UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

A CASE STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF FOUR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE PINETOWN DISTRICT

PARESH PRAKASH

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A CASE STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF FOUR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE PINETOWN DISTRICT

BY

PARESH PRAKASH

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This dissertation has been submitted with / without my approval

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Dr S.E. Mthiyane (Supervisor)

March 2015

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- The four principals of the schools in which this study was conducted.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my dear mother Mrs K. Baliraj and my late father Mr P. Baliraj, who instilled in their children the importance of learning and motivated them to accomplish their goals. To them, I will always be thankful.

This study is also dedicated to my brother, Ajay and sister Preleen for their understanding, encouragement and support during this academic journey.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to gain a greater understanding of the instructional leadership practices of school principals in the four researched schools. The study explored what school principals actually do to support and enhance effective teaching and learning in schools. It also elicited the school principals' views on the barriers they faced as they support instructional leadership practices in schools. The study further investigated how school principals navigated the barriers they experienced as they support instructional leadership practices in schools.

This study used the qualitative research approach which was located in the interpretive paradigm. Furthermore, a case study design was used and it allowed for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Four school principals in the Pinetown District were purposively sampled on the basis of learners' academic performance, demographics and socio-economic contexts. In addition, data was generated through semi-structured interviews and documents review. National and international scholastic literature was interrogated in order to shed light on the research topic. The study was underpinned by two theoretical frameworks, namely Weber's (1987) instructional leadership model and Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership theory.

The analysis of the generated and presented data led to the findings that the school principals conceptualised their roles to be very significant in managing / supporting teaching and learning. However, this did not necessarily translate into improved learner achievement outcomes or school improvement. The findings were utilised as the basis for making conclusions. A significant conclusion that was gleaned from this study was that organisational management practices were as important as instructional leadership practices in order to enhance school improvement and maximise learning outcomes. Furthermore, it emerged that principals displayed high levels of distributed instructional leadership practices in their schools. It was also concluded in the study that school principals faced significant barriers from various stakeholders in their attempts to support effective teaching and learning in schools.

Recommendations, informed by the conclusions, were also presented to suggest how each theoretical conclusion can be translated into workable practice in order to support effective teaching and learning in schools. Finally, the implications of the study were proffered.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ANA	Annual National Assessment
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
HoD	Head of Department
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LSEN	Learners with Special Educational Needs
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Materials
NDP	National Development Plan
NSC	National Senior Certificate
PLC	Professional Learning Community
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SGB	School Governing Body
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMT	School Management Team
TIMSS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The president of the Republic of South Africa, Mr J.G Zuma, proclaimed in parliament on 3rd June 2009 that "Education will be the key priority for the next five years. We want our teachers, learners, and parents to work together with government to turn our schools into thriving centres of excellence" (Worst, 2009, p.1).

Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, the South African government has enacted progressive legislation in order to improve quality and equity in education. This was borne out of the fact of the South Africa's apartheid past. In this regard, two important pieces of legislation have empowered school leaders. Section 16(3) of the *South African Schools Act, (No. 84 of 1996)* (Republic of South Africa, 1996), and Section 4(2) of the *Employment of Educators Act, (No. 76 of 1998)* (Republic of South Africa, 1998), stipulates that professional leadership and management in the process of evolving conditions for enhanced teaching and learning, is the responsibility of school principals.

Instructional leadership is by no means, a new concept. Hallinger (2009) posits that instructional leadership has been part of the educational discourse since the early 1980's. It was subsequently eclipsed by transformational leadership and School-Based Management (SBM) during the 1990's. However, the concept became in vogue during the turn of the 21st century. As Hallinger (2009) further notes, the advent of the accountability movement focused more attention on learning outcomes and school improvement. Thus, the term instructional leadership was coined by Elmore (2000) to emphasise instructional practices, in order to enhance learner achievement outcomes (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2010).

Barth (1990, p.64) opined, "Show me a good school and I'll show you a good principal". Evidently, principals are the most visible school leaders and they are the ultimate authority to the staff, learners and the community. As such, principals are the interpreters of district policy and are responsible for the operational effectiveness of the school (Zepeda, 1999). Consequently, the

primary responsibility of principals is to promote quality teaching and learning. Therefore, it is crucial that a school has an effective instructional leader at the helm of the institution.

The Minister of Basic Education, Mrs A. Motshekga, stressed that "a school stands or falls on its leadership … school principals are critical to the improvement of our levels of learner performance … they are a key weapon in our arsenal to turn underperforming schools around" (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education, 2010, p.3). This dovetails with Weber's (1987) instructional leadership model which views the role of school leaders as managing the curriculum and instruction, and encouraging a positive school environment. Furthermore, the academic literature also highlights the importance of school principals as instructional leaders (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Southworth, 2002; Hallinger, 2005). With this in mind, it was prudent to examine the instructional leadership practices of South African school principals.

1.2 Background to the study

Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010, p.9) assert that the school's "primary and unique purpose is to promote learning". Therefore, the principal as the chief instructional leader should have a positive influence on classroom practice in order to improve learner achievement outcomes. However, the opposite seems to be happening as our learners continue to perform abysmally in examinations, assessments and international benchmark tests.

The national performance for the Grade 12 learners in 2010 was 67,8% (DoBE, 2011). Crucially, the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination results are viewed as a yardstick to assess the overall effectiveness of the country's education system. Moreover, Delport (2011, p.6) states that the Minister of Basic Education, Mrs A. Motshekga, described the recent Annual National Assessment (ANA) results as "very sad". Nationally, Grade 3 learners scored 28% for numeracy and 35% for literacy, whereas Grade 6 learners recorded 28% for literacy and 30% for Mathematics. The crux of the matter is that our children cannot read and write. In addition, South African learners continue to perform poorly in benchmark tests as compared to their international counterparts. Dempster and Reddy (2007, p.907) attest to this, when they reported that "South Africa has consistently been the lowest-performing country in Mathematics and Physical Science in two successive Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) tests".

The poor learner academic results are perplexing considering that the overall budget for 2013/14 for the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) was R 17,592 billion. This was an increase of R1,248 billion from the previous year (SowetanLive, 2013). Interestingly, the education budget constitutes the lion's share of the national budget and this has prompted many people to question the vast amount of money pumped into education when you consider the poor return on investment.

In view of the aforementioned facts, the role of school principals is called into question. It has also raised many hard questions about the quality of education provided at primary and secondary school levels.

1.3 Purpose and rationale for the study

I have been teaching at my current school for five years now. During this period I have observed and experienced numerous education related challenges. A major concern for me is the low literacy and numeracy levels at our school and the neighbouring schools. Furthermore, the principal at my school is more involved in a managerial capacity and less so as an instructional leader. She is not involved in classroom teaching and is more engrossed in other school activities. A possible reason for this is that the school is classified as Quintile 3 with the no-fee paying status and needs to constantly raise funds for the salaries of School Governing Body (SGB) employed staff. Critical friends opine that the principal was out of touch with reality on the ground, as she is not at the coalface of curriculum delivery. The counter argument is that many SGB's do not have the time or skills to fundraise. Section 36 of the *South African Schools Act, (No.84 of 1996),* spells out that a core function of the SGB is to supplement the schools resources (Republic of South Africa, 1996). However, this does not seem to be happening in practice. In the light of these challenges, it is incumbent on school principals to drive fundraising initiatives in order to raise the necessary funds to employ additional teaching staff.

Furthermore, my colleagues and I have observed that professional growth of teachers is virtually non-existent. As a teacher, perpetual learning is vital to assist me to develop academically and professionally (Fullan, 2009). However, the only time professional development occurs at our school is during the mandatory Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) programme and the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) workshops. Teachers need to be kept constantly

informed about new developments such as the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and Continuous Professional Teacher Development (CPTD). In addition, 2014 saw the start of the CPTD system whereby points will be allocated to teachers on the basis of professional development activities that are obtained. Crucially, a Professional Learning Community (PLC) is non-existent at our school. In a Professional Learning Community, there is a collaborative culture whereby teachers work in teams to improve pedagogy and ultimately the learner achievement outcomes (DuFour, 2004; Williams, 2013). This is the value of a Professional Learning Community to the school.

The South African *Employment of Educators Act, (No. 76 of 1998)* stipulates the responsibilities of school principals, as *inter alia*: general and administrative functions, management of human resources, a commitment to instruction (both classroom teaching and assessment), involvement in co-curricular and extra-curricular programmes, and interacting and communicating with various stakeholders (Republic of South Africa, 1998).

This is corroborated by the Department of Basic Education's (DoBE) *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025*. It advocates that, school principals should "ensure teaching takes place as it should, according to the national curriculum. Through responsible leadership, they promote harmony, creativity and a sound work ethic within the school community and beyond" (DoBE, 2010, p.1). The intention of these legislative mandates and policies were to improve instructional practices and overall education quality. However, this is not happening in practice. Perhaps this is not in line with what the law requires. There seems to be a problem there and it needed to be investigated.

The reason that I am passionate about this study is because there is a general silence on instructional leadership literature in the South African context. Scholars such as Southworth (2002), Bush (2003) and Hallinger (2009) have written extensively about the subject in an international context. However, I have only managed to obtain a handful of South Africa-specific articles (Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009; Msila, 2013; Naicker, Chikoko & Mthiyane, 2013). In addition to this, the South African studies have concentrated on either primary or secondary schools. Conversely, this study interrogates both primary and secondary schools. Furthermore, I am embedded in the school and have first-hand knowledge of the people, networks and practices.

Crucially, I hope that my study will enrich the knowledge base around the topic and help to improve the instructional leadership practices of school principals. This study was finished on time because I had access to numerous school principals in the Pinetown District.

Given the efficacy of instructional leadership in schools, my personal observations, and the limited literature that was relevant to the South African context, as well as an increased focus on effectiveness of schools by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE), it was significant to explore the instructional leadership practices of school principals and their subsequent impact on school improvement and learner achievement results.

1.4 Aims and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to explore the instructional leadership practices of school principals, and seeks to accomplish the following objectives:

- To explore the school principals' understandings of their roles as instructional leaders in supporting instructional leadership practices in their schools.
- To investigate how school principals enact and enhance their instructional leadership practices as they support teaching and learning in their schools.
- To explore the barriers that school principals experience in discharging their instructional leadership practices.

1.5 Key research questions

- What do school principals understand to be their roles in supporting instructional leadership practices in their schools?
- How do school principals enact and enhance their instructional leadership practices as they support teaching and learning in their schools?
- What are the barriers that school principals experience in discharging their instructional leadership practices and how do they overcome them?

1.6 Clarification of key concepts / terms

For purposes of common understanding, key terms are defined and contextualised.

1.6.1 Leadership and Management

There are a plethora of definitions that describe leadership, however three dimensions are considered essential. Yukl (2006, p.3) comments, leadership "involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organisation". Secondly, leadership is increasingly being associated with values as personal and professional values are expected to predominate (Bush, 2003; Fullan, 2009). Thirdly, leadership is most often associated with a realistic, credible and a positive vision for the organisation (Nanus, 1992).

Leadership is related to its sister concept – management. Clarke (2009) avers that three managerial strategies ensure the school's operational effectiveness. Firstly, planning and budgeting is about setting up the systems, policies, procedures and timetables to ensure efficiency. It also involves evaluating the schools physical, financial and human resource requirements (Clarke, 2009). Secondly, organising, staffing and delegation ensure that all stakeholders understand the requirements from them. Thirdly, schools should have specific systems in place to monitor the progress and performance of various tasks (Clarke, 2009).

In this study leadership refers to the processes whereby school principals influence various stakeholders such as teachers, learners and the community to achieve the school's vision of enhancing learning outcomes and school improvement. On the other hand, management entails using organisational resources (human and material) in order to achieve its objectives. The concepts of leadership and management are often used interchangeably, and in this study leadership is subsumed by its sister concept – management.

1.6.2 Instructional leadership

Southworth (2002, p.79) posits that the instructional leadership concept is "strongly concerned with teaching and learning, including the professional learning of teachers as well as student growth". Moreover, instructional leaders develop a school vision which demands high expectations and excellence from teachers and learners (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Barth, 1990). The ultimate goal is quality teaching and learning in order to improve learner achievement outcomes (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2010).

1.6.3 Instructional leadership practices

The defining of the school's mission is the first instructional leadership practice that is pertinent (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2009). This domain consists of two aspects, namely: framing the school's goals, and communicating these goals. Initially principals work with the staff in order to develop vibrant, quantifiable and time-based goals that are primarily focused on learner achievement outcomes. School principals subsequently articulate these goals to all relevant stakeholders in order to get a buy-in from them (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

The second domain is managing the instructional programme. Here the focus is on the principals' management of the curriculum and pedagogical practices. Van Deventer and Kruger (2009) mention that it consists of supervising and evaluating the instructional programme, coordinating the curriculum and overseeing learner progress. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) further state that school leaders are tasked with motivating, managing and monitoring instructional practices in schools. Therefore, principals should possess the requisite pedagogical skills and be committed to the school's overall improvement. Hallinger (2009) maintains that the sheer magnitude of the task requires distributed leadership, as the principal cannot go it alone.

The third domain deals with promoting a favourable school environment. This comprises aspects such as: protecting the instructional time, encouraging staff professional growth, principals having a visible school presence, instilling high standards, and giving incentives to teachers and bestowing rewards to learners (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2005). Evidently, this dimension is quite broad in scope and intention, and it incorporates aspects such as teacher professional development, continuous learning and Professional Learning Communities (Hallinger, 2009). Ultimately, principals are required to model the desired values and principles in order to promote excellence in their schools.

In this study, instructional leadership practices refers to the practical or concrete steps that school principals enact in order to enhance the quality of teaching and learning.

1.6.4 Professional Learning Community (PLC)

DuFour (2004) avers that in a Professional Learning Community, teachers work collaboratively in an ongoing process to improve learners' academic outcomes. It involves aspects such as

collective inquiry, action research and job-embedded learning for teachers. Hopkins (2003) asserts that a Professional Learning Community is a top priority in instructional leadership as it is synonymous with staff development. Furthermore, Fullan (2009, p.62) posits that Professional Learning Communities "spread and develop leaders across the school, thereby creating a critical mass of distributive leadership as a resource for the present and the future". This study used the notion of a Professional Learning Community to mean a group of teachers who engage with each other's teaching practices in order to improve learner achievement outcomes.

1.7 Literature review and theoretical / conceptual frameworks

Ebeling and Gibbs (2008, p.66) define literature review as "… a piece of writing that is a systematic, critical evaluation and synthesis of existing scholarly works, studies, theories and current thinking on a given research subject or area". Wisker (2005) concurs with these views, but adds that researchers make use of others' arguments, theories and interpretations to guide the focus and analysis of their own research and arguments. Crucially, a literature review serves multiple purposes such as to examine the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the subject, and to critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of prior research in order to guide the design of your current study (Green, 2008). In this study, national and international scholastic literature was extensively explored in Chapter Two.

Vithal and Jansen (2010, p.17) describe a theory or theoretical framework as "a well-developed, coherent explanation for an event". I utilised Weber's (1987) instructional leadership model and Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership theory in this study, and it is fully discussed in the proceeding chapter.

1.8 Research design and methodology

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), a research design outlines the processes for carrying out research and its main objective is to assist in providing suitable answers to research questions.

Maree (2011, p.47) refers to a paradigm as "a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which gives rise to a particular world-view". Creswell (2012) maintains that there are four paradigms for research, namely: positivism, critical paradigm, constructivism and

interpretivism. This research was conducted in the interpretive paradigm, whereby data is gathered "of humans in their natural and social settings, and [the researcher] organises and interprets information obtained from humans using his or her eyes and ears as filters" (Lichtman, 2010, p.5). The interpretive paradigm was deemed appropriate as it allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of the school principals' instructional leadership practices.

I used a case study design for this research. Noor (2008, p.1602) describes a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence". The evidence employed in a case study is generally qualitative in nature and it concentrates on acquiring a profound instead of a generalised understanding of the phenomenon. Therefore, I considered a case study as the most appropriate device to elicit data on the instructional leadership practices of school principals.

This study employs the qualitative research methodology, which is concerned with "exploring and understanding the meaning individuals and groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2012, p.4). Crucially, Cohen, *et al*. (2011) maintain that the qualitative approach enables researchers to understand the participants from within, and the way they define their own world.

Data was generated using both semi-structured interviews with the school principals, and documents review. Kvale (1996, p.14) describes the interview as "an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest". Interviews were deemed appropriate because they provide flexibility in posing questions, and the use of in-depth discussions, follow-ups and probes to clarify the responses (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). In addition, semi-structured interviews offer participants an opportunity to open up and talk freely (De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2005). The secondary research technique that was employed is documents review, as it is one of the most cost-effective methods for data generation (Maree, 2011).

The school principals that were selected for this study were identified by means of purposive sampling because the context of the problem was identified in those specific schools. Therefore, the data that I obtained was relevant to this study. Cohen, *et al*. (2011, p.156) define purposive sampling as the method whereby "researchers hand-pick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgment of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics

being sought". In my sample, the population consisted of two primary school and two secondary school principals.

The deductive data analysis strategy "moves from the general to the specific" (Babbie, 2007, p.22). It is used by quantitative researchers who begin with a hypothesis and move towards proving it. In contrast, Babbie (2007, p.22) argues that inductive reasoning "moves from the particular to the general, from a set of specific observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all the given events". The reason that I employed inductive data analysis was because it enabled me to identify the multiple realities present in the potential data (Maree, 2011). Lastly, content analysis was performed on the data. This entire process was fully discussed in Chapter Three.

1.9 Demarcation of the study

Hoberg (1999, p.190) posits that demarcating the problem means "establishing the boundaries of the problem area within which the research progresses". The research was limited to the Pinetown District schools because I am familiar with the locality as I live and work in the area. Since generalisation was not the purpose of this study, I purposefully selected schools in which data sources were deemed adequate and information rich. This is consistent with qualitative research.

1.10 Limitations of the study

Creswell (2012, p.199) postulates that "limitations are potential weaknesses or problems with the study identified by the researcher".

My study had one important limitation. School principals are generally very busy people. I did anticipate that they would not have much time for me. To alleviate this problem, I negotiated with them to conduct the interviews after school or at a time convenient to them.

1.11 Organisation / outline of the study

This research study consists of five chapters organised as follows:

Chapter One is the overview of the study. It gave the background and rationale for the study. The aims, objectives and three research questions that guide the study are also provided.

Additionally, there was the clarification of key concepts. It provides a summary of the literature review, as well as the underpinning theoretical frameworks. There is also a brief review of the research design and methodology. Lastly, the demarcation and limitations of the study are highlighted.

Chapter Two reviews relevant national and international scholastic literature regarding the instructional leadership practices of school principals. In addition, the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study, Weber's (1987) instructional leadership model and Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership theory, are discussed.

Chapter Three deals with an in-depth explanation of the research design, methodology, data generation methods, data analysis procedures, issues of trustworthiness and the ethical issues that were followed in carrying out the research.

Chapter Four concentrates on the presentation of data analysis and interpretation thereof.

Chapter Five presents a synthesis of the key findings of the research on the basis of which conclusions, recommendations and implications of the study are made known to various stakeholders.

1.12 Chapter summary

This chapter introduced the theme of the research project namely, "the instructional leadership practices of school principals". This was followed by the background and rationale for the study, research questions and key concepts. Thereafter the research design and methodology, as well as the demarcation, and limitations of the study were discussed. The next chapter presents a review of the related literature and the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter of this study provided a general orientation to the study. This chapter focuses on the review of related literature on instructional leadership and the theoretical frameworks that underpin this study. In the first section, there is an extensive review of international literature regarding the instructional leadership practices of school principals, followed by African and South African literature. In the second section, the study is theoretically framed using Weber's (1987) instructional leadership model and Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership theory.

2.2 Literature review

This section reviews both international and national literature on the topic. The intention of the review is not only to describe the basic tenets of instructional leadership, but also to critically analyse the published body of knowledge surrounding school principals' instructional leadership practices. Thus, the literature review is presented under the international, African and South African contexts.

2.2.1 The international context

The research by Reitzug, West and Angel (2008) illuminate four different conceptions of instructional leadership. The generally held view is that instructional leadership is the onus of school principals. This study focuses on school principals understanding of their day-to-day practices and the consequent improvement in their instructional leadership. Moreover, different conceptions of instructional leadership were identified, and problematic aspects were discussed.

Firstly, in the Relational Instructional Leadership conception, the focus of the principal is on promoting relationships (Reitzug, *et al*., 2008). Teachers and learners are encouraged and supported to excel. This alludes to various human resource concepts such as self-efficacy, self-concept and motivation. This is an indirect theory as the improvement in learner achievement outcomes is attained through developing relationships and not directly through the instructional

programme (Reitzug, *et al*., 2008). However, questions must be raised whether creating a culture where everyone feels loved is enough to bring about coherence to teaching and learning. It should however be noted that providing encouragement, motivation and support is sufficient for effective teaching and learning to take place. Secondly, in Linear Instructional Leadership, the principal aligns standards, curricular goals, tests, and evaluates the outcomes with test data (Reitzug, *et al*., 2008). This essentially uses quantitative data in the form of test scores to evaluate learner achievement. In retrospect, it would be more beneficial to include qualitative data to understand the way teachers and learners experience different pedagogical aspects. This qualitative data would focus on the individual's expectations.

Thirdly, Organic Instructional Leadership postulates that instructional aspects cannot be isolated from the larger organism (school). Crucially, the underlying view is that leadership emerges as a result of a persistent issue (Reitzug, *et al*., 2008). Here the principal facilitates collaborative interactions and reflection. There are frequent observations and critique of teachers. Furthermore, there is job-embedded professional development and the existence of a Professional Learning Community. This concept seems to be congruent with successful instructional leadership practices (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Weber, 1987; Southworth, 2002). Fourthly, in Prophetic Instructional Leadership, leadership is about a higher calling. Leadership is seen more than just achieving higher test scores. In other words, leadership is seen as a higher calling that involves morals and ethics. Furthermore, there is the ethos of: first serve, lead later. Therefore, the school leader articulates a vision whereby everyone works towards a common purpose. Reitzug, *et al*. (2008) state that this could be termed moral leadership. It should however be noted that a leader can hold high moral values and concurrently achieve exceptional test scores.

The study by Reitzug, *et al.* (2008) was a phenomenological qualitative study. Hence, the researchers tried to understand the principals' perspective. In this methodology the key is how individuals in the educational sphere comprehend the world through interpreting sense data (Briggs, Coleman & Morrison, 2012). Reality is viewed as a social construction. The data was generated by using grounded theory. Creswell (2012, p.396) defines it as a "systematic, qualitative procedure used to generate a theory that explains, at a broad conceptual level, a process, an action, or interaction about a substantive topic". Grounded theory is a process theory

that elucidates an educational process of events, activities, actions and interactions which transpires over a period of time. Thus, there is a systematic generation of data, whereby categories (themes) are identified and these categories are connected to develop a theory in order to explain the process (Creswell, 2012).

The use of grounded theory was apt for this study because it focused on principal leadership and tried to offer a theory or explanation of complex interactive situations of individuals at schools. Crucially, grounded theory is appropriate where no existing theory exists and it tries to build a theory of the phenomenon being studied (Briggs, *et al*., 2012). Hence, the researchers were able to construct a theory comprising the different concepts of instructional leadership. The sample consisted of twenty principals from primary and secondary schools. Interviews were used to generate a thick, rich narrative of the phenomenon.

However, concern must be expressed at the failure of the researchers regarding certain issues. The use of grounded theory has one important limitation. According to Briggs, *et al*., (2012, p.202), "grounded theory does not aim to generalise to larger samples or populations". Therefore transferability is possible, rather than generalisability. In other words, people can draw inferences from the study after applying the findings to their own situations. Another methodological limitation was only interviewing school principals. The voices of teachers should have been elicited in order to give a richer picture. This study, however, adds to the literature regarding instructional leadership conceptualisations.

Southworth's (2002) qualitative study examined the notion of instructional leadership at primary schools in Britain. This authoritative research advocates three major strategies to enhance the efficacy of teaching and learning. Firstly, modelling is about the power of example. Southworth (2002) holds the view that principals and teachers are always 'on show'. This means that principals should use their pedagogical practices as a template for others to follow, work in close proximity with teachers in the classroom, coach staff, and use assemblies to promote core values and practices (Southworth, 2002). In other words, principals provide the performance standards for other stakeholders to emulate. In the final analysis, principals are basically interested in creating exemplary institutions with an emphasis on providing quality instruction.

The second strategy that Southworth (2002) articulates is monitoring. This involves principals looking at the teachers' weekly plans, visiting classrooms, inspecting learners' work, observing lessons, implementing school policies and analysing the test results of the school (Southworth, 2002). The principal also provides constructive feedback on various pedagogical issues.

Thirdly, professional dialogue provides the opportunity for teachers to communicate with school management and their colleagues regarding teaching and learning. Hence, professional dialogue is propagated by means of: staff meetings, developing curricular programmes, re-evaluating practice, examining learners' data, joint planning sessions and overall teamwork (Southworth, 2002). Furthermore, principals may also visit classrooms and engage in informal conferences with staff, use probes to understand teacher assumptions and promote strategies to proceed. Southworth (2002) maintains that promoting and sustaining teacher dialogue is an effective tool for staff development. Southworth's (2002) findings complement those reported by Blasé and Blasé (1999). There is much similarity between these two studies in terms of professional dialogue as Blasé and Blasé (1999) also stress the significance of teacher reflection. Within the confines of teacher reflection, they note the importance of teachers subsequently communicating their views to their colleagues. In addition, Blasé and Blasé's (1999) strategy of promoting professional growth encompasses aspects such as teamwork, modelling and coaching relationships amongst teachers. These are also common threads in Southworth's (2002) study.

The study by Klar and Brewer (2013) examine how school leaders in three poor-performing schools enact their key leadership responsibilities in order to improve pedagogy. Moreover, the principals also considered the contextual factors, as these schools were situated in impoverished locales with many socio-economic problems. The conceptual framework that underpins this study is the Comprehensive School-Wide Reform (CSR). It has its basis in the accountability movement which stresses the importance of learners to continually improve their examination scores. The CSR encompasses the whole school and is not restricted to any specific instructional strategies. Klar and Brewer (2013) pinpoint four key leadership practices that are essential in the CSR. These comprise: setting directions, developing people, redesigning the organisation and managing the instructional programme.

Klar and Brewer (2013) conducted a mixed methods research of three schools in the south eastern United States of America. The methodological approach was a case study of high-needs institutions. In other words, these schools had many impoverished learners who displayed poor academic results. Klar and Brewer (2013) interviewed school principals, teaching staff and parents. Furthermore, documents review was performed on learner performance data, annual reports and professional growth programmes. The use of multiple data generation techniques helped ensure triangulation and consequently trustworthiness.

The empirical findings were discussed under the four fundamental leadership practices. The first aspect was direction setting. Each principal built a common vision based on the contextual needs of the community. At Magnolia Grove School, the principal selected the Advanced Via Individual Determination (AVID) programme to improve the learners' academic performance. The school also tried to create a family atmosphere and there was an ethos of 'no excuses'. At County Line School, the principal instituted the Literacy Across the Curriculum (LAC) to improve literacy levels. The school was also developed as a family centre because many of the learners came from dysfunctional family units. The principal at Myers Circle School developed a shared vision of strong relations with the learners and families by regularly visiting their homes.

These findings resonate with Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) view that principals should understand the complexities and context of the surrounding communities. Similarly, Klar and Brewer (2013) posit that it is crucial to consider these other aspects of instructional leadership when setting directions for the school. The second leadership practice entailed developing human resources. Each of these schools provided teacher development programmes for their teaching staff in order to meet the schools' objectives. As such, the principal of Magnolia Grove School sent all her teachers for AVID training to improve their skills. The leadership of County Line School provided their teachers with in-service literacy training and further instituted a peer-coaching programme at the school. Moreover, the aforementioned individual modelled a strong work ethic in school. Likewise, the principal of Myers Circle School was able to professionally develop his teachers by allowing them to teach in single-gender classrooms. In addition, he projected a high visible presence at Myers Circle School.

As described by other scholars (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008), the researched schools empowered their staff in formal forums and in informal situations.

Furthermore, they coordinated staff professional development opportunities, with an eye on the contextual factors that beset the community (Klar & Brewer, 2013).

The third leadership practice that the researchers enunciated was redesigning the organisation. The principals of these schools were able to build a collaborative culture with teachers and the community. The principal at Magnolia Grove School developed a team to efficiently use the AVID strategy and he also used data to evaluate the learners' progress. Furthermore, the principal at County Line School developed a cooperative culture of teaching, whereby teachers met regularly to discuss useful instructional methods. In addition, the principal of Myers Circle School professionally developed his teachers by allowing them to teach in single-gender classrooms. Here teachers worked in teams to implement proactive strategies. Moreover, classroom instruction was monitored. The principals in this study restructured their schools to bring it in line with the CSR programme. This is consistent with the literature which advocates that the redesign of the organisation should be closely aligned to the school's vision and objectives (Leithwood, *et al*., 2008; Robinson, *et al*., 2008).

The fourth leadership practice was managing the instructional programme. This comprised: prudently recruiting staff, using data to monitor learner progress, supporting teaching practices and aligning resources to objectives. The principal at Magnolia Grove School carefully checked prospective applicants for teaching positions and used data to promote learners' progress. Further, the principal at County Line School recruited the appropriate teaching staff and carefully monitored teaching practices. Lastly, the principal of Myers Circle School enhanced instruction by providing teaching staff with pedagogical support and materials.

The findings are congruent with the views held by Southworth (2002) and Robinson, *et al*. (2008), that proactive instructional leadership practices are essential for school effectiveness. Klar and Brewer's (2013) study adds to the body of research on strategies that benefit high-needs schools. While these findings highlight the existence of a set of key leadership practices; there needs to be further research conducted in the South African context. From a methodological standpoint, a meta-analysis of Comprehensive School-Wide Reform (CSR) case studies would provide education officials with a road map to improve underperforming schools.

The focus of the study by Lee, Hallinger and Walker (2012) was on the distributed instructional leadership practices in International Baccalaureate (IB) schools in East Asia. Moreover, the researchers honed in on how dispersed instructional leadership contributes to an effortless transition between programmes and school-wide success.

The theoretical frameworks that underpin this study are the instructional leadership theory and distributed leadership theory. Lee, *et al*. (2012) argue that earlier conceptualisations of instructional leadership concentrated exclusively on the actions of the principal. However, scholars such as Barth (1990), Hallinger (2005) and Fullan (2009) question the notion of a 'hero leader' as putting the entire burden on one individual. With this in mind, Lee, *et al*. (2012) assert that it is crucial to examine the contributions of all stakeholders in the school establishment.

The second framework that underpins this study is Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership model. Firstly, the leader-plus aspect theorises that there are many individuals who perform leadership activities (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006). Thus, Lee, *et al*. (2012, p.670) describe distributed leadership as "collective interactions among school members taking leadership responsibilities". In addition, Spillane (2006) advocates the use of various material artefacts (tools), such as test marks and curricular frameworks to organise and improve the tasks of different leaders. Therefore, the researchers in this study sought to identify and examine: (a) the tools that contribute to dispersed leadership practices and (b) the school contexts in which these tools were used. Lee, *et al*. (2012) conducted a case study of five schools in Asia. Each International Baccalaureate (IB) school is composed of three organisational units (primary, middle and high school). They also have three distinct IB programmes. The Primary Years Programme (PYP) is designed for learners aged 3 to 12 years. Next the Middle Years Programme (MYP) caters for learners aged 11 to 16 years. Lastly, the Diploma Programme (DP) serves learners aged 16 to 19 years. Administrators, teachers and learners were interviewed and certain lessons were also observed.

This study highlights three important instructional leadership practices at IB schools. Firstly, leadership employed articulation strategies. It required people to work in close quarters in order to improve curriculum coherence between programmes (Gronn, 2002; Spillane, 2006). There are two types of articulation strategies, namely: backward mapping, and documentation. Backward mapping is a collaborative inquiry designed to "identify and create coherence in the skills and

knowledge" which learners are expected to achieve (Lee, *et al*., 2012, p.677). Documentation is used to create an all-embracing school philosophy by providing clear instructional guidelines. These leadership tools subsequently enhanced collaboration between the staff and could thus be termed an institutionalised practice of distributed instructional leadership (Lee, *et al*., 2012).

Cross-programme activities were the second instructional leadership practice at IB schools. It was initiated and propelled by IB coordinators and teachers – and not by senior leadership (Lee, *et al*., 2012). Cross-programme activities refer to the teaching staff acquainting themselves with other programmes, either through formal meetings (workshops and staff meetings) or informal interactions. Cross-programme activities were further enhanced by using two different strategies. In cross-programme teaching, teachers taught in more than one programme such as both Middle Years Programme (MYP) and Diploma Programme (DP). This enabled teachers to understand the entire IB programme. In contrast, cross-programme cooperation involved teachers acting as mentors or project supervisors in other programmes. Cross-programme cooperation is in line with what Gronn (2002, p.433) terms "an added advantage of specialisation within a role set". In other words, teachers developed a whole new set of skills and expertise that benefited the entire school. Spillane (2006) describes this as many leaders working cooperatively to perform similar leadership tasks.

The third instructional leadership practice at IB schools is strategic staffing. In this regard, the concept of position switching is crucial. An example of position switching is when teachers who taught in the Middle Years Programme (MYP) subsequently switched to the Diploma Programme (DP). This essentially helped to improve curriculum coherence as instructional resources were spread throughout the school (Lee, *et al*., 2012). Therefore, position switching is another tool that helped disperse instructional leadership practices and create leadership opportunities for teachers.

Scholars such as Robinson, *et al.* (2008), as well as Heck and Hallinger (2009) highlight the importance of dispersed instructional leadership on the school organisation. However, the study by Lee, *et al*. (2012) differs from these studies and thus can be regarded as more authoritative. The methodological approach that Lee, *et al.* (2012) used were case studies of IB schools in five countries. Further, the researchers used interviews and in-school observations. These measures helped provide an in-depth account of distributed instructional leadership practices.

Hoque, Alam and Abdullah's (2011) empirical study examines the consequence of teacher professional development activities on school improvement in Bangladesh. The researchers established a positive correlation between teacher professional development activities - such as teachers' collaboration, in-service training and lesson observations - and school improvement.

Teacher professional development and school improvement serves as the conceptual foundations for this study. Hoque, *et al*. (2011, p.337) define teacher professional development as "increasing teaching techniques, broadening subject knowledge … gathering the latest information to prepare their students according and based to the needs of contemporary society". Firstly, teachers' collaboration allows them to reflect and critically analyse their practice. Secondly, in-service training enables teachers to participate in meetings, workshops and conferences to improve their skills and knowledge. Thirdly, action research indicates how teachers detect problems, and gather and evaluate information to make informed decisions (Hoque, *et al*., 2011). Fourthly, classroom observations give feedback to teachers in order to improve their pedagogy. Finally, teacher professional development also focuses on curricular issues (Hoque, *et al*., 2011).

The second conceptual foundation of this study is school improvement. Hoque, *et al*. (2011, p.340) posit that school improvement is "a journey towards excellence on some changing process". Scholars such as Barth (1990) and Fullan (2009) maintain that school improvement deals with the school culture. This invariably focuses on improving teaching and learning conditions, and promoting teacher leadership skills. The ultimate goal is improving quality in the education system.

This study was viewed through the positivist lens. Therefore, a quantitative approach was used to generate data. The researchers randomly sampled secondary schools in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The sample population consisted of 127 school principals and 694 teachers. Hoque, *et al*. (2011) used questionnaires to gather data. After the data was analysed, the researchers presented five indicators for teacher professional development activities (Hoque, *et al*., 2011).

The first indicator was teachers' collaboration on school improvement. Hoque, *et al*. (2011) maintain that teachers' collaboration allowed for reflective dialogue, improving teachers knowledge base and the implementation of good classroom practices. Furthermore, teachers were able to critically examine their teaching practice and partake in peer coaching. This finding

is similar to Blasé and Blasé's (1999) conclusion, which articulates that teachers' collaboration had a significant impact on school improvement.

Secondly, the researchers presented their findings on teachers' in-service training. Hoque, *et al*. (2011) identified that workshops and conferences helped enhance teachers' professional development. Additionally, a more practical form of in-service training was considered crucial. This study's finding is congruent with Blasé and Blasé's (1998) assertion that teachers receiving effective in-service training positively impacted on learning outcomes. The third indicator that Hoque, *et al*. (2011) focused on was action enquiry and school improvement. Interestingly, Hoque, *et al*. (2011, p.345) established that action enquiry has "no significant or positive effect on school improvement".

The fourth indicator was classroom observation and school improvement. Hoque, *et al*. (2011) assert that classroom observation has a direct impact on school improvement as it directly focuses on teaching and learning. It allows teachers to evaluate their classroom practice and incorporate other successful teaching methods. Furthermore, the researchers contend that this practice would be further enhanced if school principals were personally involved in classroom observations. This finding is congruent with other studies (Blasé & Blasé, 1998 & 1999) which establishes a strong correlation between classroom observation and school improvement.

The final indicator was curricular focus and school improvement. Hoque, *et al*. (2011) established that Bangladeshi teachers followed the curriculum in a very rigid manner. Consequently, this practice had a detrimental effect on teacher professional growth. Hoque, *et al.* (2011) postulate that the curriculum was designed 100 years ago by the British colonialists and was therefore archaic and out of touch with current knowledge. This view is consistent with Marzano's (2003) assertion that it is crucial for schools to follow a cutting-edge curriculum that caters for the needs of the 21st century.

Hoque, *et al*. (2011) highlight the importance of teachers' collaboration and classroom observations to the development of teachers' professionalism. These are inexpensive practices that could be replicated in developing countries such as South Africa. However, the study has a major methodological flaw. The researchers did not incorporate contextual variables such as the

learners' socio-economic backgrounds and the varied subject areas. This would have enriched the study and made it more results oriented.

Grissom, Loeb and Master's (2013) empirical study examine how the school principals' total time spent on instructional leadership practices impacts on learner achievement outcomes and school improvement. The researchers identified essential instructional leadership practices such as classroom walkthroughs, teacher coaching and improving the instructional programme (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Interestingly, principals who spent much time on teacher coaching and improving the instructional programme had a favourable impact on learning outcomes. On the other hand, principals who devoted a considerable amount of time on classroom walkthroughs had a negative impact on learner achievement outcomes.

Grissom, *et al*. (2013) draw on the Management by Walking Around (MBWA) concept as a basis for their research. More specifically, they hone in on Downey, Steffy, English, Frase and Poston's (2004) Three-Minute Walkthrough (TMW) model. Downey, *et al*. (2004, p.20) assert that the goal of the TMW model is for principals to "gather focused data in a very short period of time". It is a five-step observational strategy that focuses on the curriculum and instruction. The first step ascertains whether learners are engaged in work. Thereafter, the principal spends most of the remaining three minutes in the classroom to check if the curricular objectives were being taught according to the district's mandate. Thirdly, the principal also notes the context or "mode of student response" and the "cognitive type" as espoused by Blooms Taxonomy (Downey, *et al*., 2004, p.27). Further, principals should be cognisant of pedagogical practices such as questioning skills and grouping strategies that could be used for reflective questions. Step four is "walking the walls" (Downey, *et al*., 2004, p.36). This refers to learners' portfolios, test papers and other artefacts that may reveal instructional practices. The fifth step entails the principals' regular visits to the classrooms and the detection of any serious health or safety issues.

Downey, *et al*. (2004) posit that the main purpose of the TMW model is to encourage teacher professional growth through reflection. The principal should play a coaching rather than a judgemental role. Furthermore, teachers have the choice to partake in reflective dialogue, but this does not constitute any formal teacher professional development process. Proponents of the MBWA model credit it with enhancing pedagogical practices, reducing discipline problems and creating a collaborative instructional culture (Downey, *et al*., 2004; Grissom, *et al*., 2013).

The research by Grissom, *et al*. (2013) is viewed through the lens of the positivist paradigm. Hence, a quantitative approach was used to elicit data. It was an intensive longitudinal study of schools, principals and learners from 2008 to 2012. Stratified random sampling was employed to identify 125 schools in Miami-Dade County, United States of America. The research methods comprised: in-person observations, documents review, interviews and surveys. Grissom, *et al*. (2013) employed in-person observations to shadow principals for a full school day during 2008, 2011 and 2012. The observers followed a strict protocol to record information. The protocols contained task areas such as learner discipline and modes of activities such as face-to-face meetings (Grissom, *et al*., 2013). The researchers also perused learners' files to scrutinise their academic data. Furthermore, Grissom, *et al*. (2013) conducted interviews and surveys with principals in order to triangulate the data.

Grissom, *et al*. (2013) illuminate the correlation between principal time allocation on instructional leadership practices and learner achievement outcomes. The first important finding regards the principals' usage of instructional time. Grissom, *et al*. (2013) note that principals spent approximately 12,7% of their time on instruction-specific activities. MBWA constituted 5, 4% of this time - whereas coaching teachers and developing the educational programme comprised 0,5% and 2,1% of their time. Moreover, MBWA is crucial because 60% of the principals view it as their main source of information about teachers' instructional practices (Grissom, *et al*., 2013).

The most important finding was that principals who spent more time on MBWA had a negative impact on learner achievement outcomes. For instance, a 1% increase in walkthrough time resulted in a 0,11% decrease in Mathematics results in 2007-2008, a 0,25% decline in 2010-2011, and a 0,22% decrease in Mathematics results in 2011-2012 (Grissom, *et al*., 2013). Similar statistics applied to reading. This finding lends credence to Horng and Loeb's (2010) conclusion that more time spent on instructional leadership practices does not result in greater school improvement. The secondary finding relates to the principals' time spent on teacher coaching. This yielded positive results, as a 0,01 % increase in teacher coaching resulted in a 1% improvement in Mathematics results (Grissom, *et al*., 2013). Similar statistics applied to time spent on developing the educational programme.

However, the major finding regarding MBWA deserves closer inspection as one has to consider certain mitigating factors. Firstly, the practice of principal walkthroughs was less prevalent in secondary schools and it was also associated with the most negative learner performance outcomes. Scholars such as Downey, *et al*. (2004) and Grissom, *et al*. (2013) proffer that the reason could be that the principals lacked instructional expertise to coach teachers in the vast array of subjects in large secondary schools. Secondly, Downey, *et al*. (2004) contend that the TMW model is most effective when it encompasses aspects of teacher professional development and coaching.

The article by Grissom, *et al*. (2013) contains certain flaws. The contextual limitation was that it did not consider the schools contextual variables that influence leadership actions and learners. In addition, the methodological limitation was the use of in-person observations on a very limited basis. You also have to consider the Hawthorne effect, whereby principals altered their behaviours on account of them being observed (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). Finally, MBWA and the TMW model do offer the possibility of improved instructional leadership practices in schools.

The study by Robinson, *et al.* (2008) investigates the comparative effect of diverse leadership styles on learner achievement results. The initial meta-analysis, comprising 22 studies, compared the effects of transformational and instructional leadership on learner achievement results. The subsequent meta-analysis, comprising 12 studies, compares the effects of five dimensions of leadership practices on learner achievement results.

Robinson, *et al.* (2008) framed their study through two leadership theories. The researchers posit that instructional leadership is characterised by a climate conducive for learning, strong teaching practices and high expectations for all learners. More recently, the concept of dispersed instructional leadership has gained much popularity. The second framework is Burn's (1978) transformational leadership theory. Burn's (1978) premise is that leaders should cooperate with staff in order to generate higher levels of energy, commitment and a moral purpose. Thus, these characteristics would enable the staff to work as a team to achieve the organisational goals.

The current study is located in the positivist paradigm, and the methodological approach was a meta-analysis, which is basically an examination of different analyses. Cohen, *et al*. (2011, p.336) contend that a meta-analysis "involves aggregating and combining the results of

comparable studies into a coherent account to discover main effects". This is usually done through statistical quantitative data analysis. Robinson, *et al.* (2008, p.640) further state that the advantage of a meta-analysis is the "systematic treatment of relevant studies and it produces a measure of overall impact of the construct of interest".

The first meta-analysis investigated the effects of leadership types on learner achievement results. This study showed that the mean effect size estimate of transformational leadership was at 0.11 and instructional leadership at 0.42 (Robinson, *et al*., 2008). This indicates that the influence of instructional leadership was three times larger than that of transformational leadership. Crucially, leadership at high-performing schools concentrated on instruction, providing pedagogical resources and promoting teacher development. These are considered classic instructional practices. One can thus deduce that transformational leadership is less successful in positively impacting on learner achievement results because more emphasis is placed on building relationships, instead of focusing on the core pedagogical practices.

The second meta-analysis study concentrated on five dimensions of leadership practices. The first leadership dimension was establishing goals and expectations. It produced an average effect size of 0.42 and is thus quite important. Goal setting invariably means that principals prioritised learners' academic performance. Robinson, *et al*. (2008) maintain that goal setting provides a sense of resolve and direction in a sea of competing tasks at a school.

The second dimension was resourcing strategically. It specifically refers to aligning resources with instructional practices and it generated an average effect size of 0.31, which clearly indicates that it had a small indirect effect on learning outcomes (Robinson, *et al*., 2008).

The next dimension was planning, organising and assessing instruction. This dimension produced an average effect size of 0.42. Robinson, *et al*. (2008) deduce that principals in high-performing schools were proactively involved in this dimension. Many of the studies reveal that principals engaged in classroom observations and provided subsequent feedback to staff. Teachers maintain that the adherence to performance criteria helped them to improve their teaching skills. Robinson, *et al*. (2008, p.662) further assert that top-performing schools, analytically monitor learner academic results to bolster school improvement.

The fourth dimension entailed encouraging ongoing teacher professional growth. Robinson, *et al*. (2008) note that this dimension was enhanced through formal forums (workshops) and also by informal deliberations regarding pedagogy. Further, principals at top-performing institutions were quite knowledgeable about instructional practices and provided pedagogical support to their teachers. The research also reveals that principals who supported teachers consequently gained greater respect and cooperation from them. This subsequently led to the smooth implementation of the curricular programme. This dimension produced an average effect size of 0.84 which indicates that it is strongly associated with positive learner achievement outcomes.

The final dimension was guaranteeing a structured and enabling school environment. This specifically refers to creating a safe teaching and learning climate, and also preventing staff conflict. It generated an average effect size of 0.27, which is considered small, but it is still quite significant in order to achieve the instructional and social goals of the institution (Robinson, *et al*., 2008).

The meta-analysis by Robinson, *et al*. (2008) infer that principals should improve their professional interactions and concentrate specifically on instructional-related practices. I would strongly recommend that any future research of instructional leadership should be strongly aligned to data on successful teacher professional development initiatives. Ultimately, this could provide a richer source of data and lead to an improvement in learning outcomes.

Grissom and Loeb's (2011) study focuses on the precise skills that principals need to achieve school success. The researchers identified five skills dimensions, namely: instruction management, internal relations, organisational management, administration and external relations that they consider is most beneficial for school improvement.

The theoretical framework that informs this study is the instructional leadership theory, and Horng and Loeb's (2010) organisational management concept. Strong instructional leaders primarily focus their attention on supervising, coordinating, evaluating classroom instruction, promoting professional development and setting school objectives (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Weber, 1987). In other words, the emphasis is on propagating effective teaching and learning practices.

Horng and Loeb (2010) advocate the organisational management concept for school improvement. They posit that it entails: recruiting high-quality teachers, allotting finances and pedagogical resources, and promoting a professional school environment (Horng & Loeb, 2010). In addition, strong organisational managers strategically hire and develop competent staff, whilst removing unproductive teachers. Horng and Loeb (2010, p.67) further postulate that "school outcomes are better, including student test-score gains" when principals exhibited strong organisational management skills. Conversely, principals who focused on traditional instructional leadership practices did not have a significant impact on learning outcomes (Horng & Loeb, 2010).

The study's data was sourced from Miami-Dade County in Florida, United States of America. It is quite a diverse region in terms of ethnicity and socio-economic levels. The sample population comprising of principals, deputy principals, teachers and parents, helped to ensure validity. The methodological approach that the researchers used was online surveys. A major advantage of online surveys is that the response rate is usually higher; however, a serious concern in the current study is that certain subsample groups were not fully represented in the respondents (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). Further, the data was combined with the district administrative data based on Florida's accountability system. Thereafter, the principals rated their personal effectiveness on 42 task items and it was subsequently categorised into five skill areas or dimensions.

The first dimension was instruction management. This refers to the tasks that the principals implemented to support and develop curricular programmes. The tasks that principals rated highly on were designing and implementing professional development, and informally mentoring teachers (Grissom & Loeb, 2011). Principals also rated highly on appraising the curriculum and providing instructional feedback to teachers. These are considered traditional instructional leadership practices.

Internal relations were the second dimension of the study. This basically refers to the principals developing strong interpersonal relationships in schools. Grissom and Loeb (2011) mention that most principals rated very highly in terms of resolving conflict within the staff. In addition, the principals were reasonably skilled in developing a good rapport with learners and parents.

The third dimension was organisational management. These are the set of tasks that enable the principal to efficiently administer the running of the school. Principals rated themselves as very proficient in promoting a safe school environment (68%), handling staff anxieties (65%) and administering the budget (64%). Significantly, teacher satisfaction with principals rated most highly in organisation management and it had a positive coefficient of .015. Deputy Principals echoed similar sentiments about organisational management when they mentioned that principals were competent at hiring staff. Finally, Grissom and Loeb (2011) also established a positive link between organisational managerial practices and parental evaluation of organisational efficacy.

Administration was the fourth dimension of principal task effectiveness. This dimension deals with general administrative duties (Grissom & Loeb, 2011). As such, the school leaders reported being very efficient in controlling teaching schedules, administering standardised tests and managing learner discipline. These findings are consistent with Horng and Loeb's (2010) study, which revealed that principals used approximately one-third of their time on administrative duties like completing paperwork. Horng and Loeb (2010) consider this a hindrance because it does not have a positive effect on school improvement. The final dimension of principal task effectiveness was external relations. Interestingly, this dimension has a lower mean effectiveness score compared to the other four dimensions. Grissom and Loeb (2011) report that on average principals felt least effective at fundraising (18%).

In the current study, Grissom and Loeb (2011) also scrutinise the correlation between principals' task effectiveness, and learners' Mathematics and literacy scores. In a sense, it is the accountability measure of these subjects from Grade 3 to Grade 10. These findings are quite enlightening. Grissom and Loeb (2011, p.1115) state that "organisation management effectiveness are positively associated with student achievement gains in both Mathematics and reading". The organisational management coefficient was .015 and it apparently outperformed the other dimensions of principal task effectiveness.

Grissom and Loeb's (2011) study makes two valuable contributions. Firstly, it illuminates the five dimensions of principal task effectiveness. Most crucially, it highlights the importance of organisational management for school improvement. Horng and Loeb's (2010) study reaches similar conclusions. Horng and Loeb (2010) view traditional instructional leadership practices as archaic. They contend that it would be virtually impossible for instructional leaders to be

effective in large schools with many teachers and diverse subject areas. Hence, they advocate strong organisational management practices such as managing personnel, allocating resources and creating a positive working environment. These studies (Horng & Loeb, 2010; Grissom & Loeb, 2011) are ground-breaking and call for a reconceptualisation of school leadership. However, it would be judicious to infuse instructional leadership with strong organisational management skills in order to enhance school improvement and learning outcomes (Grissom & Loeb, 2011).

Williams (2013) study focuses on the implementation of Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) in a Texas school district in the United States of America. The purpose of the study was to establish whether learners reading achievement levels improved as a consequence of teachers' collaboration. Consequently, four wide-ranging themes emerged, namely: collaborative teacher learning, data-driven decisions, curriculum and instruction, and the school culture.

The concept of a Professional Learning Community has gained much popularity in the educational arena (DuFour, 2004; Fullan, 2009; Williams, 2013). Williams (2013) study is grounded in the belief that Professional Learning Communities empower teaching staff to regularly cooperate and strategise in order to improve learner achievement outcomes. Thus, a Professional Learning Community is considered the antithesis of the ubiquitous once-off staff development workshop. Here, teachers receive ongoing support and also gain constant feedback on learner progression (Williams, 2013). Ultimately, teachers' professional practice is enhanced. Williams (2013) employed a causal-comparative research design and applied a mixed methods approach. A causal-comparative research design enables researchers to scrutinise the past for causes of current situations when it is not possible to carry out an experiment (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). The researcher employed purposive sampling to choose 76 schools and 35 teachers. In addition, Williams (2013) used focus group interviews to generate qualitative data. Consequently, four themes emerged.

The first theme was on collaborative teacher learning. Williams (2013) states that teachers' professional collaboration was enhanced when working within a team. Moreover, knowledge was gleaned from colleagues, and this allowed teachers to compare and then incorporate successful teaching methods into their classrooms. As a result, the reading proficiency levels of learners drastically improved (Williams, 2013). Secondly, data-driven decisions are considered

crucial in a Professional Learning Community. Various data sources such as teacher observations, learners' work and assessments were used to inform instruction (Williams, 2013). Evidently, a large amount of time in Professional Learning Communities is dedicated to examining and interpreting learners' assessment data.

The third theme centred on curriculum and instruction. Here teachers vigorously discussed reading skills such as fluency, vocabulary enrichment and critical thinking in Professional Learning Communities (Williams, 2013). In addition, teachers also debated important instructional strategies such as utilising skill-based small groups. Accordingly, teachers were able to articulate their pedagogical concerns and receive assistance from their peers.

The most interesting theme that emerged was the development of a unique school culture at high-performing schools. According to Williams (2013), teachers collaborated before school, during the lunch break and at various times of the day. In other words, these Professional Learning Communities acted as a forum for queries and problem-solving (Williams, 2013). Needless to say, the opposite was true in low-performing schools.

Williams (2013) study established that Professional Learning Communities made a significant improvement to learners' reading proficiency levels. In fact the effect size was .75% for middle schools and .67% for secondary schools. The second finding was that teachers' collaboration had a positive effect on classroom instruction. The current study added credence to Bolam, McMahon, Stoll, Thomas and Wallace's (2005) findings that Professional Learning Communities enhanced learner achievement outcomes and professional practice in schools.

2.2.1.1 The role of school principals in the creation of Professional Learning Communities

Bolam, *et al.* (2005, p.iii) succinctly describe a Professional Learning Community as having the "capacity to promote and sustain the learning of all professionals in the school community with the collective purpose of enhancing pupil learning". Similarly, Hord (1997) avers that Professional Learning Communities occur at schools where professionals collaborate and share their expertise in order to improve teaching and learning practices.

Likewise, DuFour (2004) proffers that Professional Learning Communities are characterised by three components. Firstly, DuFour (2004) contends that strong professional learning is steeped in

the culture of the organisation. This suggests that there is a high degree of teamwork whereby the teaching staff makes the effort to meet on a regular basis, and they are further provided with strategies to improve pedagogy. Secondly, there is a culture of systematic collaboration which focuses on professional practice, rather than just camaraderie. In the final analysis, the majority of time of Professional Learning Communities is focused on analysing learner assessment data in order to improve learning outcomes (DuFour, 2004; Williams, 2013).

Research indicates that Professional Learning Communities have many positive spinoffs for the learners and teaching staff. Strong Professional Learning Communities foster social aspects in teachers such as trust, mutual respect, job satisfaction and a shared purpose (Hord, 1997). In this regard, teachers constantly engage in reflective dialogue, whereby they evaluate their professional practice and are able to develop better strategies to improve teaching and learning (Bolam, *et al*., 2005). Furthermore, DuFour (2004) contends that teacher collaboration helps develop content knowledge, new skills and problem-solving capabilities. Crucially, Bolam, *et al*. (2005) assert that Professional Learning Communities positively affect learners' academic results. Similar views are shared by earlier publications. Rosenholtz's (1989) study demonstrates that strong teacher collaboration improved learners' performance in reading and Mathematics.

According to Southworth (2002, p.77), school leaders should concentrate their efforts on the "behaviours of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students". Thus, principal leadership plays a pivotal role in creating Professional Learning Communities. Initially, the principal is responsible for articulating a vision and promoting shared values (Bolam, *et al*., 2005). Invariably the emphasis is on providing quality instruction and having high expectations from all stakeholders. Additionally, Fullan (2009) contends that the establishment of a school-wide culture is crucial because it influences the readiness for change.

Bolam, *et al*. (2005) posit that principals also distribute leadership and power to enable Professional Learning Communities to flourish. In very efficient Professional Learning Communities, school leaders engage in joint enquiry with the teaching staff and subsequently empower them with various leadership tasks (Bolam, *et al*., 2005). Principals further impart their leadership skills by means of peer observations, providing feedback to stakeholders and the mentoring of staff (DuFour, 2004).

Hord (1997) proclaims that supportive structural conditions enable Professional Learning Communities to function efficiently. In this regard, it is incumbent for principals to provide the time, space and resources for collaboration to occur. Thus, logistical issues need to be considered for Professional Learning Communities to operate. In addition, principals are also responsible for nurturing relational conditions such as: trust, respect, risk taking and reflective dialogue in order to bolster professional learning. Moreover, the collegial nature of professional learning enhances the principal's instructional leadership practices. Ultimately, the principal is essentially the chief accounting officer of the school and should monitor and review the entire process (Hord, 1997).

2.2.2 The African context

Studies have also been conducted on instructional leadership in the African context. Pansiri's (2008) study honed in on the efficacy of the Primary School Management Development Project (PSMDP) in Botswana. The government instituted the PSMDP in order to enhance the education system, and this entailed providing assistance and management training to School Management Teams (SMTs). Ultimately, the research findings served as a barometer to ascertain whether the PSMDP helped improve instructional leadership practices in schools.

The conceptual framework that underpins this study is the PSMDP. It is quite an innovative initiative and its core function was to improve the instructional leadership practices of school leadership. Initially, 30 principals were identified and trained as mentors. These mentors then developed resources to train the School Management Teams (principals and deputy principals). The SMTs subsequently used a cascade model to train their school's teaching staff regarding curriculum leadership and implementation aspects (Pansiri, 2008). This study was viewed through the positivist lens. Hence, a quantitative approach was used to generate data. Pansiri (2008) used convenience sampling to select the schools based on his knowledge of the area. The sample consisted of 240 primary school teachers and principals, and 575 learners. The methodology was a large scale survey comprising questionnaires. Data was analysed, and the empirical findings of the study were discussed under different themes.

Firstly, in terms of leadership skills, the PSMDP was able to effectively train the SMT. There was the development of crucial skills such as interpersonal relations, collegiality and conflict management. Teachers mentioned that they received affirmation from the SMT and they had

cordial relations with them (Pansiri, 2008). However, some teachers criticised the lack of cooperation between the teaching staff and parents. Furthermore, respondents bemoaned the fact that "the SMTs overloaded themselves … they should learn to delegate" (Pansiri, 2008, p.484). Scholars such as Blasé and Blasé (1999) view the delegation of tasks as an important strategy to disperse leadership skills throughout the school organisation.

The second area was the coordination of leadership functions. Respondents claimed that leadership was competent in implementing the School Development Plan (SDP), but were weak in monitoring the implementation thereof. Pansiri (2008) notes that a further complaint was poor managerial skills of the school leadership, as pedagogical resources were not delivered on time.

Thirdly, the issue of curriculum management was highlighted. The majority of teachers were satisfied that the SMT made regular classroom visits and gave constructive feedback. However, there was criticism regarding a lack of coaching and demonstration for aspects such as the handling of specific topics or lessons. Pansiri (2008, p.492) indicates that teacher professional development was lacking and there should be an "in-service training programme for SMTs and teachers". Blasé and Blasé (1998) concur that teacher professional development is an essential instructional leadership practice. Ultimately, for all the PSMDP successes, learner achievement outcomes continued to be very low (Pansiri, 2008).

A major methodological flaw of the study was not interviewing the respondents. In my view the above-mentioned study would have generated thick, rich data if Pansiri (2008) had elicited the voices of school principals. On the other hand, the PSMDP concept is innovative and cutting-edge. This model seems feasible and could be tailored to meet the unique contextual realities of South Africa.

2.2.3 The South African context

Studies have also been conducted on instructional leadership in the South African context. The empirical study by Hoadley, *et al.* (2009) was on the management of the curriculum and instruction. Moreover, the study identified crucial aspects that positively affected learners' academic performance.

The conceptual framework that underpins the study by Hoadley, *et al.* (2009) is leadership theory. This specifically refers to school principals' management of the curriculum in the South African context. Hoadley, *et al*. (2009, p.375) assert that the country's literature is "not conceptually rich" on this concept. For Hoadley, *et al.* (2009), the management variables that are considered essential are: monitoring, supporting and delivering the curriculum, and the regulation of time. Furthermore, the procurement and management of pedagogical resources are also considered crucial. Lastly, the researchers posit that it is essential to monitor the learners' academic performance and have regular quality assurance tests.

This study is viewed through the positivist lens. The researchers used a stratified sample consisting of 200 urban and rural secondary schools in the Eastern Cape and Western Cape provinces. The methodology consisted of a survey with the respondents filling in questionnaires. Hoadley, *et al*. (2009) indicate that the respondents were school principals, deputy principals, Heads of Department (HoDs) and teachers. Furthermore, learner achievement data was obtained from the Department of Basic Education (DoBE).

The findings of the study yielded interesting results regarding the management of the instructional programme. Firstly, the instructional focus is important in a learning-centred school. This manifests itself in many different ways. There is an emphasis on the curriculum coverage, maximising the day for optimal learning and having a strategic plan to improve learner achievement results. Crucially, Hoadley, *et al*. (2009, p.382) maintain that without adequate curriculum coverage "students' chances of learning and achievement are greatly diminished".

Secondly, the importance of a positive school culture was highlighted. This basically refers to cordial social interactions between the SMT and teachers, and also a cooperative relationship between teachers. Invariably, the principal is tasked with creating a proactive learning environment. Similar studies (DuFour, 2004; Williams, 2013) extol the virtues of collaborative professional learning for improved learning outcomes. However, Hoadley, *et al*. (2009) argue that there is an indirect association *vis-à-vis* a positive school culture and managerial actions.

Thirdly, coordinating Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) are crucial for effective pedagogy. Hoadley, *et al*. (2009) assert that the management of textbooks and resource materials are more important than the abundance of it. This finding is congruent with Chapman, Snyder

and Burchfield (1993), who conclude that the provision of good quality instructional materials is essential. It assists teachers in lesson preparation, as they are able to select, organise, sequence, and pace the presentation of content. Consequently, this systematic presentation of content may result in improved learner achievement outcomes (Chapman, *et al*., 1993).

Finally, the most interesting finding was the importance of schools in creating a cooperative partnership with the community. The researchers posit that parents who cherished and supported education were a key variable in creating a 'social trust' with the school. This is well captured by Hoadley, *et al*. (2009, p.384) when they proffered, "regardless of the poverty level of the community, supportive parents and an SGB willing to assist the school make a difference to the improvement or decline of student results at that school".

The study by Hoadley, *et al*. (2009) on the management of the instructional programme has one important limitation. It highlights the changes in learners' academic performance during a specific timeframe, but does not consider the use of different leadership practices during that time period. Therefore, one cannot make a positive correlation between enhanced learner achievement outcomes and specific management practices. Whilst the study fails to establish a causal link between successful management styles and improved learning outcomes; it does illuminate successful variables that could help to improve teaching and learning.

Msila's (2013) study focused on a school principal who incorporated the instructional leadership practices of journal writing and teacher reflection as a means to improve pedagogy. These are pioneering strategies that could be employed in order to enhance pedagogical practices in South African schools.

The two concepts that undergird this study are journal writing and teacher reflection. Msila (2013) contends that journal writing enables teachers to reflect on their teaching. It fosters "ongoing professional introspection, constant dialogue with oneself, [and] self-critical awareness of one's practice" (Msila, 2013, p.83). Thus, the use of descriptive writing reconstructs an individual's perception of past experiences. The benefits are that it may highlight good practices and may also inform individuals of inherent flaws. Msila (2013) views journal writing and reflection as conceptually linked to each another. For Msila (2013), teacher reflection is the careful deliberation of any belief or practice. The researcher indicates that there are many

positive spin-offs from this concept as it allows teachers to embrace more innovative teaching strategies to improve teaching and learning (Msila, 2013).

This study utilised the qualitative research methodology. The school was chosen through opportunistic sampling, as the researcher previously studied the school principal's effectiveness. Msila's (2013) case study consisted of one underperforming rural school in the KwaZulu-Natal province. This school is located in an impoverished area and has limited resources. In order to generate data, interviews were conducted with the principal and teachers, and there was also observation of lessons and documents review of learners' results. Thus, the researcher wanted to ascertain whether journal keeping and critical reflection helped improve pedagogical practices.

All the teachers in the above-mentioned study reported that journal keeping enhanced their teaching practice. Common aspects that were included in the journals were: the way lessons unfolded, learners' behaviour and welfare, challenging areas and strategies to improve future lessons. Teachers also learnt aspects about themselves such as their professional past, their current teaching practices and ways to plan for the future (Msila, 2013). Furthermore, teachers were able to learn different aspects about their learners, and talk to the principal about their weaknesses. Msila (2013) states that the process of writing their experiences as former learners helped them to comprehend their own teaching. This is termed using biography. Crucially, the principal maintains that "journal writing and critical reflection did have a huge impact on learner achievement rates" (Msila, 2013, p.86).

Teacher critical reflection is considered an extension of journal writing. Msila (2013, p. 86) contends that reflection made teachers "understand the psychology in teaching and learning". It also benefited learners because teachers became more cognisant of learners' difficulties, and thus tailored their pedagogy to focus on learner requirements. Lastly, critical teacher reflection supports the notion of lifelong learning and professional development (Choy & Oo, 2012; Msila, 2013).

Teacher journal keeping and critical reflection are underutilised pedagogical strategies in South African schools. However, studies by Choy and Oo (2012) and Msila (2013) have shown the positive benefits of these instructional practices in improving pedagogy and learners' academic

performance. This current study has further shown that a school which has a vision can excel, even if it has minimal resources.

Naicker, *et al.* (2013) examined the instructional leadership practices of five school leaders in high performing institutions. The contextual factors that engulfed these schools included: high poverty levels, crime, single-parent headed households and an inferior school infrastructure. However, proactive leadership enabled these schools to thrive and excel. This is borne out of the fact that these schools performed very well in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) and managed to increase their combined average performance by 55% (Naicker, *et al*., 2013).

The theoretical perspective that informs this study is Weber's (1996) instructional leadership model. Pertinent dimensions of this model guided the researchers in their study. Managing the curriculum and instruction refers to the principal providing the necessary instructional resources and support to the staff (Weber, 1996). Furthermore, the dimension of observing and improving instruction entails observing classroom lessons and targeting teacher professional growth. Lastly, evaluating the curricular programme is crucial, as principals are involved in planning, designing, and analysing the assessment programme (Weber, 1996).

This study is located in the interpretive paradigm, which postulates that the myriad of truths which exists in society are socially constructed (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). Furthermore, a qualitative approach was used to generate data, as the researchers examined the lived experiences of the participants (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). The Umlazi District in KwaZulu-Natal was purposively sampled. In addition, the five schools were chosen because of their stellar performances in challenging contexts. The chief participants were school principals, but circuit managers were also interviewed for the purpose of triangulation. This helped to ensure trustworthiness (Naicker, *et al*., 2013). Accordingly, the research findings were presented in the form of major themes.

The first significant finding of the study was that school principals modelled appropriate professional behaviour. These principals were at the coalface of curriculum delivery, as they taught key subjects such as Physical Science in Grade 12 (Naicker, *et al*., 2013). The premise is that principals have a wealth of pedagogical knowledge and skills that can add value to a school (Horng & Loeb, 2010). Furthermore, the principals modelled important instructional aspects such as classroom attendance, conducting lessons and preparing assessments. In addition, the

principals' presence in the classroom ensured that they maintained a high visibility within their schools, which Hallinger and Murphy (1985) note is a prerequisite of a good instructional leader.

The second theme to emerge was the importance of teacher professional development. The principals initiated dedicated induction programmes to mentor and induct new staff members. In fact, the process of assisting novice teachers was dispersed to HoDs and senior teachers. This distributed instructional leadership has the positive effect of leaving behind a band of instructional leaders (Barth, 1990; Fullan, 2009). Furthermore, the schools developed a collaborative culture which flourished into Professional Learning Communities. Principals also deployed staff strategically through the use of team teaching. Here novice teachers taught alongside senior teachers to further enhance their pedagogical practices (Naicker, *et al*., 2013).

Maximising the teaching and learning time also emerged as another important theme. Crucially, all five principals placed instructional leadership practices on a high pedestal (Naicker, *et al*., 2013). Numerous proactive initiatives such as extra classes were introduced to extend the instructional time and further enhance learner achievement outcomes. Moreover, the principals tried to minimise disruptions to the teaching programme at their schools. Naicker, *et al*. (2013) state that the schools implemented specific measures to prevent labour unrest from infringing upon the curricular programme. In this regard, the principals held firm against recalcitrant teacher unions who constantly use education as a pawn for their own political whims.

The final theme that emerged was monitoring the teaching and learning programmes. Principals directly monitored teachers' performances through classroom observations. In addition to this, they indirectly monitored teachers through a distributed approach. As such, HoDs were entrusted with the task of visiting classrooms in order to check learners' books and teachers' assessment records (Naicker, *et al*., 2013). This enabled the principals to have a bird's eye view of the instructional programme in their schools.

The findings of Naicker, *et al*. (2013) reinforce the importance of innovative instructional leadership practices in disadvantaged township schools. These principals were able to develop a culture to deal with the communities contextual limitations. The two significant findings of the study were a distributed notion of instructional leadership and job-embedded teacher professional development. However, the study's methodological flaw was that it was a small

scale qualitative study which only employed interviews. A larger mixed methods approach, comprising different role players, would provide a richer picture and allow for generalisability.

2.3 Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

The theoretical frameworks that underpin my study comprise of Weber's (1987) instructional leadership theory and Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership theory.

2.3.1 The Weber (1987) model of instructional leadership

Weber's (1987) instructional leadership model is premised on the belief that schools principals are the chief instructional leaders and their leadership responsibilities are sometimes dispersed in order to improve the efficiency of the organisation. It consists of six dimensions, namely: setting academic goals, organising the instructional programme, supervision and evaluation, protecting instructional time and programmes, creating a climate for learning, and monitoring achievement and evaluating programmes.

Weber's (1987) framework of instructional leadership is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

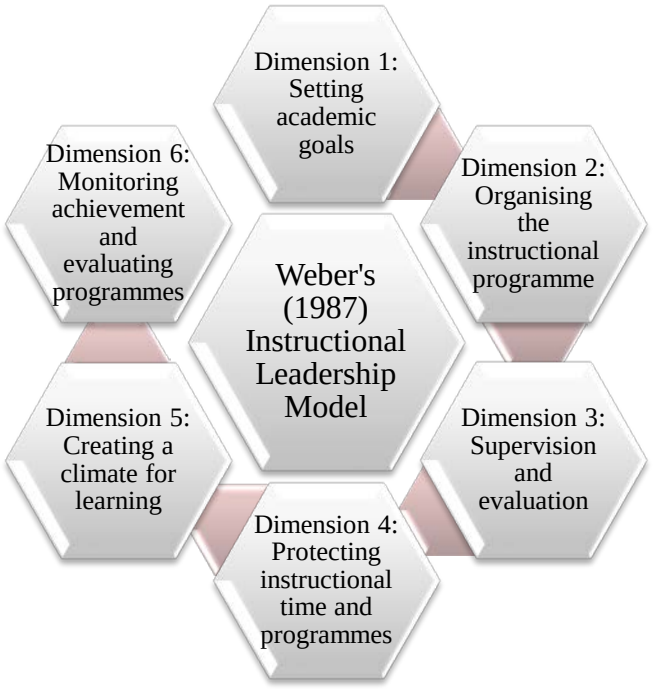

Figure 1: Weber's (1987) Instructional Leadership Model

Firstly, the school leader sets academic goals. Weber (1987) states the principals' main duty is to develop a vibrant academic mission and subsequently bring all stakeholders on board regarding its objectives. The process of defining the school's mission requires cooperation and reflective thinking by all stakeholders. Ultimately, Weber (1987) asserts that the academic mission of a school is invariably based on the common vision of improving learner achievement outcomes.

The second dimension of organising the instructional programme is closely aligned to the first dimension. In order to achieve the organisational goals, the principal should implement strategies such as allocating the staff, institute learner groupings and organise the curriculum (Weber, 1987). It also involves collaborative planning between the instructional leader, learners and parents. Weber (1987) recommends that principals' should exhibit certain behaviours to achieve these objectives. These attributes include: communication with the staff and utilising their recommendations, making resources available and creating a cooperative environment. In addition, collaborative planning sessions should be performed with the staff and school principals ought to keep staff informed of all relevant policy changes in education (Weber, 1987).

The third dimension comprises teachers' supervision and evaluation. According to Weber (1987), this dimension is the foremost duty of any instructional leader. Weber (1987) postulates that it is crucial for instructional leaders to monitor the teaching staff, give constructive advice, and make formative evaluations concerning instructional deficiencies so that it can be improved upon. Therefore, principals should be knowledgeable about the curricular programme and pedagogical practices to be able to be effective. For Weber (1987), successful instructional strategies include: monitoring teachers and learners' performance; providing feedback to teachers about observations; and encouraging teachers to express their views about observational data. Further, principals should give teachers praise for their achievements and successes, and suggest alternative teaching techniques if required. Additional assistance such as pedagogical resources and training programmes could be offered to teachers to improve their instructional skills (Weber, 1987).

Aligned to the supervision and evaluation of teachers, is the hiring of new teachers. Weber (1987, p.29) contends that "hiring competent people is vital to the health of an instructional programme". Regardless of the emphasis principals' place on teacher supervision and

professional development, a lot of time and resources can be saved if competent staff is hired in the first place. This is because they are responsible for navigating the instructional programme.

The fourth dimension entails protecting the instructional time and programmes. Cusick's (1973) seminal study concluded that approximately three hours of a learners' normal school day was spent on mundane issues. Similarly, teachers used valuable time for taking learners' attendance, allocating resources, and so on. Hence, much teaching time is lost. In addition, instructional time also suffers when learners exhibit disciplinary problems, truancy and absenteeism (Weber, 1987).

Weber (1987) advocates that in order to increase academic learning time; principals should focus on learners' school attendance and allocate sufficient time for pedagogy. In terms of improving school attendance, attention should be given to identifying problems regarding learner attendance, eliciting parental support and providing a reward system for good attendance (Weber, 1987). Moreover, the allocated time for instruction has many facets. The principal could hold staff meetings to strategise on problems related to instructional planning and minimise any disruptions to the school curriculum. Additionally, there should be classroom visits to observe teachers and learners, and the streamlining of teachers' administrative tasks (Weber, 1987).

Weber (1987) opines that the fifth dimension of creating a climate conducive for learning has a huge impact on learning outcomes and the individuals' self-concept. As such, the professional ethos that the school principal and staff personify, strongly influence learner achievement outcomes (Weber, 1987). Therefore, when the whole staff supports core pedagogical values, then the notion of school improvement becomes a reality. In fact, learners' attitude towards academic learning is embodied in the schools' professionals. Thus, the norms that Weber (1987) considers essential to enhance pedagogy are: the amount of time allotted for learning, the volume of schoolwork learners receive and the degree of attentiveness that learners' display in their work.

Weber (1987) further indicates that instructional leaders should demand high expectations from all stakeholders in order to create a positive learning climate. Strategies that could be utilised to improve the learning climate include: providing adequate instructional time, having sufficient content coverage and teachers willing to assist learners. Likewise, it is crucial to give praise to learners for providing the correct answers, and have an adequate response opportunity factor

(Weber, 1987). This aspect specifically refers to the number of times learners are called on to answer challenging questions.

The final dimension is about monitoring achievement and evaluating programmes. This dimension refers to principals who plan, manage and analyse assessment tasks in order to ascertain the efficacy of the instructional programme. Moreover, whole programmes can be reviewed for underlying successes or flaws. However, the effectiveness of the instructional programme is generally measured against learner achievement results. Weber (1987, p.54) poses some critical questions such as, "Are they [learners] reaching the objectives proposed?" and "Where are they failing and why?" For Weber (1987), if deficiencies in the education system can be identified, then these learning problems can be remedied. Thus, the constant analysis of the curricular programme allows principals to address learners' requirements through trial and error. In the final analysis, the assessment of learners' academic performance is one of the most crucial components of the instructional programme (Weber, 1987).

The instructional leadership models (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Weber, 1987) dominate the educational landscape. The similarities between these two models are: defining the school's mission, and encouraging a favourable learning environment. However, Weber's (1987) model is most appropriate for this study because it is quite comprehensive and it has further dimensions. The most important dimension is setting the academic goals, as it potentially involves all other areas of pedagogy and incorporates past experiences when planning for future eventualities. This suggests that the instructional leader does not only theorise, but also uses research and practical innovations. Furthermore, Weber's (1987) model emphasises the embedded values of a school, such as perpetual improvement and collegiality, which may motivate all stakeholders to improve their teaching and learning practices.

2.3.2 Distributed leadership theory

The notion of distributed leadership has become prominent in the instructional leadership literature (Spillane, 2006; Harris, 2008). Hallinger (2009, p.13) notes that any discourse on school leadership should not only take into account the "practices and effects of leadership, but also the sources of leadership". Hence, the school principal as the only source of leadership can be detrimental to school effectiveness (Southworth, 2002; Leithwood, *et al*., 2008). In other

words, leadership should be dispersed and teachers should take ownership of the process. Furthermore, Fullan (2009) contends that a solid rationale for distributed school leadership is the concept of sustainable change as the ultimate goal is improved learning outcomes.

Basically, distributed leadership tries to debunk the myth of a 'hero leader' because this is considered bad for business as too much revolves around one person. Fullan, Cuttress and Kilcher (2009) maintain that the mark of a good principal is not just their impact on learners' academic performance, but also a band of future leaders that are empowered. Hence, the ideal is for leadership to be a dispersed and collaborative process involving school principals, deputy principals, HoDs and teachers. Thus, Spillane (2006, p.58) defines distributed leadership as "both lateral and vertical dimensions of leadership … [and the] co-performance of leadership and the reciprocal interdependencies that shape that leadership practice".

A distributed leadership perspective comprises many different characteristics. It recognises that there are multiple leaders and not just one individual leader (Spillane, 2006; Harris, 2010). Harris (2010) mentions that leadership activities are widely shared within and between organisations, and all individuals' work is acknowledged (Fullan, 2009). A distributed model focuses on the interactions rather than the actions of leaders, in both formal and informal leadership roles. It is primarily concerned with leadership practices and how leadership influences organisational and instructional improvement (Spillane, 2006). Further, Harris (2008; 2010) posits that distributed leadership is crucial for system reconfiguration and organisational redesign, as it requires a flatter, lateral decision-making process. In other words, it involves many individuals.

I utilise Spillane's (2006) distributed perspective on leadership because it helps us examine not only 'what' school leaders do, but 'how' and 'why' they do it (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership model can be viewed through the lens of: the leader-plus aspect; and the leadership practice aspect.

Firstly, in the leader-plus aspect there is the acknowledgement that several people in both formal and informal positions assume school leadership roles. The belief is that multiple leaders create a richer, more holistic view of leadership (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). The leader-plus aspect is not an abdication of the authority and responsibility of the leader, but rather considers the work of "all individuals who have a hand in leadership" (Spillane & Diamond, 2007, p.7).

Furthermore, Spillane (2006) advocates the use of a variety of material artefacts (tools) such as test scores, technology-based tools, and curricular frameworks to coordinate and enhance the work of multiple leaders. In this study, the leader-plus aspect considers the instructional leadership practices of school principals, deputy principals, HoDs and teachers.

Secondly, the leadership practice aspect focuses on the interactions among leaders, followers, and their contexts around specific leadership tasks (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). For clarity, I will examine the three components separately. Our common conception of leadership is that it is the practices or behaviours of individual leaders. A distributed perspective asks us to view leadership as interactions between leaders and followers. The following paragraph will deal with the context component.

The interactions between individuals cannot be separated from the context. According to Spillane and Diamond (2007, p.6), practice constitutes the "actual doing of leadership in particular places and times". This view has its roots in the distributed cognition and activity theory. The basic premise is that the social context is integral to activity and cognition (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Hence, context not only affects leadership but also constitutes a leadership practice. In the light of this, leadership can be empowered or inhibited by context.

The third component is the interaction between leaders and followers in specific contexts around specific tasks (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Since my topic focuses on instructional leadership practices of school principals, the leadership tasks are related to teaching and learning. Thus, instructional leadership practices should include the relationship between instructional leadership and instruction. Lastly, the leadership practice aspect considers how the school principal, deputy principals, HoDs and teachers engage in the three aforementioned components.

Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership theory is relevant to this study because in order to achieve school improvement, the instructional leadership practices should be spread across the staff complement of a school.

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter sketched the review of related literature and the theoretical frameworks that underpinned the study. In the first section there was a thorough review of literature surrounding

the instructional leadership practices of school principals. Thereafter two theoretical frameworks, namely Weber's (1987) instructional leadership theory and Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership theory, were presented and discussed. The former approach underpinned my study because it seems to be comprehensive and vividly illuminates the instructional leadership practices that are required in schools. The next chapter will focus on the research design and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The literature review and theoretical frameworks in the previous chapter served as the bedrock for the research design and methodology. The chapter also highlighted the implications of the school principals' instructional leadership practices on learner achievement outcomes and school improvement - as perceived and concluded by different researchers. This chapter is on research design and methodology and commences by explaining in greater detail the research design and methodology that was employed in the study. Subsequent to this, the context of the study is presented. Thereafter, this chapter enunciates the data generation methods that were used to explore how school principals enact their instructional leadership practices. Finally, the data analysis procedures, trustworthiness, ethical issues, and the demarcation and limitations of the study were presented and discussed.

3.2 Research paradigm

Maree (2011, p.47) describes a paradigm as "a set of assumptions or beliefs about fundamental aspects of reality which gives rise to a particular world-view" while Denzin and Lincoln (2005) assert that paradigms guide the researchers' actions through the research process, and reflect their philosophical beliefs of the world. Thus, the paradigm in which researchers position themselves shapes the research. According to Creswell (2012), there are four dominant paradigms in the Social Sciences. Positivism is the first paradigm, and its basic premise is that science is the basis for reorganising society in a more rational way. However, scholars such as Cohen, *et al*. (2011) contend that positivism is less successful in the study of the school environment because it does not consider the complexities of human nature and social phenomena. The second paradigm that I discuss is interpretivism. According to Cohen, et al. (2011, p.17), the interpretive paradigm is "characterised by a concern for the individual" and tries "to understand the subjective world of human experience". This paradigm begins with the individual and sets out to "understand their interpretations of the world around them" (Cohen, et al., 2011, p.18). Thirdly, the critical paradigm is framed in terms of the perpetuation of injustice and inequalities from one generation to the next. Therefore, its objective is to empower people

and promote democratic tendencies (Cohen, *et al*., 2011; Maree, 2011). Fourthly, Mouton (2002) postulates that postmodernism is characterised by multiple interpretations of a phenomenon, the importance of individual voices and the rejection of simple cause-and-effect laws of behaviour and action.

For purposes of this study I utilised the interpretive paradigm. Aligned to this paradigm are three important philosophical assumptions that we need to know. The ontological assumption is concerned with "the nature of reality" (Mertens, 2007, p.215). This refers to how you know that something is real at a conceptual level. Furthermore, Mertens (2007, p.216) posits that the interpretive paradigm has "multiple realities that are socially constructed". I elicited knowledge from school principals in order to understand and make meaning of their instructional leadership practices, and its impact on teaching and learning. Since each school principal has their own world-view, the results were diverse. The epistemological assumption refers to the nature of knowledge, and "the relationship between the knower (researcher) and the would-be-known (participant)" (Mertens, 2007, p.215). In terms of epistemology, "knowledge is socially and historically located within a complex cultural context" (Mertens, 2007, p.216). In my study, knowledge was constructed from the information volunteered by school principals through interviews and documents review. Mertens (2007, p.215) contends that the methodological assumption "relates to the appropriate approach to systematic inquiry". This refers to how I went about finding knowledge. In terms of methodology, the interpretive paradigm generally uses a qualitative approach. It will be thoroughly discussed in the following section.

3.3 Research design

According to Briggs, *et al*. (2012, p.107), the research design is the "schema or plan that constitutes the research study".

I used a case study design for this research. Yin (2003, p.4) describes a case study as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". The case was four school principals and it was a case of instructional leadership practices in the Pinetown District. Rule and John (2011) assert that a case study can shed more light on the phenomenon and provide a thick, rich description of the case and also illuminate its relations to a

larger context. In addition, I examined the participants lived experiences (Cohen, *et al*., 2011) and it provided me with a wide variety of raw data (Rule & John, 2011). Cohen, *et al*. (2011, p.289) postulate that case studies can establish "cause and effect ('how' and 'why'); indeed one of their strengths is that they observe effects in real contexts". Therefore, the context was a powerful determinant of cause and effect. Most crucially, case studies emphasise the individual unit and it allowed me to be in the context of the study (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). Furthermore, the rich contexts that I encountered required me to use several research methods to elicit data (Yin, 2003). Thus, a case study design was deemed appropriate for the phenomenon being studied as it adheres to the principle of *fit for purpose* (Rule & John, 2011).

However, some critics such as Yin (2003) and Cohen, *et al*. (2011) argue that case studies are flawed because they do not allow for the generalisation of the study. Scholars such as Rule and John (2011) counter this by proclaiming that the data obtained from case studies are precise and give a voice to the participants. It also retains the holistic and important characteristics of real-life events. Rule and John (2011) further state that case studies may illuminate other, similar cases, thereby providing some level of generalisation. In the light of the aforementioned benefits, the case study offered me a close-up and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. It also provided me with a wealth of descriptive data about the school principals in their unique, natural environments which helped me to explore their interactions, attitudes and characteristics regarding instructional leadership practices.

3.4 Research methodology

Gough (2000) opines that the word 'methodology' is derived from the Greek words *meta* (with, after) and *hodos* (the way). It is also referred to by other monikers such as *methodos* (a following after) and *logos* (reason, account). Thus, methodology is basically the principles that guide the theory of producing knowledge. Briggs, *et al*. (2012) contend that the quantitative, mixed methods and qualitative methodologies are the three approaches that researchers use to help them answer their research questions and find solutions to their research problem. De Vos, *et al*. (2005, p.74) state that quantitative studies focus on "testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers and analysed with statistical procedures in order to determine whether the predictive generalisations of the theory hold true". The quantitative approach is generally viewed through the lens of the positivist paradigm.

The mixed methods research approach generates, analyses, and mixes both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a research study (Creswell, 2012). The assumption is that the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods provides a better understanding of the research problem (Briggs, *et al*., 2012; Creswell, 2012). However, Briggs, *et al*. (2012) and Creswell (2012) also point out that this methodology has certain flaws, such as being very expensive and time-consuming in generating and analysing the data.

This study used the qualitative research approach which was located in the interpretive paradigm. Slavin (2007, p.121) defines qualitative research as "research that emphasises elaborate description of social or instructional setting, intended to explore social phenomena by immersing the investigator in the situation for extended periods". In the same vein, De Vos, *et al*. (2005) maintain that the qualitative approach is holistic and tries to comprehend the meaning that people attach to their daily social lives. Thus, it produces descriptive data in the participants own written or spoken words. As a result, it gave me an in-depth and rich description of the experiences of school principals regarding their instructional leadership practices.

There are a few important characteristics that pertain to qualitative research. Patton (1990, p.55) states that qualitative research maintains the "empathic neutrality", or the authenticity of the natural setting as the source of data. In other words, I was able to observe, describe and interpret the setting as it was. In addition, Patton (1990, p.56) mentions that the researcher acts as the "human instrument" of data generation, and this required me to display a certain amount of skill. Similarly, Strauss and Corbin (1990, p.42) call for "theoretical sensitivity" from the researcher. This concept referred to my skill and ability to critically synthesise the data. My theoretical sensitivity was further developed through academic literature, professional experiences and personal experiences. This is corroborated by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who posit that human beings are the most appropriate agents for naturalistic inquiry as they are cognisant of the contexts, process data, and can adjust responses when required.

3.5 The context of the study

The context of the study supported the phenomenon being researched. An interpretive perspective was deemed relevant in order to engage with participants in their natural settings. Patton (1990) posits that phenomenon is embedded in their unique contexts. Therefore, I

scrutinised the schools' contexts in order to get a better understanding of the principals' practices. This study was located within the context of the instructional leadership practices of school principals in the Pinetown District. For this reason, the details of the contexts relevant to this study are fully discussed in the following section.

3.5.1 Selection of participants

The research design, research problem and research questions guided me in the selection of the sample for this study. Maree (2011, p.79) defines sampling as "the process used to select a portion of the population for study". There are two major groups of sampling methods. In probability sampling the sample is representative of the larger population; whilst non-probability sampling does not purport to represent the larger population but only a specific group (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). For this study, I used purposive sampling which falls under non-probability sampling. This means that I intentionally selected the participants and research sites to understand the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Furthermore, the selection criteria of the key participants and the research sites were that they are "information rich" sources (Patton, 1990, p.169). The participants were also chosen on the criteria of learners' academic performance, demographics and socio-economic contexts of the schools. In addition, the district was chosen based on convenience to where I live and work (Creswell, 2012). Consequently, this had a limited impact on my time and expenses.

Thus, two primary school and two secondary school principals were purposively chosen in the Pinetown District. I selected primary school and secondary school principals because much research on instructional leadership has been conducted on either primary or secondary schools, but not on both simultaneously. Hence, there is a gap in research on this phenomenon in both types of schools. The schools that I sampled performed satisfactorily in the Annual National Assessment (ANA) and National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations, and therefore cannot be considered exemplary schools in terms of learner academic achievements. Ultimately, the school principals were the primary focus of the study as I wanted to gain an in-depth understanding of their instructional leadership practices on learner achievement outcomes and school improvement. In the light of this sampling strategy, no generalisations will be made to the population of school principals in the greater Pinetown District.

I have researched four schools. The names of the participants and their schools were anonymised through the use of pseudonyms. The data is presented below.

3.5.1.1 Profiling the four schools

The data that is presented and discussed in this chapter was generated in each of the four schools, which scholars such as Yin (2003) refer to as case study sites. The first section profiles the four schools in order to establish a greater understanding of the contextual background of the schools.

Penguin Primary School

Penguin Primary was one of the newer primary schools to be built in the Pinetown District. It was established in 1983 under the auspices of the former House of Delegates (HOD) regime. The school is located in the peri-urban area of Mariannhill and is approximately 20 kilometres from Durban. It draws its learners from Mariannhill, and the surrounding townships of KwaNdengezi and Coffee Farm. The school is situated against a backdrop littered with low-cost and informal housing. The surrounding area has numerous socio-economic challenges such as: poverty, crime, high unemployment, single-parent headed households, HIV/Aids, and so on. Moreover, most families are dependent on social grants for survival.

Penguin Primary has 1053 learners and 32 teachers on the staff. There are 4 Heads of Department (HoDs) and 2 deputy principals. It has a teacher: pupil ratio of 1:40. The principal is a female with 10 years' experience in the position. Black learners constitute 95% of the learner population, and Indian and Coloured learners make up the remaining numbers. The Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is English, even though IsiZulu is the home language for the vast majority of learners. The school is classified as Quintile 3 with the no-fee paying status. It is for this reason that the school embarks on numerous fundraising initiatives to supplement its resources. These funds are primarily used to pay the salaries of one SGB-employed teacher and three cleaning staff. The government also provides a feeding scheme for the learners. The physical infrastructure of the school is relatively well maintained and there are 26 classrooms that are utilised. There is a modern computer centre; however the science laboratory remains non-functional. The school also provides extra-curricular activities such as soccer and netball. Furthermore, remedial classes are offered in literacy and numeracy to improve the learners' skills. However, the learner achievement outcomes remain mediocre. The 2013 ANA pass rate

for Grade 3 literacy was 59% and numeracy was 72%. Further, the Grade 6 literacy pass was 60% and the numeracy pass was 49%. Despite these indicators, the school remains popular as there is a long waiting list for places in the school.

The school had adopted the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education's vision and mission statement, which was displayed in the foyer and office. The school's vision statement highlighted the need to provide well-educated, skilled and highly developed citizens. In addition, its mission statement aimed to provide an equitable access to high quality education for the people it served.

Albatross Secondary School

Albatross Secondary School is also located in the peri-urban area of Mariannhill. It was built in 1984 to serve the needs of Indian learners during the former House of Delegates (HOD) regime. However, the learner demographics have changed. Black learners now constitute 90% of the learner population and Indian and Coloured learners make up the remaining numbers. Crucially, Penguin Primary serves as the feeder school for Albatross Secondary, as these schools are approximately 3 kilometres apart. As a result, the learners in Albatross Secondary face similar socio-economic challenges that their counterparts in Penguin Primary experience.

Albatross Secondary has 1732 learners and 60 teachers on the staff. There are 5 HoDs and 2 deputy principals. It has a teacher: pupil ratio of 1:50. The school principal is a male who has been at the helm for 10 years. He was also the principal at a prior school for 5 years. The school is classified as Quintile 3 with the no-fee paying status. It is a typically large secondary school with 40 classrooms units. The school has a modern computer centre and science laboratories to cater for the needs of the learners. Various sporting codes are offered to meet the physical and recreational needs of the learners. As such, it has well maintained sports fields. Although Albatross Secondary has been under-performing in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination, the pass percentage was steadily increasing. Additional classes in Mathematics, Physical Science and Accounting are offered to the Grade 12 learners. The school got a 78,7% pass rate in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination in 2013. Consequently, there was a 21,3% failure rate. However, poor literacy levels continue to hinder the school as the majority of learners are English Second-Language speakers.

The vision and mission statement of the school was well displayed in a big banner in the foyer. The vision statement highlighted the commitment to offer academic education that was contemporary. Learners were encouraged to strive for personal excellence, and thereby contribute to their community and country. The school aimed to achieve this through the commitment of the school staff and community members. In addition, Albatross Secondary's aim was to provide a teaching and learning environment of the highest standard. This would enable the holistic development of the learner – be it intellectually, spiritually, physically, emotionally and socially.

Robin Primary School

Robin Primary School is located in the urban centre of Pinetown. It accommodates Grade R to Grade 7 learners. It opened its doors on the 30th March 1973 and was a former Model C school that catered predominantly to White learners. Its demographics have subsequently changed and 99% of the learners are now Black. The school is located approximately 15 kilometres from Durban. The catchment area of the school is the greater Pinetown region, New Germany, KwaDabeka, Clermont, and so on. Therefore, you also have to consider the contextual factors that impact on the school's dynamics.

Robin Primary School has 641 learners and 29 teachers on the staff. There are 3 HoDs and 1 deputy principal. It has a teacher: pupil ratio of 1:33. The principal is a male who has been in the position for 6 years. The Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is English. The school charges school fees of R9400, 00 per learner, per year. The principal maintains that around 75% of fees are collected. However, legal measures are employed to collect the remaining 20%, while 5% of the school fees are not fully recovered. The school's infrastructure is quite impressive. The gardens are perfectly manicured and the school is neat. There are 25 classroom units that are utilised. It has the requisite computer centre with internet connectivity, a science laboratory and a library. The school offers a full range of extra-curricular activities such as sports, music choir, chess, and so on. There is also a remedial teacher that draws learners in need of remediation. Here the focus is on literacy and improving reading strategies. The 2013 ANA pass rate for Grade 3 literacy was 61% and numeracy was 59%. Further, the Grade 6 literacy pass was 69% and the numeracy pass was 57%.

The school had a well-defined and visible vision and mission statement which was displayed in the foyer and office. The vision statement envisages an inviting environment where effective teaching and learning will ultimately develop productive citizens. Furthermore, the mission statement advocates developing the relevant policies, procedures and programmes. The aim was to empower personnel and provide a safe and healthy working environment. The school community would also be instilled with the values of trust, human dignity and respect.

Kestrel Secondary School

Kestrel Secondary School is located in the urban area of Wyebank. It was established in 1941 and is one of the oldest secondary schools in the Pinetown District. The school has its roots in the Indian community and was built on land sponsored by the Haji Motala Trust. Its demographics have subsequently changed, and 86% of the learners are now Black. Indian and Coloured learners constitute 13% and 1 % of the learner population respectively. The school is located approximately 25 kilometres from Durban. The catchment area of the school is Wyebank, Motala Farm, Inchanga and Cliffdale.

Kestrel Secondary has 1274 learners and 46 teachers on the staff. There are 5 HoDs and 2 deputy principals. It has a teacher: pupil ratio of 1:38. The principal is a male who is well settled in the position. The Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is English. Kestrel Secondary is a large school and has 36 classroom units that are utilised. There is a modern computer centre, library and science laboratory to augment teaching and learning. Needless to say, the buildings and facilities were in good condition. The school offers a wide variety of extra-curricular activities such as sports to enhance the holistic development of the child. Furthermore, the principal was proud of the fact that the school had invested in technical subjects and technical equipment. Kestrel Secondary also provides the Grade 12 learners with additional Mathematics and Physical Science classes. The school got 72,41% in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination in 2013. Consequently, there was a 27,59% failure rate. However, the principal cautioned that most learners are English Second-Language speakers, and as such, the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination may not be the best yardstick to measure learning outcomes.

The school had adopted the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education's vision and mission statement, which was displayed in the hallway and office. The school's vision statement highlighted the commitment to provide well-educated, skilled and highly developed citizens. In addition, its mission statement committed to provide a relevant, high quality public education to all its learners. The school aimed to achieve this by prioritising teaching and learning; developing teachers to improve their skills; preparing learners to become productive members of society; and collaborating with the community to develop their school.

3.5.1.2 Profiling the participants

This section summarises the profiles of all participants from the four schools. These profiles show the race, gender, age, professional qualifications, teaching experience, experience as principals, as well as their motto in life. The profiling of the participants helps provide us with a greater understanding of their professionalism. Profiles of the four school principals are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Principals' profile

Categories	**Mrs Naicker**	**Mr Nkosi**	**Mr Ramdin**	**Dr Chetty**
Race	Indian	African	Indian	Indian
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Male
Age category	50 - 60 years	50 - 60 years	40 - 50 years	50 - 60 years
Professional qualifications	B.Ed. – Honours in Management.	Higher Diploma in Education. B Com	M.Ed. - Human Resource Management.	PhD - D Admin.
Teaching experience	35 years	34 years	27 years	34 years
Experience as a principal	10 years	15 years	6 years	16 years
Motto in life	Do onto others as you would have others do to you.	Be a lifelong learner.	Learn to serve.	Be useful to your fellow man.

The profile of the school principals from Table 1 above, show that three of the participating principals are Indian and one is Black; whereas one principal is female and three are male. Three of them fall into the age category 50 – 60 years and one principal is below 50 years. The table further shows that the principals had a wealth of academic knowledge. Mr Nkosi holds a B Com degree, Mr Ramdin possesses a M.Ed. degree and Dr Chetty holds a PhD degree. The principals had many years of teaching experience, ranging from 27 years to 35 years respectively. Mrs Naicker, Mr Nkosi and Mr Ramdin had a similar range of experience as principals of between 6 to 10 years respectively. However, Dr Chetty had been at the helm of his school for 16 years. All the principals had extensive management experience and were part of the various management structures. Thus, their accumulated wealth of knowledge and skills should stand them in good stead to effectively enact their instructional leadership roles.

3.5.2 Venue for interviews and documents review

The interviews were conducted in the respective school principals' offices to allow for privacy. This could be considered a comfortable environment, allowing principals to operate in their natural setting which formed part of their professional work context. The interviews were conducted after school hours to minimise any disruptions to teaching and learning. However, I did visit the schools on prior occasions to familiarise myself with the culture and activities of the schools. In addition, I performed documents review of the School Improvement Plans (SIPs), School Management Team (SMT) minutes and staff minutes of the researched schools. This was done in the office block using the schools' equipment.

3.6 Data generation methods

Qualitative research has a variety of methods that can be used to generate data. These data generation methods include observations, interviews, documents and artefacts review, questionnaires, and so on (De Vos, *et al*., 2005). However, in the context of this study, qualitative semi-structured interviews and documents review were employed. The data generation process took a period of five weeks to complete.

Kvale (2008, p.11) defines qualitative interviews as an attempt to understand "the interviewees' lived world with respect to interpretation of the meaning of the described phenomena". I

employed semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with the school principals. Semi-structured interviews were useful because my topic is complex. In semi-structured interviews, the interview schedules "takes the form of a few major questions, with sub-questions and possible follow-up questions" (Briggs, *et al*., 2012, p.252). I was guided by an interview schedule, but I did deviate from it when the need arose. There was flexibility as I followed up on interesting avenues that emerged. I focused on a range of themes or question areas which allowed me to gain an insight into the participant's beliefs, perceptions and accounts of my topic. Each interview was limited to a few questions that followed a logical sequence. Moreover, open-ended questions were asked to allow the participants to speak freely. The questions were neutral rather than leading and ambiguous questions were avoided (De Vos, *et al*., 2005).

The interviews with the school principals were held at the school premises. It was at the time convenient to them and lasted for approximately 40-45 minutes. I used a digital voice-recorder to record the interviews as it removed the burden of note taking (Kvale, 2008).The digital voice-recorder enabled me to listen carefully to the interviewees and probe their responses. Nevertheless, the interview research method does have some criticism levelled against it. It has been pointed out that it is open to interviewer bias and it is an artificial construction (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). However, semi-structured interviews proved invaluable to my study as the participants were able to tell their own stories about their experiences as instructional leaders (De Vos, *et al*., 2005; Kvale, 2008).

I also used documents review as the secondary data generation method. Maree (2011, p.82) states that documents review are "all types of written communication" that we can use to explain a phenomena. Here I sampled the minutes of staff meetings and School Management Team (SMT) meetings. In addition, I examined the schools' vision and mission statements, the School Improvement Plans (SIPs), and the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis. It was able to shed fresh light on the school principals' instructional leadership practices. The time frame for selection of the minutes was 2013-2014. This was because the data needed to be relevant and cutting-edge. The documents review allowed me to triangulate what school principals articulated in the interviews. Creswell (2012) contends that documents review is advantageous because it is in the language and words of the participants, and there is no need

for transcription. However, the negative aspect is that it is difficult to verify whether the information is accurate or not (Creswell, 2012).

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis is a process that consists of organising, accounting for and clarifying the data (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). In other words, raw data is broken down by simplifying and extracting key parts of the text. This data is then condensed and organised into a more accessible and compact form to allow the researcher to draw clear conclusions from the data (Creswell, 2012).

All semi-structured interviews were digitally voice-recorded and thereafter transcribed *verbatim*. Briggs, *et al*. (2012, p.262) mention that the reason for recording the interviews is that, "all nuances of the answers can be retained and the richness of individual statements is not lost". After the transcription process, the transcripts were read and qualitative content analysis was performed. Krippendorff (2013, p.24) asserts that content analysis is "a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use". This process involved generating categories, themes and patterns regarding the instructional leadership practices of school principals. Firstly, the text was coded. This means that the words, phrases and sentences were placed into categories. These categories were subsequently compared in order to establish a link between them. This process enabled me to draw theoretical conclusions from the text (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). Lastly, I explained the conclusions in written words to provide answers for my research questions. The same process was applied to the SMT minutes and staff minutes.

3.8 Issues of trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.290) posit that the basic question regarding trustworthiness is, "How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences (including self) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of ?" In other words, trustworthiness is essential to evaluate a research's worth. The four principles to follow in order to achieve a trustworthy study are: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

3.8.1 Credibility

The credibility criteria proposes that researchers "carry out the inquiry in such a way that the probability that the findings will be found to be credible is enhanced" and also "to demonstrate the credibility of the findings by having them approved by the constructors of the multiple realities being studied" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.296). I focused on three techniques that helped to influence credibility. Firstly, triangulation is "the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data, or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research" (Creswell, 2012, p.259). Therefore, in order to understand the instructional leadership practices of school principals, I used interviews and documents review to ensure credibility. Creswell (2012) terms this methods triangulation. Secondly, I enlisted the help of a competent de-briefer. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.308) contend that the task of the de-briefer is to make the researcher aware of their "posture and process". The de-briefer also provided an alternative view to my emotions and feelings regarding the research. Thirdly, I engaged in member-checking. Member-checking is "whereby data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions are tested with members of those stakeholding groups from whom the data were originally collected" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.314). In this regard, I provided the school principals with the interview transcripts and data analysis to ensure authenticity of the case descriptions and findings.

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability is whether the findings "may apply even in the same context at some other, later time" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.217). My intention of the study was not transferability, but to make sense of the phenomena. However, if researchers are interested, a paper trail is available to them. In my study I have ensured that there is a paper trail in terms of data instruments used, interview transcripts, and data analysis procedures so that other researchers who want to use the data can use it in other contexts. In addition, Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert that qualitative researchers should provide sufficient information about the phenomenon for other researchers to use - if they deem the findings are applicable to the new situation. With this in mind, I have provided a detailed account of the schools' contexts, research participants, data generation methods, and so on.

3.8.3 Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.299) define dependability as "taking into account both factors of instability and factors of phenomenal or design induced change". Moreover, Rule and John (2011) hold the view that in a naturalistic inquiry the phenomenon is constantly affected by changing conditions. To address the issues of dependability, I made use of a critical reader. The critical reader helped ensure that the findings emanated from the data, and that there was congruence in the data generation, findings and data analysis.

3.8.4 Confirmability

The confirmability criteria refer to the degree to which researchers can demonstrate the neutrality of the research interpretations, through a "confirmability audit" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.318). This entails providing an audit trail consisting of: raw data, analysis notes, reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, personal notes and preliminary developmental information (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I have ensured that most of these measures were adhered to. Miles and Huberman (1994) also consider a key criterion for confirmability is whether researchers can admit their own predispositions. My predisposition was that I am professionally acquainted with four of the school principals who constitute my study.

3.9 Ethical issues

De Vos, *et al*. (2005, p.57) define research ethics as "a set of moral principles which is suggested by an individual or group, is subsequently widely accepted, and which offers rules and behavioural expectations about the most correct conduct towards experimental subjects and respondents". Cohen, *et al.* (2011) note that it is crucial for researchers to adhere to strict ethical principles in order to anticipate problems that may arise during fieldwork, and also to protect the rights and autonomy of the participants. With this in mind, I focused on three ethical principles: autonomy and informed consent, non-maleficence and beneficence (Cohen, *et al*., 2011).

In terms of ethics, one of the first principles that I adhered to was autonomy and informed consent. Informed consent is when "participants freely choose to take part (or not) in the research and guarantees that exposure to risks is undertaken knowingly and voluntarily" (Cohen, *et al*., 2011, p.78). In observance of these principles, I applied for and was granted permission to

conduct research in the selected schools by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and the school principals. A formal application for ethical clearance was also sought from the University of KwaZulu-Natal Ethical Office, and I was granted permission for the research to proceed. In terms of participation in the study, the school principals signed the informed consent forms which granted me access to the schools. Participants were also informed about the purpose of the study, and they had the option to withdraw at any time if they wished to do so (De Vos, *et al*., 2005). Lastly, pseudonyms were used for the school principals and schools were anonymised.

The second principle is that of non-maleficence. Cohen, *et al*. (2011, p.85) mention that non-maleficence is "where no harm is wished upon subjects or occurs". I have ensured that there were no questions or aspects of the study that could potentially injure or harm the participants. In this regard, the participants were not damaged physically, psychologically, emotionally, professionally, or personally (Cohen, *et al*., 2011).

The third principle of beneficence endeavours to benefit the interested parties (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). The intention of my study was to understand the instructional leadership practices of school principals, and not to solve problems. However, the findings of this study have the potential to benefit the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education in empowering school principals to improve learner achievement outcomes and create exemplary school organisations.

3.10 Demarcation of the study

Hoberg (1999, p.190) posits that demarcating the problem means "establishing the boundaries of the problem area within which the research progresses". Moreover, demarcating the problem helps to make it more manageable. In the context of this study, the research focused on instructional leadership practices of two primary and two secondary school principals in the Pinetown District in KwaZulu-Natal. The research was limited to the Pinetown District schools because I am familiar with the locality as I live and work in the area. Since generalisation was not the purpose of this study, I purposefully selected schools in which data sources were deemed adequate and information rich. This is consistent with qualitative research.

3.11 Limitations of the study

According to Creswell (2012, p.199), “limitations are potential weaknesses or problems with the study identified by the researcher”. Furthermore, he mentions that “they often relate to inadequate measures of variables, loss or lack of participants, small sample sizes, errors in measurement, and other factors typically related to data collection and analysis” (Creswell, 2012, p.199).

My research had one important limitation. School principals are generally very busy people. I did anticipate that they would not have much time for me. To alleviate this problem, I negotiated with them to conduct the interviews after school or at a time convenient to them.

3.12 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the research design and methodology that was employed during the study. Initially, the research paradigm and research approach of this study were discussed. Thereafter, the case study design was described and the reasons were given for its adoption. The context of the study - namely the participants and the venue - was presented. Furthermore, the data generation methods and data analysis procedures were explained. Issues of trustworthiness and research ethics were also highlighted. Finally, the demarcation of the study and the limitations of the study were discussed. The next chapter focuses on the data presentation and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology that was employed in this study. In this chapter I present, analyse and discuss the findings in relation to the instructional leadership practices of four school principals in the Pinetown District. The data was generated through semi-structured interviews with the school principals and the documents reviewed at the selected schools pertaining to instructional leadership practices. In order to remind the reader, I reiterate my key research questions:

- What do school principals understand to be their roles in supporting instructional leadership practices in their schools?
- How do school principals enact and enhance their instructional leadership practices as they support teaching and learning in their schools?
- What are the barriers that school principals experience in discharging their instructional leadership practices and how do they overcome them?

Findings are presented under themes and sub-themes from data generated from the field. I also use literature and the theoretical frameworks presented in Chapter Two to analyse the findings. In presenting the data, pseudonyms of both the research participants and their schools are used in the discussion. In addition, *verbatim* quotations are used in the discussion in order to ensure that the participants' voices were not lost.

4.2 Presentation of findings

The research findings are presented thematically as discussed in Chapter Three, based on the data generated through content analysis of the interview transcripts and documents review. Four themes emerged namely: principals' conceptualisations of their roles in supporting instructional leadership practices; principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools; barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices; and principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices. The four themes are discussed in the following section.

4.2.1 Principals' conceptualisations of their roles in supporting instructional leadership practices

All four participating school principals conceptualised their roles to be very important in managing / supporting teaching and learning. This suggests that they placed instruction and learning at the core of the school in as far as teachers were expected to teach and learners to learn. Furthermore, their job descriptions required them to be at the forefront of curriculum delivery. For instance, the principal of Kestrel Secondary said:

> *The principal is central to teaching and learning. He is the cog in the wheel that makes everything else turn. That is why schools are built, which is to promote teaching and learning, and to transmit the culture from one generation to another. So in terms of supporting teaching and learning, the principal needs to be involved in the process, he cannot be an outsider looking in.* (Dr Chetty)

The principal of Albatross Secondary expressed similar sentiments on this issue. However, he brought in the element of dispersed leadership into the equation. This is what he said:

> *It is important to be a curriculum leader… although the people who are going to manage the curriculum are the Heads of Department (HoDs). I have put systems and mechanisms in place to check that proper teaching and learning takes place in the classroom - via the deputy principal.* (Mr Nkosi)

The principal of Penguin Primary described her role as one of leadership and support. She said:

> *I am accountable and responsible as per my job description. I must ensure that all individuals are motivated and supported to enable effective teaching and learning to take place.* (Mrs Naicker)

The principal of Robin Primary further added:

> *It would be a supportive role to enable teachers to deliver the curriculum. So that would be: human resource planning, organising, leading individuals, measures of control and accountability.* (Mr Ramdin)

This study also used documents review for data triangulation. The principals of Penguin Primary, Robin Primary and Kestrel Secondary granted me permission to perform documents review of the schools' staff minutes and School Management Team (SMT) minutes. Furthermore, I was permitted access to the School Improvement Plans (SIPs) of all four researched schools. During a SMT meeting held at Kestrel Secondary on 13/01/2014, Dr Chetty lamented the decline in the pass rate to 72% in 2013. Dr Chetty stated *"we need an academic approach to address the problem with the cooperation of the SMT and staff"*. Moreover, Mr Ramdin informed Robin Primary's staff on 14/01/2014 that *"management will fully support them with regards to CAPS implementation"*. At a staff meeting at Penguin Primary on 15/12/2013, Mrs Naicker stated *"we need to plan for next year in terms of loads and duties"*. These voices clearly show that the principals played an important role in managing and supporting teaching and learning. While I had access to the documents of three of the four researched schools, Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary was stonewalling and only granted me access to one document which was the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The reason given was that he did not want the school's documents to go out in the public domain, as it contained sensitive information. This begs the question: why was information about teaching and learning so sensitive in Albatross Secondary and not so at the other three researched schools? This could suggest that there were no meetings held where teaching and learning was discussed, and Mr Nkosi did not want me to see that.

To a large extent, the findings from the interviewed school principals corroborated with the findings from the documents that I analysed. *The South African Standard for Principalship* (DoBE, 2014) clearly defines the job description of school principals as providing leadership and management in all areas of the school to ensure that high quality teaching and learning takes place. The principal, working with the SMT and others, has the key responsibility for the development and implementation of plans, policies and procedures to enable the school to realise its vision and mission statement. Furthermore, principals are tasked with creating a safe, nurturing and supportive learning environment to enable effective teaching and learning to take place. The document further states that the principal is accountable overall to the Department of Basic Education (DoBE), School Governing Body (SGB), the community, and other stakeholders (DoBE, 2014).

The findings seem to suggest that school principals conceptualised their roles to be very important in managing and supporting teaching and learning. Dr Chetty's view that the principal is a central figure in the school suggests that he placed a great emphasis on teaching and learning. Mr Nkosi's view suggests that leadership should be dispersed and involves many individuals. Both Mrs Naicker and Mr Ramdin displayed leadership and managerial skills to support teaching and learning in their schools. The voices of the principals are in line with the views expressed in *The South African Standard for Principalship* (DoBE, 2014).

Literature strengthens the findings from the two research methods used in this study to generate data. The view that principals should be instructional leaders is supported by scholars such as Southworth (2002), Bush (2003) and Hallinger (2009), to cite just a few. Southworth (2002) contends that instructional leaders are central to pedagogy, and thus directly affect school improvement and learning outcomes. According to Hallinger (2009), instructional leaders play leadership and managerial roles in the school. Thus, they are responsible for coordinating, controlling, and supervising the curriculum and instruction. My findings are similar to Mkhize's (2013) findings regarding principals' conceptualisations of their roles in supporting instructional leadership practices. The findings suggest that the principals considered their primary role was to manage and support quality teaching and learning in their schools.

From a theoretical perspective, Weber's (1987) model speaks directly to the principals' conceptualisations of their roles in supporting instructional leadership practices. The first dimension focuses on setting the academic goals. The second dimension of organising the instructional programme, involves supporting instructional best practices and making instructional resources available. Weber's (1987) third dimension encompasses supervision and evaluation of the instructional programme. The fourth dimension involves protecting the instructional time and programmes. The fifth dimension advocates promoting a positive learning climate. The last dimension involves monitoring achievement and evaluating programmes.

In summarising this theme, the key finding that emerged was the important role that school principals play in managing and supporting teaching and learning. Ultimately, the desired goal is greater school improvement and learning outcomes.

4.2.1.1 Modelling best practice

The findings that emerged were that the principals modelled professional behaviour and were deeply involved in the curriculum. As such, Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary asserted that he modelled appropriate levels of professional behaviour with respect to excellent school attendance and punctuality. Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary also mentioned that:

> *I must lead by example in whatever aspect: in terms of instruction, dress, punctuality, ensuring that my work is done timeously, and ensuring that the standard of my work is of a high quality … so that others can adopt my styles and my practices.* (Mrs Naicker)

In a similar vein, Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary also spoke about being deeply involved in classroom practices:

> *The principal needs to be the kind of teacher that others could look up to and model their practice. I have got a class that I teach, and I try to do that with a kind of decorum in order to provide a good role model for other teachers to emulate.* (Dr Chetty)

Similarly, the perused documents confirmed that all four principals had a good understanding of the importance of modelling good professional practices in their schools. In fact, evidence was present at Kestrel's timetable to confirm that Dr Chetty was indeed involved in classroom teaching. Furthermore, at the staff meeting of Kestrel Secondary on 13/01/2014, Dr Chetty advised teachers to *"strive to help learners to pass by being excellent role models"*. At the staff meeting held at Robin Primary on 14/01/2014, Mr Ramdin also advised teachers to emphasise school discipline. Lastly, at the staff meeting at Penguin Primary on 19/07/2013, Mrs Naicker stated that teachers should be punctual and that *"the dress code is professional and not casual"*.

The above extracts seem to suggest that Dr Chetty was involved in classroom teaching. Furthermore, Mrs Naicker and Mr Ramdin also tried to model the appropriate dress code and professional behaviour. Thus, modelling serves as a template for other teachers to follow because principals have a wealth of knowledge and expertise to share. However, three principals in this study were not involved at the coalface of curriculum delivery. This suggests that they may lose touch with reality on the ground as the core business of a school is teaching and learning. It may also negatively affect the principals' understanding and implementation of the new Curriculum

and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The counter argument is that principals are generally very busy people and they may be preoccupied with other important aspects of school life such as administration tasks or fundraising activities. This is consistent with the view held by Hoadley, *et al.* (2009) that principals spend most of their time on administration functions.

From a literature perspective, Southworth (2002) contends that principals should model the correct professional behaviour and teaching practices for other teachers to emulate. Only Dr Chetty indicated that he taught in the classroom. Through classroom teaching Dr Chetty maintains a high visibility within the school, which Hallinger and Murphy (1985) describe as a key job descriptor of an instructional leader. This speaks to modelling teaching practices and having one's fingers on the pulse. In addition, Mrs Naicker and Mr Ramdin indicated that they modelled appropriate levels of professional behaviour such as excellent school attendance and punctuality. The premise is that others would try to follow this good example.

Drawing on Weber's (1987) model of instructional leadership, these principals understood the importance of modelling professional behaviour in their schools. The second dimension of Weber's (1987) model deals with organising the instructional programme, whereby principals communicate with staff and make resources available. This clearly alludes to principals modelling best practice in their professional lives.

In summarising this sub-theme, the key finding that emerged was that school principals modelled professional behaviour and teaching practices in the classroom. The premise is that others would try to emulate these good practices.

4.2.1.2 The school's vision

Crucially, all four participants highlighted the importance of having a vision for the school. A vision provided a sense of direction for the principals and their schools. Mrs Naicker, Mr Nkosi and Dr Chetty espoused the Department of Basic Education's (DoBE) vision of providing quality teaching and learning for all. This is well captured by Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary who maintained that:

> *Our vision is in line with the vision of the Department of Basic Education (DoBE), which is to provide quality teaching and learning.* (Mr Nkosi)

However, Dr Chetty cautioned that we should not just look at the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination as the sole benchmark for learner performance, but rather align the curriculum to the demands of the economy. Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary emphasised this by stating:

> *We also offer the packages where we believe that these students can get jobs. I believe that by offering Mechanical Technology, Civil Technology, Electrical Technology, and Engineering Graphics and Design – we may not be getting such a high percentage pass because they have to do those subjects with Mathematics and Physical Science ... But even those who fail have got a better chance of getting a job.* (Dr Chetty)

Dr Chetty seems to have aligned Kestrel's vision with South Africa's National Development Plan (NDP). The National Development Plan (NDP) is a blueprint for achieving socio-economic milestones such as increasing employment, reducing poverty and inequality, and improving living standards for the majority of South Africans. The National Development Plan (NDP) has diverse objectives such as providing quality education and skills development. Furthermore, it aims to match skilled, technical, professional and managerial posts to truly reflect South Africa's racial, gender and disability profile (National Planning Commission, 2011). This shows that Dr Chetty is a visionary leader who is actively promoting the National Development Plan (NDP). By offering technical and trade subjects, learners from Kestrel Secondary have a better chance of finding jobs as there is a dire shortage of skilled professionals in South Africa.

In addition, Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary explained that his school's vision encompassed an invitational approach. He stated:

> *Our school's vision – one can look at it as three parts: an input, a throughput, and an output. We look at an inviting environment that we want to create - so that is the input. The throughput – it is the experience of the child, and all the programmes that make up the school [the learning experience]. The output – whilst we cannot measure that, but we hope the child will be on his way towards being a productive citizen.* (Mr Ramdin)

Findings from Robin Primary seem to suggest that Mr Ramdin employed different strategies to create an invitational approach. Firstly, teachers were supported in their efforts to deliver the curriculum to the learners. There were forums where teachers could air their views and receive

feedback or feed-forward. Crucially, Mr Ramdin indicated that school programmes were constantly reviewed to check whether they were effective. Secondly, remedial programmes and guidance counselling were offered to learners who were in need of such services. Thirdly, Robin Primary initiated a parental skills workshop in order to improve parenting skills. Thus, Robin Primary actively lived its vision and mission statement, and this dovetailed with the school's motto: '*learn to serve'*.

Similarly, at the SMT meeting held on 19/09/2013, Dr Chetty stressed that when planning for 2014, Kestrel Secondary needed to be true to the vision and mission of the Department of Basic Education (DoBE). With this in mind, Dr Chetty advised that learners be "*empowered with computer skills to meet the challenges of the modern economy"*. In addition, at a staff meeting held on 19/01/2013, Mrs Naicker indicated that Penguin Primary will prioritise *"learning outputs and teaching inputs"*. Furthermore, Mr Ramdin opined that the invitational approach of Robin Primary was encapsulated in its motto: '*learn to serve'*. Thus, the documents reviewed confirmed the findings deduced from the interviews.

Crucially, the Department of Basic Education's (DoBE) *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025* envisions school principals being professional managers, implementing all curricular activities and departmental policies, and improving the standard of basic education (DoBE, 2010). Similarly, the first dimension of Weber's (1987) instructional leadership model involves setting academic goals. Here the principal sets the vision and goals for the school with others, which invariably focuses on strategies and measures to improve learner achievement outcomes. Thus, the vision of Penguin Primary, Albatross Secondary and Kestrel Secondary focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning. On the other hand, Robin Primary's vision of school improvement was based on an invitational approach. Scholars such as Nanus (1992), Fullan (2009) and Hallinger (2009) contend that it is vital for a school to have a vision in order to set a clear direction for the school and improve learning outcomes (Klar & Brewer, 2013).

In summarising this sub-theme, the key finding that emerged was the importance of having a vision in order to provide a sense of direction for the school. Thus, the vision is invariably based on providing quality teaching and learning and maximising school improvement.

4.2.1.3 Creating an appropriate positive school environment

In terms of the school environment, all four participants reported that it was essential for the school leadership to create a positive school environment in order to promote effective teaching and learning. Consequently, much emphasis was placed on: leadership styles, school safety and orderliness, and minimising interruptions.

Firstly, the four participating principals used different leadership styles in their daily practice. Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary commented:

> *Everybody is informed of their job descriptions and the prevailing policy of the school. It is basically the policy of encouraging people to engage in a collegial atmosphere and the professionalism that they exhibit in carrying out their duties. People are aware of the structures and the organogram. People are also empowered in terms of the curriculum and teaching practices. So the climate: talks to punctuality, discipline, dress code and how people communicate with each other.* (Mrs Naicker)

Similarly, Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary said:

> *I encourage teamwork; I always want us to work as a team and to pull in the same direction. If you are not happy, you must tell me up front. So when teachers are happy, when things are put on the table and they are consulted, and when they are involved in what is happening in school – I want to tell you the climate of teaching and learning is going to be okay.* (Mr Nkosi)

This view was echoed by the principal of Penguin Primary who said:

> *We create an environment in the school where the teacher is happy and productive. We have activities in school where teachers can gel and work together.* (Mrs Naicker)

Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary indicated that his school used an invitational approach. This is what he had to say:

> *An invitational approach is simply – if we have something to offer in this school, then you are invited to enjoy from that. We offer you the latitude to express yourself as a teacher,*

and the grounding philosophy is that it will teach you trust. Our programmes must be inviting: for the teacher, the child and the parent. (Mr Ramdin)

The above voices highlighted the importance of the different leadership styles used by the school principals. Mrs Naicker and Mr Nkosi utilised collegiality in their daily practice. This meant working as a harmonious team to achieve the schools goals. On the other hand, Mr Ramdin utilised an invitational approach. This meant that all stakeholders were invited to be part of the school's programmes and were encouraged to positively contribute to the school. The use of leadership styles that is grounded in the context of the school has important implications for these institutions. Firstly, the collegial model enables people to work interdependently and develop mutual respect. Collegiality also allows people to be creative and take ownership of the process. Secondly, the invitational approach allows for greater participation as it moves away from central control. There is critical engagement as people generate new ideas. Both models help reduce the workload of principals and set the culture of teaching and learning in schools.

The second factor that the principals focused on was school safety and orderliness. All four principals felt that it was important to set the right tone and to support their teachers. Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary commented:

We don't have all the resources to create the right climate. I have a fairly conducive climate for teaching and learning; it's reasonably safe, and the area is fenced. Just last week Monday we had the South African Police Services (SAPS) undertaking a raid here. Teachers cannot perform their professional duties if they are living in fear. (Dr Chetty)

With regards to school safety and orderliness, the principal of Penguin Primary stated that:

We ensure that interruptions such as absenteeism is minimised, and leave taking is regulated. We also ensure that the infrastructure is well maintained, and that there is a maintenance plan, so that we are not forced to close school prematurely. (Mrs Naicker)

Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary proposed several measures to improve school safety and orderliness. He said:

We have security in school. There are measures to exercise discipline, and control late coming. Teachers sign the period register after completing teaching. It is also important

for teachers to be well prepared when they teach; they must know their 'stuff'. If teachers are prepared then they will have good discipline in the classroom. (Mr Nkosi)

Similarly, Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary said:

There are ongoing discipline problems that we handle. We have detention duties; and we have the period register. (Dr Chetty)

The above extracts suggest that the principals used different strategies to improve school safety and orderliness. Mrs Naicker, Mr Nkosi and Dr Chetty focused on improving the school's physical infrastructure and reducing absenteeism. Furthermore, Mr Nkosi and Dr Chetty implemented the detention policy and the period register to improve discipline and learner attendance. Mr Nkosi also indicated that it was important for teachers to be well prepared in order to have good discipline in the classroom. Principals endeavour to have school safety and orderliness because it speaks to teaching and learning. It stands to reason that if there is no discipline and orderliness in school then effective teaching and learning cannot take place.

Thirdly, the principals minimised interruptions. All four principals bemoaned the fact that interruptions were unavoidable and came with the terrain. The findings seem to suggest that some interruptions were real and others were contrived. Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary was of the firm opinion that CAPS was a very rigid programme and it did not consider the various interruptions. He asserted that:

CAPS is based on the assumption that there are no interruptions. They give you a very rigid thing to follow. Interruptions are inevitable. By way of illustration: you have got to have the blood donor clinic - it is a very useful servant, and you have got to have the athletics day. (Dr Chetty)

The general feeling was that schools should be run in a coordinated fashion, and not on an *ad hoc* basis. Therefore, regular SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis was performed to identify the challenges, and strategies were devised to minimise interruptions. This view is illustrated by the following excerpts from the participants. Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary said:

> *CAPS is a very rigid programme and there is little leeway for time that is lost. So if time is lost, then it has to be made up. One strategy would be to reduce the duration of subjects that are less important such as computer lessons in the timetable.* (Mr Ramdin)

A similar response came from the principal of Penguin Primary, who said:

> *When the unions interrupt the school because of closures, we try to minimise that. We ensure that we do not have lengthy breaks and that there are no overruns into instructional times. We also ensure that parental visits are scheduled outside teaching time. Lastly, our relief policy is in place for teachers who are absent.* (Mrs Naicker)

Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary added that:

> *Instead of one hour, we make the periods 40 minutes or 30 minutes so that every teacher has got teaching time. If we need to knock-off at 13:00, then we reduce the periods. We even have our management meetings after 14:30 so that is does not impact on instructional times.* (Mr Nkosi)

The voices of the principals suggest that interruptions were inevitable and it did affect the instructional time. However, Dr Chetty suggests that certain interruptions such as sports events are necessary. So whilst athletics may not directly impact on teaching and learning, it is an extra-curricular activity which is important for the holistic development of the learner. Furthermore, Mrs Naicker, Mr Nkosi and Mr Ramdin devised certain strategies to minimise interruptions. These measures included instituting a relief policy, reducing the times of the periods, and allowing parental visits to take place after teaching time. These proactive strategies suggest that the principals were very mindful of protecting the sanctity of the school timetable in order for teaching and learning to run efficiently.

Similarly, the perused documents confirmed that the principals were striving to ensure a positive learning environment in their schools. According to the minutes of the staff meeting dated 22/08/2013, Mrs Naicker urged Penguin Primary's staff to work as a collective to ensure that the Annual National Assessment (ANA) process was efficient. Similarly, at a staff meeting held at Robin Primary on 14/01/2014, it was noted that *"parents need to get more involved in the school's activities"*. This clearly alludes to the invitational approach that Mr Ramdin espouses.

At an SMT meeting held on 24/03/2014 at Penguin Primary, it was decided to revamp the security measures due to outside intrusions. Various measures were proposed such as fortifying the fence and installing an intercom system. Similarly, the 2013 School Improvement Plan (SIP) of Kestrel Secondary focused on the construction of a wall around the school and Closed Circuit Television (CCTV). Mrs Naicker emphasised that various measures were taken to prevent interruptions. An illustration of this is the relief roster that was implemented at the Penguin Primary staff meeting on 19/02/2014. However, at a prior staff meeting held at Penguin Primary on 19/04/2013, it was minuted that "*more emphasis was placed on fundraising than on academics"*. This contradicts Mrs Naicker's version of events, and it calls into question the quality of teaching and learning that was taking place at that school. The large amount of time spent on fundraising suggests that it would negatively affect the quality of teaching and learning.

Literature supports the establishment of a positive school environment for the delivery of effective teaching and learning. In fact, the sentiments of the school principals are in line with various scholars (Leithwood, *et al*., 2008; Klar & Brewer, 2013) who maintain that having a positive school climate is essential for effective teaching and learning to take place.

Drawing on Weber's (1987) model of instructional leadership, these school principals understood the importance of creating a positive school environment. Dimension five of Weber's (1987) instructional leadership model states that creating a positive school climate has a positive impact on learner achievement outcomes. In this regard, the principals focused on leadership styles, school safety and orderliness, and strategies to minimise interruptions.

In summarising this sub-theme, the key finding that emerged was the importance of creating a positive school environment. As such, the principals placed great emphasis on different leadership styles, school safety and orderliness, and strategies to minimise interruptions.

4.2.1.4 Organisational Management

In all the four researched schools, the findings suggest that the principals displayed different types of organisational management skills to develop the organisation. As such, the factors that they focused on were organisational structures, providing Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) and resources, and the hiring of teachers.

The first factor that the principals emphasised was the importance of efficient organisational structures to facilitate teaching and learning. In this regard, Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary said:

> *There is a line function that we follow and we have put structures in place that teachers have to adhere to. All this helps to support teaching and learning.* (Dr Chetty)

Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary stressed that the organogram should be clearly specified with regards to the supervision of teachers, and the capability of teachers to perform different tasks. Mrs Naicker further mentioned that strategic plans were crucial for the functioning of the school. This view was echoed by Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary who said:

> *Regular SWOT analysis is done to identify problem areas and strategies are devised to overcome them.* (Mr Ramdin)

The voices of the principals seem to suggest that organisational management practices were present in the researched schools. Kestrel Secondary followed a bureaucratic structure; whilst Penguin Primary had a functioning organogram. Furthermore, Robin Primary used strategic plans. This suggests that the schools were being run along professional lines and organisational structures were in place to support effective teaching and learning.

Further, organisational management also speaks about providing the necessary Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) and resources (Horng & Loeb, 2010). Mrs Naicker mentioned that Penguin Primary's resources were sufficient for quality teaching and learning to take place. In a similar vein, Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary asserted that:

> *We have ensured that all learners have access to textbooks and stationery.* (Mr Nkosi)

Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary added that:

> *When the CAPS programme was implemented, we put in a budget of R200 000, 00 for textbooks. The SGB inquired if that was enough money to address our needs. We said that it was not enough money; but we are putting a ballpark figure simply because we feel that textbooks are crucial. Surprisingly, the SGBs response was that all children should have textbooks in every grade, and for all subjects.* (Mr Ramdin)

With regards to pedagogical resources, the principal of Kestrel Secondary stated that:

> *The national government has invested over 4,5 million rands in providing high-tech equipment such as milling machines. If students learn how to operate those milling machines, then they have got a better chance of getting jobs than students with a whole lot of distinctions in subjects that commerce does not need.* (Dr Chetty)

Findings from Penguin Primary, Albatross Secondary and Robin Primary seem to suggest that the principals acquired LTSM for their schools. This would surely enhance the teaching and learning process at these schools. Furthermore, Kestrel Secondary was able to acquire hi-tech equipment for trade specific subjects. By offering trade specific subjects, Kestrel learners would improve their chances of finding employment. This is in line with the National Development Plan's (NDP) goal of proving meaningful job creation (National Planning Commission, 2011).

The third factor that the principals considered important was the recruitment of competent and suitably qualified teachers. Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary commented:

> *We recruit and identify competent, skilled and experienced personnel. Furthermore, we ensure that the HoDs are supervising them.* (Mrs Naicker)

Similarly, Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary said:

> *I am proud to announce that we have got every teacher in place – even in the scarce subject areas. We have recruited the Mechanical Technology teacher from industry. He has got a Mechanical Technology diploma; and we have mentored him using our expertise.* (Dr Chetty)

However, Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary added a note of caution regarding the hiring and firing of personnel. He said:

> *The SGB may not have the acumen that is requisite for the hiring of teachers and the SGB may have other agendas.* (Mr Ramdin)

The above extracts suggest that Penguin Primary and Kestrel Secondary were able to recruit the teachers that they needed. Furthermore, Mrs Naicker and Dr Chetty indicated that they mentored these novice teachers to improve their skills. This suggests that effective teaching and learning was taking place at these schools as they had the full staff complement. However, Mr Ramdin

noted that the hiring and firing of teachers is a complicated issue as it was not entirely in the hands of the SMT, but fell under the domain of the SGB and the Department of Basic Education (DoBE).

Similarly, Penguin Primary's staff minutes on 06/02/2014 confirmed that the organogram was fully operational to enable the smooth functioning of the school. At a staff meeting held at Penguin Primary on 19/01/2013, Mrs Naicker informed the house that *"learners had been issued with the Department of Basic Education LTSM"*. In addition, the 2013 School Improvement Plan (SIP) of Penguin Primary noted that the school had employed a qualified computer teacher, and the computer laboratory had internet connectivity. At a phase meeting held at Robin Primary on 02/08/2013, it was noted that *"the LTSM allocation for stationery had been completed"* and it was decided to order CAPS textbooks for 2014. Furthermore, the SMT meeting held at Kestrel Secondary on 16/05/2013 noted that the school had *"the full complement of teachers"*. The 2013 School Improvement Plan (SIP) of Kestrel Secondary also indicated that the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) had provided laptop computers and data projectors for technical subjects. These illustrations corroborate the voices of Mrs Naicker, Mr Ramdin and Dr Chetty regarding organisational management practices. However, the view expressed by Mr Nkosi regarding school-wide access to textbooks and stationery is called into question. This is because the 2013 School Improvement Plan (SIP) of Albatross Secondary indicated the non-availability of critical resources such as textbooks.

Thus, the findings from the documents review refute Mr Nkosi's views regarding the availability of resources such as textbooks at Albatross Secondary. The non-availability of critical resources such as textbooks raises serious concerns about the instructional leadership practices at Albatross Secondary. Chapman, *et al*. (1993) maintain that the provision of good quality instructional materials is crucial because it assists teachers in lesson preparation and allows them to select, organise, sequence and pace their lessons. So this begs the question: what kind of teaching and learning is taking place at Albatross Secondary? Perhaps this suggests that the principal is not walking the talk which does not speak well of supporting instructional leadership practices.

Scholars such as Horng and Loeb (2010) posit that schools that have a strong organisational management framework have a better chance of improving learner achievement outcomes. These findings are congruent with that of Grissom and Loeb (2011) who contend that principals should

not only focus on their instructional leadership practices, but also consider their organisational management skills for greater school improvement. Horng and Loeb (2010) further provide a comprehensive framework to conceptualise organisational management. Horng and Loeb's (2010) conceptualisation focuses on developing organisational structures to improve instruction, and these include: promoting a positive teaching and learning environment, allocating resources, and the hiring and supporting of teachers. The findings suggest that principals used the organisational structure and organogram for a positive school environment. Secondly, efforts were made to acquire resources such as LTSM and hi-tech equipment. Thirdly, teachers were recruited and also mentored to improve their teaching skills.

In summarising this sub-theme, the key finding that emerged was the importance of organisational management skills. As such, the school principals focused on organisational structures, providing Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) and resources, and the hiring of competent teachers.

The first theme focused on principals' conceptualisations of their roles in supporting instructional leadership practices. The findings suggest that the principals understood this to mean: modelling best practice; the school's vision; creating an appropriate positive school environment; and organisational management skills. I will now turn to my next theme which is the principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools.

4.2.2 Principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools

The findings that emerged were that principals strove to enact and enhance their instructional leadership practices in many ways and these are discussed below. Also emerging from the findings was that the participants used organisational management skills in order to improve teaching and learning. In this regard, the principal of Robin Primary stated that:

> *The CAPS programme is already planned for us. However, we still manage the programme in terms of drawing up the timetable, providing resources, and ensuring that there are sufficient personnel to man the classrooms. Thereafter, we monitor the curriculum delivery and oversee the assessment programme.* (Mr Ramdin)

Similarly, Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary said:

> *We have organised the organogram, timetable, teaching allocations and we have ensured that teacher supervision is taking place. We have also ensured that monitoring and feedback are provided to learners. There is strategic planning whereby resources are provided and suitably qualified teachers are recruited.* (Mrs Naicker)

Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary added that:

> *Our organisational structure consists of a line function that teachers follow in order to support teaching and learning.* (Dr Chetty)

Further, the principal of Robin Primary indicated that his office cascaded important information and directives from the Department of Basic Education (DoBE). He said:

> *The principal's office acts as the hub or link between the Department of Basic Education's (DoBE) goals and the school's goals, and the needs of learners.* (Mr Ramdin)

Findings from the interviews seem to suggest that Mr Ramdin and Mrs Naicker enacted and enhanced instructional leadership practices in their schools by efficiently drawing up the timetable, ensuring curriculum delivery and overseeing the assessment programme. Dr Chetty also stated that Kestrel Secondary's organisational structure consisted of a line function to support effective teaching and learning. Furthermore, organisational management practices such as providing resources and hiring teachers were evident in Robin Primary and Penguin Primary. Lastly, by communicating the Department of Basic Education's (DoBE) goals and policies, Mr Ramdin was able to effectively enact instructional leadership practices in Robin Primary. This shows that Mr Ramdin, Mrs Naicker and Dr Chetty engaged in different activities to enact and enhance teaching and learning at the researched schools.

The Department of Basic Education's (DoBE) *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025* (DoBE, 2010) confirms the findings deduced from the interviews. Goal 21 of the *Action Plan* advocates that schools should have good management processes in place to ensure a functional school environment. In this regard, Penguin Primary and Robin Primary had managerial structures to develop the timetable and the organogram. According to Penguin Primary's staff meeting on 13/01/2014, Mrs Naicker informed teachers "*to follow the draft*

timetable and organogram". Further, Kestrel Secondary had an organisational structure that followed a line function. Goal 14 of the *Action Plan* calls for young qualified teachers to enter the profession; whilst Goal 19 advocates for the provision of resources such as textbooks. In this regard, Penguin Primary and Robin Primary provided the necessary resources and recruited qualified teachers. Lastly, Robin Primary's cascading of information to stakeholders is in line with the *Action Plan's* goal of communication with parents. There is evidence of communication at Robin Primary's staff meeting on 07/05/2014, when Mr Ramdin stated *"it is vital that we work on the parent / teacher relationship"*.

Literature strengthens the findings from the two research methods used in this study to generate data. *The South African Standard for Principalship* (DoBE, 2014) states that the key function of the principal is to effectively manage the curriculum in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The document further states that principals should endeavour to provide the necessary resources. In addition, principals should strengthen communication and build relationships in order to improve learning outcomes (DoBE, 2014). There is a similarity between my findings, and Namukwambi's (2011) and Mkhize's (2013) findings on principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools. The findings suggest that the principals achieved this through being strong instructional leaders and using their organisational management skills.

From a theoretical perspective, Weber's (1987) model speaks directly to the principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools. The second dimension focuses on organising the instructional programme. This consists of managing the curriculum, making resources available, and keeping stakeholders informed about departmental goals and policies. Thus, the findings seem to be consistent with Weber's (1987) model.

In summarising this theme, the key finding that emerged was the principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools. As such, the school principals focused on managerial processes, providing resources and communication with stakeholders.

4.2.2.1 Distributed instructional leadership

The findings from the data suggest that all four principals displayed high levels of distributed instructional leadership practices in their schools. Consequently, the key factors that emerged

were: the importance of distributed instructional leadership, strategies used to implement distributed instructional leadership, examples of distributed instructional leadership, and the benefits of distributed instructional leadership.

The first factor that the principals emphasised was the importance of distributed instructional leadership in the effective functioning of their schools. Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary said:

> *Delegation is very important in a school because a school is not a one-man show. So as a leader and a principal, you need to delegate duties to educators, HoDs and deputy principals. But this is not an abdication of your responsibilities.* (Mr Nkosi)

A similar response came from the principal of Kestrel Secondary, who said:

> *The principal cannot do this [leadership] alone. We have got a School Management Team - the key role player in the process of teaching and learning. So we rely heavily on our HoDs, as they know the subject areas and they are entrusted with the first line supervision.* (Dr Chetty)

Findings from the interviews seem to suggest that the principals considered distributed instructional leadership as a very important practice in their schools. The general view was that a 'hero leader' at the top is obsolete, and not feasible in a large and diverse school organisation. This is encapsulated in Mr Nkosi's view that many individuals assume leadership roles in the school. Further, Dr Chetty's view that he relied heavily on HoDs as first line managers can be best surmised by the adage, 'two heads are better than one'. This is because HoDs have subject area expertise and are thus best placed to deal with any challenges associated with teaching and learning.

Further, the principals highlighted the strategies that they used to implement distributed instructional leadership practices. This is apparent in the following excerpts from the principals. Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary had this to say:

> *We involve the managers deeply in collegial decision-making. We have created a democratic environment where people are free to engage in robust dialogue. We have frequent subject committee meetings and we empower others to lead. I delegate tasks to people. Thus, there is constant reviewing and providing feedback.* (Mrs Naicker)

Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary added that:

> *You must know when to delegate, although accountability still lies with you. You need to monitor the delegation, and consider people's abilities and interests.* (Mr Nkosi)

However, Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary took a slightly different view regarding distributed instructional leadership. He said:

> *I think managing teaching and learning is just too important to delegate entirely. You cannot delegate the accountability for it. Okay, you can delegate some of the responsibility. I believe if you work alongside people and also do a bit, then it is more beneficial. But I believe more effective than just delegating, is when you delegate along the continuum so that all people are doing the same thing.* (Dr Chetty)

The above extracts suggest that the school principals followed certain strategies when delegating leadership tasks. Mrs Naicker and Mr Nkosi delegated tasks to individuals, but supported and monitored them in their efforts. Further, both principals were held accountable for the tasks. This seems to suggest that Mrs Naicker and Mr Nkosi adopted a nurturing and responsible role in their schools. In a similar vein, Dr Chetty endorsed the concept of delegation but believed that principals should take a hands-on approach to delegation. This shows that Dr Chetty took an active interest in school-wide issues and would thus be deeply involved in teaching and learning practices. All these strategies serve the common goal of improving teaching and learning.

The third factor that the principals discussed was specific examples of distributed instructional leadership practices. Three principals provided illustrations of delegating stock control, handling disciplinary procedures, and timetabling issues. Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary commented:

> *Sometimes I need to delegate the duty of ensuring stock control. Firstly, there is the administrative function where the administrative clerk plays a role. Secondly, the HoD controls the distribution and the stock register. What is your policy regarding the safe keeping and the utilisation of stock? So I support the person to ensure that the stock is properly managed, that there is a register for effective stock distribution, and I have put procedures in place to recover the stock and monitor if it is utilised.* (Mrs Naicker)

Similarly, Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary said:

The person who is in charge of discipline in the school is Mr Reddy. Even when people say that he is a racist, and treats Indian learners differently from African learners, I always check that he is consistent. So I delegate discipline and I monitor it. (Mr Nkosi)

Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary added that:

For example timetabling is delegated to a manager who puts a team together and works with the team. So the specific duties of allocating times according to the prescripts of the CAPS programme - all those kind of things and logistics are worked out. But I monitor the timeframe within which we have to work. We always have the performance indicators beforehand such as what is expected by a certain day. So whilst the timetabling committee does all the work, I am always held accountable. (Mr Ramdin)

Findings from the interviews seem to suggest that distributed instructional leadership practices were prevalent in the researched schools. By delegating tasks such as stock control, disciplinary procedures and timetabling committees, the principals displayed vision as they were willing to relinquish some power and control. The upshot of this was that other teachers would be able to develop their leadership skills and expertise. This would invariably benefit teaching and learning practices at the schools.

The fourth factor that the principals illuminated was the benefits of distributed instructional leadership. Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary commented:

And for growth and development purposes, when you have faith in certain people - you are developing them and you are empowering them so that they grow as people. You will then find that teaching and learning is developed. (Mrs Naicker)

Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary added that:

It is not possible for any single individual to manage all aspects of school functionality. It is impossible for one person [the principal] to carry out all tasks effectively. So by delegating, one is able to reduce one's workload. (Mr Ramdin)

The voices of the principals suggest that distributed instructional leadership empowered people with new skills and expertise. Mrs Naicker also opined that it developed trust in teachers to fulfil

their true potential. This is in line with *The South African Standard for Principalship's* (DoBE, 2014) goal of maximising all potential resources within the school. Further, Mr Ramdin stated that dispersed leadership reduced the workload of principals. Most schools are large and complex organisations and would require many individuals to contribute to its effectiveness. Thus, it would allow principals more time to concentrate on supporting teaching and learning practices.

Similarly, the staff minutes of Penguin Primary dated 19/07/2013, confirmed that Mrs Naicker had constituted the Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) committee which engaged in regular meetings and kept proper records. The staff minutes of Robin Primary dated 21/02/2014 also indicated the composition of the *"Staff Development Team (SDT) to oversee the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) process"*. Furthermore, the staff minutes of Kestrel Secondary on 13/01/2014 thanked the timetabling committee for drawing up the 2014 timetable. Thus, the documents reviewed corroborated the findings generated in the interviews regarding the distributed instructional leadership practices at the researched schools.

The sentiments of school principals regarding distributed instructional leadership are in line with what the literature is saying. *The South African Standard for Principalship* (DoBE, 2014) states that principals should manage schools as successful organisations by effectively using human resources and other assets to support teaching and learning. In addition, Lee, *et al*. (2012) provide an in-depth account of how distributed instructional leadership practices deal with the challenges that schools face in diverse contexts. Crucially, Leithwood, *et al*. (2008) posit that school leadership has a greater impact on learning outcomes when it is widely distributed.

In this study, I draw on Spillane's (2006) model in order to theorise distributed instructional leadership in schools. Firstly, the leader-plus aspect acknowledges that several people both in formal and informal positions assume school leadership roles. The findings in this study suggest that principals used teachers, HoDs and deputy principals in different leadership roles. Secondly, the leadership practice aspect focuses on the interactions among leaders, followers, and their contexts around specific leadership tasks. In this regard, the principals delegated the tasks of stock control, disciplinary procedures, and timetabling issues.

In summarising this sub-theme, the key finding that emerged was that distributed instructional leadership practices were prominent in all four researched schools. With this in mind, the key

factors that were discussed were: the importance of distributed instructional leadership, strategies used to implement distributed instructional leadership, examples of distributed instructional leadership, and the benefits of distributed instructional leadership.

4.2.2.2 Professional dialogue and communication

The findings suggest that all four principals fostered high levels of professional dialogue and communication in their schools. Professional dialogue and communication is crucial to unite all stakeholders under the common goal of improving the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, the other factor to emerge was teacher reflection.

The findings suggest that communication is the golden thread that unites the teachers at the schools. Different strategies were used to communicate with various stakeholders. Penguin Primary had a formal hierarchical structure that used an organogram. In this regard, Mrs Naicker said:

> *Our lines of communication are clearly enunciated. The organogram is clearly specified. A lot of deep thought goes into who supervises who, the competencies and skills of people, and where the challenges are found so that we have the right manager for the right educator.* (Mrs Naicker)

Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary also indicated that his school employed a top-down and bottom-up approach. Mr Nkosi explained further:

> *We also have staff briefings every day from 7:15 to 7:30. In the briefings, I spell out what happened yesterday … such as the mistakes that we made.* (Mr Nkosi)

Similarly, Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary said:

> *Well we try to keep an open door policy whereby there are always open channels of communication. At staff briefings we merely tell teachers what the order of the day is, how things should be done, and what the latest developments are.* (Mr Ramdin)

Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary added that:

> *There is a place for formal communication, and there is a place for informal communication. There is a time for a polite word, and a time for a very formal memorandum … chatting to the teacher outside in the corridors is a form of communication. So all types of communication are used.* (Dr Chetty)

The above voices highlighted the importance of communication in schools. The use of an organogram at Penguin Primary suggests that communication was of a formal or hierarchical nature. Moreover, Albatross Secondary and Robin Primary used staff briefings to communicate current developments. In contrast, Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary also used informal chats to communicate with individuals. These measures show that the participants used effective communication strategies to enhance teaching and learning in their schools.

The findings seem to suggest that professional dialogue is another important instructional leadership practice at the researched schools. In addition, teacher critical reflection also emerged as an important factor. With regards to professional dialogue, the principal of Penguin Primary stated that:

> *The South African Council for Educators (SACE) governs our code of conduct, and the school needs to have some form of code of conduct in order to set the ground rules as to how people interact.* (Mrs Naicker)

Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary added that:

> *Last Thursday we had a staff meeting and new teachers were telling me that they are having challenges in maintaining classroom discipline. I had to unpack that a core aspect of teaching is maintaining discipline. If you cannot maintain discipline then you cannot teach.* (Dr Chetty)

Findings from Penguin Primary and Kestrel Secondary seem to suggest that the principals used professional dialogue wisely. Mrs Naicker indicated that Penguin Primary followed the South African Council for Educators (SACE) code of conduct for communication. This suggests that Penguin Primary was run along professional lines. Furthermore, Dr Chetty provided an illustration of professional dialogue whereby teachers were advised on classroom discipline. This shows that high levels of professional discourse were used to support teaching and learning.

In addition, teacher reflection has gained much popularity in recent times but is still an underutilised pedagogical practice (Msila, 2013). Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary opined that many teachers possessed the practical competence and the foundational competence (actual knowledge), but lacked reflexive competence. He lamented:

> *Teachers do not actually reflect on their teaching, and that is one of the weaknesses of the system - whether they are too busy to take time off to reflect. I encourage people after a lesson to always ask themselves: what went right or wrong, how can I do things differently, and did I deliver that lesson properly. It is only reflexive competence that will reflect and reveal whether the lesson was actually understood by the learner.* (Dr Chetty)

Robin Primary used a system of diagnostic and statistical analysis for each subject. Thereafter, teachers were asked to reflect on whether they achieved their goals. Mr Ramdin explained:

> *After each assessment, diagnostic and statistical analysis is performed. Thereafter, using the curriculum tracker and within the Development Support Group (DSG) – there will be discussion on what was achieved, and what was not achieved. So if there is a need for reflection and a change in strategy, then the teacher is encouraged to do that.* (Mr Ramdin)

Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary further emphasised that teacher reflection was important because it prevented stagnation and highlighted the latest trends in education. She stated:

> *We brainstorm ideas and we ask our teachers to do some introspection to establish how best they can change their mind-sets in order to improve and develop, so that the ultimate beneficiary is the learner in the classroom. Once the teachers reflect, we ask them to come forward and try new ideas and new methodologies.* (Mrs Naicker)

The above extracts suggest that teacher reflection was evident in three of the researched schools. Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary suggests that teachers should display reflexive competence in order to ascertain if learners understood the lesson. Further, Mr Ramdin stated that teachers at Robin Primary should do reflection after they had completed statistical analysis. Lastly, Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary indicated that teacher reflection helped generate new ideas. These

examples point to the fact that teacher reflection can be a useful tool to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Similarly, teachers were advised at the staff meeting at Penguin Primary on 19/07/2013 to adhere to the organogram. Furthermore, at Penguin Primary's phase meeting on 11/02/2014, teachers were instructed that they should *"keep records of parental meetings and meetings were to take place after 14:00"*. During the staff meeting held at Robin Primary on 28/01/2013, teachers were informed that the agenda of the forthcoming parent meeting consisted of CAPS and learner progression. At an SMT meeting held at Kestrel Secondary on 13/01/2014, the learning area committees were advised to *"discuss pertinent curriculum issues"*. The 2013 School Improvement Plan (SIP) of Albatross Secondary indicated that there was a spirit of collegiality at the school. This suggests that there were high levels of professional dialogue and communication at the researched schools. There was further evidence of teacher reflection in the staff minutes of Kestrel Secondary on 17/06/2014; as Dr Chetty asked his staff to *"reflect on why the school was in decline"*. He stressed that teacher late coming was a contributory factor, and gave the staff articles to peruse. During Penguin Primary's staff meeting on 19/07/2013, Mrs Naicker raised concerns about the poor quality of lesson plans and asked teachers to *"do serious introspection"*. Thus, the documents reviewed confirmed the findings deduced from the interviews.

These findings are congruent with Southworth's (2002) study, which reveals that professional dialogue and communication is integral to the principal's instructional leadership practices. Furthermore, Blasé and Blasé (1999) posit that principals who communicated with teachers helped to motivate them to critically reflect on their teaching practices. However, Msila's (2013) study adds an innovative dimension to the concept of critical reflection as teachers were encouraged to use journal writing to reflect on their teaching practices. The principals' voices in this study were silent on this concept and it would be prudent for them to emulate this good practice in order to enhance teaching and learning in their schools. Professional dialogue and communication falls within the ambit of Weber's (1987) instructional leadership model. Dimension two of Weber's (1987) model focuses on organising the instructional programme, whereby principals are required to communicate with staff and constructively use their suggestions to improve teaching and learning.

In summarising this sub-theme, the key finding that emerged was that professional dialogue and communication was widely practiced at the researched schools. It lies at the heart of instructional leadership practices, and thus serves as a useful tool to achieve the school's goals. As such, this sub-theme also focused on critical teacher reflection and good instructional leadership practices.

4.2.2.3 Monitoring teaching and learning

In all the four researched schools, the findings suggest that the principals effectively monitored teaching and learning. As such, the principals focused on monitoring the curriculum, teachers' practices and learner's performance. In addition, Management by Walking Around (MBWA) also emerged as an effective management technique to enhance teaching and learning. With regards to monitoring of teaching and learning, the principal of Penguin Primary stated that:

> *We monitor the whole plant in terms of teachers' performance of their duties, classroom practices and learners' performance. I have a hands-on policy whereby I follow-up with the managers to ensure that they give me proper feedback.* (Mrs Naicker)

Similarly, Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary said:

> *The SMT meets on a monthly basis to discuss the monitoring of teaching and learning. So we get reports of the performance of teachers in every learning area.* (Mr Nkosi)

Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary also mentioned that:

> *The curriculum tracker gives us an indication whether teachers have achieved the outcomes for the term. This ensures that teaching and learning is ongoing.* (Mr Ramdin)

Dr Chetty added an innovative edge to the monitoring of Kestrel's curriculum. He said:

> *The school-wide curriculum is on my computer and it serves as a useful tool to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. So if the Civil Technology teacher wants materials for a practical project then I can determine whether it is justified or not.* (Dr Chetty)

Two principals provided illustrations of monitoring teaching and learning in their schools. Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary commented:

> *We have book evaluations where we randomly review learners' books and teachers' programmes. We check whether sufficient material is being covered. Thereafter, a report is given to teachers and any shortcomings are addressed.* (Mr Ramdin)

In a similar vein, Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary added that:

> *I went into my deputy principal's class last week and I observed a very interesting lesson on Auto CAD. It is really amazing how much you can learn.* (Dr Chetty)

The above voices suggest that Mrs Naicker and Mr Nkosi were deeply engaged in monitoring the curriculum and providing effective feedback to stakeholders. Furthermore, Mr Ramdin used the curriculum tracker to monitor the progress of teaching and learning and Dr Chetty had the school's curriculum on his computer in order to monitor and evaluate it. Moreover, Mr Ramdin used book evaluations to ascertain whether the curriculum content was covered, and Dr Chetty also observed lessons to get first-hand experience of the delivery of the curriculum. These proactive strategies suggest that the principals had a bird's eye view of the curriculum and were thus able to have a positive influence on teaching and learning practices in their schools.

Further, the principals engaged in Management by Walking Around (MBWA) to enhance the monitoring process (Grissom, *et al*., 2013). In this regard, Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary said:

> *My deputy principals and I walk around during the first period and the last period. We only return to the office when all teachers are teaching in the classroom.* (Mr Nkosi)

Similarly, Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary extolled the virtues of Management by Walking Around (MBWA). She said:

> *MBWA is not about socialising or interrupting the curriculum time. It serves as a key feedback generator. You see the smoke before the fire. In other words, you get to hear the stresses and challenges of teachers. So MBWA is extremely beneficial as it allows me to communicate and resolve issues without using the formal route.* (Mrs Naicker)

Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary added that:

MBWA serves two purposes. Firstly, the visibility helps with the discipline of learners and teachers. Secondly, it gives you a measure of where the school is and what is being done and what is not being done. (Mr Ramdin)

Findings from the interviews seem to suggest that the participating principals used Management by Walking Around (MBWA) to enhance the monitoring process. Mrs Naicker's comments suggest that MBWA was beneficial because it enabled her to deal with challenging issues in an informal manner. Furthermore, Mr Nkosi and Mr Ramdin indicated that MBWA helped with school-wide discipline. This shows that MBWA was a useful management technique that the principals enacted in order to be up close and personal and have a positive impact on teaching and learning.

Similarly, the perused documents confirmed that the principals monitored teaching and learning. The 2013 School Improvement Plan (SIP) of Penguin Primary indicated that *"there was strategic planning to assist, evaluate and monitor the performance of educators, and ultimately the learners"*. Furthermore, the 2013 School Improvement Plan (SIP) of Albatross Secondary indicated that strategic leadership and quality assurance was implemented to improve the learning outcomes. According to the SMT minutes of Robin Primary dated 28/01/2013, the *"SMT have devised a schedule of classroom visits and book checks"*. Lastly, the SMT minutes of Kestrel Secondary on 19/05/2014 stated that *"all reports regarding continuous assessment moderation should be handed in so that curriculum delivery in the learning areas could be tracked"*.

Literature supports the monitoring of teaching and learning as an important instructional leadership practice. *The South African Standard for Principalship* (DoBE, 2014) states that there should be ongoing monitoring and evaluation of learning outcomes for continuous school improvement. Furthermore, Southworth (2002) posits that monitoring involves principals looking at teachers' weekly plans, inspecting learners' work, observing lessons, implementing school policies and analysing test results. Thus, the desired goal of ongoing monitoring of teaching and learning is to improve the organisational structures and functions.

Monitoring teaching and learning falls within the ambit of Weber's (1987) instructional leadership model. Dimension three of Weber's (1987) model focuses on supervision and

evaluation. Weber (1987) postulates that it is crucial for principals to observe teachers, offer advice about problems, and pinpoint areas to improve. In this regard, the strategies that are considered essential are: classroom observations of teachers and learners' performance, providing feedback to teachers about observations, and encouraging teachers to express their feelings about observational data. Further, the Three-Minute Walkthrough (TMW) model as conceptualised by Downey, *et al*. (2004) provides a basis for Management by Walking Around (MBWA). The goal of the model is for principals to gather valuable data in a short space of time. Consequently, the high visibility of principals plays a crucial role in school improvement (Downey, *et al*., 2004).

In summarising this sub-theme, the key finding that emerged was that the monitoring of teaching and learning was widely practiced at the researched schools. It is a crucial instructional leadership practice that directly impacts on teaching and learning. As such, this sub-theme also focused on Management by Walking Around (MBWA).

4.2.2.4 Promoting teacher professional development

In all the four researched schools, the findings suggest that the principals were actively involved in the professional development of teachers. As such, much emphasis was placed on Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) evaluations, workshops, and the mentoring of teachers. With regards to IQMS evaluations, the principal of Penguin Primary responded as follows:

> *We support teacher professional development by means of the IQMS programme of appraisal and evaluations. Initially, the School Development Team (SDT) manages the IQMS and they identify challenges that teachers experience in terms of their professional growth plans, and the SDT comes up with a year plan for teacher development.* (Mrs Naicker)

In a similar vein, Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary also spoke about the IQMS process:

> *The IQMS programme gives us certain needs that we put in the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and School Development Plan (SDP). Thereafter, information from the SIP, SDP and the Development Support Group (DSG) are used to draw up a needs analysis. From our needs analysis we prioritise our areas of staff development.* (Mr Ramdin)

Further, the principals emphasised the important role that workshops play in teacher professional development. Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary commented:

> *The CAPS workshops that teachers attended is an example of professional development because our teachers are kept informed of the latest curriculum trends.* (Mr Ramdin)

Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary added that:

> *When our teachers return from the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) workshops they provide feedback to the staff. It benefits the teachers in that they are skilled and the staff also receives the latest information.* (Mr Nkosi)

Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary provided an illustration of the mentoring of a novice teacher. This is what he said:

> *Ms Zama came to our school as a novice teacher and was employed as a SGB educator. Eventually she got a permanent post at the school. However, during her tenure, we trained and mentored her to pursue her studies. I am pleased to report that she is now making good progress with her doctoral studies.* (Dr Chetty)

The above extracts suggest that teacher professional development was actively promoted at the researched schools. Mrs Naicker and Mr Ramdin used the results of IQMS evaluations to draw up the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and the School Development Plan (SDP). Subsequently, staff development issues were identified and pursued. Further, Mr Nkosi and Mr Ramdin used workshops to empower teachers and keep staff informed of the latest trends. Lastly, Dr Chetty helped train and mentor novice teachers at Kestrel Secondary. Dr Chetty seems to be informed by the asset-based model of management which advocates that all individuals have unique talents, skills and capacities (Naicker, *et al*., 2013). Thus, the mentoring of novice teachers helps develop their knowledge, skills and practice and this will ultimately have a positive impact on learner achievement outcomes. Crucially, this shows that the principals went the extra mile to promote teacher professional development in their schools. In the final analysis, these proactive measures help to promote a culture of teaching and learning in the schools.

Similarly, the perused documents confirmed that the principals actively promoted teacher professional development in their schools. According to the 2013 School Improvement Plan

(SIP) of Penguin Primary, *"teachers are currently involved in professional development using expertise from within the school and through workshops provided by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE)"*. In a similar vein, the 2013 School Improvement Plan (SIP) of Albatross Secondary noted that the School Development Team (SDT) had implemented the School Development Plan (SDP). There was further evidence in Robin Primary's SMT minutes on 07/05/2014 to confirm that the IQMS evaluation was implemented. Lastly, Kestrel Secondary's SMT minutes on 13/01/2014 stated that *"management should mentor novice teachers in the profession as well as in the subjects"*.

The sentiments of the school principals regarding teacher professional development are consistent with what the literature is saying. *The South African Standard for Principalship* (DoBE, 2014) states that principals should empower their staff with ongoing professional development opportunities in order to meet the teachers development needs and to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In addition, Hoque, *et al*. (2011) established a positive correlation between teacher professional development activities and school improvement.

Drawing on Weber's (1987) model of instructional leadership, these principals took the initiative to actively promote teacher professional development in their schools. The third dimension of Weber's (1987) model comprises supervision and evaluation. Here the principal helps improve instruction through providing ongoing support and professional development opportunities.

In summarising this sub-theme, the key finding that emerged was that the principals actively promoted teacher professional development in their schools. As such, much emphasis was placed on Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) evaluations, workshops, and the mentoring of novice teachers.

4.2.2.5 Understanding of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

The findings from the data suggest that the majority of school principals did not fully understand the concept of a Professional Learning Community. In fact, the responses of three of the four participating principals were inconsistent with what the literature is saying. For instance, the principal of Penguin Primary said:

In the learning area committees there is interaction, robust decision making and people learning from each other. (Mrs Naicker)

Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary commented:

We have got a literacy period and a numeracy period where learners are taught how to read and count because there is a crisis in these areas. (Mr Nkosi)

Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary surmised that delegation is closely aligned to a Professional Learning Community. This is what he had to say:

The HoDs plan, organise, lead and control all aspects. So the idea is for the managers to delegate within the phases. Thereafter, the grade coordinators oversee the leadership at different levels. (Mr Ramdin)

In contrast to the aforementioned participants, Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary displayed a greater understanding of a Professional Learning Community. This is what he said:

We have got a principals' Professional Learning Community in the Kranskloof Ward. The 34 of us meet and basically share knowledge about our difficulties and hardships. You will be amazed at what you could learn from others and certain principals are looked upon for guidance and advice. I try to incorporate some of these ideas into our school. (Dr Chetty)

Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary added that:

I insist that our subject committee meetings must not be barren, to do meetings. We make it exciting: novel ways to teach the novel, creative strategies for teaching creative writing. So I initially start off and thereafter the staff follows. It is vital to draw people in and build their confidence. Crucially, I am involved with Higher Education Institutions such as Stellenbosch University which keeps me informed of cutting-edge knowledge in education. I subsequently inform my teachers of the latest trends. (Dr Chetty)

Similarly, the perused documents corroborated Dr Chetty's views on the existence of a Professional Learning Community at Kestrel Secondary. According to the SMT minutes of Kestrel Secondary on 16/05/2013, Dr Chetty stated that *"a principals meeting will take place on May 23 at our school. We need to give the visitors a good impression"*. Further, the SMT

meeting at Kestrel Secondary on 13/01/2014 indicated that the learning area meetings should focus on "*all relevant matters with regard to the curriculum, ground duty and discipline*". This clearly illustrates that a Professional Learning Community does exist at Kestrel Secondary. The findings emanating from Penguin Primary, Albatross Secondary and Robin Primary were, however, silent on this issue.

The findings suggest that the school principals did not fully grasp the concept of a Professional Learning Community. Mrs Naicker's understanding of the concept was more akin to collegiality; whilst Mr Nkosi understood it to mean a turnaround strategy. On the other hand, Mr Ramdin conceptualised a Professional Learning Community as being a distributed leadership practice. This is inconsistent with the literature. DuFour (2004) asserts that powerful professional learning occurs when teachers are organised into teams and regularly meet to improve pedagogical practices. Moreover, there is a culture of systematic collaboration and teacher reflection in order to enhance teaching practices and learning outcomes. Dr Chetty's view of being involved in a principals' Professional Learning Community and subsequently cascading important knowledge to his staff suggests that he had a fairly good understanding of the concept. However, in contrast to the literature (DuFour, 2004; Williams, 2013), Dr Chetty did not refer to the use of data-driven decisions. This is a crucial aspect as the majority of time of Professional Learning Communities is focused on analysing learner assessment data in order to improve learning outcomes (Williams, 2013). Thus, one can deduce that the principals did not fully harness the power of Professional Learning Communities and therefore missed a golden opportunity to enhance teaching and learning in their schools.

From a literature perspective, *The South African Standard for Principalship* (DoBE, 2014) states that principals and the SMT have the overriding responsibility to build Professional Learning Communities in their schools. It also advocates that the principal should promote quality, secure commitment, and enhance the performance of all stakeholders in order to ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place. Moreover, a Professional Learning Community forms part of ongoing professional development as it comprises teamwork, empowerment and skills development (DoBE, 2014). In addition, Williams (2013) contends that Professional Learning Communities improve learner achievement outcomes and professional practices in schools.

From a theoretical point of view, Weber's (1987) model speaks directly to a Professional Learning Community. The second dimension focuses on organising the instructional programme which involves the principal making available instructional resources, creating a collaborative environment and supporting instructional best practices. This clearly alludes to the establishment of Professional Learning Communities in order to enhance teaching and learning in schools.

In summarising this sub-theme, the key finding that emerged was that the majority of school principals did not fully understand the concept of a Professional Learning Community. As a result, this may have a negative impact on their ability to enhance teaching practices and maximise learning outcomes in their schools.

4.2.2.6 Rewards and recognition

The findings from the data suggest that all four principals used rewards and recognition as a strategy to enhance instructional leadership practices in their schools. In fact, Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary maintains that rewards / incentives help to motivate learners to improve their academic performance. This is captured in the following comment by Mr Ramdin:

> *In our school we offer badges to learners who excel academically. There are different colour academic badges that learners can obtain if they achieve a certain level of performance. So we do have incentives for learners.* (Mr Ramdin)

Further, three principals' opined that it was also important to recognise teachers as individuals. In this regard, communication and teacher contentment emerged as important factors. This was clearly illustrated by the principal of Penguin Primary who stated that:

> *I follow the dictate: praise in public and criticise in private. There are times that I communicate with teachers on a formal basis, and at other times we may engage informally. We try to create the atmosphere in the school where teachers are happy and are therefore productive.* (Mrs Naicker)

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary who stated that:

> *I communicate with my teachers all the time. I am consistent with my teachers and I treat them fairly … I want my teachers to be happy.* (Mr Nkosi)

Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary had this to say about this issue:

> *Teachers love to be spoken to and they love to be heard. You must give them the impression, even though you may not be, that you are really listening to their problems. So teachers like to know that you really care about their well-being.* (Dr Chetty)

Findings from the interviews seem to suggest that the participating principals used rewards and recognition to enhance their instructional leadership practices. Mr Ramdin handed out academic badges to help motivate learners to perform well. This innovative strategy helped to engender a spirit of academic excellence in the school. Similarly, the Awards Day functions of all four researched schools recognised exemplary learner performance. On the other hand, Mrs Naicker, Mr Nkosi and Dr Chetty used the tried and trusted method of teacher praise. By giving praise to teachers, it helped boost their morale and emotional well-being. This shows that the principals tried to inspire teachers to improve their teaching practices. Ultimately, the use of rewards and recognition has the common goal of improving learner achievement outcomes and creating exemplary schools.

Likewise, there was evidence of learner motivation at Robin Primary as the homework policy stated that teachers should *"reward learners who complete or submit their homework on the due date"*. The 2013 School Improvement Plans (SIPs) of all four researched schools indicated that exemplary learner performance was celebrated at the schools' Awards Day functions. According to the staff minutes of Penguin Primary dated 19/11/2013, the principal praised Mrs Dlamini's attendance record and asked other teachers to *"follow her good example"*. Furthermore, at Kestrel Secondary's staff meeting on 28/03/2014, Dr Chetty praised two teachers for *"providing vacation classes"*. Thus, the documents reviewed confirmed the findings deduced from the interviews.

Literature supports the provision of rewards and recognition to enhance teaching and learning in schools. The sentiments of the school principals are in line with various scholars (Reitzug, *et al*., 2008; Hallinger, 2009) who maintain that good instructional leaders bestow incentives to learners who perform well. Furthermore, Blasé and Blasé (1999) contend that giving praise to teachers helps to improve their motivation, self-esteem and performance levels.

Drawing on Weber's (1987) model of instructional leadership, the school principals understood the importance of providing rewards and recognition to both teachers and learners. Dimension five of Weber's (1987) model deals with creating the appropriate climate for learning. A key aspect involves giving praise to learners for providing the correct answers in class. In addition, dimension two of Weber's (1987) model focuses on organising the instructional programme, whereby principals communicate with staff in order to improve teaching and learning.

In summarising this sub-theme, the key finding that emerged was that the school principals provided rewards to learners and recognised teachers in order to enhance instructional leadership practices in their schools.

The second theme focused on principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools. As such, much emphasis was placed on: distributed instructional leadership; professional dialogue and communication; monitoring teaching and learning; promoting teacher professional development; Professional Learning Communities (PLCs); and rewards and recognition. I will now turn to my next theme which is barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices.

4.2.3 Barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices

The findings suggest that there were various barriers that made it difficult for school principals to discharge their instructional leadership practices. In this regard, the barriers focused on the problems posed by learners, parents, teachers, teacher unions and the Department of Basic Education (DoBE).

Firstly, learners are a core constituent of the school organisation and are the main reason why schools exist. However, the attitude of some learners to schooling posed serious problems to instructional leaders. Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary commented:

> *Learners see little value in education nowadays. There is a myth or belief that if you get a tender then you do not need a National Senior Certificate (NSC) and you could lead a political party.* (Dr Chetty)

However, Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary took a different tact and focused on the contextual factors that affected the learners' academic performance. This is what he had to say:

The biggest barrier facing my school is the issue of language. The medium of instruction in school is English but learners mostly speak IsiZulu at home. So the learners' proficiency in English is not of the requisite standard. (Mr Ramdin)

Further, the barriers posed by learners are deeply rooted in the social problems that beset the community. In terms of the contextual factors, Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary stated that:

Many of our learners come from impoverished backgrounds. There are many single-parent headed households and they do not have access to proper clothing and nutritious food. These factors do impact on the quality of teaching and learning. (Mrs Naicker)

Secondly, with regards to the role of parents, the principal of Robin Primary stated that:

Parents are non-compliant with regards to coming to school and communicating with us. The ideal situation for us would be greater parental involvement in their children's education. (Mr Ramdin)

Thirdly, the principals highlighted the barriers that they experienced with regards to teachers from long-distance Higher Education Institutions. They decried the calibre of teachers entering the teaching profession and questioned their passion for teaching and the support the students received from such institutions. This is well-captured by Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary who asserted that:

People who have failed to find employment elsewhere take the Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) route to qualify as teachers. If they had a passion for teaching then they would have initially studied a B.Ed. degree. Moreover, students from long-distance Higher Education Institutions are destroying our education. When we evaluate them in the classroom, we are shocked! The problem is that they do not study teaching subjects and thus lack the content knowledge to effectively deliver the lesson. However, we do try to support and mentor them. (Mr Nkosi)

A similar response came from the principal of Penguin Primary, who said:

The calibre of teachers entering the teaching profession is sub-standard. Moreover, we are limited by the number of teachers on the Department of Basic Education's (DoBE)

database and also the SGB is primarily responsible for the recruitment and selection of teachers. (Mrs Naicker)

Fourthly, the participants had this to say about barriers they faced with the teacher unions as they attempted to support effective teaching and learning in their schools. Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary responded as follows:

Teacher unions cause a lot of disruptions in schools as their activities cut across curriculum time. Nowadays teachers seem to have too many rights and they are less accountable. So this takes a toll on teaching and learning. (Mrs Naicker)

According to Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary teacher unions were not very professional and did not follow due protocol when embarking on labour action. This is what he said:

In many cases the teacher unions do not provide timely circulars for their labour actions. They are required by law to give us three days' notice so that we can make arrangements to accommodate the learners. (Mr Nkosi)

Lastly, the school principals emphasised certain barriers that were posed by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE). The participants bemoaned the fact that the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) did not provide adequate support for teaching and learning. In this regard, Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary said:

We are running short of 104 subject advisors in the Pinetown District. In fact, we have not had a Mathematics subject advisor for the last five years. (Mr Nkosi)

In addition, Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary stressed that the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) was a major obstacle with regards to staffing issues. This is captured in the following comment by Dr Chetty:

I needed an Electrical Technology teacher as it is a very scarce subject. I submitted a request for the teacher: the circuit task team looked at it; then the district task team looked at it; thereafter the provincial task team examined it; and they finally came back and told me to find my own teacher. The process is slow and bureaucratic. (Dr Chetty)

The voices of the principals suggest that they faced a myriad of barriers in their endeavour to discharge their instructional leadership practices. Firstly, the learners' attitude towards schooling was of a major concern as they are the intended recipients of education. Mrs Naicker further indicated that contextual factors such as poverty and disease directly affected the children's ability to learn. Mr Ramdin concurred but added that teaching English to second language speakers was a major barrier and this directly affected their ability to grasp new knowledge. Secondly, Mr Ramdin's view of parents not being involved in their children's education shows that learning was not positively reinforced at home. Thirdly, the general view of the poor calibre of teachers produced suggests that many teachers did not possess the necessary knowledge and skills to nurture young minds. Fourthly, the disruptive and unprofessional nature of some teacher unions suggests that they did not have the best interests of the learners at heart. Lastly, Mr Nkosi's concern regarding the dire shortage of subject advisors and Dr Chetty's frustration with staffing issues shows that the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) was not walking the talk with regards to supporting teaching and learning in the Pinetown District.

The Department of Basic Education's (DoBE) *Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025* (DoBE, 2010) confirms the findings deduced from the interviews. The *Action Plan* states that proper schooling cannot happen if *"learners suffer from desperate poverty or malnutrition"* (DoBE, 2010, p. 36). Further, the *Action Plan* notes that *"many learners who complete Grade 6 are not able to write simple sentences"* (DoBE, 2010, p. 9). This confirmed Mrs Naicker's view about the contextual factors that affected her school and Mr Ramdin's assertion that learners were not proficient in English. Robin Primary's 2013 SWOT analysis corroborated Mr Ramdin's view on parental non-involvement when it listed *"absentee parents"* as a threat to the school. In addition, the *Action Plan* states that *"many teachers have not received all the training to cope with the responsibilities of teaching"* (DoBE, 2010, p. 26). This corroborated Mrs Naicker's and Mr Nkosi's views that the system was not producing good quality teachers. Moreover, the *Action Plan* advocates *"collaboration between the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) and teacher unions"* (DoBE, 2010, p. 10). However, Mrs Naicker and Mr Nkosi were adamant that teacher unions were unprofessional in schools. Lastly, the *Action Plan's* observation that many *"district offices do not have enough staff or the existing staff do not have the skills to support schools"* is in line with Mr Nkosi's and Dr Chetty's views on this issue (DoBE, 2010, p. 38).

Literature supports the findings of what school principals confront as they attempted to support effective teaching and learning in their schools. Hoadley, *et al*. (2009) contend that contextual factors such as high poverty levels do have a negative impact on learning outcomes. Dempster and Reddy (2007) investigated the dismal performance of South African learners in the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) 2003. The researchers concluded that the reason why township schools performed so dismally was the lack of parental involvement in their children's education (Dempster & Reddy, 2007). My findings are in contrast to Namukwambi's (2011) findings that parents played a major role in their children's education. It must be noted that Namukwambi's (2011) study was conducted in Namibia while my study was set in the South African context. However, it is still perplexing why the findings are so divergent considering that the two countries are quite close neighbours and have similar socio-economic contexts. Moreover, Naicker, *et al*. (2013) posit that some teacher unions in South Africa are unprofessional and play a disruptive role in education. Naicker, *et al*. (2013) further add that the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) officials rarely visit schools and do not provide proper support for teaching and learning. Thus, the literature mirrors the voices of the school principals.

From a theoretical perspective, Weber's (1987) model concurs with the findings generated about the barriers that instructional leaders experience. The fourth dimension involves protecting the instructional time and programmes. In this regard, learner disciplinary problems pose a serious barrier and it advocates enlisting the help of parents to support teaching and learning. Dimension three of Weber's (1987) model comprises supervision and evaluation and it states that the hiring of competent teachers in essential in order to deliver the curriculum.

In summarising this theme, the key finding that emerged was that certain barriers made it difficult for school principals to discharge their instructional leadership practices. As such, much emphasis was placed on the problems posed by learners, parents, teachers, teacher unions and the Department of Basic Education (DoBE).

The third theme focused on the barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices. I will now turn to my fourth and final theme which is principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices.

4.2.4 Principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices

The findings from the data suggest that all four school principals employed proactive strategies in their attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices. In this regard, the strategies focused on the barriers posed by learners, parents, teachers, teacher unions and the Department of Basic Education (DoBE).

Firstly, the participants articulated different strategies that they used to deal with the barriers posed by learners. This basically entailed using several turnaround strategies and leveraging their social resources in order to enhance teaching and learning. With regards to the turnaround strategies, the principal of Penguin Primary stated that:

> *There is extended contact time with learners during our Saturday classes. Learners are provided with extra booklets in core subjects such as English and Mathematics during the holiday period. We also align our examination papers in accordance with the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) standards. Furthermore, there are programmes to deal with Learners with Special Educational Needs (LSEN) in our school.* (Mrs Naicker)

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary who stated that:

> *We have two programmes in school. The remedial programme draws average performing learners with specific gaps and we try to address those deficiencies. For example we have remedial classes for English where we focus on reading skills. On the other hand, the LSEN programme addresses the needs of slow learners.* (Mr Ramdin)

The principal of Albatross Secondary further added:

> *We are working with a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) called 'Hey Maths' which provides extra classes in Mathematics. Learners pay a fee of R6,00 to receive 3 hours of tuition. I have subsequently noticed an improvement in the Mathematics marks for the March tests.* (Mr Nkosi)

In addition, I seem to be finding evidence of networking in two of the researched schools. Penguin Primary and Robin Primary leveraged their social resources in order to improve the

well-being of the child. In contrast, the data generated from the other schools was silent on this issue. Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary mentioned that:

> *We have various fundraising initiatives to ensure that learners have adequate resources. We also network with the Psychological and Guidance Services (PGSES) for learners with special educational needs.* (Mrs Naicker)

Mr Ramdin of Robin Primary added that:

> *We are going to introduce a parental skills workshop where parents are invited to improve their parenting skills. Social issues do impact on the child's performance in the classroom … therefore we have an open door crisis centre.* (Mr Ramdin)

Secondly, Mr Ramdin highlighted several strategies that Robin Primary used to communicate with parents in order to keep them informed of the school's activities and their children's progress. He said:

> *We start the year off with a parent information meeting whereby parents and teachers meet to discuss pertinent issues. There is a communication book that goes out every day. We also make use of letters and the Short Messaging Service (SMS) system to keep parents informed.* (Mr Ramdin)

Thirdly, Mrs Naicker of Penguin Primary emphasised that she used several strategies to deal with the barriers posed by teachers. This is what she had to say:

> *I work with the SGB in order to motivate them as to the type of teacher that I require. So for instance if I need a Mathematics specialist, then I articulate that point of view. With regards to teacher shortcomings, I make sure that the weaker performing teachers are developed. So we engage with them in order to mentor and assist them.* (Mrs Naicker)

Fourthly, Mr Nkosi of Albatross Secondary was rather forthright in his dealings with teacher unions. He asserted that:

> *I overcome challenges by sticking to the policy. So I manage the school by adhering to the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document. I do not use common sense as this will land you in trouble. Therefore, if teachers want to embark on union activities then they*

must give me three days' notice. Conversely, if they do not provide a circular then they are not going to leave school. (Mr Nkosi)

Lastly, Dr Chetty of Kestrel Secondary stressed that he used a common sense approach to deal with barriers that were posed by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE). To counteract the slow and cumbersome process of teacher staffing, he recruited and developed his own teachers. Dr Chetty explained:

We have recruited people from industry especially for the technical subjects. We have also recruited people from the defence force to become Civil Technology teachers. Our strategy is to mentor and train them so that they qualify as teachers. I have sourced over a dozen teachers from industry - may I add free of charge to the Department of Basic Education. (Dr Chetty)

The findings suggest that the participating principals used various strategies in their attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices. Mrs Naicker, Mr Nkosi and Mr Ramdin implemented turnaround strategies such as extra tuition and remedial classes. This meant that they prioritised teaching and learning in their schools. The LSEN programme at Mrs Naicker's and Mr Ramdin's schools suggests that they realised that all learners were not of the same intellectual capacity and thus needed specialised help in order to progress. Further, Mrs Naicker and Mr Ramdin leveraged their social resources in order to improve the lives of their learners. This far-sighted action suggests that they did not only focus on the curriculum but also on the learners' holistic well-being. Mr Ramdin's use of innovative communication strategies such as parent information meetings and the SMS system shows that efforts were made to impact on the lives of learners beyond the classroom. Moreover, Mrs Naicker's attempt to motivate the SGB to appoint skilled and competent teachers suggests that she placed a high premium on the quality of teaching and learning. Furthermore, Mr Nkosi's firm dealing with recalcitrant teacher unions suggests that there was not much disruption to Albatross Secondary's instructional programme. One of the most notable observations from the findings was the barriers posed by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) regarding staffing issues. However, Dr Chetty tried to overcome this barrier by taking the initiative to recruit and mentor teachers in scarce technical subjects. This shows that Dr Chetty went the extra mile in order to improve teaching and learning at Kestrel Secondary.

To a large extent, the findings from the interviewed school principals corroborated with the findings from the documents that I analysed. According to Penguin Primary's 2013 School Improvement Plan (SIP), *"English and Mathematics results have improved due to the extra tuition offered on Saturdays"* and *"the PGSES have provided guidelines to assist LSEN learners"*. In addition, Robin Primary's 2013 SWOT analysis lists "*a well-developed academic programme*" as a major strength. Albatross Secondary's 2013 School Improvement Plan (SIP) also indicated that *"an academic programme was in place to help Grade 12 learners with extra tuition"*. These illustrations point to the existence of turnaround strategies in these schools. There was further evidence of networking as Penguin Primary's 2013 School Improvement Plan (SIP) confirmed that the school networked with social workers and Robin Primary's 2013 SWOT analysis listed the *"good support network within the area"* as an opportunity. Moreover, Penguin Primary's 2013 School Improvement Plan (SIP) noted that *"educators need to develop skills to teach and assess learners"*. This clearly alludes to Mrs Naicker's concerns regarding the hiring of skilled and competent teachers. Furthermore, Robin Primary's SMT minutes on 07/05/2014 confirmed the use of innovative communication strategies when it stated that *"conversations with parents should be written on a parent interview card"*. Lastly, Kestrel Secondary's SMT minutes on 16/05/2013 corroborated Dr Chetty's views on the recruitment and development of teachers when it stated that *"we have the full staff complement"*.

Literature supports the principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices. *The South African Standard for Principalship* (DoBE, 2014) states that principals should use strategies for the development of a learning culture in the school and for raising the levels of learner achievement and excellence. In this regard, Mrs Naicker, Mr Nkosi and Mr Ramdin used turnaround strategies to create exemplary schools. Further, Mrs Naicker's and Mr Ramdin's use of social resources is in line with *The South African Standard for Principalship's* goal of networking with the wider community for greater school improvement (DoBE, 2014). In addition, Hoadley, *et al*. (2009) contend that the relationship between parents and the school is crucial to improve learner achievement outcomes. According to Naicker, *et al*. (2013), good school principals take a firm stand against recalcitrant teacher unions to ensure that there is minimal disruption to teaching and learning. This is consistent with Mr Nkosi's actions on this issue. Moreover, Naicker, *et al*. (2013) posit that schools receive very little support from the

Department of Basic Education (DoBE) and have to take the initiative to make things happen. This is in line with Dr Chetty's efforts to recruit and develop teachers in specialist subject areas.

In the final analysis, the participating principals seem to be exhibiting the *Batho Pele* principles of increasing access to services; maintaining high service standards; consulting with clients; and transparency (DoBE, 2014). These public servants (principals) thus showed that they were committed to serving the people (learners / parents) and they found ways to improve service delivery (education).

Drawing on Weber's (1987) model of instructional leadership, the school principals attempted to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices. Dimension six of Weber's (1987) model focuses on monitoring achievement and evaluating programmes. Here the principal contributes to the planning, designing, administering and analysis of assessments in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. Weber (1987) further avers that if there are any flaws or deficiencies in the system, then it can be identified and remedied. This clearly alludes to the principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices.

The fourth theme focused on principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices. In this regard, the principals used various proactive strategies to overcome the many barriers posed by learners, parents, teachers, teacher unions and the Department of Basic Education (DoBE).

4.3 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the findings and analysed data generated through interviews and documents review with four school principals in the Pinetown District. It analysed the findings for each of the interview questions and then compared and contrasted the findings with the data from the documents. The proceeding chapter is the final chapter of this study and consists of an introduction, a summary of the entire study; the conclusions derived from the entire study, and ends with the recommendations and the implications of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDY SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter presented, analysed and discussed the data from the field. This chapter provides the study summary, the conclusions and the recommendations of the entire study. Drawing from the findings outlined in Chapter Four, conclusions and pertinent recommendations are derived at, thereafter the implications of the study are made known to various stakeholders. A chapter summary concludes the presentation.

5.2 The summary of the study

The focus of the study was to explore the instructional leadership practices of school principals.

Chapter One was an orientation to the study. The chapter gave an overview of the following: the background and rationale for the study, the aims of the study were stated followed by the key research questions, clarification of key concepts, an overview of the literature reviewed as well as the underpinning theoretical frameworks, the research design and methodology, the demarcation and limitations of the study, and the outline of the study. The chapter ended with a chapter summary.

Chapter Two provided an in-depth literature review on instructional leadership as well as the underpinning theoretical frameworks that were able to shed light on the phenomenon under discussion.

Chapter Three dealt with a detailed explanation of the research design, methodology, methods of data generation, data analysis procedures, issues of trustworthiness and the ethical issues that were followed in carrying out the research.

Chapter Four concentrated on the presentation of data analysis and interpretation thereof.

Chapter Five presents a synthesis of the key findings of the research on the basis of which conclusions, recommendations and implications of the study are made known to various stakeholders.

5.3 Conclusions

According to Maree (2011), the ultimate goal for researchers when interpreting data is to make findings and draw conclusions. Maree (2011) further avers that each conclusion should be based on verified findings from the data, in relation to what is already known, in order to reveal new insights or corroborate existing knowledge. Conclusions thus serve as a final comment or judgement about a specific study. Maree (2011), however, argues that conclusions cannot be generalised to the larger population but is specifically confined to the study participants in their own context. This is termed a "bounded conclusion" (Maree, 2011, p.113). As its key research aim, this study sought to explore the instructional leadership practices of school principals. It also sought to elicit the school principals' views on the barriers they experience as well as to investigate how they navigate those barriers as they support and enhance instructional leadership practices in their schools. The main research question for this study was: *How do school principals enact and enhance their instructional leadership practices as they support teaching and learning in their schools?*

A significant conclusion that was gleaned from this study's findings was that school principals conceptualised their roles to be very significant in managing / supporting teaching and learning in their schools. In fact, the principals placed instruction and learning at the core of the school and they were at the forefront of curriculum delivery. Further, the participants modelled professional behaviour and one principal was involved in classroom teaching. Moreover, the schools espoused a broader vision of improving the quality of teaching and learning for all. One visionary participant went even further by offering technical and trade subjects, thereby improving the chances of learners finding employment once they leave school. This is in line with the socio-economic milestones of the National Development Plan (NDP). Crucially, the principals realised the importance of creating an appropriate positive school environment. This was achieved through using the collegial leadership style and an invitational approach. There was also an emphasis on school safety and orderliness, and efforts were made to minimise interruptions to the curriculum.

The other major finding that emerged from the study was that organisational management practices came to prominence. All four participating principals displayed high levels of organisational management skills by utilising organisational structures such as the organogram

and doing SWOT analysis. Furthermore, Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) were provided to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, and resources such as hi-tech equipment provided learners with much needed trade skills. In addition, the principals' recruitment of competent and suitably qualified teachers even in scarce subject areas such as Mechanical Technology showed that effective teaching and learning was taking place at these schools. However, the principals were constrained regarding the hiring and firing of teachers as it was not the prerogative of the SMT, but fell under the domain of the SGB and the Department of Basic Education (DoBE).

Another finding that emerged was that the principals displayed high levels of distributed instructional leadership practices in their schools. The principals also illuminated the strategies that were used to implement distributed instructional leadership practices. Initially, tasks were delegated to individuals and they were subsequently supported and monitored in their efforts. Moreover, the principals were always held accountable. Crucially, distributed instructional leadership had many positive benefits as it empowered staff with new skills and expertise, developed trust and camaraderie, and reduced the workload of principals. Ultimately, distributed instructional leadership could be viewed as a professional development practice.

Evidence from this study also showed that all four principals fostered high levels of professional dialogue and communication in their schools. Different strategies were used to communicate with various stakeholders such as formal hierarchical structures that used an organogram. Interestingly, the principals also utilised informal communication strategies such as chatting to teachers outside in the corridors. Further, professional discourse regarding issues of teaching and learning also featured quite prominently. Conversely, the study showed that principals and teachers did not utilise the concept of teacher reflection in order to enhance professional practice.

According to the data presented, it emerged that the principals effectively monitored teaching and learning. They focused on monitoring the curriculum, teachers' practices and learners' academic performance. This took the form of classroom visits, and the monitoring of learners' books and teachers' programmes. Thus, the principals took a hands-on approach whereby they followed-up with managers for feedback. The study also showed that the principals used Management by Walking Around (MBWA) to enhance the monitoring process. The reason for

performing such tasks was that it was a means to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their schools.

The findings in the study further suggested that the principals actively promoted teacher professional development in their schools. Firstly, the Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) of appraisal and evaluation enabled principals to draw up a needs analysis to prioritise areas of staff development. Secondly, the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) workshops informed teachers of the latest curriculum trends and they subsequently cascaded the information to the rest of the staff. Thirdly, novice teachers were mentored in order to improve their knowledge, skills and practice. Thus, teacher professional development served as an impetus for the betterment of teaching and learning.

Research findings indicated that the participating principals did not fully understand the concept of a Professional Learning Community. Various incorrect definitions of Professional Learning Communities were proffered; such as collegiality, a turnaround strategy and dispersed leadership. However, one participant had a fairly good understanding of the concept but failed to mention the analysis of learner assessment data in order to improve learning outcomes. This is a telling aspect and showed that the participants did not fully harness the power of Professional Learning Communities in order to augment teaching and learning in their schools.

Another significant conclusion that was gleaned from this study's findings was the use of rewards and recognition as a strategy to enhance instructional leadership practices. Learners were given incentives such as academic badges and recognition at the Awards Day functions; whilst teachers were praised and encouraged for their professionalism. This showed that the principals realised that the schools human resources were its most important commodity.

While there were these positive conclusions, however the findings indicated that there were significant barriers that made it difficult for school principals to discharge their instructional leadership practices. Firstly, learners' attitude towards schooling left a lot to be desired. In addition, contextual factors such as high levels of poverty and the lack of proper clothing and nutritious foods also affected the learners' academic performance. However, language emerged as one of the biggest barriers as most IsiZulu speaking learners had difficulty learning in English. Further, there was the problem of parental non-involvement in their children's education. This

showed that a culture of learning did not exist at home. Thirdly, newly qualified teachers from long-distance Higher Education Institutions were not of the requisite standard as many of them did not major in teaching subjects and thus lacked the content knowledge to effectively deliver the lesson. Fourthly, findings suggested that teacher unions posed serious barriers to teaching and learning as their labour actions cut across curriculum time. Lastly, one of the most notable observations from the findings was the barriers posed by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE). This specifically referred to problems regarding the shortage of specialist subject advisors and the bureaucratic nature of appointing teaching staff.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

Recommendation One

Findings from the study showed that the participating principals were strong instructional leaders and effectively managed and supported teaching and learning in their schools. Furthermore, they placed instruction and learning at the core of the school in as far as teachers were expected to teach and learners to learn. This meant that their instructional leadership practices were worthy of emulation. To a large extent they modelled professional behaviour, however only one principal was involved in classroom teaching. It is therefore recommended that all principals teach content subjects in order to master the new Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum and stay in touch with practices on the ground. In addition, it would be judicious for schools to implement a curriculum that is rich in technical and trade subjects in order to improve the chances of learners finding jobs. This is in line with the National Development Plan's (NDP) goal of improving the standard of living for all South Africans.

Recommendation Two

A significant conclusion that was observed from the findings of this study was that organisational management practices featured quite prominently in the researched schools. This entailed focusing on organisational structures, providing Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) and resources, and hiring competent teachers. Horng and Loeb (2010) posit that instructional leadership practices are archaic as it would be virtually impossible for

instructional leaders to be effective in large schools with many teachers and varied subjects. With this in mind, there should be a reconceptualisation of school leadership whereby there is an infusion of strong organisational management skills with traditional instructional leadership practices in order to enhance school improvement and maximise learning outcomes. Furthermore, it is essential that the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) train School Management Teams (SMTs) in order to equip them with skills and expertise to deal with important issues such as the hiring of teaching staff.

Recommendation Three

Findings from the study showed that there were high levels of distributed instructional leadership practices in the researched schools. It involved many role players such as the principal, deputy principals, Heads of Department (HoDs) and teachers, and was very effective in supporting pedagogical practices and dispersing skills and expertise throughout the school. It is therefore recommended that distributed instructional leadership practices be expanded to incorporate other stakeholders such as parents, the community and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in order to further enhance teaching and learning.

Recommendation Four

Another recommendation of this study would be that school principals promote the concept of teacher reflection in order to enhance professional dialogue and communication. Msila (2013) contends that teachers should use journal writing in order to be more self-critical and reflect on their professional practice. Consequently, this innovative strategy would help to improve pedagogical practices in schools.

Recommendation Five

It is recommended that all school principals use Management by Walking Around (MBWA) as an additional tool to monitor teaching and learning. More specifically, principals should follow the Three-Minute Walkthrough (TMW) model as conceptualised by Downey, *et al*. (2004). The goal of this model is for principals to gather valuable data in a short space of time. Thereafter, feedback is provided to teachers and they are encouraged to express their views about the observational data.

Recommendation Six

It is further recommended that all schools should have a strategic professional development programme to develop novice teachers. This would entail the SMT and experienced teachers working alongside novice teachers to impart their knowledge and skills in order for novice teachers to improve their professional practice. This is in contrast to the ubiquitous 'once-off' Department of Basic Education (DoBE) workshops where there is little time or opportunity to engage in instructional practices.

Recommendation Seven

Findings from the study showed that Professional Learning Communities were not present at the researched schools. It is therefore recommended that all principals explore the positive spin-offs of having Professional Learning Communities in their schools. According to DuFour (2004), this will ensure that teaching practices and learning outcomes would be enhanced in their schools.

Recommendation Eight

With regards to rewards and recognition, it is recommended that all school principals use rewards and recognition as a strategy to enhance their instructional leadership practices. This basically entails principals focusing on their human resources (teachers and learners) in order to boost their morale and emotional well-being. The consequence of this would be a greater buy-in from these stakeholders for overall school improvement.

Recommendation Nine

The principals cited numerous barriers that made it difficult for them to discharge their instructional leadership practices. Firstly, they used various turnaround strategies to improve learning outcomes. These successful strategies should be continued, however schools should also utilise Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) that specialise in teaching English to second language speakers. Further, schools should network with social organisations in order to improve the well-being of the child. Secondly, it is essential that schools liaise with parents to build a culture of learning and also utilise the Short Messaging Service (SMS) system to keep parents informed. Thirdly, schools should mostly recruit teachers from reputable institutions such as the University of KwaZulu-Natal instead of disreputable long-distance Higher Education

Institutions. Fourthly, all school principals should keep abreast with current educational policies and adhere to the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document when dealing with recalcitrant teacher unions. Lastly, the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) should secure the services of more subject advisors and each one of them should be responsible for a reasonable number of schools. In addition, the teacher database should be more efficient and the process of appointing teachers should be streamlined for convenience. Thus, there should be synergy between the Department of Basic Education and principals to enhance teaching and learning.

5.5 The implications of the study

The findings from this study may be of primary importance to school principals as they consider their instructional leadership practices and the barriers they face in supporting teaching and learning in their schools. Findings may also make teachers more reflective about their professionalism and assist them with strategies to improve their pedagogical practices. Furthermore, the findings may inform teacher unions of the disruptive role that they play in schools and ask them to consider self-introspection to rectify their actions. In addition, the findings may influence the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) to re-examine the strategic support that they provide to schools in their endeavour to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In the final analysis, the findings may encourage parents to contribute to a culture of learning thereby improving learner achievement outcomes.

Finally, the limited scope of this study should be expanded. It would be judicious to conduct an in-depth quantitative study on the instructional leadership practices of school principals. This study would essentially focus on learner achievement outcomes data in relation to barriers posed to instructional leadership practices, and would thus establish a statistical correlation between instructional leadership practices and barriers to learner achievement outcomes. Consequently, more research would assist school principals to enhance their instructional leadership practices.

5.6 Chapter summary

This chapter outlined the summary of the entire research study. The findings were informed by data generated from the participants. These findings subsequently led to conclusions that elicited corresponding recommendations. In summation, the implications of the study were proffered.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

29 April 2014

Mr Paresh Prakash 210551028
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Prakash

Protocol reference number: HSS/0296/014M
Project title: A case study of instructional leadership practices of four school principals in the Pinetown District

Full Approval – Expedited

This letter serves to notify you that your application in connection with the above has now been granted **Full Approval**

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project; Location of the Study, Research Approach/Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment /modification prior to its implementation. Please quote the above reference number for all queries relating to this study. PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol

Yours faithfully

Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)
Humanities & Social Science Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor/Project Leader: Dr Siphiwe E Mthiyane
cc Academic Leader: Professor Pholoho Morojele
cc School Admin: Mr Thoba Mthembu

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za / snymanm@ukzn.ac.za / mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
Website: www.ukzn.ac.za

1910 - 2010

APPENDIX B: PERMISSION LETTER TO THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

21 Harmony Road
Silverglen
Chatsworth
4092

Attention: The Head of Department (Dr. N.S.P. Sishi)
Department of Basic Education
Province of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X9137
Pietermaritzburg
3201

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am Paresh Prakash, an M.Ed. student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research on instructional leadership practices of school principals in the Pinetown District. In this regard, I request permission to conduct research in the following district /s schools: The schools where the research shall be conducted: [redacted] and all are in the Pinetown District.

The title of the research project is: ***A case study of instructional leadership practices of four school principals in the Pinetown District.***

This study aims to explore the instructional leadership practices of school principals in the Pinetown District, and will focus on school principals to solicit their views and experiences on the phenomena of instructional leadership. This study will use semi-structured interviews and

documents review to generate data. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 20-35 minutes at the time and place convenient to them.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.

Participants' identities will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.

All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality. Fictitious names will be used to represent participants' names. Participation is voluntary which means participants are free to withdraw at any time they so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences / penalty on their part. The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview. Participants will be contacted on time about the interviews dates and times.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact me using the ff. contact details:

Mr P. Prakash; Tel: 031 7062353; E-mail: pareshprakash1@gmail.com; Cell: 0721925583.

Dr S. E. Mthiyane; Tel: 031 2601870; E-mail: Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za; Cell: 073 377 4672.

The HSSREC Research Office (Ms P. Ximba, Tel. 031 2603587, and E-mail: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za)

The interview schedule and documents review schedule is attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Mr P. Prakash

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Sibusiso Alwar | Tel: 033 341 8610 | Ref.:2/4/8/1/109

Mr P Prakash
21 Harmony Road
Chatsworth
Durban
4000

Dear Mr Prakash

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"A CASE STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTISE OF FOUR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE PINETOWN DISTRICT",** in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 01 April 2014 to 30 March 2015.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Mr. Alwar at the contact numbers below.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report / dissertation / thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Director-Resources Planning, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (Pinetown District)

Primary School	Secondary School
Primary School	Secondary School

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 05 May 2014

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X 9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa ...dedicated to service and performance
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. 033 392 1004 Fax: 033 392 4003
EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.connie@kzndoe.gov.za: CALL CENTRE: 0860 596 363:

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

21 Harmony Road
Silverglen
Chatsworth
4092

Attention: The Principal

[redacted]

[redacted]

Dear Sir / Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am Paresh Prakash, an M.Ed. student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research on instructional leadership practices of school principals in the Pinetown District. In this regard, I request permission to conduct research in your school. Please be informed that I have already sought and are awaiting the necessary permission from the Research Office of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education to conduct this research. (See copy of letter attached).

The title of the research project is: ***A case study of instructional leadership practices of four school principals in the Pinetown District.***

This study aims to explore the instructional leadership practices of school principals in the Pinetown District, and will focus on school principals to solicit their views and experiences on the phenomena of instructional leadership. This study will use semi-structured interviews and documents review to generate data. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 20-35 minutes at the time and place convenient to them.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.

Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.

All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Fictitious names will be used to represent your names.

Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences / penalty on your part.

The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist the researchers in concentrating on the actual interview rather than focusing on writing voluminous notes.

You will be contacted in time about the interviews.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact me using the ff. contact details:

Mr P. Prakash; Tel: 031 7062353; E-mail: pareshprakash1@gmail.com; Cell: 0721925583.

Dr S. E. Mthiyane; Tel: 031 2601870; E-mail: Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za; Cell: 073 377 4672.

The HSSREC Research Office (Ms P. Ximba, Tel. 031 2603587, and E-mail: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za)

The interview schedule and documents review schedule is attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Mr P. Prakash

APPENDIX E: DECLARATION / CONSENT FORM FROM THE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

P O BOX

TELE-FAX 031-

28 February 2014

To whom it may concern

This letter confirms that I, Mrs. , hereby grant permission to Mr P. Prakash to conduct research for his Masters Research Project at Primary School.

I wish him well in his endeavours.

Yours sincerely

PRIMARY SCHOOL
P.O. BOX 501 - 3604
PINETOWN DISTRICT
CIRCUIT: CITY OF DURBAN
WARD: KWASANTI
TEL/FAX: 031

Mrs.
(Principal)

SECONDARY SCHOOL

ROAD

P.O. BOX

Our Ref. _____

Your Ref. _____

Tel: (031)
Fax:(031)

28 February 2014

To whom it may concern

This letter confirms that I, Mr. , hereby grant permission to Mr.P.Prakash to conduct research for his Masters Research Project at Secondary School.

I wish him well in his endeavours.

Yours sincerely

Principal

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU NATAL
SECONDARY SCHOOL
P.O. BOX
EMAIL:
DEPT OF EDUCATION & CULTURE

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Street,
Postal Address: P.O. Box
Telephone:
Fax:

10 November 2014

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter confirms that I, Mr , hereby grant permission to Mr P Prakash to conduct research for his Masters research project at School.

I wish him well in his endeavours.

Yours sincerely

MR
PRINCIPAL

KWA-ZULU NATAL DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION & CULTURE
PRIMARY SCHOOL
P.O. BOX

SECONDARY

EDUCATION FOR HARMONY

SECONDARY SCHOOL

ENQUIRIES : PRINCIPAL – DR

P O BOX

TEL : 031 –
FAX : 031 –
e-MAIL :

28 February 2014

To whom it may concern

This letter confirms that I, Dr , hereby grant permission to Mr P. Prakash to conduct research for his Masters Research Project at Secondary School.

Yours faithfully

DR

PRINCIPAL

PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE

SECONDARY SCHOOL
P.O. BOX , KLOOF
TEL: (031)
FAX: (031)

APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. As a school principal, what do you understand to be your role in supporting teaching and learning in your school? Please explain.
2. How do you personally enact and enhance the instructional leadership practice of modelling, as the principal?
3. How is the vision and mission of the school aligned to teaching and learning?
4. How do you ensure that an appropriate climate is created to facilitate teaching and learning?
5. How do you enact your role as an organisational manager in order to support teaching and learning?
6. What do you actually do to support and manage teaching and learning in your school? Please elaborate.
7. How do you involve others / collaborate with others as you support and manage teaching in your school?
8. How do you personally enact and enhance the instructional leadership practices of professional dialogue and communication as the principal?
9. How do you monitor teaching and learning in the school?
10. How do you support teacher professional development in your school?
11. What strategies have you employed to create a Professional Learning Community (PLC)?
12. What measures are in place to reward and recognise both teachers and learners?
13. What are the challenges / barriers (from learners, parents, teachers, teacher unions, DoBE)

that you experience as you enact your leadership and management practices of teaching and learning in your school? Please elaborate.

14. How do you overcome the challenges / barriers that you experience as you support and manage teaching and learning in your school?

APPENDIX G: DOCUMENTS REVIEW SCHEDULE

The documents that will be reviewed will not be older than two years and will include:

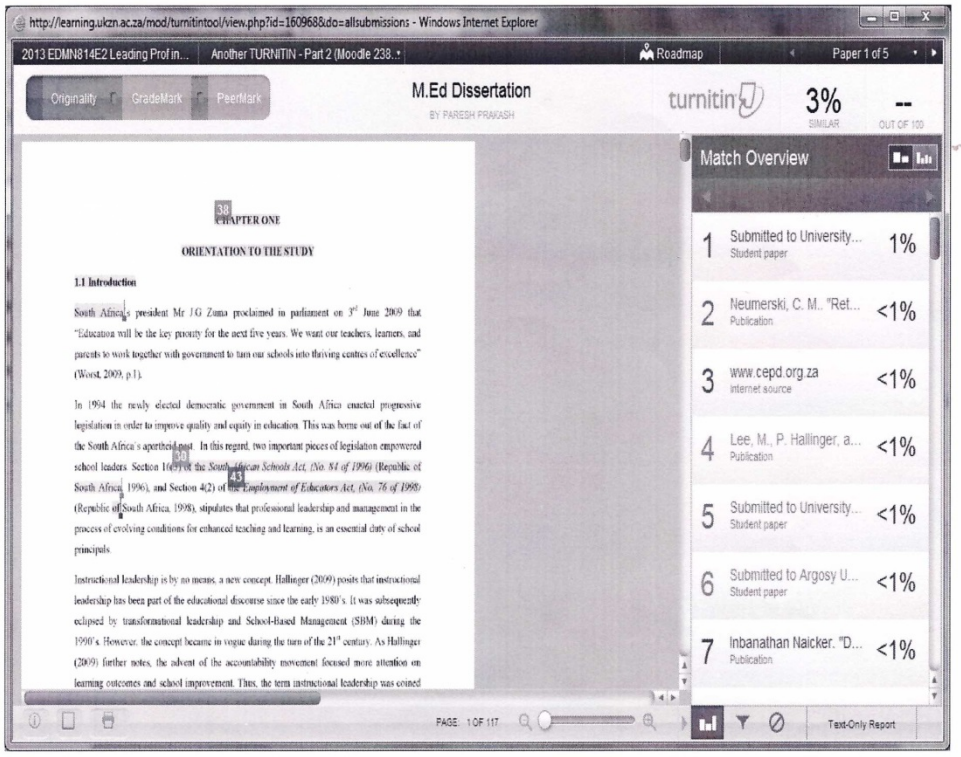
a) Written sources such as the minutes of management meetings shall be the focus of my study.

b) Written sources such as the minutes of staff meetings shall also be extensively studied.

Official documents will be used to corroborate the interview process, thus improving the trustworthiness of the findings. The documents may reveal aspects that were not found through interviews. Documents can provide valuable information about the context and culture of institutions and frequently provide another window for the researcher to read between the lines of official discourse and then triangulate through interviews, observations and questionnaires.

Extensive notes will be taken on matters relating to the instructional leadership practices of school principals.

APPENDIX H: TURNITIN CERTIFICATE



APPENDIX I: LANGUAGE EDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

25 Maple Crescent
Circle Park
KLOOF
3610

Phone 031 – 7075912
0823757722
Fax 031 - 7110458
E-mail:
wyebanksec@telkomsa.net
sathsgovender4@gmail.com

Dr Saths Govender

08 DECEMBER 2014

LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This serves to inform that I have read the final version of the dissertation titled:

A CASE STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF FOUR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE PINETOWN DISTRICT, by P. Prakash, student no. 210551028.

To the best of my knowledge, all the proposed amendments have been effected and the work is free of spelling and grammatical errors. I am of the view that the quality of language used meets generally accepted academic standards.

Yours faithfully

S. Govender

DR S. GOVENDER
B Paed. (Arts), B.A. (Hons), B Ed.
Cambridge Certificate for English Medium Teachers
MPA, D Admin.