow an agenda and were mainly information sessions to ensure teachers were at school on time to start their daily activities.

On Thursday, the principal informed me that he will meet DHs after school at 13h50 in the staff room, a meeting which started on time. The agenda of the meeting was to discuss the half-yearly examination preparations. They agreed upon when to collect examination question papers from teachers, the moderation procedures to be followed for the question papers and how question papers were to be printed and kept safe. They also designed a timetable for the June examination. The objectives of the meeting were achieved and the provided time frames were observed by all participants resulting on the adjournment of the meeting on time.

(b) Observation of a class visit of the principal

On Tuesday I conducted classroom observation of a class visit of a Grade 5B class which the principal was visiting for monitoring the teaching of Geography. The observed lesson which started at 9h00. My observations were that the teacher had adequate content knowledge of Geography as such his lesson was successful. He was able to create a conducive learning environment with learners being actively engaged in their learning and well disciplined. Furthermore, the learners were actively engaged in their learning as they discussed the presented content in groups and were able to answer the questions posed based on the presented lesson.

At the end of the lesson the principal advised the teacher to extend the lesson presentation time and shorten the writing of classwork. He also advised the teacher to improve his lesson plan.

(c) Observation of DH meetings with subject teachers

I also observed the morning briefings of the DH while providing information to the teachers. It was an interactive meeting with teachers asking questions. It was a short briefing which lasted for five minutes. The briefing aimed at reminding teachers to follow assessment regulations as the school was busy with assessments.

The social science DH invited four social science teachers to the meeting which started at 14h30. The discussion was on designing an effective lesson plan to improve learning. After the presentation the teachers actively engaged with the presentation. My observations revealed that teachers appeared to be comfortable in expressing their views regarding lesson plans. The meeting lasted for a period of 90 minutes and the DH kept to the provided time frames.

(d) Observation of one class visit of DH

My observation involved observing how the DH conducted her class visit of a Xitsonga lesson. We entered the Grade 2A class and we were welcomed by the teacher and learners. The DH requested the lesson plan of the Xitsonga lesson and other documents. The observed teacher was presenting a lesson on Xitsonga pronouns which lasted for 30 minutes. Learners were actively involved and were disciplined; thus, the teacher was able to create a conducive classroom environment for learning. At the end of the lesson the DH gave feedback of the observed lesson to the teacher. She advised the teacher to give learners homework at the end of each lesson. She further advised the teacher to include assessments in her lesson plans.

5.2.1.4 Findings of observations in School D

I also conducted observations in School D. The following findings emerged from observations:

(a) Observation of principals' meetings with DHs

On the morning visit to this school prior to the start of the day's lessons the principal had a morning briefing with his teaching staff. He briefed them of the planned visit of Curriculum Advisors. Further discussed in this briefing, was the maintenance of discipline in the classes and the preparation of summative assessments.

I further observed the principal while conducting meetings with the DHs which took place in his office after school. The principal did not distribute the agenda prior to the meeting as such teachers were not aware of the purpose of the meeting. He explained how to ensure that the curricula for all subjects are completed on time and provided the attendees with an opportunity to brainstorm ideas on the issue. The meeting lasted for 90 minutes after a way forward was proposed. All the DHs participated actively in the discussions. What I observed is that the principal motivated all DHs to express their views.

(b) Observation of the principal's meetings with teachers and DHs

Further observed in this school was the principal conducting classroom visits to a Grade 5 English class. The teacher presented the English lesson for ten minutes and used the remainder of the time for assessment. During lesson presentation the teacher failed to engage the learners actively. After the lesson the principal provided the teacher with feedback from the observed lesson in his office. The principal informed the teacher of ways to improve his lesson presentations.

In this school I also observed how DHs conducted meetings with five subject teachers. The meeting was held in the morning to discuss the writing of an English test which was scheduled for that day. Rules and regulations for the writing procedures and marking procedures were discussed with teachers being actively engaged. The meeting ended with clear directions to be followed for the writing and marking of the English test.

Another meeting observed dealt with English related challenges faced at the school and strategies to be implemented to support learners. Further discussed was the

effective use of learning support materials in English language classes. All participants were actively engaged in the discussions and the meeting was concluded after 90 minutes. This meeting met its objectives and was handled professionally as evidenced by its adjournment on time.

(c) Observation of DH class visit

In School D, I also conducted observation of the Xitsonga DH while monitoring the Grade 3 teacher. The teacher presented the Xitsonga lesson for 25 minutes and concluded by asking the learners questions and giving them homework. There was a clear introduction and presentation of the lesson and the learners listened attentively. Learners actively participated in the lesson and it was concluded with a homework exercise. At the end of the lesson, the DH provided the observed teacher with feedback in his office. He expressed his satisfaction with the lesson but advised the teacher to set aside time for classwork exercises. He further advised the teacher to improve the lesson plan or preparation. The discussions between the DH and the Xitsonga teacher demonstrated collegiality. It was also clear that the DH was not punitive but aimed at ensuring that teaching and learning is effectively conducted.

5.2.1.5 Summary of observations at the four schools

My observation findings from the principals, deputy principals and DHs during class visits revealed that they were aware of their roles as instructional leaders. The observation results further revealed that it is the participating schools' culture to hold daily morning briefings resulting in the effective running of these schools. The attendance of all teachers in these morning briefings evidenced the commitment of these teachers and their professionalism. In all the four participating schools' meetings are scheduled with the aim of discussion of teaching and learning matters revealing that the instructional leaders are aware of their roles and that teaching and learning is placed at the centre of schools' activities. The observations further revealed that in the four schools, principals and deputy principals monitor the work of DHs, teachers and learners by conducting class visits. In all the four schools after the class visits teachers are assisted on how to improve their lessons. All these findings indicate that morning

briefings, meetings and class visits are effective strategies conducted by instructional leaders in enhancing teaching and learning.

5.2.2 Phase 1: Findings from document analysis

This section focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data collected through document analysis from the four participating primary schools. Two sets of documents were analysed. The first set of analysed documents are those from the National Department of Education, namely, the National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996, Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 and the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996. The second set of documents analysed are those designed by the schools, which included school policies, the roles and responsibilities of instructional leaders in schools, time and attendance register, work allocation document and minutes of the school meetings. I requested these documents from each of the school principals of the four participating schools.

Documents analysis assisted me to uncover meaning, develop understanding, and discover insights relevant to the instructional leadership role of the principals and DHs. The following criteria was followed in analysing the documents:

- a) the type of document and date;
- b) creator of the document;
- c) aim of document;
- d) context, intended audience;
- e) the factual information contained;
- f) why the document is a valuable source of information; and
- g) what the document does not answer.

In this study, the research questions guided search for evidence about instructional leadership practices of the school principals, deputy principals and the DHs. Each document was analysed to determine the extent to which the policy or programme described, addressed or considered each of the identified 'themes' for sustainable services. Based on the analysis of text and its meaning, relevance and context, for each theme, the document was assessed as 'good', 'limited', 'none' or 'unclear'. A

document which was rated as '*good*' for a particular building block contained a clear and consistent references to policy, strategy or practice which related to instructional leadership. A score of '*limited*' indicated only a brief or cursory reference to a building block with little corroborative detail or contextual information on the level of resource allocation or prioritisation. A rating of '*unclear/none*' indicates that there was no information clearly attributable to a building block.

The following two types of documents were analysed in Schools A, B, C and D, namely, the national education policies or legislation and the documents designed by the schools.

5.2.2.1 The National Education Policies or Legislations

The national education policies or legislation are the laws that are designed by parliament of the Republic of South Africa. Parliament is the legislative authority of South Africa and has the power to make laws for the country, in accordance with the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996). The following documents were analysed because they are used in Schools A, B, C and D:

(a) National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996

The National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996 is a legislation designed by the parliament of the Republic of South Africa in 1996 (RSA, 1996). This policy was analysed because it is used by all the four participating schools.

(i) The aim and objectives of the policy:

The aim of the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) No. 27 of 1996 is to indicate the conditions of employment of educators and school management. The objectives of the policy are to provide for:

- the determination of national education policy by the Minister in accordance with certain principles;

- the consultations to be undertaken, prior to the determination-of policy and the establishment of certain bodies for the purpose of consultation;
- the publication and implementation of national education policy; and
- the monitoring and evaluation of education.

(ii) Intended audience: The intended audience of the National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996 is all school educators.

(iii) Main points expressed in the document:

The main points expressed in the policy are employment of educators, vision, mission, goals and objectives and regulations of the schools, directive principles of national education policy, monitoring and evaluation of education.

(iv) Significance of document:

This document is significant for this study as it presents the employment of educators, vision, mission, goals and objectives and regulations of the schools, role of principals, deputy principals, DHs, teachers, school governing bodies and learner representative councils.

(v) Strength or weakness of the document:

An analysis of the National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996 revealed that the policy is relevant to the study because it presents conditions of employment for educators, management of schools and the duties of instructional leaders and teachers. Its weakness lies in the fact that learners' enrolment at primary and secondary schooling levels are not considered at tertiary education levels. Another weakness I am observing is that although education receives a huge budget from government, the quality of teaching remains poor in most schools. Furthermore, the inequality with regard to the quality of teaching in schools remains large to an extent that the type of the school the children attend determines their future success and failure.

(b) The South African Schools Act (SASA), Act no. 84 of 1996

The South African Schools Act (SASA) Act no. 84 of 1996 is legislation which was designed by the parliament of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1996). This policy was analysed because it is used by the South African schooling system. An analysis of this document revealed the following findings:

- (i) **Aim of policy:** The aim of the South African Schools Act (SASA), is to provide for a uniform system for the organisation, management, leadership, governance and funding of schools. It further aimed at amending and repealing certain laws relating to schools and to provide for matters connected therewith.
- (ii) **Intended audience:** The intended audience of the South African Schools Act (SASA) Act No. 84 of 1996 is parents, learners, educators, school governing bodies, learner representative councils and learners.
- (iii) **Main points expressed in the document:** The main points expressed in the policy are provision of public schools, public schools on state property, public schools on private property, status of public schools, governance and professional management of public schools, funding of public schools, appointment and promotion of educators, salaries and conditions of employment of educators, transfer of educators, admission of learners, and code of conduct of learners.
- (iv) **Significance of document:** its significance lies in that it aims at providing uniform system of funding and governance of schools. It made provision for the participation of the school governing bodies and a representative council of learners in each school. It also protects the rights and responsibilities of learners and parents.
- (v) **Strength or weakness of the document:** An analysis of the South African Schools Act (SASA), Act No. 84 of 1996 revealed that the policy is relevant to the study because it presents conditions of employment of educators,

management of schools and the duties of instructional leaders, teachers, school governing bodies and learner representative councils. The weakness of the act lies in the fact that all parents are not well qualified to participate actively in the running of the schools. Most schools in rural and township are either over spending or underspending. Thus, although parents are supposed to support the smooth running of the schools, the principals continue to be the only leaders. Parents are dismissed as illiterate in these poor school communities. However, in suburban affluent schools the opposite is true; most parents are well educated and receive good salaries and they appear to be overbearing towards the principals in these schools.

(c) The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998

The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 is legislation which was designed by the parliament of the Republic of South Africa (RSA, 1998). This policy was identified and analysed because it is used in the country's schooling system. An analysis of this document revealed the following findings:

- (i) **Aim of policy:** The aim of the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 is to provide for the employment of educators by the state, for the regulation of the conditions of service, discipline, retirement and discharge of educators and for matters connected therewith.
- (ii) **Intended audience:** The intended audience of the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 is all school educators. \
- (iii) **Main points expressed in the document:** The main points expressed in the policy are conditions of service and employment of educator. These include the establishments, appointments, promotions and transfers, termination of services, Incapacity and misconduct.
- (iv) **Significance of document:** This document is significant for this study as it presets conditions of service and educator establishments, appointments, promotions and transfers, termination of services, incapacity and misconduct

and the role of SACE. All these are related to school management and leadership.

- (v) **Strength or weakness of the document:** An analysis of the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 indicates that its strength is in its ability to ensure that educators are qualified, committed and competent to offer quality education to their learners. It provides for the establishment of the educator's forum to determine the distribution of educators to the various schools. It sets out criteria for the appointment, promotion, retirement and dismissal of educators due to misconduct.

Its weakness is amongst others that it is too rigid and does not allow for flexibility and autonomy for the schools to manage their own staff. It is also criticised for contradicting the Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995 which governs labour in South Africa. Finally, the Act is criticised for failing to effectively deal with poor performance, misconduct and ineffective educators.

5.2.2.2 The documents designed by the schools

I also analysed documents which were drafted at school level. The documents were analysed in Schools A, B, C and D.

Documents analysed in School A

The following documents were designed by School A and are used by the school for school management and instructional leadership.

(a) Time and attendance register for teachers

The first document which was analysed in School A is the time and attendance register for teachers. The time and attendance register is a document that records teachers' presence and absence from school. Teachers regularly sign the register as proof of their presence at school.

- (i) **Aim of the time and attendance register:** An analysis of the time and attendance register indicated its aim. The aim of the time component of the register is to record names of teachers, times of arrival, departure and absence of teachers at school. The aim of the attendance component is to record the number and the nature of leave taken by teachers which include casual leave, sick leaves, leave without pay, paid leave and others.
- (ii) **Main points expressed in the document:** This document is very clear because it includes the date, name of the teacher, perusal number, designation of the teacher, time of arrival, time of departure, absence of teachers at school and signatures of teachers.
- (iii) **Significance of document:** This document is relevant for this study because it assists the instructional leaders to manage the school. At this school, the document is used as a time register because it indicates teachers who came to work and who were absent, who are punctual, those who are late and the time of arrival and departure, which promote punctuality and performance of teachers and learners at school. The time and attendance register is therefore, significant for processing the salaries of teachers, keeping an eye on the regularity of teachers and helping management to take the necessary and feasible actions for the smooth running of the school.
- (iv) **What document does not answer:** None. At this school, this document is very clear because it presented clearly the topics of discussions and how they should be implemented by the teachers.

(b) Allocation of work document

Allocation of work refers to delegating workloads to the team members in a manner making best use of the available human resources. It is the process of effectively organising resources and labour to meet the company's output goals of a task or project. In schools, allocation refers to delegating the subjects that should be taught by all the teachers of that schools as well as other duties that should be performed by the teachers. In schools the allocation is based on the professional qualifications of the teachers. Work allocation, therefore, allows the instructional leaders to allocate teaching and instructional duties to qualified teachers. At School A, I analysed the allocation of work document and it revealed the following findings:

- (i) **Aim of the allocation of work:** The allocation of work document presents the roles and responsibilities of the principals, DHs and teachers. The aim of allocation of work document is to delegate the subjects that should be taught by all the teachers according to qualifications. The allocation of work document presents the roles and responsibilities of the principals, DHs and teachers. It is also used to regulate the professional, moral and ethical responsibilities of educators, as well as teachers' competency requirements. At this school, all teachers are allocated work by the DHs. The document ensures that all educators know their duties and responsibilities. This document is very clear.
- (ii) **Main points expressed in the document:** An analysis of the Allocation of work document in School D, revealed the main points found in the document. The findings revealed that the main points included in the document is the same as the main points found in the similar documents of Schools A, B and C.
- (iii) **Significance of document:** Very clear. The document ensures that all educators know their duties and responsibilities.
- (vi) **What the document does not answer:** There is none. The document is very clear and relevant to the study because this document presented all the duties of educators. The allocations were conducted by the DHs and then submitted to the principal.

(c) Minutes of school meeting

In School A, the minutes of school meetings, were also analysed. The minutes of school meetings are notes that are recorded during a meeting which are used to capture what happened in a meeting or official record of discussions held and decisions taken at a meeting. Minutes of the meetings or meeting minutes is therefore a formal record document that the school uses to record the propositions and decisions that are taken in a meeting of teachers. The minutes of a meeting are written by the Secretary of the SMT. In School A, the principal led the meeting while secretary of SMT wrote the minutes of the meeting. An analysis of this document revealed the following findings:

- (i) **Aim of the minutes of school meeting:** An analysis of the minutes of school meetings first revealed the aims of the minutes of school meetings. The aim of minutes of school meetings is to record the decisions made and actions requested by the group in the meetings and keep the record of the discussions of school meetings for future reference. The aim of the minutes of school meeting is to provide an accurate record of what transpired during the meeting and the decisions taken. Minutes of school meetings highlight the key issues that are discussed, motions proposed or voted on, and activities to be undertaken. They are an important source of information for people who were unable to attend or looking back to reflect on what happened. They are also an effective tool to notify or remind people of tasks assigned to them or timelines to keep everyone on track.
- (ii) **Main points expressed in the document:** An analysis of the minutes of meetings document of School A also revealed the main points in the document. The document indicates that the minutes of meetings are not a minute-by-minute record but include the key details that the team will want to know. Minutes of meetings indicates who was there and what happened. The main points in minutes of meeting documents are date and time of meeting, opening prayer and welcome, names of the participants, agenda items and topics discussed, names of teachers who failed to attend the meeting, announcements, agreements and conclusion.
- (iii) **Significance of document:** Analysing the minutes of meetings document of School A also revealed the significance of the document. One of the duties of instructional leaders is to convene meetings regularly in order to train the teachers and discuss the challenges that are experienced by the teachers. The minutes of meetings are very important for this study because they are proof that instructional leaders of school convene regular meetings as required. The document is important because it possess the information that was discussed and concluded in the meetings. When instructional leaders and teachers have forgotten about certain issues that were agreed upon in the meetings, they always approach the secretary to request the document. In other words, the document ensures that all teachers are able to perform all their duties and responsibilities. The document also serves as a legal record of the agreements that were made in the meeting and they indicate

that the instructional leaders are performing their duties effectively. In School A, the document is very clear because it indicates what is discussed in the meetings.

- (iv) **What document does not answer:** None. At this school, this document is very clear because it presented clearly the topics of discussions and what was discussed in the meetings.

Documents analysed in School B

The following documents were designed by School B and are used by the school for school management and instructional leadership.

(a) Minutes of school meeting

In School B, I also analysed the minutes of school meeting document. An analysis of the minutes of school meeting of School B revealed that the minutes of School meetings of School B were similar to the minutes of school meetings used in School A.

- (i) **Aim of the minutes of school meeting:** After analysing the aim of minutes of school meetings of School B, it became very clear that the aim of the minutes of school meetings of School A and B are similar.
- (ii) **Main points expressed in the document:** The main points expressed in the minute document of School B was also analysed. The minutes of school meeting in School B indicated a discussion of how to conduct diagnostic and formative assessment, maintenance of discipline and how to compile a lesson plan.
- (iii) **Significance of document:** In School B, the significance of the minutes of school meetings document of School B was analysed. An analysis of the significance of the minutes of school meetings document of School B, is also significant as the minutes of school meetings document of School A.
- (iv) **What document does not answer:** An analysis of the minutes of meetings of School B, revealed that, like in School A, this document is very clear

because it presented clearly the topics of discussions and how they should be implemented by the teachers.

(b) Allocation of work

The document of the allocation of work was also collected and analysed at School B. An analysis of the allocation of work of teachers document in School B revealed the following findings:

- (i) **Aim of allocation of work of teachers' document:** An analysis of the allocation of work document in School B revealed that the aim of the document is similar to the aims of the similar documents in Schools A, C and D.
- (ii) **Main points expressed in the document:** An analysis of the allocation of work document also revealed the main points in the document, which were similar to the allocation of work documents of Schools A and B.
- (iii) **Significance of document:** Analysis of the allocation of work document also revealed the significance of the document, which is similar to the same documents in Schools A, B and C.
- (iv) **What document does not answer:** An analysis of the allocation of work document revealed that the document is very clear because it indicates the duties of all the teachers.

(c) An attendance register

An attendance register was also analysed in School B. The attendance register of School B indicates names, of teachers, times of arrival, departure and absence of teachers at school. An analysis of the attendance register of the school, revealed the following findings:

- (i) **Aim of the Attendance register:** An analysis of attendance register document of School B, revealed that the aim of the attendance register document of School B is similar to the aims of attendance registers of School A, C and D.

- (ii) **Main points expressed in the document:** An analysis of the attendance register of School B also revealed the main points expressed in the document. An analysis of the main points expressed in the attendance register document of School B, revealed that the attendance Register of School B is similar to the main points of attendance registers of Schools A, C and D.
- (iii) **Significance of document:** An analysis of the attendance register document of School B, also revealed the significance of the attendance register. The analysis of the document revealed that the significance of the attendance register of School B is similar to the significance of the attendance Registers of Schools A, C and D.
- (iv) **What document does not answer:** An analysis of the document also revealed that the document is able answer all questions like the Time Registers of Schools A and B.

School C

I also collected and analysed some documents from School C. I collected the following documents used by the school for school management and instructional leadership in School C:

- (a) **Time and attendance register:** The first document that was analysed in School C is the time and attendance register. This is a document which is completed in the workplace and it indicates names, of teachers, times of arrival, departure and absence of teachers at school. An analysis of the time registers of the school revealed the following findings:
 - (i) **Aim of the time and attendance register:** An analysis of time and attendance register document of School C revealed that the aim of the Time register document of School C is similar to the aims of time and attendance registers of School A and B.
 - (ii) **Main points expressed in the document:** An analysis of the time and attendance register of School C also revealed the main points expressed in the document. An analysis of the main points expressed in the time and

attendance register document of School C, revealed that it is similar to the same document of Schools A and B.

- (iii) **Significance of document:** An analysis of the time and attendance register document of School C, also revealed the significance of the time and attendance register. The analysis of the document also revealed that the significance of the time and attendance register of School C is similar to the significance of the time and attendance registers of Schools A and B.
- (iv) **What document does not answer:** An analysis of the document also revealed that the document is able answer all questions like the time and attendance registers of Schools A and B.

(b) Allocation of work document

At School C, the allocation of work was also collected and analysed. Analysis of allocation of work of teachers document in School C produced the following findings:

- (i) **Aim of allocation of work of teachers' document:** An analysis of the allocation of work document in School C revealed that the aim of the document is the same as the aims of the similar documents in Schools A and B.
- (ii) **Main points expressed in the document:** Analysing the allocation of work document also revealed the main points in the document, which were similar to the allocation of work documents of Schools A and B.
- (iii) **Significance of document:** Analysing the allocation of work document also revealed the significance of the document, which is similar to the same documents in Schools A, B and C.
- (iv) **What document does not answer:** Analysing what the document is able to answer indicated its similarity to what was discovered in Schools A and B.

(c) Minutes of school meetings

The researcher also collected and analysed the minutes of school meetings in School C. An analysis of the minutes of school meeting revealed the following findings:

- (i) **Aim of the minutes of school meetings document:** An analysis revealed that the aims of the minutes of school meetings document of Schools A, B and C are very clear and the same.
- (ii) **Main points expressed in the document:** In School C, an analysis of the minutes of school meetings document also revealed that the main points expressed in this document are very similar to the main points expressed in similar documents in Schools A and B.
- (iii) **Significance of document:** At School C, an analysis of the minutes of school meeting document revealed that the document is very important but is the same as the minutes of school meeting documents of Schools A and B.
- (iv) **What document does not answer:** An analysis of the minutes of school meeting document also revealed what the document was able to answer or not answer. The findings revealed that this document is similar to the minutes of school meeting documents of Schools A and B.

School D

In this study, documents that are used for school management and instructional leadership were also collected and analysed from School D. Three types of documents were collected from School D, namely, time and attendance register, Minutes of school meetings and allocation of work documents.

(a) Time and attendance register document

In School D, the time and attendance register document was collected and analysed. This is the document used by the teachers every day to record their time of arrival and departure. An analysis of the time and attendance register document revealed the following findings:

- (i) **Aim of the time and attendance register document:** The findings of the analysis indicate that the aim of the time and attendance register document of School D is similar to the aims of the time and attendance registers of

Schools A, B and C. This indicates that the aim of the time and attendance register document is very clear.

- (ii) **Main points expressed in the document:** The findings of the analysis of the time and attendance register documents in School D, also revealed the main points in the document. According to the findings, the main points of the time and attendance register of Schools A, B, C and D are all similar.
- (iii) **Significance of document:** An analysis of the time and attendance register document in School D also revealed the significance of this document. The findings of the analysis revealed that the significance of this document is similar to the significance of the same documents in Schools A, B and C.
- (iv) **What document does not answer:** An analysis of the time and attendance register document revealed that the document is similar to the same documents in Schools A, B, and C. This indicates that this document is also able to answer relevant questions of instructional leadership of principal and DHs.

(b) Allocation of work document

The second document that was collected and analysed in School D is allocation of work document. An analysis of the allocation of work document revealed the following findings:

- (i) **Aim of the allocation of work document:** The findings of the analysis of the allocation of work document of School D, revealed the aim of the document. According to the findings of the analysis, the aim of the document in School D is similar to the aims of the same documents in Schools A, B and C.
- (ii) **Main points expressed in the document:** An analysis of the allocation of work document in School D, revealed the main points found in the document. The findings revealed that the main points included in the document is the same as the main points found in the similar documents of Schools A, B and C.
- (iii) **Significance of document:** An analysis of the allocation of work document in School D, also revealed the significance of the documents.

The findings revealed that that significance of this document is similar to the significance of the same documents in Schools A, B and C.

- (iv) **What document does not answer:** Analysing the allocation of work document in School D, also revealed whether the document is able or unable to answer relevant questions about the roles and responsibilities of instructional leaders and teachers. The findings revealed that the allocation of work document of School D is similar to the same documents in Schools A, B and C.

(c) Minutes of school meetings

At School D, I also collected and analysed the minutes of school meetings. Minutes of the meetings or meeting minutes is a formal record document that the school uses to record the propositions and decisions that are taken in a meeting of teachers. The school meetings are always conducted by the principal and DHs.

- (i) **Aim of the minutes of school meetings:** Analysing the minutes of school meeting revealed the aim of the document. According to the findings of the analysis, the aim of the minutes of school meetings of School D is similar to the aims of the same document of Schools A, B and C.
- (ii) **Main points expressed in the document:** An analysis of the minutes of school meetings document also revealed the main points expressed in the minutes of school meetings document. According to the findings, the main points in this document of School D is the same as the similar document of Schools A, B and C.
- (iii) **Significance of document:** An analysis of the minutes of school meetings document of School D, also revealed the significance of the document. The findings indicate that the significance of this document of School D is the same as the significance of the same documents in Schools A, B and C.
- (iv) **What document does not answer:** An analysis of the minutes of school meetings document also revealed whether the document is able to answer or not able to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that the document in School D is very clear and it is similar to the same documents in Schools A, B and C.

5.2.2.3 Summary of findings from document analysis

The analysed documents revealed that the schools were functioning in accordance with the National Education Policy as well as the South African Schools Act. Furthermore, the schools were able to design their own policies to ensure compliance with the DBE policy requirements. The documents also revealed the teachers who were present and absent on each day as well as their time of arrival and departure.

5.3 PHASE 2: FINDINGS FROM INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

The aim of this section is to present, analyse and interpret the data collected during individual interviews with the four principals and the focus group interviews with the deputy principals and DHs from the four purposefully selected schools. Firstly, the biographical information of the participants is provided.

5.3.1 Biographical information of the participants

In the table below bibliographical information of the school principals is provided.

Table 5.1: The biographical information of the principals

Name of school	Gender	Qualifications	Experience
School A	Female	M.Ed and Dipl. in Educ.	20 years
School B	Female	B. A and Dipl. in Educ.	15 years
School C	Male	B.A Hons and Dipl. in Educ.	23 years
School D	Male	B. Ed Hons	10 years

Table 5.1 indicates that four principals from Schools A, B, C and D participated. Two principals from Schools A and B were female, while two principals from Schools C and D were male. This illustrates an equal gender distribution among principals who participated in the study. Table 5.2 also indicates that all participating principals had

lengthy experience and were well qualified. The principal from School A has a Master's Degree, Diploma in Education and 20 years' experience; the principal from School B has a Bachelors' Degree, Diploma in Education and 15 years' experience; the principal from School C has Bachelor of Arts Honours Degree, Diploma in Education and 23 years' experience; and the principal from School D has Bachelor of Education Honours Degree and ten years' experience.

The next sub-section presents the main themes and sub-themes of the data collected from principals.

5.3.2 Biographical information from deputy principals and departmental heads

Table 5.2: Biographical information of the deputy principals and DHs

Name of school	No	Rank	Gender	Qualifications	Experience
School A	1	DH	Male	Diploma	25 years
	2	DH	Female	Honour's Degree	17 years
	3	DH	Male	Honour's Degree	20 years
	4	DH	Female	Diploma	18 years
	5	Deputy Principal	Male	Honour's Degree	8 years
School B	1	DH	Male	Bachelors' Degree	26 years
	2	DH	Female	Honour's Degree	14 years
	3	DH	Female	Honour's Degree	20 years
	4	DH	Male	Diploma	22 years
	5	Deputy Principal	Female	Honour's Degree	11 years

School C	1	DH	Male	Bachelors' Degree	10 years
	2	DH	Male	Honour's Degree	13 years
	3	DH	Male	Bachelors' Degree	18 years
	4	DH	Female	Honors degree	7 years
	5	Deputy Principal	Female	Honour's Degree	6 years
School D	1	DH	Male	Bachelors' Degree	15 years
	2	DH	Female	Bachelors' Degree	17 years
	3	DH	Male	Diploma	22 years
	4	DH	Female	Honour's Degree	13 years
	5	Deputy Principal	Male	Honour's Degree	7 years

Table 5.4 reveals that nine females and 11 males (deputy principals and DHs) participated in focus group interviews. Table 5.4 also reveals that four participants have a Teachers' Diploma; five participants have a Bachelors' Degree and 11 participants have an Honours Degree in Education. The table also reveals that all the participants had considerable professional experience: five participants have between 6 to 10 years' experience; five participants have 11 to 15 years' experience; six participants have 16 to 20 years' experience; three participants have 21 to 25 years' experience; and one participant has 26 years' experience in the teaching profession. Thus, the participants were all experienced and well qualified and as such they could provide valuable information for this study.

5.3.2.1 *Main themes and sub-themes of the data collected from principals*

The four themes of this study are based on the four main research questions of the study and an analysis of the data collected from principals produced thirteen sub-themes of the collected data. From the analysed data collected from principals as presented in Table 5.3. The aim of this section is to present, interpret and analyse the data collected by the researcher from principals through individual interviews.

The above four main themes and their sub-themes from the analysed interviews with the school principals are discussed in the section below.

Table 5.3: Main themes and sub-themes of the data collected from principals

Main Theme	Sub-themes
The role of school principals as instructional leaders	Monitor teachers' performance of t Conduct professional development sessions for teachers. Administrative duties of instructional leaders.
The instructional leadership role of heads of department in teaching and its impact on learners' academic performance	Administrative duties Professional development of teachers Monitoring the work of teachers
The challenges experienced by instructional leaders on the provisioning of effective instructional leadership.	Lack of resources Lack of knowledge on instructional leadership and subject matter Poor academic performance of learners Violation of rules and regulations.

Strategies for enhancing and sustaining instructional leadership	Support from circuit office, district and province Professional development of teachers Supervision of teachers
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5.3.2.2 *The role of principals as instructional leaders*

The first main theme which emerged from the analysed data is the role of principals as instructional leaders. The first sub-theme which emerged from this main theme is monitoring and evaluation of teachers which will be presented below.

(a) Monitoring of teachers

An analysis of the participants' responses revealed that the role of a principal as an instructional leader is to monitor the implementation of the prescribed curriculum. The following quotations from the participating principals confirm this finding.

"I provide the staff in my school with guidelines on how teaching and learning should be conducted. As a head of the SMT I am accountable for the instructional decisions made." (School A principal).

In supporting this statement another principal from School B stated:

"As a principal I ensure that teachers execute their roles and responsibilities allocated at the beginning of the year and I provide supervisory support...I check on teachers regularly by monitoring both deputy principal, DHs and teachers and avoid sitting in the office. I read through the minutes of various committees and close any gaps emerging from the teaching and learning discussions." (School B Principal).

A different view of monitoring teaching and learning was expressed by another principal who said:

“All School Management Team members: Deputy Principal, Departmental Head and teachers provides me with updates on learner performance and we discuss ways in which learners’ academic performance could be improved.” (School C Principal).

Yet another different view was expressed on monitoring teaching and learning by principal of School D, who said:

“We always receive support from curriculum advisors as our school is not far from the main road. These curriculum advisors are the ones who are responsible for monitoring, advising and supporting our teachers on teaching and learning. They sample learner’s books, teacher files and encourage them to do better. They also help DHs to comply with the minimum requirements.” (School D Principal).

The findings above reveal that the principals are aware of their instructional leadership roles as well as the importance of sharing leadership responsibilities. They work with the SMTs to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place. The results further revealed that principals work closely with district officials who monitor curriculum implementation in schools. This finding is in line with the distribution theory (Thompson, 1967) which indicates that instructional leadership is team leadership and not only the role of curriculum advisors. According to Whitby, (2014) and Cuofano (2022) instructional leadership entails shared leadership. Shared leadership is crucial in strengthening school communities, sharing responsibilities and making the workload manageable resulting in accountability by all stakeholders. The results of this study reveal that the principals are aware of their responsibilities of sharing their leadership roles with the DHs. Furthermore, they are able to centre instructional leadership as their core responsibilities. This is in line with Robert’s (2019) assertion that instructional leadership stresses managing teaching and learning as the core activity of educational institutions. Harris (2014) however, refers to instructional leadership as the provision of direction, resources and support to teachers and learners to improve teaching and learning. There is a strong appeal for distribution leadership in schools as it is in line with the democratic values of the South African Constitution (RSA, 1996).

The findings further revealed that the participating principals were aware of the need to ensure that curriculum content is covered for effective learning to take place. The quotations below support this assertion:

“As a principal I ensure that teachers effectively teach the prescribed curriculum and that the prescribed content is adequately covered.” (School B principal).

He elaborated on how this is achieved and stated thus:

“My role is to ensure that each and every person within the school namely Deputy principal, Departmental Head and teachers carry out responsibilities assigned to them. I also conduct classroom visits to ensure that effective teaching and learning take place.” (School C principal).

The principals' role in monitoring teaching was further supported by another principal who said:

“I supervise, monitor and where necessary intervene to assist or support the teaching staff in my school, for example I check the time book to ensure that it is signed in and out and it is stamped and that leaves are registered I also ensure that challenges are resolved.” (School principal A).

The importance of monitoring and supporting the teaching and learning agenda was further expanded on by another principal who said:

“I make arrangements with curriculum advisors when teachers have challenges in teaching certain content.” (School principal B).

This principal also emphasised the importance of team work in monitoring teaching and learning.

“I ensure that the whole SMT do their monitoring part using monitoring tools to help encourage teachers to do their work with enthusiasm. Without

supervision there will be no teaching and learning as teachers will stay in staffrooms doing their own activities and socialising.” (School B principal).

The findings above allude to the importance of monitoring teaching and learning in schools. Thapa (2022) describes monitoring as the measuring and documenting of progress, achievements, and results. According to MacGregor Burns (1978), it is one of the responsibilities of principals to monitor teaching and learning to ensure learners' academic success. The importance of monitoring and supervision of teachers is further emphasised by Mpisane (2015), suggesting that both formal and informal monitoring should take place through unplanned class visits be conducted by instructional leaders. The results reveal that principals and DHs monitor through classroom visits which is confirmed by Syomwene (2018), Ampofo et al. (2019) and Naicker and Mestry (2013). They opine that the main goals of monitoring are to collect data in order to learn from past experiences and improve present or future actions, account for used resources, make informed decisions and promote functional approaches.

Principals and DHs should agree on procedures for educators' appraisal processes in order to improve teaching and learning (DBE, 2016). Laska (2016), recommends that classroom observation should be used to monitor teachers. Through classroom observation principals and other instructional leaders are able to identify challenges and make recommendations to improve practice. The importance of monitoring instructional time is further emphasised by Glewwe and Muralidharan (2016). It is thus important for the principal to ensure that teachers are in class on time daily.

The role of the principal as an instructional leader is also supported by Naidoo and Mestry (2019), who assert that since 1980, principals have been advised to shift their roles from being administrators to instructional leaders. Accordingly, Renard (2018), adds another crucial role of school principals which is monitoring learner progress by ensuring that the teachers use curriculum-based monitoring tests, observation and interaction with the learners, frequent evaluations and formative assessment.

(b) Conducting professional development sessions for teachers

The second sub-theme emerging from interview with the school principals is conducting professional development for teachers. Effective teaching and learning and students' excellent academic performance depends on the quality of teachers as well as the leadership role of the school principals. It is thus, of importance that teachers are constantly developed through in-service training. The following quotations from the participants confirm this finding.

"I definitely conduct professional development sessions for teachers in my school as I am fortunately a team member principal who conducts Integrated Quality Management System of the teachers in the Circuit." (School A principal).

He further elaborated on the importance of professional development and explained:

"Teacher development is key to learner performance. I encourage teachers to attend professional development workshops. Although these workshops are no longer conducted due to the Covid 19 pandemic." (School A principal).

This finding was supported by School B principal who expounded on the types of workshops conducted by stating:

"I conduct workshops on how teachers should plan and deliver their lessons and how DHs should monitor teachers' work and learner's books." (School B principal).

He further elaborated on the challenges they faced and indicated:

"We are still lacking on how to develop teachers following a developed programme received from DBE. I am unable to develop teachers professionally on how to follow the programme that is there, but in every meeting, I am able to take them through processes and systems that are to be followed in managing curriculum partially so." (School B principal).

This was further supported by another research participant who indicated:

“It concentrates on professional development and curriculum delivery and instructional strategies used. I also address issues of dress code when coming to work for teachers.” (School C principal).

The participant further elaborated on the procedures followed in planning for professional development workshops:

“Workshops are conducted using a hierarchical model namely there are separate workshops for the Principals, Deputy principals, DHs and Educators to cater for their diverse responsibilities.” (School C principal).

On the role of curriculum advisors in instructional leadership School C principal agreed as follows:

“Curriculum advisors assist teachers on how to assess so that they can assist learners attain better performance.” (School C principal).

He further elaborated:

“They have in depth knowledge on what is lacking in the subject, type of question learners is performing better and where they perform low.” (School C principal)

Yet School D principal had this to say:

“I do have an allocated budget for the professional development of teachers in my school.” (School D principal).

He elaborated further on how professional development of teachers is planned by stating:

“We plan our professional development sessions in advance by making a need analysis for our teachers and plan the workshops for all stakeholders according to the identified needs.” (School D principal).

The above findings reveal a need for principals to continually develop their teachers through professional development and the need for collaboration with the subject advisors. The results further revealed the importance of identifying teachers' needs in order to plan for professional development workshops which are relevant and essential for developing teachers. Principals are also aware of the need to budget for such development workshops. These findings are confirmed by Hallinger (2012) who views the role of instructional leaders as identifying the strength and weakness of teachers in order to plan for relevant workshops to improve teaching and learning. He opines that instructional leaders need to attend to the needs of each subordinate and provide mentorship to the subordinates. I am of the view that it is the principals' responsibilities to conduct professional development sessions for teachers. Their responsibilities include stimulating, nurturing and developing teachers to enhance teaching and learning (Mestry, 2018).

Furthermore, such leaders allow followers to ask questions, think critically and independently about issues and strategise on the best ways to execute their tasks (Burns, 1978). The role of principals as leaders is to mentor their teachers and ensure that they are well equipped to implement the curriculum and improve learners' academic achievement.

The principals' responsibilities in teachers' professional development is supported by Mizzel (2010) who asserts that continuous professional development is a collaborative learning process that nourishes the growth of individuals, teams, and the schools through a daily job-embedded, learner centred and focused approach (Galaczi, Nye, Poulter & Allen, 2018). According to Slegers, Wassink, Van Veen and Imants (2016), principals can play a key role in transforming teachers' instructional practices and fostering teachers' learning by creating collaborative workplace conditions and giving support. Their responsibilities further entail directing, supporting and distributing responsibilities to all the teachers and other stakeholders of the school (Urick & Bowers, 2014; Aubrey-Hopkins & James, 2002). They work collaboratively with teachers and such close proximity affords them the opportunity to know their staff better and assist where necessary (Aubrey-Hopkins & James, 2002).

Hellinger (2012) emphasises that the primary purpose of professional development in the schools is to capacitate educators with the knowledge and skills to enhance the teaching-learning process. Principals are also expected to participate in their own professional development to enhance their leadership skills. Hellinger (2012) argues that such professional development initiatives are essential in creating conducive working environments for all teachers to flourish.

(c) Administrative duties of principals.

The third sub-theme emerging from the first theme is the administrative duties of the school principals. The results revealed that principals are also aware of their administrative duties. Principal A stated the following;

“The administrative part deals mainly with among others human resource management, filing and record keeping...all activities conducted within the schools are planned and effectively managed. Furthermore, I ensure that records of information are well kept and easily retrieved when required. As now SASAMS is used to keep records I should ensure that the data that is kept is accurate.” (School A principal).

This was supported by principal of School B who indicated:

“My role as an administrative leader is to ensure that proper records are kept. As now SASAMS is used to keep records I ensure that the data that is kept to generate information is a true reflection and correct. I ensure that I quality proof the data that is captured in the system. Whether it be finances or human resource my administrative role should be to ensure that all is correctly done as we are now data driven.” (School B principal).

A divergent view was expressed by principal of School C as indicated in the quotation below.

“As an administrator my primary role is instructional leader and the administrative role is secondary to that.” (Principal of School C).

Yet another divergent view is expressed by principal of School D in the quotation below:

“My role is to ensure that the school budget is compiled and Norms and standard are taken into consideration, ensuring that money is allocated accordingly. My administrative role is to ensure that the school has a planned budget as school management requires funding. I must ensure that the money I am entrusted with is in safe hands and is used as specified.”
(Principal of School D).

The above responses revealed that the principal is also responsible for managing data and reports, keeping records and reports up to date, helping to maintain the budget plan, organising and scheduling meetings and events, supervising staff and delegating responsibilities. In the school context, one of the main duties of transformational leaders is administration (Alramdhan, 2022). School administration involves the management of all school operations, creating a safe learning environment and managing the school budget (Alramdhan, 2022). Such tasks are at times performed by deputy principals, instructional coordinators, athletic directors, and other support staff. The administrative duties of the school principal include, overseeing teachers and support staff, disciplining learners, preparing school schedules, implementing curriculum standards, follow up on work progress, reviewing the teaching programs and procedures, creating class schedules, setting rules and security procedures, monitoring learners' achievement and handling the school budget (Alramdhan, 2022). Anukam, Okunamiri and Ogbonna (2008) assert that the principal is also the finance and physical facility manager. They are expected to create and maintain good relationship with the immediate school community and ensure a continuous contact with the Ministry of Education.

The next section discusses the second main theme and sub-themes of the study, based on data collected from the principals about the instructional leadership role of the DHs.

5.3.2.3 Instructional leadership role of DHs

The instructional leadership role of DHs is another main theme which emerged from the analysed data of interviews with the school principals. This main theme has four sub-themes which will be discussed in the section below.

(a) Administrative duties

An analysis of data revealed that DHs are also responsible for administrative duties which include filing, record keeping and management of teaching and learning resources. The administrative duties of DHs were confirmed by the participants of the study.

“Administrative role of DHs, is to deal with the leave of absence of educators, which they approve and keep records.” (School B principal).

Other responsibilities of DHs were cited as follows:

“DHs give instructions to teachers during examinations on procedures to be followed. They control late coming and escalate the matter in case they fail to resolve the matter.” (School C principal).

This view was further supported by another principal who indicated thus:

“They monitor the quality work and assessments provided to learners and the LTSM in their different sections and ensure that these are purchased to enhance teaching and learning.” (School D principal).

The results revealed that school principals share the administrative responsibilities with the DHs. These results are supported by Harris and Muijs (2014) who maintain that distributive leadership widens the basis for decision-making and creates a flatter administrative structure. The distribution of work encourages faster decisions, efficiency and collaboration (Bahsin, 2020). This is further supported by Mahr (2022) who opines that flat administrative structures reduce costs, improve communication, result in quick decision-making and provide the organisation with agility to respond to change.

(b) Professional development of teachers

An analysis of data revealed that DHs are responsible for the professional development of teachers. The quotations below confirm the participants' views:

"The role of the curriculum advisors in terms of the instructional leadership is to assist teachers on the teaching of various subjects as well as on policy issues." (School A principal).

This was supported by another participant who had this to say:

"They also train teachers on how to assess to ensure that quality assessment is provided." (School B principal).

Further supporting comments were provided as follows:

"They train the teachers to design year plans and lesson plans and the use of different teaching methods to enhance learners' academic performance." (School C principal).

"They train the teachers about the effective implementation of the curriculum and how to improve the academic performance of the learners." (School D principal).

The results revealed that the participating principals view professional development as the subject advisors' responsibilities instead of their own. Such a view is contrary to Hallinger's (2012) theory which calls for principals to be responsible for the staff development of their staff members. Principals are expected to be monitoring teachers both formally and informally to know their strengths and weaknesses to enable them to carefully plan the support and professional development of teachers. The results therefore suggest the principals' main reliance on the curriculum advisors for the professional support of teachers instead of taking the responsibility themselves.

I am of the opinion that although subject advisors are there to assist principals, the latter should follow up professional development sessions at school level to enhance teaching and learning and improve learners' academic performance. According to Juneja (2015), principals must train, guide and mentor their teachers to enable them to be creative and innovative.

This finding is confirmed by Antoniou and Kyriakides (2013), who indicate that one of the roles of the principal as an instructional leader is to conduct professional development workshops to equip the teachers with recent developments in their various subjects on teaching and assessments. According to Du Plessis and Eberlein (2017), DHs should conduct workshops to guide the teachers about effective teaching and assessment methods, use of technology and other resources and how to improve the academic performance of the learners. Professional development of teachers is also confirmed by Maponya (2015) who indicates that one of the roles of principals and DHs is to hold meetings with the teaching staff and to equip the teachers with the relevant knowledge and skills.

(c) Monitoring teachers' work

The results of the analysed data revealed that DHs and curriculum advisors are responsible for monitoring teachers. The results of the interview results with the school principals further revealed that heads of departments and subject advisors' other responsibilities:

"They are responsible for both administrative and Instructional leadership. They are the curriculum drivers in their different phases." (School A principal).

This finding was also supported by another participant who stated thus:

"The DHs monitor the attendance register for both the learners and the teachers in schools. They ensure that teachers submit weekly preparations." (School B principal)

She further added:

“I do not see any value of curriculum advisors coming to our school because they rarely come to our school. When they come, they support the Foundation Phase educators on how to arrange lessons and how to paste teaching aids for lessons. They show teachers on how to teach reading in the Foundation Phase and ignore the other phases.” (School B principal).

Principal from School C also supported monitoring as one of the duties of DHs. This was also confirmed by the principal of School D who responded as follows:

“Yes, they conduct class visits, check teachers subject and assessment files, to see if teachers follow pace setters and if learners are given enough written activities and if feedback on given activities is provided.” (School D principal).

The participant also expressed concerns with regard to the curriculum advisors and said:

“Teachers sometimes fail to do their work due to lack of assistance from curriculum advisors sometimes curriculum advisors cause confusion for teachers because at times, they give teachers contradictory information especially concerning pace setters. For example, one curriculum advisor insisted that teachers must teach learners sex education while the pace setter says COVID-19.” (School D principal).

The results revealed that principals relied more on the DHs in monitoring the teachers' work than on curriculum advisors. This further confirms a gap in their understanding of their instructional leadership roles. Although subject heads and curriculum advisors are expected to assist in monitoring the teaching and learning, principals should still play an active role to ensure that teaching and learning is not compromised. There is therefore a need to work closely with teachers, subject heads and curriculum advisors. The results further revealed a mistrust between the school principals and the curriculum advisors. It appears principals are of the opinion that subject advisors are not supportive and at times are not sure of the actual curriculum requirements. The

results suggest that instead of taking responsibility in the teaching and learning in their respective schools, principals expect subject advisors to equip their teachers with the knowledge and skills to teach their subjects. I am of the view that this is a contraction to the role of principals as instructional leaders who should understand the curriculum requirements and advise their teachers accordingly.

The role of curriculum advisors as mentors for the teachers is confirmed by Ross (2018), who indicates that the role of DHs is to conduct class visits, check teachers' work and ensure that the performance of all staff is reviewed annually. According to PAM (DBE, 2016), the DHs are responsible for controlling the work of educators and learners in the department, administrative responsibilities of staff members, test and examination papers as well as memoranda in the department. According to Wyatt (2017), the DHs as instructional leaders are responsible for observing a teacher's lesson and providing feedback, modelling a particular teaching strategy in a classroom, observing a teacher working with a small group of students on a diagnostic assessment task and making a judgement about the skills and understanding demonstrated.

5.3.2.4 The challenges experienced by instructional leaders on the provision of effective instructional leadership

The third main theme which emerged from data analysis is the challenges experienced by instructional leaders on the provision of effective instructional leadership. Under this main theme four sub-themes emerged, namely, shortage of teachers, lack of knowledge on instructional leadership and subject matter, poor academic performance of learners and violation of rules and regulations, which will be discussed in section below.

(a) Shortage of teachers

An analysis of the participants' responses revealed that the challenges experienced by instructional leaders on the provision of effective instructional leadership, is a shortage of teachers. The following quotations from the participating principals confirm this finding.

“We are faced with a challenge of balancing allocation in the sense of number of periods and ignore the number of subjects and number of learners.”
(School C principal).

Another participant commented on the issue of workload and stated:

“This leads to fights when it comes to the number of subjects because is a lot of work and it also leads to poor performance because the workload is too much for them.” (School C principal).

The principal from School D also commented as follows:

“Some teachers’ salaries were cut without any notice resulting in them now failing to pay for their expenses.” (School D principal).

The results of the study reveal that teachers in schools are experiencing challenges of workload and as a result they are often unhappy. This results in fighting which compromises the academic agenda of the participating schools. Another challenge revealed is the salary cuts of teachers resulting in their demoralisation as they are unable to pay for their living expenses. The results indicate instabilities within schools and also explain poor academic performance of learners. If teachers experience a heavy workload and are underpaid, their unhappiness affects their performance.

The shortage of teachers has been confirmed by Sephton (2018), DBE (2013), Mafora (2013), Richter (2016) and Masinire (2015) who maintain that South Africa is facing an education crisis because of injudicious appointments and poor allocation of teachers. As a result, some schools end up with far more teachers than they need, while other schools have too few.

(b) Lack of instructional leadership and subject matter knowledge

An analysis of the participants’ responses revealed that one of the challenges experienced by instructional leaders on the provision of effective instructional

leadership is lack of instructional leadership and subject know. The following quotations from the participating principals confirm this finding.

“The challenge that I am experiencing is that I do not understand instructional leadership and content knowledge. I am unable to assist teachers with content knowledge as I am not a specialist.” (School B principal).

This was supported by another participant who indicated:

“It is difficult for me to check curriculum coverage to see if the teachers are on the correct track as such I fail to support them effectively.” (School C principal).

In supporting this statement another principal from School A stated the following:

“I have a challenge of instructional leadership, especially the lack of knowledge of many subjects because I was trained only in two subjects but I must monitor and assist teachers of all subjects.” (School A principal).

The study results revealed that principals have difficulty monitoring their teachers' work due to lack of subject knowledge. They therefore are unable to offer the necessary support to teachers, as such the teaching agenda in the participating schools is compromised.

The challenge of lack of knowledge and skills is also confirmed by Kiat, Tan, Heng and Lim-Ratnam (2017), who emphasises that the major challenge experienced by instructional leaders is lack of knowledge and skills about instructional leadership and the subject matter. This challenge is also supported by Dongo (2016), who revealed that principals are facing challenges in executing their roles as instructional leaders because they are inadequately prepared to be instructional leaders and as such, they lack the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to lead and manage schools effectively and efficiently. According to Fink and Silverma (2014), the major challenges of instructional leadership experienced by the instructional leaders are lack of subject

content knowledge, lack of knowledge and skills for providing support and guidance and increasing task demands on principals.

(c) Poor academic performance of learners

The sub-theme emerging from the main theme revealed poor academic performance as a challenge in the provisioning of instructional leadership. To this effect the participants indicated:

“The challenge of poor learners’ performance was exacerbated by Covid-19 pandemic regulations. As a result, learners came to schools in shifts to adhere to social distancing regulations.” (School C principal).

This view was supported by two other principals who indicated:

“In our school we have learners who cannot read nor write especially in English which is also a medium of instruction. Despite this we were forced to promote them to the next grade.” (School D principal).

“We also have a challenge with the Grade 4’s because they were learning three subjects in their home language when in Grade 3 and immediately, they are expected to learn all the five subjects in EFAL in the transition grade which leads to their underperformance and failure.” (School A principal).

The challenge of poor academic performance of learners is supported by Pretorius, Jackson, McKay, Murray and Spaul (2016) and Spaul (2013). According to Pretorius et al. (2016), learners in primary schools who fail to acquire the requisite language proficiency skills have limited chances of academic success in higher grades. Researchers agree on the lack content and pedagogic knowledge and skills amongst English language teachers resulting in learners’ poor academic performance due to language related challenges.

(d) Violation of rules and regulations

An analysis of the participants' responses revealed that one of the challenges experienced by instructional leaders on the provision of effective instructional leadership, is violation of rules and regulations. The violation of rules and regulations was confirmed by the participants of the study. The principal from School A emphasised that some teachers violate rules and regulations of the schools:

"Yes, we do experience challenges because some teachers do not comply to schools' rules and regulations, although others do." (Principal from School A)

The violation of rules by teachers was supported by principal from School B who asserted:

"We have a challenge of many teachers who are members of teachers' unions who always violate the school policies. It seems they are motivated by their unions." (Principal from School B)

Violation of rules by teachers and learners is confirmed by Bayer (2016), who asserts that teachers' attitudes and behaviours towards principals deeply affect principals as their authority is undermined. Bayer (2016) concurs that there is an increase of undesirable behaviours in classrooms and schools, for example, late coming, absenteeism, smoking and using drugs. According to Maarman (2017), teaching and learning is also disrupted by misbehaviour of learners, which includes aggression, stubbornness, disobedience, lack of accountability, unauthorised talking and disturbing other learners. Therefore, Simatwa (2012) indicates that it is very important to formulate rules which must be obeyed by the teachers and any violation of the rules calls for the use of discipline and punishment.

5.3.2.5 Strategies for enhancing and sustaining instructional leadership

The fourth main theme which emerged from data analysis is the strategies that can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools. Under this main theme four sub-theme emerged, namely, supervision or monitoring of

teachers, professional development of teachers and support from the circuit office, district and province, which will be discussed in section below.

(a) Supervision and monitoring of teachers

An analysis of the participants' responses suggested a strategy that can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools is the supervision and monitoring of teachers. The following quotation from the principal from School A confirms this finding.

“Obviously, the more we receive support and monitoring from Circuit, District and Province, it will help us to rectify all the loopholes that may be found. It will help me and all the staff to improve our teaching and my instructional leadership.” (Principal from School A).

Supervision or monitoring as the best strategy is also supported by principal from School B, who said:

“I expect to receive supervision from the curriculum advisors to be sure if what we do is correct, and to take me through processes and procedures of what needs to be done in managing curriculum.” (Principal from School B).

The principal from School A added:

“I must also ensure that teaching and learning support material is available for both teachers and learners.”

The strategy of monitoring and supervision of teachers and learners is also confirmed by Sterrett, Parker and Mitzner (2018), who assert that instructional leaders have a vital role in valuing teachers' time and they must have site-based control in establishing the master schedule for the classes. Mestry (2018) also emphasises that principals must place more emphasis on teaching and learning rather than focussing primarily on managerial and administrative duties.

(b) Professional development of principals

The results revealed that the participating principals were aware of their inability to assist teachers effectively. They were of the opinion that they needed professional training to perform their duties efficiently. The quotations below support this finding:

“As principals we should receive Instructional training from the Department of Education on a yearly basis.” (School A principal)

“I have never been trained. I was only trained through my own initiatives. I enrolled with UNISA from 2007 to 2008. The Department conducted short workshops which were only a few minutes long.” (School B principal).

“I think it is very important that principals should receive training in instructional leadership because there have been major changes in the schooling system.” (School B principal).

Another participating principal commented as follows:

“I was partially trained, in 2016 the Department gave us a crash course on planning and managing the curriculum. Another training was conducted to ensure that curriculum is well driven in the school. The course was conducted by the Nelson Mandela Bay in 2011 on instructional leadership.”(School C principal).

Another principal indicated that his training was conducted by curriculum advisors and commented thus:

“I receive training from curriculum advisors to be sure if what we do is correct, they took me through processes and procedures of what needs to be done in managing curriculum but I need more support. “(School D principal).

Training at work or professional development is very important for the principals. The primary purpose of professional development of instructional leaders is to increase the

effectiveness of principals, deputy principals and DHs in their support and guidance of the teachers. According to Carraway and Young (2015), the principals, deputy principals and heads of department need professional development to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to successfully guide the teachers to promote student learning. According to Kennedy (2016), the principals are responsible for the professional development of deputy principals and DHs to improve their instructional leadership practices (Kennedy, 2016). Therefore, lack of training leads to poor performance of principals who are unable to perform their instructional duties. During initial teacher training many principals were only trained as classroom teachers and not as instructional leaders. Principals and DHs started the teaching profession as teachers and they were merely promoted to occupy their current positions without specific training.

When there is lack of training of principals as instructional leaders, they will not be able to support teachers effectively because they do not possess knowledge and skills of instructional leadership duties. The DBE should organise the training of DHs to equip them with the instructional leadership knowledge and skills. This perception is confirmed by attribution theory which addresses the processes by which individuals explain the causes of behaviour and events. According to the attribution theory (Weiner, 1980), lack of training in instructional leadership will contribute to principals' poor instructional leadership which will result in poor teaching and learning and poor academic performance of the learners. This implies that when principals are not trained, teachers will be poorly supported. If the teachers are unable to teach effectively, the learners will not learn effectively.

The training of principals to support teachers effectively is supported by Mbhalati and Jita (2018), who assert that lack of training of principals makes them unable to support the teachers to teach effectively. According to Du Plessis (2016), training of principals enables them to support the teachers to acquire new skills and to enhance their competence. According to Syomwene (2018), the training of principals enables them to motivate and support teachers, improves learner performance, and guarantees job satisfaction (Syomwene, 2018).

5.3.2.6 Summary of findings from individual interviews with the school principals

The main findings from the interviews of school principals are the role of school principals as instructional leaders, the instructional leadership role of DHs on teaching and its impact on learners' academic performance, the challenges experienced by instructional leaders on the provision of effective instructional leadership and strategies for enhancing and sustaining instructional leadership.

An analysis of the data of the first main theme revealed three instructional duties of the principals, namely, monitoring the performance of teachers, conducting professional development sessions of teachers and administrative duties of instructional leaders which include filing, record keeping and management of teaching and ensuring that there are sufficient teaching and learning resources. An analysis of the second main theme revealed three duties of DHs in instructional leadership, namely, administrative duties, professional development of teachers and monitoring the work of teachers such as conducting class visits. The third main theme revealed the challenges experienced by instructional leaders on the provision of effective instructional leadership, namely, lack of resources, lack of knowledge on instructional leadership and subjects, poor academic performance of learners and violation of rules and regulations. The fourth main theme revealed the strategies that may be implemented to improve instructional leadership in schools, namely, supervision of teachers, professional development of teachers and support from the circuit office, district and province.

5.4 FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS WITH DEPUTY PRINCIPALS AND DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

The aim of this section is to present, analyse and interpret data collected by means of focus group interviews from 16 DHs and four deputy principals from the four selected primary schools in Khujwana Circuit of Mopani West District in Limpopo Province.

5.4.1 Main themes and sub-themes of the data collected from deputy principals and DHs

In this section, the findings are categorised into the following four main themes and 12 sub-themes.

Table 5.4: Themes and sub-themes of focus group interviews with deputy principals and DHs

Main Theme	Sub-themes
The influence of the instructional leadership role of the deputy principal and DHs on teaching and academic performance of learners.	Monitoring of teachers. Professional development. Parental involvement. Delegation of work.
The influence of the instructional leadership role of the DHs on teaching and academic performance of learners.	Monitoring and supporting of teachers. Professional development of teachers.
The challenges experienced by instructional leaders in the provision of effective instructional leadership.	Lack of time of instructional leadership. Poor academic performance of learners. Lack of community support Workload of deputy principal and DHs.
The strategies that can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools.	Professional development of deputy and DHs. Conducting class visits.

The above four main themes are based on the research questions of this research, presented in section 1.3 of chapter 1.

5.4.2 Findings from focus group interviews with the deputy principals and DHs

The next section focuses on the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected from the deputy principals and DHs by means of focus group interviews.

5.4.2.1 *The influence of the instructional leadership role of the principal on teaching and academic performance of learners*

The first main theme which emerged from the analysed focus group interviews with deputy principals and DHs is the influence of the instructional leadership role of the principal on teaching and academic performance of learners. Under this main theme five sub-themes emerged, namely, monitoring of teachers, approval of allocation of work, professional development, parental involvement and delegation of work. Each of these sub-themes will be discussed in the section below.

(a) Monitoring of teachers

The results from focus group discussions with deputy principals and DHs revealed that the role of the principal is to monitor the teachers when they implement the prescribed curriculum. The following quotations from focus group interviews confirmed this finding:

“We fully support the idea that principals are responsible for instructional leadership. We all know that principals are overseers of curriculum implementation from Grade R to 7. If they fail, schools may collapse and close due to poor results.” (Focus Group 1 from School A).

“The principal is ex-officio of all subjects and all school activities. They should thus have a general overview all happenings in the school.” (Focus Group 1 from School A)

A divergent view was raised thus:

“The principal must also teach a class to notice some things which happens in a class to be able to account.” (Focus Group 1 from School A).

The above quotations from the members of Focus Group 1 indicated that the principal must avoid poor implementation of the curriculum which contributes to poor academic performance of the learners by monitoring the work of teachers, supporting teachers who have challenges and also teaching the learners.

The above perceptions of Focus Group 1 from School A are confirmed by the transformational theory of this study. According to transformational theory, leaders can be defined transformational when, exhibiting behaviours of inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, idealised influence and individualised consideration, they motivate and stimulate its subordinates to go beyond their own self-interest and do more than what is expected of them (Bass, 1985). The monitoring, support, encouragement and consideration employees receive from transformational leaders stimulate workers to engage in both idea generation and implementation (Khalili, 2016). The views of the participants in Focus Group 1 are also supported by Brazer and Bauer (2018), who asserts that the principal as an instructional leader is responsible for ensuring the implementation of the educational mission of a school by overseeing, equipping and empowering teachers to provide meaningful learning experiences to learners. This important function is monitoring, which includes the control, evaluation and assessment of the work of teachers and learners, in order to maintain a good teaching standard and progress among the learners (Brazer & Bauer, 2018). According to Kaehler and Grundei (2019), the principal must be confident that the actions of all the educators in the department are able to move the school towards its stated goals and this is achieved by setting performance standards, monitoring staff performance through performance data evaluation, comparing this performance to the established standards, identifying the challenges experienced by the employees and taking corrective actions.

The role of the principals of monitoring teachers was also confirmed by members of Focus Group 3 from School C who responded as follows:

“Yes, as deputy principal and DHs we do support the role of the principal as the instructional leader. Remember that the principal is the one who gave the DHs and the deputy principal the scope as to what is expected of them. He is supposed to check on us on daily basis.” (Focus Group 3 from School C).

The members of Focus Group 3 from School C also commented that the principal is responsible for analysing monthly reports provided by the DHs in order to see how each department functions. The members of Focus Group 3 said:

“We also have accountability books which are submitted to where we the principal on monthly basis and account on our sections. We provide reports on our engagement with the teachers.” (Focus Group 3 from School C).

Focus Group 4 members further commented that principals should also teach learners in order to see how the curriculum is implemented. In this regard they said:

“Principals must teach in order for them to have knowledge of the classrooms and effectively support us.” (Focus Group 4 from School D).

Focus Group 4 members further indicated that another role of the principal is to support the teachers who have challenges and they commented as follows:

“The principals are also responsible for supporting teachers, the DHs and the deputy principal and also correct them whenever a need arise.” (Focus Group 4 from School D).

The above quotations from the members of Focus groups 1, 2, 3 and 4 revealed that many DHs recommend that principals should not only focus on administrative duties but should also teach the learners, support the deputy principal, DHs and teachers and monitor the teachers. According to transformational leadership theory, the principals should provide support to their subordinates and recognise the unique contributions of each follower (Juneja, 2015). The monitoring of teachers by DHs is confirmed by Weller Jr (2001), who asserts that theoretically, DHs have a great responsibility to monitor and supervise instruction, though this is not the case in all

school contexts and they must perform multiple roles in their quest to ensure effective curriculum delivery. According to Mpisane (2015), DHs must use monitoring and supervision to identify impending challenges and to provide relevant guidance and support but not as a punitive apparatus. This view is also confirmed by Van Deventer (2016) who asserts that the principal is responsible for supervising and evaluating the work of the teachers.

(b) Sub-theme 2: Approval of allocation of work

An analysis of the participants' responses revealed that the role of the principals as an instructional leader is the approval of teachers' work allocation. The following quotations from the members of Focus Group 1 confirm this finding:

"The principal must ensure that the allocation of duties to all teachers is balanced to ensure equal and fair distribution. They further ensure that we are also teaching it." (Focus Group 1 from School A).

According to distributive leadership theory, instructional leadership functions and expertise should be shared by instructional leaders at all levels in the school in order to generate more opportunities for change and to build the capacity for improvement (Harris, 2014). This implies that the decisions taken by an instructional leader should not be a final decision, but should be evaluated by other instructional leaders. This is done to improve teaching and learning. The principle of sharing instructional leadership is confirmed by the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 as amended in 2016 (DBE, 2016). Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 indicates that at the beginning of the year, principals must check and approve the allocation of work to teachers by DHs and must ensure that workloads are equitably distributed among the staff. According to Grant (2010), distributed leadership calls for leaders, regardless of organisational position, to engage critically with the values, goals and mission of the organisation and to ask questions which begin to challenge the status quo and raise issues of social inclusion and exclusion.

(c) Sub-theme 3: Professional development of teachers

An analysis of the participants' responses revealed that the role of the principal as an instructional leader is the professional development of DHs and teachers. The following quotations from the members of Focus Group 2 confirm this finding:

“In order to ensure that curriculum implementation is effective the principal must conduct internal workshops of DHs and teachers of various subjects in the school. The principal must motivate the deputy principal and DHs to conduct subject meetings and workshops on how the curriculum must be delivered in the institution. The principal is responsible for leading teaching and learning in the school.” (Focus Group 2 from School B).

An analysis of the response from Focus Group 2 revealed that one of the duties of the principal is to train deputy principals and DHs about instructional leadership, and to train teachers about the effective implementation of the curriculum. This role of the principal reveals that a person who occupies the position of principalship should be a graduate of higher degrees who possesses adequate instructional knowledge. The above quote from Focus Group 2 complies with the theory of this study, namely, distributive leadership theory. According to distributive leadership theory, instructional leadership should be shared by the principal, deputy principal, heads of department and senior teachers, but each one of them should possess the capacity for instructional leadership. It is therefore important to provide the capacity for instructional leadership by professional development or training.

The professional development of teachers by the principal is confirmed by Zvandasara (2016), who asserts that the principal should also assist in the teachers' professional development and should focus on developing teachers' potential through delegation because it is a way of empowering others. The professional development of the teachers by the principal is also supported by Mncube and Potokri (2015), who indicate that the principal must assist in the teachers' professional development, as well as developing teachers' potential through delegation and sharing of ideas and expertise. According to the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, another role of the principal

is to organise school-based, school-focused and externally directed staff development training programmes of deputy principals and DHs in instructional leadership.

(d) Sub-theme 4: Parental involvement

The research findings revealed that another role of the principal as an instructional leader is to work collaboratively with parents to improve learners' academic achievement. This result is confirmed by members of Focus Group 1 who indicated:

"In our school we experience learner related challenges which principals need to resolve with the assistance of their parents. "(Focus Group 1 from School A).

This was supported by another member of Focus Group 2 from School B who indicated:

"Our principal convenes parents' meetings to discuss learners' academic progress, behavioural patterns, projects, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities." Focus Group 2 from School B).

This finding emphasises the important role that parents play in the education of their children. Parents can be involved in their children's learning through becoming part of school boards, showing concern about their children's academic performance, and expressing dedication to their children's learning through attending parents' meetings, in order to gain a better understanding of the performance of their children (Ntekane, 2018). Involvement of parents allows them to keep an eye on school and classroom activities as well as to synchronise their efforts with educators to give them confidence for building an acceptable classroom behaviour and learning environment (Malik, 2017). Segoe and Bisschoff (2019) emphasise that active parental involvement is an essential aspect of improving learner achievement but many parents are marginalised by the teachers.

The involvement of parents in the schools is in line with the theoretical framework of the study, namely, distributive leadership theory. According to Robert (2019), in

distributive leadership theory, the emphasis is on principles of participative management where all stakeholders are involved in decision-making and smooth running of schools. This implies that parents and SGBs are also responsible for the effective management of the schools. According to the distributive leadership theory, leadership functions of organisations are shared by many people in various ways that strengthen the whole school community, intensifying a sense of engagement and shared responsibility while making the workload more manageable (Jones & Harris, 2013).

Another role of DHs is to promote parental involvement by ensuring that parents feel welcome to come to school to talk about their children's progress and utilise school facilities to assist their children (DBE, 2018). The DHs also meet with parents to discuss with them the progress of their children and assist in organising and conducting extra lessons and co-curricular activities related to the specific subject (DBE, 2018). The parental role in the child's education is to ensure each child's entrance into the education system, provide the necessary equipment and learning environment, continuously care for the child's achievements and be active in the process of the child's learning and mastering educational tasks (Balaic, 2022).

(e) Sub-theme 5: Delegation of work

An analysis of the participants' responses revealed that the principal's role as an instructional leader involves delegation of work to SMT members. This finding is confirmed by the following quotations below:

"The principal must be able to delegate other SMT members to assist him in his instructional leadership role." (Focus Group 1 from School A).

This was supported by Focus Group 2 as follows:

"The principal's role is to share instructional leadership duties with deputy principal and DHs because most of the times the principal is attending meetings." (Focus Group 2 from School B).

These findings are supportive of the literature which state that instructional leaders should ensure quality education by supervising, monitoring, assessing, evaluation and dissemination of current information on educational matters (Sindhi, 2013), in line with the distributive leadership theory which informs this study. The distributive leadership theory indicates that those in authority and subordinate positions should interact with each other and co-perform the leadership activity in the same place. This theory indicates that distributed leadership is related to delegation of work because it means mobilising leadership expertise at all levels in the school in order to generate more opportunities for change and to build the capacity for improvement.

The delegation of work by the principal is also supported by Vency (2020), who asserts that delegation builds autonomy in workers, helps your team grow and builds respect for your leadership. Mestry (2017) emphasises that the primary role of the principal is to transform schools by creating conducive teaching and learning environments where teachers and learners are provided with opportunities to reach their full potential. According to Bush and Glover (2016), delegation of work results in the creation of effective educational institutions and makes it possible to achieve their visions and goals.

5.4.1.2 The influence of the instructional leadership role of the DHs on teaching and academic performance of learners

The second main theme which emerged from data analysis is the influence of the instructional leadership role of the DHs on teaching and academic performance of learners. Under this main theme, two sub-themes emerged, namely, monitoring and supporting of teachers and professional development of teachers, which will be discussed in section below.

(a) Monitoring and supporting of teachers

An analysis of the participants' responses revealed that one of the instructional roles of the DHs is monitoring and supporting of teachers. The following quotations from the members of Focus Group 1, confirm this finding:

“Our role as instructional leaders is that of an administrator and instructional leadership. We ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place to improve learners’ academic performance achievement. Our role as instructional leaders is to ensure that teachers teach what they are supposed to teach and learners learn what they are supposed to learn.” (Focus Group 1 from School A).

The above quotation revealed the aim of instructional leadership which is conducted by the DHs, includes to ensure that there is teaching and learning every day and to teach only what is in the curriculum.

A different view was expressed by another participant who indicated:

“Instructional leadership requires of us to be honest, transparent and fair whenever we monitor teachers work.” (Focus Group 1 from School A).

Another view was also expressed by another participant.

“We must also ensure that they use caps documents, have LTSM, have time tables, teach correct content, ensure that learner activities are marked and controlled by teachers and conduct class visits...We make sure that monthly audits of written work for all teachers are done. Formal assessments are pre-moderated before administered and controlled for quality assurance.” (Focus Group 1 from School A).

The above quotation reveals that DHs should follow some rules to ensure that their instructional leadership is relevant and effective. For example, the DHs should first design a plan for implementing their monitoring and avoid being harsh to the teachers. The findings of monitoring and supporting of teachers is based on attribution theory. According to McLeod (2012), Attribution theory is concerned with how ordinary people explain the causes of behaviour and events. Heider (1958) emphasises that events, behaviour and performance may be caused by dispositional attribution or situational attribution. Dispositional attribution assigns the cause of behaviour to some internal characteristic of a person, rather than to outside forces and situational attribution is

the process of assigning the cause of behaviour to some situation or event outside a person's control rather than to some internal characteristic. In the school context, the instructional leader must always monitor the performance of teachers in order to discover the causes of poor performance of teachers and learners. The instructional leaders must conduct class visits to discover the causes of poor performance of teachers and learners. After discovering the causes of poor performance of teachers and learners, the role of instructional leaders is now to design and implement strategies which will ensure that there is effective teaching and learning every day. This implies that good performance of teachers and learners can only be attributed to certain strategies implemented by the instructional leaders. One of the strategies which may cause good performance of teachers and learners is monitoring. Monitoring is therefore one of the attributes of good performance of teachers and learners because it will reveal the strategies that should be implemented to improve teaching and learning.

The monitoring of teachers by the instructional leader is also supported by Laska (2016), who asserts that the instructional leader should correctly recognise the performance of each teacher and in order to achieve this, a systematic monitoring and evaluation of the class and the work of teachers must be developed. Before the start of the school year or during certain periods, the instructional leader (in this case, the DH) should plan which teachers will be monitored and assessed during the process (Laska, 2016). During the class visit (observation), it is preferred that the instructional leader should take notes about the situation in the class, by focusing on the teaching techniques and learner activities (Laska, 2016). It is very important for the class visit to be consequently documented and much more information to be gathered and this should be done throughout the class, by registering all the moments and activities conducted (Laska, 2016). The DHs are also responsible for controlling the administrative responsibilities of staff members in their departments, such as assessing their year plans, time-tables, lesson plans, question papers of tests and exam and examination schedules (DBE, 2016). The monitoring role of the DH is also confirmed by Wyatt (2017), who asserts that as instructional leaders (i.e. DHs) are responsible for observing the presentation of the curriculum or lesson by the teachers, observing practical activities conducted by the teachers modelling a particular teaching

strategy in a classroom and assisting the teachers to identify the learners with learning barriers or difficulties.

The emphasis on monitoring was expressed by a DH who stated thus:

“We also provide support to teachers where learners are not performing well in certain subjects. In such instance we develop intervention strategies to improve performance.” (Focus Group 1 from School A).

Another participant indicated the type of intervention strategies implemented

“We advise the teachers to conduct morning and afternoon lessons and studies to improve the results. We also train them how to mark the learners’ books and give feedback to learners. We also encourage teachers to be punctual, honour their time tables, follow their ATP’s, pace setters and to always ensure that they are well prepared. We also advise the teachers to involve parents by encouraging them to support their children to do classwork and homework at home.” (Focus Group 1 from School A).

The above quote revealed that the DH is responsible for conducting class visits of teachers by notifying them or not notifying them. During the class visit, the DH listens to the presentation of the lesson by teacher.

The analysed data further revealed that learners’ exercise books were monitored to enhance learners’ performance. This is supported by the quotations below:

“We also check learner’s books to see if they are given enough activities, work is marked and controlled and if feedback is given. We also check the quality of work given to learners and whether it is marked.” (Focus Group 2 from School B).

“We also support the teachers when they experience challenges and also encourage them to perform their duties without any fear and favours.” (Focus Group 2 from School B).

The above quotations from Focus Group 2 revealed that the monitoring role of DHs include conducting class visits, checking the work of learners and also supporting the teachers who have challenges. These three monitoring roles of DHs are based on attribution theory and transformational leadership theory. According to attribution theory (Weiner, 2010), instructional leaders make a judgment about their employees based on their attribution of the causes of the performance of teachers (Heider, 1958). Leaders make attributions (try to understand) about the cause of the performance before deciding on the appropriate action to take (Heider, 1958). The instructional leader will then develop effective strategies of improving the performance of employees and one of them is the monitoring of the employees. According to James MacGregor Burns, the instructional leader is focused on bringing about positive changes within the staff members (Juneja, 2015). Monitoring is therefore conducted in order to identify the challenges experienced by teachers in order to change the performance of teachers.

The role of the DH in monitoring and supporting teachers was also confirmed by the members of Focus Group 3. Focus Group 3 provided the following response:

“We are members of school management team and we are responsible for instructional leadership and administrative leadership. One of our duties is to monitor and support the teachers. We always hold SMT meetings to discuss how we should monitor the teachers. We always check the lesson plans of teachers and conduct class visits. In the classrooms, we observe how a teacher implement the curriculum and also check the work of learners. At the end of the lesson, we support the teacher to improve the implementation of the curriculum. We sometimes ask teachers to submit their challenges in writing.” (Focus Group 3 from School C).

The above quotation revealed that the role of the DHs of monitoring the teachers consists of checking lesson plans and work of learners, conducting class visits, supporting the teachers and requesting the teachers to submit their challenges.

The role of DHs in monitoring and supporting the teachers was supported by members of Focus Group 4, who emphasised that DHs always check how the teachers perform

their duties and then support them. The members of Focus Group 4 from School D said:

“Our main duty is to monitor the work of teachers by always checking how they perform their duty of teaching the learners effectively. We always conduct class visits of teachers in order to see how the teachers present their lessons. We always assist them to improve their presentation of lessons. We also monitor their work by checking their lesson plans, assessment methods and the work of learners. Our monitoring is always accompanied by supporting them in order to improve their performance.” (Focus Group 4 from School D).

The above responses of Focus Groups 1, 2, 3 and 4 are in line with the theory of this study, namely, the transformational leadership theory. According to the transformational theory which guides this study, a leader should always nurture and develop people who think independently and stimulate followers to be creative in order to implement changes within organisations (Burns, 1978). Furthermore, such leaders should allow followers to ask questions, think critically and independently about issues and strategise on the best ways to execute their tasks. The monitoring and support of teachers is supported by the SACE, which described one role of the deputy principals as regularly visiting teachers in the classrooms to provide support and advice and to monitor progress in quality teaching and learning. According to PAM (DBE, 2016), the DH must also guide and supervise the work and performance of staff and, where necessary, discuss and write or countersign reports and also participate in agreed educator appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management. According to Laska (2016), the classroom observation is a basic strategy for the professional development of teachers and from this observation the monitor should give full conclusions as to the performance of each teacher and the conclusions must be drawn in order to connect with his or her individual improvement. In order to have more accurate results of the teaching process, the monitor should observe a variety of activities, and for this reason the position of the observer must be very interactive, so he or she would be able to see the face of the learners and not only their verbal responses, but also the non-verbal ones (Laska, 2016).

(b) Sub-theme 2: Professional development of teachers

The second sub-theme emerging from the instructional leadership role of the DHs on teaching and academic performance of learners deals with the need to conduct professional development sessions for teachers. The following quotations from the participants confirm this finding.

“We do workshops once per fortnight to give teachers time to expand their knowledge about teaching their subject which are in these meetings we share curriculum related issues, such as how to teach during COVID-19 and how to ensure that teaching and learning is effective.” (Focus Group 2 from School B).

The members of Focus Group 2 further commented that professional development is also used to assist learners to learn effectively. They commented as follows:

“We also discuss how we can assist learners achieve better and how teachers can improve their teaching because their failure to teach effectively may lead to poor performance of learners. We also discuss on how to assist the learners who have challenges of learning effectively.” (Focus Group 2 from School B).

The above quote from Focus Group 2 from School B revealed that the DHs conduct workshops twice per month to assist the teachers to acquire new knowledge and skills of their subject. The quote also revealed that professional development was also conducted to train the teachers how to teach during the COVID-19 pandemic and how the teachers could assist learners to learn effectively.

An analysis of the findings revealed that the views of participants are in line with the theory of the study, namely, attribution leadership theory. According to the attribution leadership theory, people attribute their successes and failures to their ability or competence, which indicates that a person's performance is determined by how he or she feels about his or her ability or competence (Weiner, 1974). It is therefore very important to always train the teachers in order to improve their performance.

According to Sonawane and Jadhav (2016), high-quality professional learning opportunities for teachers align with higher education institutional goals, state and district standards and other professional-learning activities, focus on core content and modelling of teaching strategies for the content, include opportunities for active learning of new teaching strategies, provide the chance for teachers to collaborate and include follow-up and continuous feedback. The role of DHs in conducting professional development of teachers is also supported by Crowther et al., (2000), who emphasise that professional development is a key for effective teaching and learning because it is designed to foster the growth of teachers that can be used for their further development.

The role of DHs in the professional development of teachers is also confirmed by PAM (DBE, 2016), which stipulates that the deputy principals are responsible for organising professional development programmes with DHs and also participate in departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses.

5.4.1.3 The challenges experienced by instructional leaders in the provision of effective instructional leadership

The third main theme which emerged from data analysis is the challenges experienced by instructional leaders in the provision of effective instructional leadership. The following four sub-themes emerged: lack of time to conduct instructional leadership, poor academic performance of learners, lack of community support and workload of the DHs. These sub-themes will be discussed in the section below.

(a) Lack of time for instructional leadership

The results of the analysed data revealed that lack of time of instructional leadership is one of the challenges experienced by instructional leaders in the provision of effective instructional leadership. The following quotation from the Focus Group 1 confirmed this finding:

“Time is always limited; we usually make time for ourselves to do professional development of teachers after school and we usually start such workshop around 14h40 and end at 16h00. “(Focus Group 1 from School A).

The challenge of lack of time for instructional leadership was supported by members of Focus Group 2 from School B, who commented thus:

“The DHs do not have sufficient time to conduct instructional leadership.”
(Focus Group 2 from School B).

Yet, the members of Focus Group 3 from School C said:

“We try to mentor colleagues during break times and phase meetings”
(Focus Group 3 from School C).

The above findings are based on attribution theory (Weiner, 2010). The attribution theory indicates that instructional leaders interpret the causes of the challenges experienced by the teachers in teaching learners and then support them to resolve the challenges. According to the attribution theory, all the causes of challenges experienced by teachers are regarded as attributes of challenges and poor academic performance of learners. Weiner (1974) indicates that people attribute their successes and failures to the following four important factors:

- **Ability:** A person's performance is determined by how he or she feels about his or her ability.
- **Effort:** This factor is related to feeling of pride and self-esteem. People feel the sense of pride in their accomplishment especially when they believe that it was their effort which led them to success.
- **Task difficulty:** The principal may find it difficult to monitor performance of teachers because of his or her lack of training.
- **Luck:** The principal may discover during monitoring that teachers are teaching effectively because they are highly motivated and they attend professional development sessions.

The challenge of lack of time is confirmed by Glewwe and Muralidharan (2016), who identified lack of time as a major challenge which the principal should solve by the effective management of instructional time by ensuring that all teachers attend classes according to the school time table and come to work every day. According to Spillane and Lee (2014) DHs are not able to perform their instructional leadership duties effectively because of increasing task demands. The shortage of staff forces the instructional leaders to have more periods, which makes it difficult for them to have time to practise instructional leadership (Spillane & Lee, 2014). According to Le Fevre and Robinson (2014), administrative tasks distract instructional leaders from the core business of improving teaching and learning.

(b) Sub-theme 2: Poor academic performance of learners

The research findings revealed that one of the challenges experienced by instructional leaders in the provision of effective instructional leadership is poor academic performance of learners. The following quotations from the members of Focus Group 1 confirm this finding:

“There is an assumption that poor performance of learners is caused by DHs in the school since they are operating as the engine of the school.” (Focus Group 1 from School A).

The members of Focus Group 1 from School A further added:

“As DHs we have to ensure that teachers do their preparations, teachers teach the learners effectively and assess the learners effectively.” (Focus Group 1 from School A)

The above quotation from members of Focus Group 1 from School A revealed that many people believe that DHs and not teachers are responsible for the poor performance of learners because they are instructional leaders. The members of Focus Group 1 from School A further alluded to the need of ensuring good learner performance of learners by commenting as follows:

“In order to solve the challenge of poor academic performance we must ensure that timetable is followed, teaching is effective, monitor teaching and assessment and also ensure that teachers are given feedback.” (Focus Group 1 from School A)

This finding revealed that the DHs are ready to resolve the challenge of poor performance of the learners.

A divergent view was expressed by members of Focus Group 2 from School B who said:

“Poor academic performance is caused by poor instructional leadership because DHs are the curriculum drivers and subject specialists.” (Focus Group 2 from School B).

The members of Focus Group 2 from School B elaborated further and indicated:

“In many schools, the performance of learners is very poor in Grade 12. DHs must monitor and control curriculum delivery from grade R to 7 and up to grade 12. Poor performance is the result of DHs failure to monitor teaching and learning. They also fail to provide teachers with the necessary LTSM to enable them to teach effectively.” (Focus Group 2 from School B).

The members of Focus Group 2 from School B also suggested a strategy that may be used to explore the main causes of poor academic performance of the learners. The members of Focus Group 2 from School B said:

“To resolve lack of academic success DHs, need to conduct regular workshops wherein teachers are given an opportunity to raise their challenges.” (Focus Group 2 from School B).

This finding is in line with attribution theory of Weiner (1980). According to Weiner (1980), attribution theory focuses on analysing the causes of the challenges experienced by the people, which are called attributes (Weiner, 1980). According to

attribution theory, it is important to identify and analyse the causes of challenges in order to design and implement effective strategies of resolving the challenges. According to attribution theory, the attributes or causes of poor teaching, learning and poor academic performance of the learners in schools are lack of community support, workload of DHs and lack of time for instructional leadership. According to Clarke (2005), in order to perform well, learners require teachers of good quality who are well-trained, well-behaved and well-motivated, because teachers are the driving force in schools. The views of Clarke (2005) are supported by Rudduck and McIntyre (2007) who assert that in order to avoid poor performance, learners must be taught by good teachers who are knowledgeable in their subjects and who are able to use various methods to present their subject matters to the learners. According to Walker (2008), a good quality teacher, who avoids poor performance of learners, is a teacher with adequate knowledge, capability and ambition, who uses teaching and learning materials effectively. Dimmock (2012) asserts that academic qualifications, knowledge of the subject matter, competence, and skills of teaching and the commitment of the teacher have significant impact on the teaching and learning process as well as the academic performance of the learners. According to Herrchen (2020), in order to be good teachers who avoid poor performance, they should possess adequate pre-requisite knowledge. According to Wallshaw (2012), laying at the heart of effective teaching and good performance of learners, is the knowledge and skill that an individual teacher brings to the cognitive demands of teaching. According to Wood, Seobi, Setlhare-Meltor and Waddington (2015), in order to ensure good performance of learners, teachers must be supported by DHs who must monitor teachers while they are teaching and provide guidance on their teaching weaknesses. However, Mestry (2017) emphasises that some DHs fail to monitor and support teachers because they do not have the skills and competencies to perform their duties, because they are not trained in instructional leadership and there are few in-service programmes available for them.

The challenge of poor academic performance of learners is confirmed by Christie, Butler and Potterton (2007), who emphasise that in almost every school, the primary school curriculum is viewed as problematic and that secondary schools in South Africa experience the poor quality of learners they receive from primary schools as a significant challenge. The challenge of poor academic performance of learners is also

supported by Lauchande, Passos and Howie (2017), who indicate low levels of literacy and numeracy skills and poor academic performance of learners in South African schools. Numerous studies link the poor academic performance of learners to socio-economic problems, poverty, and politics (Engelbrecht et al., 1996). The expectations of others and the school climate which surrounds learners determine their readiness to learn, which in turn results in poor learner performance (Mullins, 2005).

(c) Sub-theme 3: Lack of community support

The research participants were of the opinion that lack of community support was their other main challenge. This finding was confirmed by the following responses from members of Focus Group 2 from School B:

“Our other main challenge is that most parents in this rural area do not support the education of their children.” (Focus Group 2 from School B).

The members of Focus Group 2 elaborated further:

“These learners are not supported at home. There is also no support from the SGB members and the community.” (Focus Group 2 from School B).

The research findings allude to the lack of support from parents, School Governing Bodies and the community. Furthermore, the findings indicate that learners are not motivated to learn due to lack of parental support. These findings are in line with the attribution theory of this study. According to Weiner (1980), attribution theory is concerned with how people interpret success and failure and how this relates to their thinking and behaviour. Attribution theory emphasises that in order to improve something, people must first identify and understand the causes of the challenges or failure. This implies that if there is lack of stakeholder involvement at school, such as lack of support from parents, SGBs and the community, the DH must first understand the causes of these challenges. Understanding the causes of challenges will then assist the DHs to design the strategies to resolve the challenges. The challenge of lack of stakeholder involvement in schools is supported by various experts. According to Nwosu and Chukwuere (2017), many schools with challenges have non-functional

SGBs because they have little or no understanding of their roles and responsibilities. A study conducted by Magano, Mohapi and Robinson (2017), revealed that the dysfunctionality of SGBs in South African schools negatively affect the academic performance of learners. This perception is confirmed by Sibanda (2017) who indicates that parents of children in poor performing schools are often not involved in the education of their children because they feel marginalised by principals and teachers. This perception is supported by McDowall and Schaughency (2017) who assert that many teachers have a negative perception of parental involvement, often classifying it as less encouraging and less rewarding in terms of advancing children's learning.

The members of Focus Group 3 further alluded the reasons why the parents, SGBs and the community are not able to support the teachers. They said:

“Many parents, members of school governing bodies and the community, are not able to support the teachers and learners because most of them are either illiterate or have low level of education.” (Focus Group 3 from School C).

The members of Focus Group 3 from School C further elaborated on the challenges, expressing the following view:

“They don't have the capacity and most parents are farm workers, working far from home. After school, the children do not have interest of reading books because the parents come back home very late.” (Focus Group 3 from School C).

The research findings suggest that parents lack of support is not out of ignorance but is due to incapacity due to poor literacy levels and parents' working conditions.

A divergent view was expressed by members of Focus Group 4 from School D as indicated in the quotation below:

“Our children are not motivated due to lack of role models in the villages they are residing in. Some learners are coming from poor background with no one to can assist them in the home environment. Some learners are from child-headed families where there is no one to guide them nor offer support in learning.” (Focus Group 4 from School D).

The above response from members of Focus Group 4 from School D revealed that some children are not motivated to learn because there are no role models in their villages. This implies that those children are living in the villages with few educated people. The response also revealed that other children are not supported because their parents have passed on and they are living in child-headed families.

The findings from Focus Group 3 and 4 are also linked to the attribution theory by Weiner (1980). As indicated above, attribution theory emphasises that all challenges must be attributed to particular causes. In other words, before resolving a particular challenge such as lack of parental support, that challenge must first be understood by examining why the parents are not involved in the learning of their children. According to Munje and Mncube (2018), many schools prevent parental involvement because parents are undermined. Segoe and Bisschoff (2019) emphasise that active parental involvement is an essential aspect of improving learner achievement but many parents are marginalised by the teachers. The local communities are also not involved in poor performing schools because they are not proud of dysfunctional schools and therefore disengage themselves in such schools (DBE, 2018).

The challenge of lack of community support is confirmed by Cooper (2022), who identified five causes of barriers to community involvement in schools: lack of trust, inaccessible technology, lack of awareness, uncertainty about what it means to get involved and poor engagement in local planning. According to Wise and Wise (2009), parents and the community can play an important role in the academic performance of learners, by providing them with the best learning environment, but many parents are not able to support school. Lack of participation of parents and the community keeps them in the dark about supporting teachers and learners and does not improve the performance of teachers and learners.

(d) Sub-theme 4: Workload of DHs

An analysis of the participants' responses revealed that one of the challenges experienced by instructional leaders in the provision of effective instructional leadership is workload of DHs. This finding was confirmed by members of Focus Group 4 who responded as follows:

“Yes, we are also responsible for teaching and assessing and to tell the truth we do not have sufficient time for conducting instructional leadership due to the workload we have in classes or in our subjects”. (Focus Group 4 from School D).

The members of Focus Group 4 from School D further added:

“Controlling of books takes more of our time and we end up conducting subject meetings after school with some teachers excusing themselves due to other commitments and miss out on the discussions.” (Focus Group 4 from School D).

The research findings revealed that DHs have workload challenges. The findings revealed that they are responsible for teaching, providing academic leadership, monitoring the implementation of curriculum and managing and developing the department to ensure that it achieves academic standards of excellence. These findings are in line with the distributive theory of this study. According to the distributive theory, distributive leadership refers to the leadership functions of organisations that are shared by many people in various ways that strengthen the whole school community, intensifying a sense of engagement and shared responsibility while making the workload more manageable (Whitby, 2014). This principle indicates that the main strategy of resolving the challenge of workload of DHs is to share their duties with senior teachers who will reduce the workloads. According to Smith et al. (2019), distributive leadership is not about dividing tasks and responsibilities amongst the teachers but is concerned about the interactions among the leaders and teachers to improve the academic performance of the learners.

The challenge of the work load of DHs is supported by Wood, Seobi, Setlhare-Meltor and Waddington (2015), who assert that the DHs have a huge workload because their role is to monitor teachers while they are teaching, and also to provide guidance on their teaching weaknesses. This challenge is confirmed by Wood et al. (2015) who emphasise that the DHs have a large workload because their role is to teach the learners, show teachers the best teaching methods, monitor teachers, facilitate discussions about monitoring, guide teachers and model new school initiatives. According Mahfouz (2018), principals and DHs find themselves working extra hours and the increasing pressures placed on them lead to a state of mental and physical exhaustion caused by one's professional life. In some schools, DHs complain about teacher's absenteeism, late coming and the workload (Mpisane, 2015). DHs, as middle managers in schools, have a significant role to play in improving teaching and learning through supervision and control, but proper time management is necessary in order for them to execute this duty effectively (Mpisane, 2015). According to Mestry (2017), DHs are faced with diverse administrative and management functions such as teaching, monitoring, assessment, procuring resources, managing learner discipline, resolving conflicts with parents and dealing with unexpected teacher and learner crises.

5.4.1.4 The strategies that can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools

The last main theme which emerged from data analysis is the strategies that can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools. Under this main theme two sub-themes emerged, namely, professional development of DHs and conducting class visits, which will be discussed in the section below.

(a) Professional development of DHs

An analysis of the findings of this study revealed that professional development of DHs is the main strategy for improving instructional leadership. This finding was confirmed by members of Focus Group 1 who responded as follows:

“In instructional leadership workshop are conducted by subject advisors on monthly basis per subjects. However, the department support is not enough for us as managers of both administrative and instructional leaders. Last year we attended a workshop at Warmbath Resort and it was so empowering that we felt refreshed, supported and motivated regarding the control of learner’s portfolio and teacher’s files.” (Focus Group 1 from School A).

The research results revealed that the curriculum advisors conduct professional development sessions for DHs and teachers. These workshops are further arranged at school level to reinforce what was learnt from Curriculum Advisors.

On the content discussed during the workshops the research participants of Focus Group 1 from School A indicated:

“The main focus of the workshops is to discuss and solve challenges faced by teachers. These include amongst others learners’ inability to read, calculate and reading with understanding and challenge with science streams. Yes, we are trained by curriculum advisors and circuit managers in the workshops. The workshops of instructional leadership are attended by the principals, deputy principals and DHs. We are also trained by the staff from head office. We also conduct professional development workshops for teachers. The deputy principal also conducts workshops for DHs and include teachers where necessary as informed by DHs. The principal also conducts developments for deputy principal, DH and for teachers.” (Focus Group 1 from School A).

An analysis of the above quotation from Focus Group 1 from School A revealed that the curriculum advisors, circuit managers, principals, deputy principals and DHs conduct workshops. Focus Group 2 from School B further alluded to the importance

of professional development of DHs. In this regard Focus Group 2 from School B provided the following response:

“Every workshop is very important because we come capacitated with new information that will help our institutions. There was a workshop during OBE introduction after it was discovered that it was difficult for teachers to implement especially on assessing learners, and we requested an extra workshop and it was offered and we finally came back capacitated that we were able to help the learners. The same thing happened with CAPS, when introduced it assisted us to assist teachers to help teachers because we have knowledge. And should we fail to assist them we consult the curriculum advisors to assist us to be able to help teachers. Workshops are useful and helpful that is the reason we make attending workshops compulsory for the SMT as leaders in order to capacitate our subordinates.” (Focus Group 2 from School B).

The above response from members Focus Group 2 from School B revealed the importance of professional development. According to the responses from members of Focus Group 2 from School B, the importance of professional development is to capacitate DHs with new information.

The views of Focus Group 2 from School B about professional development were supported by members of Focus Group 3 from School C who said the following:

“We have been trained as DHs and deputies in this institution for this administrative leadership. The head master trained us and he mostly uses the morning briefings as the session to workshop us because we normally report earlier before the school starts. We are workshopped and trained on daily basis to help us aware of our daily activities.” (Focus Group 3 from School C).

The above quotation of Focus Group 3 from School C indicates that professional development of DHs and deputy principals is conducted daily by the principal, which reveals that the professional development is very effective.

The members of Focus Group 3 from School C further elaborated that professional development is also conducted by the officials from the district or the curriculum advisors. They indicate that the workshops are conducted effectively, but there is only one problem, that is, the workshops are conducted only once or twice per year and the workshops last only two hours, which is not sufficient. Focus Group 3 from School C lamented as follows:

“As DHs and deputy principal we seldom attend those workshops we only attend once in a while and the people who are conducting those workshops are the officials from the district or the curriculum advisors and in terms of gaining knowledge, as workshops only run or lasts for two hours they become useless to us as we do not have enough information. We therefore propose that they arrange such workshops in a quarterly basis to refresh our minds and by so doing that can help DHs.” (Focus Group 3 from School C).

The members of Focus Group 3 elaborated that the DHs also conduct professional development sessions, as indicated in the quotation below:

“In our school we call it in-service training where the DHs conduct the training where we train our subordinates, who are our teachers. Some of the things on which we train them are the methods of teaching and how to change the methods of teaching the learners and most importantly on how to improve the results especially on how to reach the target. In the workshops we come up with a strategy or a plan on how best we can improve the results. We also ensure that new teachers are inducted where we call them once per quarter and induct them.” (Focus Group 3 from School C).

The response of Focus Group 3 about professional development revealed that the DHs are able to conduct effective professional development sessions. The DHs train the teachers in effective teaching methods and how to improve the results and induct new teachers.

The members of Focus Group 3 from School C further elaborated that teachers are also involved in conducting professional development sessions. They elaborated as follows:

“Last year we came up with a strategy or a plan on how best we can improve the results. We have developed “team teaching” where a teacher who is best in a particular subject, such as History, can assist other teachers who are unable to teach that subject, for the benefit of learners.” (Focus Group 3 from School C).

The above quotation indicates that a new professional development strategy was developed, called team teaching, where excellent teachers train other teachers (Focus Group 3 from School C).

A divergent view about professional development of teachers was expressed by members of Focus Group 4 from School D, who emphasised that professional development sessions are conducted by various instructional leaders, as indicated in the quotations below:

“We have been trained in instructional leadership in August 2019 for three days in Oliphant’s Tusk lodge and another workshop was done in May 2021 for three days at Belabela Shangri-La lodge. We were also trained twice by the circuit manager from Capricorn, and also by the district director of Mopani West and the circuit manager of our own circuit. Professional developmental workshops are also conducted by the guest speaker from the provincial office and motivational speakers from other circuits.” (Focus Group 4 from School D).

The above quote reveals that the DBE organises professional development sessions which are conducted by the provincial officials, district director and circuit manager. The members of Focus Group 4 from School D elaborated on the importance of professional development sessions conducted by the principals, provincial officials, district director and circuit manager. The members of Focus Group 4 from School D elaborated as follows:

“In these workshops we learnt that as educators we need to work hard in order to serve God’s purpose upon the learners. We were encouraged to enroll to further our studies where we will be empowered with new information that will allow us to impart more knowledge to our learners. We will also be fully equipped with the current affairs which will help us to update the learners because subjects are being updated timeously. Since we do not have libraries to access more information workshops provide us with such departmental developments.” (Focus Group 4 from School D).

The above quote reveals that the professional development is very important because teachers are equipped with new knowledge and skills and motivated to further their academic qualifications, which assists them to improve teaching and learning.

The members of Focus Group 4 from School D further elaborated about the workshops for teachers conducted by DHs, when they said:

“Most of the times we are trained by our principal in our SMT meetings. Yes, we do conduct professional development workshops for teachers. We conduct the workshops three times per term. We first meet as SMT, secondly the subject meetings are held and the third meeting is for the staff. And we also have a meeting when joined by a new member to make them feel welcome where we introduce ourselves to them and by so doing, they get used to the new environment.” (Focus Group 4 from School D).

The above quote explains that professional development workshops for DHs are also conducted by the principals and those of teachers are conducted by the DHs.

The members of Focus Group 4 from School D elaborated further about the importance of professional development workshops of teachers conducted by the DHs. They elaborated as follows:

“When the teachers attend the workshops, we check if they have challenges so we can strategize on how to help them. We also consolidate the challenges and the strategies so we can own them as an institution. We also

conduct workshops where teachers help each other share teaching methods and their teaching frustrations. That is where we manage to profile our teachers' abilities so during the need to assist others, we know who to consult for assistance." (Focus Group 4 from School D).

An analysis of the challenge of work overload of DHs revealed that the views of the members of Focus Group 4 from School D are in line with the transformational leadership theory of this study. Furthermore, such leaders allow followers to ask questions, think critically and independently about issues and strategise on the best ways to execute their tasks and acts as a guide or mentor to the subordinates. According to transformational leadership theory, a leader works with teams to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change through inspiration and executing the change with committed members of a group (Burns, 1978). Professional development of DHs is confirmed by Syomwene (2018), who indicates that guiding DHs about a school's culture improves learner performance, motivates teachers, and guarantees job satisfaction. According to DuFour (2006), professional development is very important in schools because it is a lifelong collaborative learning process that nourishes the growth of individuals, teams, and the school through a daily job-embedded, learner-centred, focused approach, on-the-job teacher training or learning process that supports and fosters instructionally effective teachers.

(b) Conducting class visits

An analysis of the findings of this study revealed that conducting class visits by DHs is one of the strategies that is implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in schools. The following quotation from the participating DHs of Focus Group 1 from School A confirm this finding:

"In order to support curriculum implementation by teachers, we conduct class visits. Class visits are key to knowing what happens in class. We developed a class visit instrument to help us during these visits. We check the lesson plan and a few learners' books. We discuss our findings with the individual teachers we visited." (Focus Group 1 from School A).

According to the above quotation one of the strategies of improving instructional leadership is that an instructional leader must conduct class visits. The aim of class visits is to monitor the work of the teacher in order to support or assist the teacher to change and improve teaching methods and resolve the challenges. These views of the participant is confirmed by the transformational leadership theory of this study. According to White (2018), the role of transformational leadership is to train, encourage, inspire and motivate employees to innovate and create change that will help grow and shape the future success of the organisation. Transformational leadership can result in a positive change within organisations as it deals with the development of everyone within the organisation. This implies that a leader always nurtures and develops people who think independently and stimulates followers to be creative in order to implement changes within organisations.

The class visits by DHs is supported by Mpisane (2015) who asserts that the monitoring process is an important tool that guarantees effective teaching and learning; monitoring manifests in the form of informal or unplanned class visits. Mpisane (2015) indicates that DHs are specialists in the subject areas in which they serve as instructional leaders and they must use classroom visits to observe what teachers did and to identify possible gaps that require their assistance. According to Brazer and Bauer (2013), DHs should also conduct appropriate class visits, in order to evaluate the implementation of the curriculum and improve teaching and learning. According to the DBE (2016), the role of the DHs as instructional leaders is to provide strong academic leadership, monitor the implementation of an assessment policy by all staff members and manage and develop the department to ensure that it achieves the highest academic standards of excellence in all its activities. Heads of department need professional development to equip them with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to successfully guide the teachers to promote student learning (Carraway & Young, 2015). According to Bipath and Nkabinde (2018), the role of the DHs is to improve communication and establish a collaborative relationship with teachers, ensure that teachers contact parents early in the school year to explain class and homework procedures and to learn about their concerns, views, talents and interests. According to Du Plessis and Eberlein (2017), DHs should conduct workshops to guide the teachers about effective teaching and assessment methods, use of technology and other resources and how to improve the academic performance

of the learners. This is confirmed by Maponya (2015), who asserts that the roles of DHs are to hold meetings with the teaching staff and to check, monitor and control the subject files of the teachers on a regular basis, including the informal and formal assessments of learners. The role of the DH is to monitor the work of the teachers as confirmed by Mthiyane, Naidoo and Bartram (2019) who indicate that the DH is a teacher, a subject specialist and expert, a mentor of colleagues, and a person who plays a staff development and monitoring role of the work of teachers. According to Metcalfe (2018), the role of the DH is to monitor the work of the teachers by regularly checking teachers' coverage of the curriculum (curriculum tracking) and checking learners' work, working with teachers to improve curriculum coverage and assisting teachers with problems related to curriculum coverage. Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) assert that the DH should conduct effective professional development of teachers, which is content focused, incorporate active learning, support collaboration, use models of effective practice, provide coaching and expert support, offer feedback and reflection and do this for a sustained duration. Similarly, Mizell (2019) reveals that professional development of teachers by DHs helps teachers analyse student achievement data during the school year to identify learning problems immediately, develop solutions, and promptly apply those solutions to address students' needs and can be useful if it takes place before classes begin or after the end of classes.

5.5 SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW FINDINGS WITH THE DHS

The findings of focus group interviews with the DHs and deputy principals revealed four main themes, namely, the influence of the instructional leadership role of the principal on teaching and academic performance of learners, the influence of the instructional leadership role of the DHs on teaching and academic performance of learners, the challenges experienced by instructional leaders on the provision of effective instructional leadership and the strategies that can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools. The first theme revealed four instructional leadership roles of the principal, namely, monitoring of teachers, professional development, parental involvement and delegation of work. The second theme revealed two instructional leadership roles of the principal, namely, monitoring and supporting of teachers and professional development. The third theme revealed

four challenges of instructional leadership, namely, lack of time of instructional leadership, poor academic performance of learners, lack of community support and workload of deputy principals and DHs. The fourth theme revealed three strategies that can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools, namely, professional development of deputy principals and DHs and conducting class visits.

5.6 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the qualitative descriptive data (responses) emanating from the research questions in phases 1 and 2. Phase 1 includes presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected through document analysis and observations. An analysis of observations revealed that instructional leaders are aware of their roles as instructional leaders, daily morning briefings contribute to effective running of schools and principals and deputy principals monitor the work of DHs, teachers and learners by conducting class visits. All these findings indicate that morning briefings, meetings and class visits are effective strategies conducted by instructional leaders to improve teaching and learning. The analysed documents revealed that the schools were functioning in accordance with the National Education policy as well as the South African Schools Act to ensure compliance with the Basic Education policy requirements. The documents also revealed that schools are able to design their own policies, such as the time and attendance register, which records the teachers who are present and absent on each day as well as their time of arrival and departure.

Phase 2 included presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected through individual interviews and focus group Interviews. The findings of the data collected through individual interviews from principals revealed three instructional duties of the principals, namely, monitoring the performance of teachers, conducting professional development sessions of teachers and administrative duties of instructional leaders. The findings also revealed three duties of DHs, namely, administrative duties, professional development of teachers and monitoring the work of teachers. The findings also revealed the challenges experienced by instructional leaders, namely, lack of resources, lack of knowledge on instructional leadership and subjects, poor academic performance of learners and violation of rules and regulations. The findings

also revealed the strategies that may be implemented to improve instructional leadership in schools, namely, supervision of teachers, professional development of teachers and support from circuit office and province.

The findings of focus group interviews with the deputy principals and DHs revealed four instructional leadership roles of the principal, namely, monitoring of teachers, professional development, parental involvement and delegation of work. The findings also revealed two instructional leadership roles of the principal, namely, monitoring and supporting of teachers and professional development. The findings also revealed four challenges of instructional leadership, namely, lack of time of instructional leadership, poor academic performance of learners, lack of community support and workload of deputy principals and DHs. The findings also revealed three strategies that can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools, namely, professional development of deputy principals and DHs and conducting class visits.

The next chapter (chapter 6) is the final chapter of this study and it focuses on a summary of the findings of the study, contribution of the study and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 6

MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The main aim of this study was to explore the role of instructional leaders on improving the academic performance of learners in primary schools. The previous chapter (chapter five) presented the discussion and analysis of the results of the study. The aim of this chapter is to present major findings, recommendations and conclusions of the study. This study was guided by the following primary research question:

What is the role of instructional leaders in improving learners' academic performance in rural primary schools?

The secondary research questions unpacked the primary research question:

- (a) Which theories and models inform instructional leadership and its implementation in schools and how are they critiqued?
- (b) What education reforms with particular reference to instructional leadership have been implemented in South African schools since 1994?
- (c) How is instructional leadership implemented by a purposeful sample of principals, deputy principals and DHs with the view to improving learners' academic performance in four selected rural primary schools in the Khujwana Circuit, Limpopo?
- (d) What recommendations can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools?

In this chapter a summary of findings from the literature study will be provided first. This is followed by a summary of findings from the empirical investigation. I also discuss my own reflections, the research contributions, the study recommendations, its limitations and conclusions.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

6.2.1 Summary of findings from the literature study

Chapter two of this study discussed the theoretical framework that underpins this study. Three theories were discussed namely, the attribution theory, the distributive theory and the transformational theory (cf. par. 2.3). According to Weiner (1980), attribution theory is concerned with how people interpret success and failure and how this relates to their thinking and behaviours. According to the attribution theory, when people experience a particular outcome, such as poor instructional leadership or poor academic performance of the learners, attributions assist them to understand what caused the event so that if the outcome is desirable, they can do their best to experience it again (Heider, 1958). According to distributive leadership theory, through distributive leadership, institutions are able to engage their members creating a shared responsibility while making the workload more manageable (Jones & Harris, 2013). Burns (1978) opines that leaders work with teams to identify needed change, create a vision to guide the change through inspiration and execute change with committed members of a group. In this study, the three theories assisted me to understand instructional leadership and to design and implement the study. Also discussed in chapter two is Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership model (cf. par. 2.6.1). According to Hallinger and Murphy (1985), there are three dimensions of the principals' functions as an instructional leader, namely, defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme and promoting a positive school learning climate (cf. par. 2.6.1). The three dimensions of instructional leadership are further delineated into ten instructional leadership functions (cf. par. 2.6.1). The first dimension of school's mission includes framing clear school goals and communicating clear school goals (cf. par. 2.6.1). The second dimension of managing the instructional programme includes supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum and monitoring student progress (cf. par. 2.6.1). The third dimension of creating a positive school climate includes providing instructional time, promoting teachers' professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers and providing incentives for learners (cf. par. 2.6.1). The use of the three theories and the model were deemed essential in this study as they complemented each other. Hallinger and Murphy's model addresses instructional leadership of school

principals specifically hence it was essential for me to include it in my discussions in chapter two.

Chapter three provided the literature review to situate the study in context. To this effect the system of school leadership in South Africa prior 1994 was presented (cf. par. 3.2). The literature review revealed that during this period, the country's education system was characterised by hierarchical and authoritarian relations (cf. par. 3.2). This was to restrict wider participation to ensure political control by the top echelons of the education departments (Bush & Glover, 2016). Furthermore, the education system was segregated based on the country's demographics and ethnicity (cf. par. 3.2). African schools were further divided according to their ethnic groups in the nine homelands of South Africa (Mestry & Du Plessis, 2020). During the colonial and apartheid periods, the black population of South Africa was divided into major ethnic groups, namely, Nguni people which consisted of Zulu, Xhosa, Ndebele and Swazi, Sotho people which consisted of Northern Sotho (Bapedi), Southern Sotho (Basotho) and Tswana, Shangaan-Tsonga and Venda, as well as Coloured and Afrikaans (South African History Online (SAHO), 2019). Decisions regarding school education were taken by the apartheid government and schools in the homelands had no authority (SAHO, 2019). A major source of concern was the Bantu Education Act of 1953, a foundational piece of the apartheid regime which separated blacks from white schools and provided non-whites with inferior education which kept them economically and politically in lower positions (Spaull, 2013). There were different mandatory levels of education, with much lower requirements for non-Whites during this period (Motala, Dieltiens & Sayed, 2009). White schools placed huge emphasis on academic subjects, while black schools were characterised with lower academic expectations, and more emphasis on 'practical' subjects to prepare them for blue-collar jobs (Rakometsi, 2008). Rights and benefits were allocated according to this hierarchy, with whites being most advantaged and black Africans being most disadvantaged (Teeger, 2015). Blacks were educated to meet their "cultural standards", as established by white government officials and the curriculum was created to keep blacks poor as workers in factories and as manual labourers under white control. During apartheid era, there were different mandatory levels of education, with much lower requirements for non-whites during this period (Motala et al., 2009). White schools emphasised more academic subjects, while schools for blacks had much lower academic expectations,

and emphasised more “practical” subjects that prepared their pupils for blue-collar work futures (Fiske & Ladd, 2004, Hyslop, 1993; Kallaway, 1984; Maharaj, Kaufman, & Richter, 2000; Nkomo, 1990; Rakometsi, 2008).

Further discussed in chapter three is the instructional leadership of school after the 1994 democratic elections (cf. par. 3.3). The rise in site-specific management roles, which are based on instructional leadership experiences, is one of the initiatives launched by the South African government to reform the South African education system (Shava et al., 2021). As a result, the ten departments of education were replaced by a unified National Department of Education. In 1994, the ANC government restructured the basic and tertiary education departments, dividing responsibilities between nine newly formed provincial education departments and a single national education department (Amnesty International, 2020). In 1995, all government-run primary and secondary schools were officially racially integrated with compulsory schooling for all from the ages of 7 to 15 (Amnesty International, 2020).

The importance of instructional leadership in improving learners’ academic performance is emphasised in schools (cf. par. 3.4). The role of instructional leadership in schools is confirmed by Shafinaz (2017), who claims that it increases the efficacy of teachers to manage education changes. According to Vogel (2018), school instructional leadership is a collaborative process between principals, teachers and other stakeholders who serve to define the school’s mission, promote a positive school learning climate and manage instructional programme through curriculum implementation. Furthermore, the role of communities in school governance is considered mandatory for the smooth running of the schools. To this effect SGBs were established in all schools. Thus, principals share the leadership responsibilities not only with teachers within the schools but also with SGBs. Another role of instructional leadership is to involve parents and other community members as resources and partners in the learning process (DBE, 2008).

Instructional leadership is applied to guide and support teachers. Instructional leaders observe and assess the instructional practices of teachers and provide feedback, guidance, support and incentives based on their learner’s performance (Vogel, 2018).

They further set the tone, motivate teachers to learn and conduct professional development.

Principals, deputy principals and DHs are mandated with the instructional leadership roles. As instructional leaders, they assist teachers in designing instructional programmes and using effective teaching strategies to meet learners' diverse learning needs. Bipath and Nkabinde (2018) assert that DHs should improve communication and establish a collaborative relationship with teachers, ensuring that teachers contact parents early in the school year to explain class and homework procedures and to learn about their concerns, views, talents, interest and availability. According to Heystek (2015), another important role of the instructional leader is to motivate the teachers to perform their work effectively. Other responsibilities include planning curriculum programs, supervising and evaluating classroom instructions, implementing remedial or corrective actions on problematic aspects and ensuring that teaching and learning time is not disturbed (cf. par. 3.4). According to the PAM (DBE, 2016), the role of instructional leaders is to guide teachers on syllabi, schemes of work, homework, practical work and remedial work.

(a) Challenges of instructional leadership

The literature reviews also identified the challenges that face instructional learners. These include lack of knowledge and skills of instructional leadership (Fink & Silverma, 2014; Spillane & Lee, 2014), teachers' absenteeism and unwillingness to be observed while teaching (Seobi, Setlhare-Meltor & Waddington, 2015), ineffective Representative Councils of Learners (DBE, 2018), lack of curriculum planning and management (Nkambule and Amsterdam, 2018:02), violence in schools (Bayer, 2016), work overload, lack of accountability (Mestry (2017), poor infrastructure (Draga, 2017), insufficient contact time (Spillane & Lee, 2014), the lack of support from the SGB (Netshitangani & Mohapi (2018), lack of parental and community involvement in their children's learning (Sibanda, 2017; Nwosu & Chukwuere, 2017) and the shortage of teachers (Gurley, Anast-May & Lee, 2015; Mthethwa, 2017) (cf. par. 3.5). The introduction of instructional leadership teams is regarded as essential to improve teaching and learning in schools. Mestry (2017) and Kellerman (2015) suggest that

professional development of instructional leaders should be implemented to assist them.

6.2.2 Summary of findings from the empirical investigation

In this study data were collected through observations, document analysis, individual interviews and focus group interviews. The empirical data collection for this study used a qualitative ethnographic approach. Chapter 4 delineates the research design and methodology. The research paradigm (cf. 4.2), the research methodology (cf. 4.3) which outlined the ethnographic enquiry method (cf. 4.3.2), the researcher's profile (cf. 4.3.3), her role (cf. 4.3.4), the selection of site (cf. 4.3.5) and participants (cf. 4.3.6), also described the data collection (cf. 4.3.7), data analysis (cf. 4.3.7.4), reflexivity (cf. 4.3.7.5) as well as trustworthiness (cf. 4.3.7.6) and credibility aspects of the study are expounded. The ethical considerations (cf. 4.4) that guided the research were also explained and limitations (cf. 4.5) stated. Below are the findings from empirical investigations based on the data collection tools used.

6.2.2.1 Findings from observation

The main findings from classroom observations of class visits by the principals, deputy principals and DHs revealed that (cf. par. 5.2.1). they held daily morning briefings to discuss how they will perform their duties (cf. par. 5.2.1). The findings revealed that all teachers are committed to attending the daily morning briefings. The observations result further revealed that in the four schools, principals and deputy principals monitor the work of DHs, teachers and learners, by conducting class visits (cf. par. 5.2.1). In all the four schools after the class visits teachers are assisted on how to improve their lessons (cf. par. 5.2.1). These findings confirm that morning briefings, meetings and class visits are strategies conducted by instructional leaders to enhance teaching and learning. These findings are confirmed by distributive theory and transformational theory. According to the distributive theory, leadership is often not situated in one person but is instead distributed among multiple individuals who have the skills to contribute to the success of an organisation (Robert, 2019). Through distributive leadership institutions are able to engage their members creating a shared responsibility while making the workload more manageable (Jones & Harris, 2013).

The emphasis of distributed leadership is upon interdependent interaction and practice rather than individual and independent actions associated with those with formal leadership roles or responsibilities (Whitby, 2014). According to Bush and Glover (2016), effective instructional leadership should be conducted through appropriate class visits, and phase and learning area discussions among educators. According to Ismail, Hussin, Don and Khalid (2018), school instructional leaders have the duty to plan curriculum programs, supervise and evaluate classroom instructions, implement remedial or corrective actions on problematic aspects and ensure that teaching and learning time is not disturbed. This perception indicates that principals and deputy principals and DHs should work together to monitor the work of teachers and learners by conducting class visits.

6.2.2.2 Findings from document analysis

In this study seven documents were analysed, namely, the National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996, Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 and the South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996, school policies, the roles and responsibilities of instructional leaders in schools, time and attendance register, work allocation document and minutes of school's meetings (cf. par. 5.2.2). These documents were reviewed because they are used in schools A, B, C and D and other schools to guide employment of teachers, duties of teachers, maintenance of discipline, the role of school governing bodies, instructional leadership and management of schools (cf. par. 5.2.2).

The findings revealed that the aim of the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) No. 27 of 1996 is to indicate the conditions of employment for educators and school management (RSA, 1997). The findings also revealed that the objectives of the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) No. 27 of 1996 (RSA, 1997) are to provide for:

- (i) The determination of national education policy by the Minister in accordance with certain principles;
- (ii) The consultations to be undertaken, prior to the determination-of policy and the establishment of certain bodies for the purpose of consultation;
- (iii) the publication and implementation of national education policy; and

- (iv) the monitoring and evaluation of education.

The findings also revealed that the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) No. 27 of 1996 is significant for this study as it presents the employment of educators, vision, mission, goals and objectives and regulations of the schools, role of principals, deputy principals, DHs, teachers, SGBs and RLCs. Thus, the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) No. 27 of 1996 is considered relevant for this study of instructional leadership.

An analysis of the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 revealed that the aim of the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 is to regulate of the conditions of service, discipline, retirement and discharge of teachers (RSA, 1998). The Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 discusses the conditions of service and employment of educators, which include appointments, promotions and transfers, termination of services, incapacity and misconduct (RSA, 1998). The findings also revealed that the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 is significant for this study as it presents conditions of service and teachers' appointments, promotions and transfers, termination of services, incapacity and misconduct and the role of SACE (RSA, 1998). An analysis of the findings of this policy indicates that the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 is relevant for this study because it relates to matters of school management and instructional leadership.

An analysis of the South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996 revealed that its aim is to provide a uniform system for the organisation, management, leadership, governance and funding of schools (cf. par. 5.2.2). It further aims to amend and repeal certain laws relating to school governance (RSA, 1996). The Act deals with the provisioning of both public and private schools on both private and public properties, governance and professional management of public schools, funding of public schools, appointment and promotion of educators, salaries and conditions of employment of educators, transfer of educators, admission of learners, and code of conduct of learners (RSA, 1996) (cf. par. 5.2.3). The findings are significant for this study because it clarifies the conditions of service, employment, promotions, transfers of educators, presents conditions of service and educator establishments, appointments, promotions and transfers and termination of services of educators, which are all related to instructional leadership (cf. par. 5.2.2.2). The findings of the

study revealed that the aim of the time and attendance register is to show the presence or absence of teachers at school. Whereas the Allocation of Work document provides the roles and responsibilities of the principals, DHs and teachers (cf. par. 5.2.2). According to the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, all employers in South Africa must keep a manual or automatic attendance register for workers and retain it for a period of for three years (RSA, 1998). The Time and Attendance Register may be used for processing salaries, presenting the record to government authorities when required, keep an eye on the regularity of the teachers, helps the management to take necessary and feasible actions for the smooth running of the school and helps to define the recruitment policy of the school (Bhimani, 2023). The aim of the Allocation of Work document is to delegate the subjects that should be taught by all the teachers according to qualifications and also presents the roles and responsibilities of the principals, DHs and teachers (cf. par. 5.2.2). According to Hyun (2020) work allocation allows for the efficient and strategic management of tasks. It makes it easier to monitor projects and ensure that progress is efficiently maintained. Minutes of school meeting provides an accurate record of what transpired during the meeting and decisions made (cf. par. 5.2.2). The analysed documents revealed that the schools were functioning in accordance with the National Education Policy as well as the South African School Act. The results revealed that participating schools were able to design their own policies to ensure compliance with the Basic Education policy requirements. The results further revealed that teachers' school attendance was effectively monitored in all the four participating schools. (cf. par. 5.2.2).

6.2.2.3 Findings from the individual interviews with the school principals

An analysis of the data of the first main theme, namely, the role of principals as instructional leaders, revealed three instructional duties of the principals, namely, monitoring the performance of teachers, conducting professional development sessions of teachers and administrative duties of instructional leaders which include filing, record keeping and management of teaching and ensuring that there are sufficient teaching and learning resources (cf. par. 5.3.3.1). These findings are in line with Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership model which characterises these responsibilities as important. The findings revealed that the principals monitor the implementation of the prescribed curriculum by conducting class visits to observe

how teachers execute roles and responsibilities allocated to them. The findings also revealed that the principals work with the SMTs and district officials to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place. They further ensure that the SMT conduct monitoring sessions are using the agreed upon monitoring tools to improve teaching and learning (cf. par. 5.3.3.1). This finding is aligned to Heystek (2015) who advises principals, DHs and curriculum advisors to work together to monitor curriculum implementation. The findings also revealed that the principals conduct professional development sessions for teachers on the planning and delivery of lessons. The professional development of teachers as instructional leaders is further elaborated upon by Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership model which ensures that the set high standards and expectations of academic achievements are met. Principals further conduct professional development sessions for DHs on monitoring teachers' work and learners' books (cf. par. 5.3.3.1). Monitoring and evaluation is regarded as another key aspect of instructional leadership by Hallinger and Murphy (1987). According to Mestry (2017), principals should conduct continuous professional development sessions in order to improve the knowledge and skills of teachers.

The findings of the study also revealed the challenges experienced by instructional leaders on the provision of effective instructional leadership, namely, lack of resources, lack of knowledge on instructional leadership and subjects, poor academic performance of learners and violation of rules and regulations (cf. par. 5.3.3.3). The findings revealed that amongst challenges experienced by instructional leadership is the shortage of teachers (cf. par. 5.3.3.3). The challenge of shortage of teachers is also confirmed by Sephton (2018), Richter (2016) and Masinire (2015) who emphasise that South Africa is facing an education crisis because of wrong appointments and allocation of teachers. I opine that this challenge is further exacerbated by unavailability of teaching posts for graduates in the past resulting in most people avoiding the teaching profession.

The findings further revealed strategies that may be implemented to improve instructional leadership which amongst others are supervision of teachers, professional development of instructional leaders and support from circuit office, district and provincial offices (cf. par. 5.3.3.4). The strategies of improving instructional leadership is supervision and monitoring of teachers (cf. par. 5.3.3.4). This finding is

confirmed by Sterrett et al. (2018), who assert that instructional leaders have a vital role in valuing teachers' time and they must have site-based control in establishing the master schedule for the classes. Mestry (2018) also emphasises that principals must place more emphasis on supervision and monitoring of teachers than focusing more on their managerial and administrative duties. This is further confirmed by Hallinger and Murphy who differentiate between instructional leadership process and functions. Monitoring is regarded by these authors as key in ensuring that the educational agenda is achieved.

Instructional leadership could also be improved thorough professional development (5.3.3.4). This is in line with Weiner (1974) who opines that professional developments are good strategies for enhancing instructional leadership. This is further supported by Darling-Hammond et al. (2017), who emphasise the need to develop subject knowledge and leadership abilities through professional development.

6.2.2.4 Findings from the focus group interview with deputy principals and DHs

The findings from group interviews with the deputy principals and DHs are based on four main themes, namely, the influence of the instructional leadership role of the principal on teaching and academic performance of learners, the influence of the instructional leadership role of the deputy principals and DHs on teaching and academic performance of learners, the challenges experienced by instructional leaders on the provision of effective instructional leadership and the strategies that can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools (cf. par. 5.4.2.1 to 5.4.2.4). The findings revealed four instructional leadership roles of the principal, namely, monitoring of teachers, professional development, parental involvement and delegation of work (cf. par. 5.4.2.1). The findings revealed principals monitor teachers during curriculum implementation, and provide reports on their engagement with the teachers (cf. par. 5.4.2.1). Khalili (2016) confirm this finding and argues that the monitoring and support provided improves teachers' performance and enhances teaching and learning.

The findings also revealed that the principal as an instructional leader works collaboratively with parents to improve learners' academic achievement (cf. par.

5.4.2.1). They collaborate with parents to resolve school challenges through parents' meetings. The findings further revealed that they also use parents' meetings to discuss learners' academic progress, behavioural patterns, projects, co-curricular and extra-curricular activities (cf. par. 5.4.2.1). Robert (2019) confirms this finding as he emphasises the importance of participative management where all stakeholders are involved in decision-making and smooth running of schools. This is also confirmed by DHET (2016), who opines that instructional leaders should regularly meet with parents to discuss learners' resources, progress and conduct.

The findings also revealed that principals as an instructional leader delegate work to SMT members (cf. par. 5.4.2.1). Principals need to share instructional leadership responsibilities with deputy principal and DHs (cf. par. 5.4.2.1). The delegation of work by the principal is also supported by Vency (2020), who asserts that delegation builds autonomy in workers, enhances growth of team members and builds respect of leaders.

The findings further revealed the instructional leadership role of the DHs in teaching and academic performance of learners, namely, monitoring and supporting of teachers and professional development of teachers (cf. par. 5.4.2.2). DHs ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place to enhance learners' academic performance success. (cf. par. 5.4.2.2). The findings revealed that they ensure that teachers use CAPS documents accurately, have enough LTSM, are knowledgeable of the subject content they are offering, learner activities are marked and controlled by teachers and conduct class visits (cf. par. 5.4.2.2). This finding is confirmed by Laska (2016), and Wyatt (2017) who emphasises the importance of systematic monitoring and evaluation of teachers through class visits' evaluation of the teacher.

The findings also revealed that teachers are monitored by checking their lesson plans and learners' books (cf. par. 5.4.2.2). The findings revealed that monitoring is conducted to identify the challenges experienced by teachers and find solutions. These findings indicate that role of DH in professional development of teachers is a key to effective teaching and learning.

The findings of this study also revealed the following four challenges of instructional leadership (cf. par. 5.4.2.3):

- **Lack of time for instructional leadership:** According to the findings, instructional leadership time is limited because DHs also have their own classes to teach. They therefore allocate breaks and after school time to mentor teachers. (cf. par. 5.4.2.3). Lack of instructional leadership time is further confirmed by Spillane and Lee (2014) who opines that DHs are unable to provide effective mentorship due to increasing task demands.
- **Poor academic performance of learners:** The findings from Focus Group 2 from School B) revealed an assumption that poor learners' performance results from inadequate or lack of LTSM which compromise teaching and learning. The result further revealed that DHs are responsible to providing these LTSM to teachers (cf. par. 5.4.2.3). This finding is supported by Lauchande et al. (2017) who claim that most South African learners have poor numeracy and literacy levels and face academic exclusion.
- **Lack of parental support:** The findings revealed that most parents in the rural and township areas appear not to support their children's education. The findings revealed that most learners appear not to receive adequate support at home due to their parents' low levels of education (cf. par. 5.4.2.3). This finding is in line with Sibanda (2017)'s assertion that most parents in poor performing schools feel marginalised and as such are not actively engaged in schools.

The findings also revealed three strategies that can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools, namely, professional development of deputy and DHs and conducting class visits (cf. par. 5.4.2.4). Instructional leadership could be improved through professional development of instructional leaders (cf. par. 5.4.2.4). The research results revealed that the curriculum advisors should enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools by conducting regular professional development sessions for DHs and teachers (cf. par. 5.4.2.4). The DHs should also promote instructional leadership by conducting compulsory professional development for teachers (cf. par. 5.4.2.4). The findings also revealed that the main focus of the

workshops should be to discuss and solve challenges faced by teachers, such as learners' inability to read, calculate and reading with understanding and their challenge with science streams (cf. par. 5.4.2.4). According to DuFour (2006), professional development is very important in schools because it is a lifelong collaborative learning process that nourishes the growth of individuals, teams, and the school through a daily job-embedded, learner-centred, focused approach, on-the-job teacher training or learning process that supports and fosters instructionally effective educators.

6.3 RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIONS

As an instructional leader, who is an acting principal of a primary school, I learned a considerable amount on the role of instructional leadership in improving learners' academic performance. I was able to learn from the reviewed documents which I otherwise might have overlooked what my own roles and responsibilities entails. My sample comprised of principals, deputy principals and DHs and they also benefited from the study as it offered them an opportunity to reflect on their roles and responsibilities. I was also able to extend my collaborations through this study as such we continue to work together on ways of improving our instructional leadership roles and how to tackle some of the challenges we face as instructional leaders alluded to in the findings. Through these collaborations we continuously assist each other and empower each other to improve our instructional leadership practices.

6.4 CONTRIBUTION OF RESEARCH

6.4.1 Contribution to participants

This study focused on the role of instructional leadership in improving the academic performance of the learners in schools. The findings of this study will make the participants of this study (principals, deputy principals and DHs) aware of effective strategies of instructional leadership to improve teaching and learning and the quality of education in their schools. The participants of this study will then prepare themselves to use effective methods to improve instructional leadership in the schools. The findings of this study will also motivate participants of this study to participate in relevant continuous professional development of instructional leaders in order to

improve their instructional leadership. The findings of this study will also motivate participants of this study to conduct regular class visits and monitoring of teachers in order to support them to improve teaching and learning in the schools. I am confident that all the participants of this study, will be fully equipped with the relevant knowledge and expertise that will prepare them to improve instructional leadership as well as teaching and learning in the schools. It is only through improved instructional leadership and effective support that teachers will be able to develop positive attitudes towards teaching learners. The findings of this study will therefore improve the performance of the participants of this study by improving their instructional leadership, teaching, learning and the academic performance of the learners in schools.

6.4.2 Contribution to research

The main contribution of this research is that it was conducted in a rural area of Mopani District in Limpopo. This is an underdeveloped area and schools in this area are located in poor socio-economic conditions. Investigating the instructional leadership role of principals in enhancing learners' academic performance was key as most learners in these schools' experience lack of academic success. Therefore, this investigation was able to shed light to research participants on what is expected to them in order to improve their instructional leadership roles.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF PRACTICE

The findings of this study revealed that instructional leaders of many schools are supporting teachers to perform their duties. However, there are still challenges of teaching and learning experienced by teachers and learners. I therefore provide the following recommendations for improving instructional leadership in order to improve teaching, learning and academic performance of the learners:

- Instructional leaders should design a year plan for the department before the school opens in January and submit it to the principal for approval when the schools open.

- Teachers should be provided with the year plan at the beginning of the year, discuss its use and train teachers on how to use the scheme of work and lesson plan. The DHs should give each teacher a copy of the year plan and show them how it must be used and train teachers in following the designed ATP's or a scheme of work and lesson plan.
- Train teachers on various effective teaching methods at the beginning of the year. This session be conducted on continuous basis throughout the year.
- Continuous professional development on assessment techniques and how to use the assessment results to improve teaching and learning.
- DHs must check practical work conducted by teachers and learners, ensure that teachers are always attending lessons, control administrative responsibilities of staff members and submit reports to the principal.
- Each circuit should have its own curriculum advisors for effective continuous professional development for teachers.
- Curriculum advisors should conduct classroom visit to support teachers.
- Curriculum advisors should provide the teachers and learners with sufficient teaching and learning resources.
- Principals, deputy principals and DHs, as instructional leaders, should work collaboratively with the curriculum advisors to empower and motivate teachers to teach effectively.
- Instructional leaders must promote accountability and principals must ensure that most time is spent on teaching and learning instead of non-instructional tasks.
- Instructional leaders must always avoid disruptions of contact time and strive to create structures that maximise instructional time, because it conveys the importance of learning to teachers.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study focused on the role of instructional leaders in the academic performance of learners. The findings of this study revealed that that there are four major challenges of instructional leadership in schools, namely, three major challenges experienced by DHs in instructional; leadership, namely, lack of resources, lack of knowledge and

skills on instructional leadership, poor academic performance of the learners and violation of rules and regulations. In order to resolve those challenges and achieve a comprehensive view on the role of school instructional leaders on teaching and academic performance of learners, it is recommended that further studies be conducted on the role of instructional leaders on the academic performance of learners. As this study focused mainly on the role of instructional leaders in Khujwana Circuit of Mopani West District, it is recommended that further research be conducted in other circuits of the Mopani West District, namely, Nkowankowa, Xihoko, N'wanedzi, Mafarana, Shiluvana, Thabina, Mawa, Rakwadu and Tzaneen Circuits. This study was also conducted in one district, namely, Mopani West District. It is therefore also recommended that similar studies be conducted in other districts, namely, Capricorn, Mopani East, Sekhukhune, Vhembe and Waterberg Districts. In order to improve instructional leadership in the education system of South Africa, it is also recommended that this type of study should also be conducted in all the provinces of South Africa.

6.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

All the potential weaknesses of research that the researcher is not able to control are called the limitations of the study (Creswell, 2014). This is typical of qualitative research which seeks to obtain detailed in depth understanding and does not seek to prove hypotheses or generalize. During the design of this study, I realized that there are two limitations of the study, namely; conducting the study in one district and conducting the study in 4 schools only.

- **Conducting the study in one district**

This study was conducted in one district in a province of five districts. Lack of time and financial challenges forced me to conduct the study in Mopani West District of Limpopo only, although Limpopo Province has five districts.

- **Conducting the study in four schools**

Another limitation of this study is that it was conducted in four selected schools. In this study, only four primary schools of Khujwana Circuit in the Mopani District of Limpopo Province were selected for in-depth investigation.

Despite this limitation, I believe that this research will contribute to the body of knowledge enhancing instructional leadership practices in schools.

6.8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The main aim of this study was to explore the role of instructional leaders in the academic performance of learners in rural primary schools through improved teaching. This chapter focussed on summary of findings from the literature study, summary of findings from the empirical investigation, researchers' reflections, contribution of research, recommendations, limitations of the study and conclusion. The significant findings of this study responded to the main and secondary research questions and the main aim and objectives of the study. The study was also guided by attribution theory, distributive theory and transformational theory. The findings of this study revealed that instructional leaders serve as the curriculum drivers of curriculum in their different phases, allocate duties of all teachers in the beginning of the year and ensure that all subordinates know their roles and perform them as specified by the PAM document. The findings also revealed three major duties of DHs and curriculum advisors, namely, monitoring the work of teachers, professional development of teachers and administrative duties. The findings of this study also revealed serious challenges experienced by instructional leaders in instructional leadership, namely, lack of resources, lack of knowledge and skills on instructional leadership, poor academic performance of the learners and violation of rules and regulations. Lastly, the findings of this study also recommended the strategies that can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools, namely, support from circuit office and provinces, professional development of teachers and supervision and monitoring. The findings of this study served to corroborate the aims and objectives of the study, research objectives. All the findings of the study indicate that instructional leadership is fundamental for whole school improvement. I believe that the findings of

this study will contribute to enhancing the instructional leadership of schools, teaching and academic performance of the learners of South Africa and other countries.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: PROOF OF REGISTRATION



1253 M1RST

MKANSI T L MRS
P O BOX 3954
LETABA
0870

STUDENT NUMBER : 0856-477-9

ENQUIRIES NAME : MR P FOLKARD
ENQUIRIES TEL : 0861670411

DATE : 2023-03-10

Dear Student

I wish to inform you that your registration has been accepted for the academic year indicated below. Kindly activate your Unisa mylife (<https://myunisa.ac.za/portal>) account for future communication purposes and access to research resources.

DEGREE : PHD (EDUCATION) (90019)
TITLE : The role of principals as instructional leaders on learners academic performance in selected South African secondary schools
SUPERVISOR : Prof TV MANYIKE (Manyitv@unisa.ac.za)
ACADEMIC YEAR : 2023
TYPE: THESIS
SUBJECTS REGISTERED: TFP001 PhD - Education (Education Management)

A statement of account will be sent to you shortly.

You must re-register online and pay every academic year until such time that you can submit your dissertation/thesis for examination.

Students registering for the first time for a dissertation or thesis must complete a research proposal in their first year of study. Guidelines will be provided by your supervisor/contact person.

If you intend submitting your dissertation/thesis for examination you have to submit an Intention to submit form (available on the website www.unisa.ac.za) at least two months before the date of submission. If submission takes place after 15 November, but before the end of January of the following year, you do need not to re-register and pay registration fees for the next academic year. Should you submit after the end of January, you must formally reregister online and pay the full fees.

Please access the information with regard to your personal librarian on the following link:
<https://bit.ly/3hxNgVr>

Yours faithfully,

Prof M S Mothata
Registrar



University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
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APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FROM THE LIMPOPO
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



Enquiries: Mkansi TL
Contact: 0735416688
Email Address: lindymkansi@gmail.com
The Head of Department
Limpopo Department of Basic Education
Strategic Planning and Research
Private Bag
Polokwane, 0970

P. O. Box 3954
Letaba, 0870
26 January 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN KHUJWANA
CIRCUIT

My name is Mkansi TL, a PHD (Educational Leadership and Management) degree student, at the University of South Africa. I am requesting permission to conduct research in 4 primary schools in Khujwana Circuit of Mopani District. I am currently a primary school deputy principal and the research is part of my PHD (Educational Leadership and Management) degree at the University of South Africa. The title of my research is “*The role of school instructional leaders on the academic performance of learners.*” The aim of this study is to explore the role of school instructional leaders on teaching and academic performance of learners. The objectives of the study are to explore the instructional leadership role of the principal on teaching and academic performance of learners, to explore the instructional leadership role of the deputy principal and departmental heads on teaching and academic performance of learners, to critically analyse the challenges experienced by instructional leaders on the provision of effective instructional leadership and to recommend the strategies that can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools.

This study was approved by the Research Ethics Review Committee of the University of South Africa.

The participants of the study consist of 4 principals and 20 SMT members from 4 schools in the Khujwana Circuit of the Mopani West District of Limpopo Province. Document Analysis, Observations, Individual interviews and Focus group interviews will be used to collect information from the participants and they will be conducted from the 3rd May to the 14th May 2021. Document analysis is a systematic procedure for interpreting, reviewing or evaluating both printed and electronic documents to give voice and meaning. In the documents I will look for roll call, aim of meetings, what was discussed, instructional duties of principal, deputy principal and departmental heads in the policies, methods of learner assessment and the academic performance of the learners. In non-participant observation, I will observe, listen and record all actions and behaviours of participants from their natural occurrence in the research site while being as unobtrusive as possible. I will observe, both principals and teachers during school hours when the schools are in full operation. In each school, I will conduct the first two observation sessions on different days as from 07H00 to 11H00 to see how the school starts and progresses. The other two observation sessions will be conducted from 12H00 to 13h30 to see how activities progresses until closing time. My aim of the observation sessions will be to specifically observe how principals and members of school management teams perform their instructional duties during that time. I will also observe the principals' and SMT members' meetings with the teachers. I will also observe the frequency of the principals' and SMT members' classroom visits to see how often they are visible during contact time and how often they will monitor and control teaching and learning activities. In this study, I will also use structured interviews to collect the data. This is a method of collecting data that will allow me to ask one or more participants general, open-ended and/or closed questions to record the answers. I will use the interview schedule to conduct interviews telephonically. The duration of telephonic interview will be 30 minutes only. In this study, I will also use 4 Focus group interviews to collect data with 1 deputy principal and 4 heads of departments from each of the 4 selected schools. Each focus group will include male and female participants. The focus group interviews will be conducted for one hour in the classrooms in four selected schools, after school hours.

I will adhere to all the ethical standards of research of the University of South Africa and Covid-19 regulations, which include voluntary participation, informed consent, confidentiality, wearing of masks, social distancing and minimisation of risks.

Thank you in advance

Yours Faithfully

.....

Mkansi TL

**APPENDIX C: APPROVAL LETTER FROM LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF BASIC
EDUCATION**

CONFIDENTIAL TO: DR MC MAKOLA

FROM: DR T MABILA CHAIRPERSON: LIMPOPO PROVINCIAL RESEARCH
COMMITTEE (LPRC)

DATE: 08th JULY 2021

SUBJECT: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS ON THE
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS RESEARCHER: MKANSI TL

Dear Colleague

The above researcher's research proposal served at the Limpopo Provincial Research Committee (LPRC). The committee is satisfied with the methodological soundness of the proposal.

Decision: The research proposal is granted full approval

Regards

Acting Chairperson:

Dr T Mabila

**APPENDIX D: A LETTER TO PRINCIPAL REQUESTING PERMISSION TO
CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE SCHOOL**



Enquiries: Mkansi TL
Contact: 0735416688
Email Address: lindymkansi@gmail.com

P. O. Box 3954
Letaba, 0870
26 January 2021

The Principal

.....
.....
.....

Dear Sir/Madam

I, Mkansi TL, am doing research under the supervision of Professor Manyike TV in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management at the University of South Africa (UNISA). The title of my research is “*The role of school instructional leaders on the academic performance of learners.*” I hereby humbly request permission to be allowed to conduct research in your school. Data collection for this study will be through document analysis, interviewing the principal, vice principal and heads of department in the school. The participants I request to interview should include male and female educators. The objectives of this study are:

- to explore the instructional leadership role of the principal on teaching and academic performance of learners,
- to explore the instructional leadership role of the deputy principal and departmental heads on teaching and academic performance of learners,
- to critically analyse the challenges experienced by instructional leaders on the provision of effective instructional leadership, and
- to recommend the strategies that can be implemented to enhance and sustain instructional leadership in the schools.

The principal will be involved in telephonic individual interview while the teachers will be involved in face to face focus group interviews, which complies with Covid-19 regulations. The duration of the interviews will be 30 to 45 minutes per participant or group. The date and time of the interviews will be negotiated with the participant to avoid interruption to school curriculum programmes. Participation is voluntary and withdrawal without reprisal is accepted. There are no potential risks involved to participants and there will be no reimbursement or incentives for participation in this research. The researcher will ensure that the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants are upheld. I furthermore would like to assure you that all the information gathered will be solely used for the purpose of this study.

Thanking you in advance

Mkansi TL

Participant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print): _____

Researcher's signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX E

A LETTER TO THE EDUCATORS REQUESTING PERMISSION FOR THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY



Enquiries: Mkansi TL

P. O. Box 3954

Contact: 0735416688

Letaba, 0870

Email Address: lindymkansi@gmail.com

26 January 2021

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Dear prospective participant

My name is Mkansi TL, a PHD student under the supervision of Professor Manyike TV, in the Department of Education Management and Leadership. I hereby request your permission to participate in my study entitled: The role of school instructional leaders on the academic performance of learners. The purpose of this study is to collect important information on whether school instructional leaders are effective in improving learners' academic performance in the Khujwana Circuit Primary Schools. You are invited because you are an instructional leader in the primary school involved, and you are therefore considered to have considerable knowledge about instructional leadership. I have obtained permission from the Department of Limpopo and will request you to form part of the Focus group consisting of 5 participants selected for the study in your school. Your role is to participate to answer semi-structured questions related to the role of instructional leaders in improving learners' academic performance. The maximum time scheduled for the interviews is 30 – 45 minutes, and this will be conducted out of normal teaching time. Your participation is voluntary, anonymous and confidential and you are free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason. If you decide to take part in this study, you will be given an information sheet to sign consent to participate. Your name will not be disclosed anywhere and no one, apart from the researcher and identified members of the research team, will know about your involvement in this research. A number or a pseudonym will be used for your name and no one will be able to connect you to the answers you give. You will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications, or other research reporting methods such as conference proceedings. Your anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as a research report, journal articles and/or conference

proceedings. A report of this study may be submitted for publication, but you as an individual participant, will not be identified.

There is no risk involved in the study, except that you will be required to sacrifice your time. Hard copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher for a period of five years in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet in the researcher's office for future research or academic purposes. Electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. The electronic data will be deleted from the computer after 5 years and all hard copies will be shredded. There will be no incentives or payment of any kind except that the study may be made available to you through presentations and publications.

This study has received written approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of Unisa. A copy of the approval letter can be obtained from the researcher if you so wish. If you require more information of the study, please contact me at the above - mentioned phone number or email.

Thank you for consenting to participate in this study.

Mkansi TL
Student

CONSENT/ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation. I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet. I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable). I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified. I also agree to the recording of the interview.

Participant Name & Surname (please print) _____

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) _____

Researcher's signature

Date

APPENDIX F: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENT **THE ROLE OF SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS ON THE ACADEMIC** **PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS**

Good morning. Firstly, I want to thank you for granting me permission to interview you. The purpose of this interview is to request your opinions about the role of school instructional leaders on the academic performance of learners. I request to tape-record the interview so that I do not miss any part of our deliberations. I fear that I might miss something valuable or even somehow change your words unintentionally when I rely on note taking. The success of this interview is dependent on your honest responses and comments. There is no right or wrong answer and please feel free to express your opinions with regard to the role of school instructional leaders on the academic performance of learners.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. There are two types of leadership in schools, namely; administrative leadership and instructional leadership. Please explain the difference between these two types of leadership and their importance.
2. Are you responsible for administrative leadership or instructional leadership or both of them? Explain your role in your instructional leadership.
3. Have you ever been trained in administrative leadership or instructional leadership? When, where, how many times and by whom?
4. As head of department you are also responsible for teaching. Do you have sufficient time to conduct instructional leadership? Explain the time that you use to conduct instructional leadership.
5. There is an assumption that the improvement or decline in the achievement of learners in the National Senior Certificate is influenced by the enactment of instructional leadership by the heads of department. Do you agree or disagree with this assumption? Motivate your answer.

6. One of the strategies of improving instructional leadership is to attend professional development workshops. Are you attending professional development workshops, who is conducting the workshops and what do gain from the workshops?
7. Are you also able to conduct professional development workshops of teachers? How many times do you conduct the workshops per term, who are attending the workshops and what is the focus of the workshops?
8. Principals are also responsible for instructional leadership. Do you support this role of the principal? Motivate your answer.
9. The main aim of instructional leadership is to enhance the academic performance of the learners. How is your instructional leadership improving the academic performance of learners in your school?
10. As a head of department and instructional leader, how do you support your teachers with regard to their instructional obligations?

Thank you very much for your time and contributions. May God bless you.

APPENDIX G: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS & DEPARTMENTAL HEADS	
The observations will be conducted in the classroom where the principal or DH is conducting class visit. A personal time table will be used which constitute 30 minutes per period. Date: ----- Classroom number: ----- Name of principal/DH: ----- Name of teacher: ----- Subject taught: -----Duration: ----- Grade: -----	
The following questions will assist in the observation process:	
What is the classroom climate?	
Was the observer warmly welcomed by the principal/DH and the teacher?	
According to the teacher's time table mention the period number when the lesson start.	
Which subject is being offered in the classroom?	
Is the teacher having a lesson preparation?	
What is the principal or DH doing in the class?	
Is the principal or DH talking to the teacher during the lesson?	

Is there a clear introduction and presentation of the lesson?	
Does the principal or DH complete a class visit report?	
Does the teacher show understanding and interest in the subject content during the presentation?	
Is the teacher comfortable with the presence of the principal or DH?	
Were learners actively involved in a lesson?	
Is the teacher assessing the learners?	
What type of assessment is given to learners? Formal/informal (verbal/written class activity).	
Does the teacher use relevant Learning and Teaching Support Materials?	
Which Learning and Teaching Support Materials did the teacher used?	
Is there a conclusion?	
What is the principal or DH doing after the lesson?	
What is the teacher doing after the lesson?	
Do you have any comments?	

Signature of Observer: -----

Signature of Principal/DH: -----

Signature of Teacher: -----

APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

PRINCIPALS' INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

THE ROLE OF SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS

Good morning. Firstly, I want to thank you for granting me permission to interview you. The purpose of this interview is to request your opinions about the role of school instructional leaders on the academic performance of learners. I request to tape-record the interview so that I do not miss any part of our deliberations. I fear that I might miss something valuable or even somehow change your words unintentionally when I rely on note taking. The success of this interview is dependent on your honest responses and comments. There is no right or wrong answer and please feel free to express your opinions with regard to the role of school instructional leaders on the academic performance of learners.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. As a principal, you are responsible for two types of leadership in your school, namely; administrative leadership and instructional leadership. Please clarify the difference between these two types of leadership and their importance.
2. As a principal, you are the head or leader of School Management Team (SMT). Explain your role as the head or leader of the SMT.
3. Have you ever been trained in school leadership, management and instructional leadership? When, where, how many times and by whom?
4. Explain why principals should receive training in instructional leadership?
5. Explain your role as an administrative leader at your school.
6. Are you an instructional leader of all the teachers or heads of department only? Explain your role as an instructional leader at your school and how you support your teachers with regard to their instructional obligations?
7. There is an assumption throughout the world that many principals prefer to be administrative leaders only. Do you agree or disagree with this assumption? Motivate your answer.
8. One of the duties of instructional leaders is to conduct professional development of teachers. As an instructional leader, do you conduct professional development of the SMT and all teachers and how do you conduct it?

9. Research findings revealed that some principals are experiencing challenges during instructional leadership. What are the challenges that you experience during instructional leadership in your school?
10. Are the heads of department at your school also irresponsible for administrative leadership and instructional leadership? Explain the administrative and instructional leadership roles of the heads of department.
11. Explain the instructional leadership role of the curriculum advisors at your school.
12. The ultimate purpose of instructional leadership is to enhance the academic performance of the learners. Is the instructional leadership conducted in your school able to achieve this purpose? Motivate your response.
13. What, in your opinion, is the purpose of supervision and do you view supervision of the teaching and learning process as part of your responsibilities as a principal?
14. As a principal, what support do you need in order to be a better instructional leader and to what extent does the department provide such support (if any) to your school and to you as principal.
15. How can you improve instructional leadership in your school?

Thank you very much for your time and contributions. May God bless you.

APPENDIX I
ETHICAL CLEARANCE



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/04/14

Ref: 2021/04/14/08564779/33/AM

Name: Mrs TL Mkansi

Student No.:08564779

Dear Mrs TL Mkansi

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2021/04/14 to 2024/04/14

Researcher(s): Name: Mrs TL Mkansi

E-mail address: lindymkansi@gmail.com

Telephone: 0735416688

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof. TV Manyike

E-mail address: manyitv@unisa.ac.za

Telephone: 0124294004

Title of research: THE ROLE OF SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS Qualification: MEd Education Management _____

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/04/14 to 2024/04/14.

The low risk application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/04/14 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment. The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
 2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics. Ref: 2021/04/14/08564779/33/AM Name: Mrs TL Mkansi Student No.:08564779 Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2017
 3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
 4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
 5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants 'privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
 6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
 7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
 8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date 2024/04/14. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.
- Note:
- The reference number 2021/04/14/08564779/33/AM should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,

Prof AT Motlhabane

Prof PM Sebate

EXECUTIVE DEAN

Sebatpm@unisa.ac.z

Approved - decision template – updated 16 Feb 2014

APPENDIX J

TURNIT IN REPORT

THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS IN THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS

ORIGINALITY REPORT

21 %	19 %	5 %	11 %
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APPENDIX K
EDITING CERTIFICATE

FROM THE DESK OF

EDITING & CRITICAL
READING SERVICES

Thursday, January 11, 24

864 Justice Mohamet St
Brooklyn 0181

To whom it may concern

This is to confirm that I have edited the following PhD thesis:

THE ROLE OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS IN THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
OF LEARNERS IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS, by TL Mkansi for language use.

The page layout of the document remains the responsibility of the author.



Eleanor M Lemmer (Professor Emeritus, UNISA) D Ed
(Comparative Education), UNISA
South African ID 510711 0118 088

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