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College of Humanities

School of Education

An exploration of instructional leadership practices of
school principals: A case study of four schools in Durban

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**AN EXPLORATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
PRACTICES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS: A CASE-STUDY OF
FOUR SCHOOLS IN DURBAN**

BY

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degree of Masters of Education- Leadership, Management and Policy in
the School of Education**

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
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November 2013

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Louis Christopher Reddy declare that:

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This dissertation has been submitted with / without my approval

Mr. S. E. Mthiyane (Supervisor)

November 2013

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I wish to convey my sincerest gratitude to:

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To all the principals that participated in my research.

DEDICATION

I wholeheartedly dedicate this study to Almighty God and to all those that had faith in my ability to bring this work to completion.

To my sweet wife Asmita, thank you for your words of exhortation and prayers, my parents, in-laws, friends Hemma and Vishaanth, including my pet Scotty.

This is also dedicated to my late grandparents. I know you would be proud.

ABSTRACT

This study entailed an exploration of instructional leadership practices of school principals. A case study was conducted at four schools in Durban. The research participants included four school principals, two from primary and two from secondary schools. My purpose was to explore the role of school principals in supporting teaching and learning at their schools. The study was conducted from an interpretive perspective. Three theories informed this investigation, namely instructional leadership theory, transformational leadership theory and distributed leadership theory. The data analysis procedure entailed a transcription of all four interviews that were thematically analysed to produce significant findings which informed the conclusions. All four principals had similar things to share about their role as instructional leaders, such as creating a favourable teaching and learning atmosphere. Secondly, some of the things that principals actually do to support teaching and learning is to motivate educators and learners and organise fund raising. Thirdly, there are numerous challenges that school principals are faced with irrespective of whether it is a primary or secondary school. Fourthly, principals take responsibility for overcoming challenges by reviewing the school's code of conduct and making amendments to curb discipline related problems and implementing professional development of their staff. All four principals displayed a good understanding of their role as instructional leaders. We can conclude that the school principals who were interviewed make a concerted effort to ensure the maximum development of their staff. They view team collaboration and delegation of tasks as important to the smooth functioning of the organisation and try their best to ensure that this takes place at their schools. Principals also voiced concerns over SGB members that often overstepped their mark in certain instances. Recommendations informed by the conclusions demonstrated that school principals, unions, and the Department of Education need to do more to enhance the delivery of quality education in schools.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- a) DOE- Department of Education
- b) HOD- Head of Department
- c) SEM- Superintendent of Education Management
- d) SMT- School Management Team
- e) SGB- School Governing Body
- f) RCL- Representative Council for Learners
- g) IQMS- Integrated Quality Management System
- h) PDMS- Performance Development Management System
- i) WSD- Whole School Development
- j) NCS- National Curriculum Statement
- k) PLC- Professional Learning Community

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

“Instructional leadership has been characterised by some scholars as a directive and top-down approach to school leadership” (Hallinger, 2003, p.337). However, the 1990’s heralded the birth of an array of new concepts in the context of North America such as “distributed leadership and transformational leadership” (Hallinger, 2003, p.330). These concepts emerged as a result of the immense discontent that important thinkers initially felt with regard to the instructional leadership model. It is argued that too much emphasis had been placed on the principal of the organisation as a figure of expertise and superior knowledge. As the concept of instructional leadership began to evolve, there was a growing need to provide a sense of empowerment for educators and to allow them the freedom to voice their opinions in the decision-making process. Scholars such as Hallinger (2003) and Gurr and David (2010) strongly argue that the key to school improvement is the ability of the organisation to foster a shared vision and dedication. The above mentioned scholars also postulate that although instructional leadership was seen as a tool that would enhance the quality of teaching and learning considerably in the United States of America, many school principals did not attach much significance to it. Similarly, in Botswana the vision has been to improve the education system together with its educational policies. Furthermore, it is argued that the emergence of the term instructional leadership required principals to join forces with other respective heads and senior educators in order to provide suitable training that would equip teachers to cope with their new roles so that quality teaching and learning could take place (Pansiri, 2008).

In the South African context, the decentralisation of power and responsibilities to school level by the new governance policies signaled a greater understanding on the part of principals in respect of their roles as instructional leaders (Hoadley& Ward, 2009). Secondly, devolution of power definitely poses serious challenges for principals. Hoadley and Ward (2009, p.3) strongly assert that “the policy around the roles and authority of school principals is contested and ambivalent, thus rendering the job of managing schools more complex”. This study thus sought to delve deeper into the role of school principals as instructional leaders as well as the challenges they experienced in enacting their roles.

1.2 Purpose and rationale for study

My motivation for embarking on this study on instructional leadership practices was the large number of educators that have become de-motivated. From observations at my school, many have lost their zeal for the profession. Several educators displayed a negative attitude towards teaching. In conversing with my colleagues, some stated that they felt unappreciated by learners as well as the school management. Very little or no credit was given to educators for the effort that they put into the delivery of quality education. In some schools principals and other members of management are autocratic. Several managers appeared to lack the faculty of empathy and were poor listeners. They also exhibited poor communication skills. In addition, very little support was given to educators that needed assistance and guidance with regard to discipline problems with learners. More and more educators were frequently absenting themselves from school and teacher absenteeism had a domino effect on students who also began staying away.

One of the roles of an instructional leader is the professional development of his or her staff (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2006). A variety of strategies are employed in this regard. Principals are expected to “inform educators about current trends and issues, encourage workshops, promote seminar and conference attendance, build a culture of learning, promote coaching and provide resources to promote development” (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2006). In addition, it is evident that leaders of education are constantly faced with external as well as internal pressures. The new political dispensation that all schools should be equitably funded falls short of its promises. In fact, the divide between “have” and “have not” schools has widened further. Research claims that in many schools “equity is elusive and social justice remains as problematic as ever” (West-Burnham, 2009, p.2). Secondly, several schools are dysfunctional and those that are not, are in dire need of better resources and support from education department officials. Hoadley and Ward (2009, p.4) draw our attention to an extremely relevant question, namely, “how are the new demands managed in schools facing tremendous social pressures from poor school communities and scarce resources?” hence the need for my study. There are a vast number of factors that contribute to the delivery of quality education, the most important being the role of the instructional leader, that is the principal. If the principal lacks understanding of what is required of him or her as an instructional leader, how are they expected to ensure that quality education takes place at their schools; thus the need to find

out about principals' understandings of their roles as instructional leaders (Hoadley& Ward, 2009).

Hoadley and Ward (2009, p.4) firmly advocatethat “principals in South African schools have little experience regarding instructional leadership and there is bound to be substantial confusion regarding who is responsible for what”. It is my firm belief that more than legislation will be required to improve teaching and learning in our schools. Quality education will only be possible if sufficient support and adequate training is provided for instructional leaders. Again, Hoadley and Ward (2009, p.4) assert that “most principals have not received specialist training, particularly in financial management and instructional leadership”.

The variables that determine school success could be compared to the process of metamorphosis. The strategies that are employed to ensure the delivery of quality education are in a constant state of flux, growing and adapting with the development of new knowledge. Just as viruses keep changing, educational leadership strategies have to be modified to ensure educational improvement (West-Burnham, 2009). This study is relevant as it aimed to explore what was being done to ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place at school. Furthermore, knowledge about instructional leadership currently reveals little about the transformational aspects of the role. It is argued that “knowledge of how principals manage curriculum and instruction in schools in South Africa is limited” and moreover, “there are no accounts of how school principals and other school managers exercise instructional leadership” (Hoadley& Ward, 2009, p.4). In light of the above, this research attempted to fill that gap.

1.3 Objectives and key research questions of the study

- To investigate what school principals understand about instructional leadership.
- To establish what school principals are doing to enact instructional leadership practices in their schools.
- To explore the barriers experienced by principals in enacting their role as instructional leaders in their schools.
- To investigate how principals navigate the challenges that they encounter in enacting their roles as instructional leaders.

This study was therefore underpinned by the following critical questions:

- What are principals' understandings of their roles as instructional leaders at their schools?
- What do school principals do to enact instructional leadership practices in their schools?
- What are the barriers that principals experience in enacting their new roles as instructional leaders?
- How do principals navigate the challenges that they encounter in enacting their roles as instructional leaders?

1.4 Definition of key concepts

The following key concepts were clarified:

1.4.1 Instructional leadership

The main focus of instructional leadership is the actual process of learning and teaching in the classroom (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2006). The head of the school, namely the principal closely monitors teaching and learning. In this way, greater support for teachers and pupils is provided. Furthermore, instructional leadership is viewed as a two-way interaction between educators and principals. The crucial factor of instructional leadership is the ability of the principal to employ a range of strategies to encourage and motivate educators such that quality education is delivered (Pansiri, 2008). According to Bush and Glover (2003), instructional leadership points to the principal's provision of support for teachers so that there will be an improvement in education. In addition, it is perceived as the actions that result in learning and professional growth of educators. By comparison, Coleman and Earley (2004, p.15) strongly assert the view that instructional leadership entails "learning-centred leadership which focuses on good teaching, effective learning and achievement". Instructional leadership creates room for principals to oversee the process of teaching and learning. Furthermore, he or she takes the development of educators seriously and understands its impact on the delivery of quality education. An instructional leader is one that "defines the school's mission and aims, manages the instructional programme and promotes a positive learning environment" (van Deventer & Kruger, 2003).

1.4.2 Transformational leadership

This leadership style gained favour as a theory between the 1970's and 1980's. This term is used synonymously with distributive leadership because of its emphasis on team

collaboration. It was developed in strong opposition to the top-down, authoritative mode of management characteristic of the 1980's (Hallinger, 2003). Transformational leadership is viewed in conjunction with transactional leadership which advocates a two-way interaction and commitment between principals and their followers. Together, managers and staff work towards the achievement of organisational goals, vision and mission. Hallinger (2003) argues that in order for efficient leadership to occur, the transactional aspect needs to be present. Furthermore, the ultimate goal of transformational leadership is enhanced results through promoting an environment that is conducive to quality teaching and learning. This is possible through the promotion of the four I's that West-Burnham (2009, p.10) identifies as "idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individual consideration". Transformational leadership is defined as the process whereby the leader challenges the status quo in order to bring about a positive revelation in an organisation, thereby resulting in its success (Hallinger, 2003).

1.4.3 Distributed leadership

Heikka, Waniganayake and Hujala (2012) asserted that there is a close link between the decentralisation of school governance and distributed leadership theory. Distributed leadership theory is often confused with democratic leadership and shared leadership. These terms are not synonyms to distributed leadership theory. Democratic leadership and shared leadership are merely components of distributed leadership theory. Instead of focusing on the role of principals, distributive leadership theory emphasises the importance of leadership practices (Heikka, Waniganayake&Hujala, 2012). Harris and Spillane (2008) maintained that "leadership practice influences organisational and instructional improvement". In addition, team collaboration and communication that is shared amongst school leaders and their staff is absolutely imperative. The practice of distributed leadership theory by school principals is context-dependent. Moreover, distributive leadership theory highlights the need for school leaders to take the initiative to create school improvement and change that is on-going (Heikka, Waniganayake&Hujala, 2012).

1.5 Survey of literature

Research conducted by Christie (2010) indicates that the advent of democracy has led to a transformation in education policy which calls for a re-conceptualisation regarding the

role of principals. “A new policy framework has radically changed the work of the school principal” (Christie, 2010, p.695). Hoadley and Ward (2009, p.1) further assert that the post-apartheid educational reform has initiated new roles for principals which need to be closely examined. In a transformed school environment, the principal is not perceived as a gatekeeper of change but instead becomes the agent of change. In support of the above claim, Reitzug, West and Angel (2008, p.695) advocate that there has been a shift in the role of principals from a so-called “inspector of teacher competence” to one of “facilitator” that provides assistance for the professional growth of his or her staff. I believe that instructional leadership is definitely effective in that it creates opportunities for growth and the improvement of education through the sharing of concerns and the pooling of ideas in problem resolution.

In addition, there is a strong emphasis on team collaboration and the use of motivational strategies by instructional leaders in the hope of enhancing the quality of educators’ work life which will in turn result in an improvement in education and the achievement of the school’s goals and vision (Pansiri, 2008). “The transformational approach encourages team work and the stimulation of team members to maximise their own and the organisation’s full potentials” (Pansiri, 2008, p.474). I fervently believe that having the support of the school principal and management indeed makes a huge difference in one’s teaching. It alleviates a large amount of stress that educators face. The inspiration and motivation that is provided by principals makes educators feel that they are not alone in the trials and tribulations that they encounter and the fact that the principal and other managers care, makes a positive impact on the attitude of educators to teaching and the delivery of quality education. Also, a relaxed atmosphere prevails which makes educators feel more comfortable discussing issues of concern.

The new policy requires principals to display and practice the following with regard to their instructional roles. Firstly, they are to demonstrate confidence in themselves and their school and have the ability to communicate with his or her staff effectively and professionally. I believe that a leader that has faith in themselves are good role models. Communication skills are extremely important so that problems can be nipped in the bud before they begin to worsen. Problems can only be efficiently resolved if there is constant communication between leaders, managers and staff. Secondly, the instructional leader sets a good example for other leaders to follow. One cannot expect to have a negative self-image and set a good example for others to follow. I firmly believe that effective

leaders need to have a vision as to where they are headed. This is imperative if the mission and goals of the organisation are to be achieved (Steyn& van Niekerk, 2007).

Thirdly, principals should demonstrate the ability to face conflict situations and to help find solutions rather than sweeping problems at school under the rug. The problem that exists at many schools is that principals may lack assertiveness. From observation, staff conflict is an issue that has a negative impact on teaching and learning. Rather than taking appropriate measures to provide assistance in this regard, principals and management sometimes tend to turn a blind eye to this reality; hence the problem begins to escalate. The Department of Education definitely needs to provide more support for principals that will equip them with the skills to be better instructional leaders. Fourthly, the principal needs to be aware of the importance of self-development and be open to it which will result in their own growth as well as the organisation's. Moreover, instructional leaders need to create opportunities for the development of professional learning communities that will enhance teaching and learning (West-Burnham, 2009).

1.6 Theoretical frameworks

This study was underpinned by three theories namely instructional leadership theory, transformational leadership theory and distributive leadership theory which are discussed in the next chapter.

1.7 Research design and methodology

A research design is an outline or plan of the type of research one is to embark on. It can be compared to a map that shows the exact route one is to take in order to reach their desired destination. It entails an outline of how the researcher is to collect and analyse the data required to answer the key research questions (Mason, 2002). Research methodology refers to the style of data collection, either qualitative or quantitative, the type of sampling, people, choice of setting, data collection methods that are to be employed such as observation or interview schedules, audio-visual devices and so forth. Research methodology also includes choices regarding validity and reliability and ethical considerations (Mason, 2002). For the purpose of my research, a qualitative design was employed. My particular research was a case-study which aims to describe the participant's lived experiences regarding their situation. The researcher is also able to gain first-hand knowledge, pertaining to the topic of their investigation (Mason, 2002).

1.7.1 Research paradigms

Furthermore, according to Mason (2002) there are different ways in which people view the world. These varied perceptions have been categorised into three research paradigms, namely the interpretive, positivist and the critical approach. Each paradigm has its own ontology, epistemology and methodology. I aimed to examine the issues related to my research from an interpretive perspective.

1.7.2 Sampling

Qualitative research assumes that since knowledge is situated within its context, it is the responsibility of the researcher to choose samples of varied backgrounds (Mason, 2002). “Sampling and selection are principles and procedures used to identify, choose and gain access to relevant data sources from which you will generate data” (Mason, 2002, p.120). My sample included four school principals (two from primary and two from secondary schools) of different social contexts in Durban. I chose four schools for my sample so that sufficient data could be obtained to inform my study. The following pseudonyms were used: Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary, Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary, Mr Jade of Rose Secondary and Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary. My sample included both primary and secondary schools to avoid the possibility of bias and to ensure a sense of balance. The sample also included male and female principals to rule out the possibility of gender bias.

1.7.3 Data generation

The data generating instrument was a semi-structured interview. All four interviews were audio-taped and conducted in English. Interviews are valuable instruments when investigating the perceptions and attitudes of individuals (Mason, 2002). Principals were interviewed individually so that they would be able to converse more openly. The interview process entailed a face-to-face discussion. Interviews are excellent tools in that they allow convenient interaction (Mason, 2002). It is much easier for someone to articulate their ideas or beliefs verbally than they would in writing. Mason (2002, p. 64) proposes that “interviews make it easy to ask questions, to listen to respondents, to gain access to their accounts and to analyse their body language” as opposed to a questionnaire, for example.

1.7.4 Data analysis

According to de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2005), qualitative data analysis entails the conversion of data into findings. This can be achieved by data reduction whereby information is carefully examined in order to identify what is useful for the purpose of the research topic. The researcher then identifies a thematic pattern from the significant data. To add, the process of data analysis serves to organise the obtained information thus bringing a sense of order to it. The main aim of analysing data is to establish a relationship from the different categories of collected information.

1.8 Issues of trustworthiness

Trustworthiness takes account of how credible or dependable the results are. Trustworthiness depends on the researcher's ability to avoid bias and adopt a neutral stance in order to ensure that he or she is able to get as close to the truth as possible (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). In addition, de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delpont (2005, p. 345) strongly assert that researchers need to ask themselves a list of questions that will assure them of the accuracy of the data. For example, researchers could ask questions such as "by what criteria can we judge the findings of the study and how can we be sure that the findings are reflective of the subjects and the inquiry itself, rather than a creation of personal bias or prejudice?" The findings obtained from the interviews were compared to each other in order to verify the degree of reliability.

1.9 Ethical considerations

It is of utmost importance for a researcher to demonstrate a clear awareness of the ethical responsibilities that he or she is bound by. As researchers, it is our duty to strictly abide by ethical principles such as autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence. According to Neuman (2006, p. 129), "researchers have a moral and professional obligation to be ethical even when participants may not be aware or concerned about ethics".

Firstly, I worked within an already approved project so ethical clearance was granted from the University. A letter of application was sent to the Department of Education requesting their permission to conduct research at the various schools that constituted my sample. I obtained written consent from the school principal that formed part of my study. All letters that were sent to schools provided a clear indication of the topic and questions that were posed so that my participants would be aware of what was required of them. All

schools and participants were given pseudonyms in keeping with the ethical principles of confidentiality.

1.10 Limitations

Only one research instrument, namely an interview was used to solicit the required information from the participants. This was mitigated by being mindful of the manner in which the interview participants communicated. I paid close attention to body language and facial expression for instance, as these aspects contributed to the quality of the data that was obtained (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The participants displayed some nervousness in answering the interview questions. I assured them that they should be comfortable as there is no correct or incorrect answer.

1.11 Delimitation of the study

I am fully aware that the topic of instructional leadership is a broad topic and is applicable to all schools; however this study was delimited to only four schools in Durban. I however, chose to conduct interviews in both primary as well as secondary schools to obtain data that enhanced the trustworthiness of the study.

1.12 Organisation of the study

Chapter One served as an orientation to the study. The chapter presented a rationale for the study, the objectives, key questions which speak to the research, a clarification of concepts, literature review followed by an outline of the chosen research design and methodology. Next, limitations and delimitations of the study were highlighted. Finally, a chapter summary portrayed the gist of the argument.

Chapter Two dealt with a literature review and theoretical frameworks which drew on various studies on the topic of instructional leadership and the role of principals in the delivery of quality education in schools. To add, the arguments radiated from the four key questions that I presented earlier on.

Chapter Three focused on the research design and methodology.

Chapter Four presented an analysis and interpretation of the data once it was obtained. Here the empirical research design including the investigative procedure was discussed in depth after the interview was conducted and transcribed.

Chapter Five included a summary of the research, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

1.13 Chapter summary

This chapter highlighted an introduction to the study, followed by a rationale, the objectives of the study, key research questions, a definition of key concepts and a survey of literature that is inclusive of a theoretical framework. Thereafter an outline of my research design and methodology was presented. Ethical considerations were discussed followed by anticipated limitations and delimitations of the study and in conclusion, the next chapter presents a literature review and theoretical frameworks that underpinned this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

There is a growing need for principals to become instructional leaders. Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013, p.277) maintain that there is a demand for principals to “increase teacher quality and effectiveness and they must become proficient in their ability to become instructional leaders.” In addition, these researchers assert that in order for principals to be better instructional leaders, it is imperative for them to take the element of change seriously. Furthermore, being an agent of change requires active, hands-on approach in its facilitation. The principal as an active leader of change does more than run the school from the office. He or she demonstrates a genuine concern for the profession of teaching and the various challenges that are part of it. The type of education that learners are receiving is also his or her main priority. “The key to change and effective instructional leadership lies in the ability of the principal to move beyond the office and to penetrate the walls of the classroom” (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013, p.152). School principals need to understand that their own development is equally significant in raising student performance (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). This chapter therefore presents a literature review that speaks to instructional leadership practices of school principals internationally and nationally and concludes with a discussion of the theoretical frameworks that underpinned the study.

2.2 International literature on instructional leadership practices

Research conducted in the field of instructional leadership by Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013) strongly emphasise that principals themselves have to demonstrate a willingness to learn and to develop their skills as instructional leaders. This requires dedication and commitment on their part. Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013, p.5) strongly assert that “principals need to become leaders of learning”. By comparison, West-Burnham (2009, p.3) draws our attention to the importance of principals to possess the desire to become learners themselves if they are to lead successful schools. “Principals should give high priority to their own growth, development and learning” (West-Burnham, 2009, p.6). In light of the above, it is my firm belief that it is imperative for principals to keep abreast with new leadership styles and embrace the opportunity to

develop their skills as instructional leaders to ensure the delivery of quality education at their schools.

Southworth (2008) claims that instructional leadership certainly has a positive impact on the process of teaching and learning. He adds that since principals are expected to work more closely with educators and learners, the quality of education is drastically improved. The needs of teachers and pupils will be easily identified through close contact between principals and the classroom arena. Emphasis is placed on classroom coaching. It is no longer enough for principals to merely issue instructions from his or her office. Principals as instructional leaders are called to monitor that all instructions are adhered to. Furthermore, they need to provide assistance and support for educators that may be experiencing problems. Principals of today should adopt a practical, hands-on approach with regard to promoting a culture that is conducive to teaching and learning and fostering the delivery of education that is of exemplary quality (Southworth, 2008). “Instructional leadership rests on head teachers focusing their time on the quality of teaching through helping adults to learn” (Southworth, 2008, p.428). There appears to be a strong link between learner achievement and the development of staff. Research suggests that teachers who are motivated, will elicit the same response from students. Learners mirror the attitude of their teachers. “The development of staff drives school improvement” (Southworth, 2008, p.429).

Southworth (2004) in Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) strongly advocates that school principals are the heart of teaching and learning. Effective leadership qualities constitute a good principal. It is imperative for principals to demonstrate the knowledge of effective leadership skills in order for educational outcomes to be successful. In addition, Southworth (2004) in Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) examines six levels of learning that are integral components of instructional leadership. Firstly, principals need to pay close attention to learning outcomes. Instructional leaders need to work collaboratively with other members of management and educators to devise strategies that will result in a positive outcome in future. For example, a staff meeting was scheduled at my school regarding the poor results that learners received in the first term. Educators from the various departments worked as a team to identify problem areas across all grades. They were also advised by the principal and heads of department to devise a remedial programme as a solution and preventative measures were to be put into place. Keeping track of learner performance is the key to effective instructional leadership. Secondly,

instructional leaders should create room for teachers to learn from each other that will result in improved teaching and learning. Thirdly, principals should foster team collaboration amongst staff. Fourthly, the importance of professional growth is highlighted. Next, the value of professional learning communities is elucidated. Lastly, the relevance of learning centred or distributed leadership is emphasised.

2.2.1 The influence of leadership on the quality of education

The concept of leadership has taken on new meaning in recent years. According to Leithwood, *et al.* (2006) and Robinson (2007) in Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010), the element of leadership is directly linked to the achievement of student outcomes. In the past, many leaders were office bound but that is quickly changing. Leadership for learning calls for principals and other senior managers to relate to teachers and learners on a more personal level in the hope of improving the process of teaching and learning. Educational leaders are increasingly found to “engage directly with teachers to enhance classroom practices” (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010, p.6). The above mentioned writers highlight the relevance of what they call the “family path”. The inclusion of parents as important stakeholders of the community and major influencers in their children’s lives is extremely integral as it impacts greatly on the performance of learners at school (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). These writers also argue that in countries such as South Africa, principals undergo a tremendous amount of pressure due to their multiple roles (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010, p.6).

In addition, it is imperative that school leaders have a clear sense of purpose that will inevitably steer the school towards success. An efficient leader keeps “the fundamental purposes of education at the forefront of their administrative practices” (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010, p.6). Furthermore, instructional leadership practices call for leadership with a type of authority that is devoid of formality as opposed to the past. It is argued that the aspect of authority is not necessarily implemented by the principal. It can be practised by any individual in the institution such as educators, heads of department and even learners on the student representative council. It is evident that leadership for learning or instructional leadership has its roots firmly embedded in democracy. Every person is viewed as equally important in the decision-making process at school (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010, p.6). In support of the above, Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013, p.9) strongly advocate that “effective principals have learned how to make sure all individuals feel they have ownership in their school”.

Research conducted by Bush, Bell and Decker (2010) suggests that experience is the best teacher. In order for principals and other senior managers to carry out their roles efficiently, they need to have sufficient experience in the classroom liaising with teachers and pupils. At many schools in South Africa principals hardly spend time teaching pupils due to the heavy work-loads that they have. “Principals have no regular teaching load” (Bush, Bell & Decker, 2010, p.7). Principals’ knowledge regarding instructional leadership practices may sometimes merely brush the surface. In addition, senior managers and other members of staff spend most of their time teaching learners; therefore I think that it is important that they also be trained as instructional leaders. Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) claim that there is a lack of adequate training for school leaders that will equip them for their new roles. The transition from teacher to senior manager or principal is quite different. It is more than a promotion. With the newly found status comes responsibility and new skills that have to be learnt.

Research findings suggest that teachers who become principals will be able to pick up on the things that principals are expected to do, failing to realise that there is much more to the role of leadership than meets the eye (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). Training and development programmes will definitely benefit those level one educators that wish to occupy leadership positions in future. There is a need for principals to recognise the need for leaders and teachers to be trained and supported on a continual basis in order for there to be enhanced teaching and learning. The development of teachers as professionals is a must. The implementation of staff development programmes is an important component of instructional leadership. “Continuing professional development, support, guidance and feedback is central to school reform” (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010, p.7 - 8).

2.2.2 The importance of communication among principals in the delivery of quality education

Communication amongst principals will undoubtedly contribute to the sharing of ideas that could assist with the resolution of problems for instance. Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013, p.62) posit that “having a better understanding of issues often gives principals a greater chance to succeed”. West-Burnham (2009) strongly argues that one should not display a complacent attitude regarding the power that professional learning communities wield. The connections that are forged amongst principals from various societal backgrounds shall indeed prove advantageous to the quality of education at schools. Team collaboration allows for the sharing of knowledge with regard to the

management of resources and how to deal with challenges in this regard for instance (West-Burnham, 2009). In the context of England, there is a strong sense of partnership amongst schools and tertiary institutions. To add, leadership for learning places emphasis on the relationship amongst staff, managers, principal, learners and members of the community. These networks are the key to successful teaching and learning (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010).

In the context of Malta, Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010, p.164 – 165) advocate the need for “shared values, vision, openness, inclusion, mutual trust and support”. I strongly believe that we are all part of the communities in which we live and liaising with individuals from different contexts within the community creates a sense of unity. Principals will feel supported in times of crisis and will rest assured that they are not alone in the problems that they experience at school. Furthermore, it is a strong sense of community that paves the way for transformation. “Community interaction lends itself to transformation” (West-Burnham, 2009, p.104). The discovery of innovative ways to make teaching and learning more productive can only be possible if principals are prepared to share ideas and be efficient listeners. “Leaders should model creativity in order to create a culture that enables a focus on creativity in all aspects of organisational life” (West-Burnham, 2009, p.26).

West-Burnham (2009) further asserts that there is an array of strategies that principals or leaders could employ that will make a positive contribution to school improvement. He claims that there is a strong link amongst the techniques that are mentioned. They all shed light on the relevance and value of the relationships we share and team collaboration. The components that form the skeleton of transformation in education are “storytelling, dialogue, appreciative enquiry, developing readiness and capability, using scenarios in school leadership and the leader as facilitator” (West-Burnham, 2009, p.118). Although a tremendous amount of value is attached to all the above mentioned aspects that foster whole school improvement, I would like to draw your attention to the model of appreciative inquiry. It is my firm belief that it is a highly efficient tool in promoting school effectiveness. To add, it is highly esteemed because of its tendency to focus on the positive aspects of leaders and the organisation as a whole. West-Burnham (2009, p.123) postulates that “the approach replaces fault-finding with the discovery of success and positive thinking”. A discussion of each of the elements of the four – dimensional cycle is presented below.

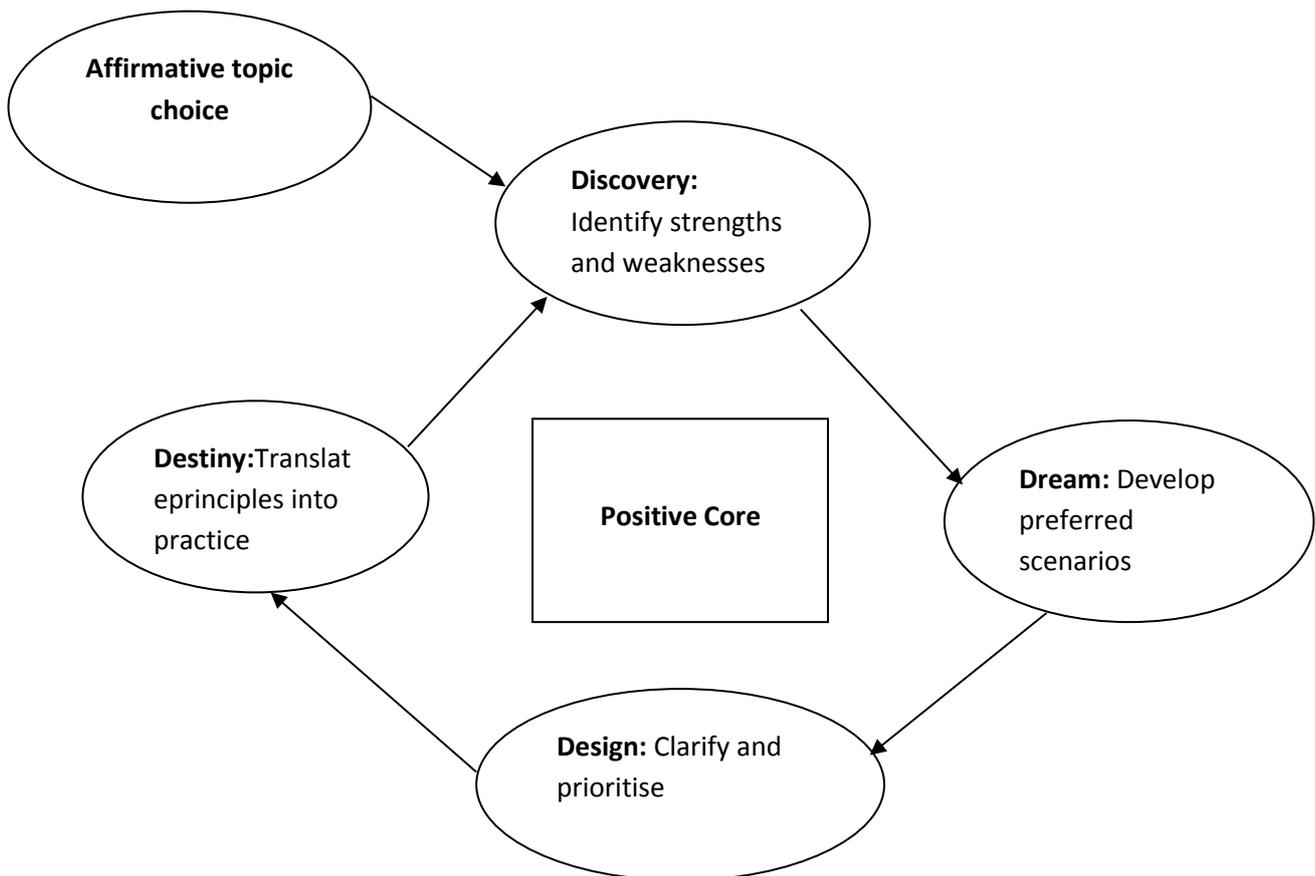
Firstly, the positive core points to the manner in which principals develop a joint understanding of their schools and what sets each school apart from the other. In other words, it is an acknowledgement of its uniqueness and celebrates this diversity. Secondly, the affirmative topic choice refers to the main concerns of the school. They could either outline a positive strategy or aim that if added to would contribute to the enhancement of the institution or a “problem that is stated in the affirmative and if studied would improve the school’s performance” (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p.7). The third component illustrates the process of finding out about the past of the school, its present and what needs to be done at school level in the future to ensure the achievement of student outcomes. It is argued that discovery inevitably leads to “a rich description of the organisation’s positive core, results in the sharing of stories of best-practices and exemplary actions within the organisation and enhanced organisational knowledge and collective wisdom” (West-Burnham, 2009, p.124). It is argued that one will never be able to achieve success without having a dream. It is in essence the vision that school leaders have for themselves, including their schools in respect of what they want to accomplish in future (West-Burnham, 2009). “The phase is a time to explore hopes and dreams for their work, their working relationships, their organisation and the world” (West-Burnham, 2009, p. 125). The aspect destiny draws attention to the personal and organisational commitment of leaders that will pave the way for the organisation’s betterment. It involves “a series of inspired actions that support ongoing learning and innovation or what will be” (West-Burnham, 2009, p.125). To add, the development of a mission and vision is inclusive of the process of framing and communicating the goals of the organisation. “Effective principals were described as having vision and the ability to develop shared purpose through the way they communicated their vision for their school” (Gurr&Drysdale,2010,p.3).

Southworth (1993) in Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) asserts that leaders with a vision for their schools are able to steer the organisation towards success. He also states that a personal vision provides leaders with a degree of motivation to improve their practice through putting in extra effort. Bush and Glover (2003) identify vision as a defining factor that sets successful leaders apart from the rest. Bush and Glover (2003, p. 5) cite Beare, Caldwell and Millikan (1989) who state that “a vision or mental picture of a preferred future” is an essential component of an effective principal. Bush and Glover (2003) refer to the aspect of vision as a dream that starts as a mental image which is

thereafter written in such a way that it encapsulates the intention and maintains the interest of the staff. To add, the vision for the school needs to be convincing and contain a powerful message that is meaningful. The vision should be documented for example in the school's code of conduct in order for it to be effective. Educators need to be informed of its importance on a regular basis and should be encouraged to practice it in their classrooms. The following table presents an outline of how principals are expected to enact their roles as visionaries at different levels.

LEVEL	VISION DERIVED GOALS
1. Basic	The principal implements the vision handed down by the Department officials.
2. Intermediate	The principal designs a plan of goals that he or she envisions for the school that is in line with their personal vision.
3. Advanced	The principal liaises with members of staff and incorporates their collective vision into his or her own.
4. Expert	The principal communicates with professional learning communities to develop goals that represent the wider community.

The principal as visionary illustrated by Begley (1994) in Bush and Glover (2003, p. 7)



The four – dimensional cycle (Whitney, Trosten-Bloom, 2003, p.6)

The above diagram displays the interrelatedness of all factors that constitute the four-dimensional cycle.

2.2.3 The role of principals in creating professional learning communities

Professional learning communities consist of individuals that share a common goal. “They work collaboratively, provide each other with support, understand and are sensitive to the fact that different individuals have different beliefs and together they form a network that creates opportunities for learning” (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013, p.243). According to Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013) it is essential for principals to become associated with each other. If one were to keep to him or herself, then personal as well as the growth of the organisation will be hampered. Furthermore, it is imperative for principals of schools to establish close ties with prominent figures within the community, parents, administrators, central office staff, learners and superintendents. A successful principal understands the value of communication and democracy in decision-making. It also leads to a trusting relationship being forged which contributes to a favourable learning environment (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013). Successful instructional leaders recognise the need to allow pupils and staff the freedom to voice

their opinions. This leads to the development of a trusting relationship being forged. “Leaders should be aware of the staff involved and be open to the dialogue and discussion that emerge as an effort to improve student outcomes and learning” (Bush, Bell & Decker, 2010, p.165).

It is my firm belief that a school community must share responsibility with school principals so that school improvement can occur. “Building the right connections and networking do make a difference in creating best practices as well as creating a great school” (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013, p.63). Shields (2011) postulates that “transformational leaders know when to speak and when not to speak. They understand that sometimes due to their position of authority, silence may be the best option. They also understand that at other times, they have the responsibility to speak. Transformative leaders are always mindful that meanings are created in dialogue and maintain that no individual can ever see the entire picture or understand the totality of any situation. It is only when individuals share their perspectives; engage deeply, respectfully and resolutely to understand each other and invite the other to enter into their world views, which shape their perspectives, that meanings become relevant, inclusive and wholly understood” (Shields, 2011, p.74).

Munro (2000) asserts that a professional learning community is a community that is engaged in the process of learning. It entails the expansion of current knowledge and the discovery of new information about particular issues of concern. It is not simply a group of individuals who each pursue learning goals. The “community focus suggests knowledge that is shared. While learners in the community may be pursuing their own goals, they are also contributing to the changing knowledge of the community at large” (Munro, 2000, p.2). In the context of England, the idea of partnership amongst educators from different schools including tertiary institutions is quite popular. It is argued that the aim of such partnerships is to promote school improvement. This system of networks is highly effective in that it results in the pooling of ideas through collaborative decision-making. These PLC’s are essential as members from different cultures come together with the common goal of enhancing teaching and learning (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010).

To add, the benefits of PLC’s to schools are invaluable. The communication of individuals from different contexts and cultures mean that educators will learn how to respond to different situations and environments that are ever transforming. Educators

will be better equipped to handle problem situations that may arise with new learners that come into school (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). The liaison among different principals creates the ideal platform for learning from each other. Du Four (2004) in Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) elucidates three key factors that are components of PLC's. They include "collaborative work among the school's professionals, a strong and consistent focus on teaching and learning associated with team collaboration and the collection and use of assessment and other data for shared inquiry into performance over time" (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010, p.164). Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013, p.153) assert that school leaders should be mindful of improvement strategies such as "collaboration and actively shared leadership".

2.2.4 School principals as transformational and instructional leaders

Transformation of an organisation is indeed challenging in many ways. It is a difficult process. Not many are open to transformation as they prefer to remain in their comfort zones (West-Burnham, 2009). Change cannot take place overnight. It is a process that entails a step of boldness, dedication, commitment, motivation and most importantly support. Fullan in Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013) strongly advocates that change is not about merely adopting a strategy for reform and thereafter implementing it. It goes beyond that. "Real change involves nurturing improvement strategies such as collaboration, actively-shared leadership, high quality instruction, teacher commitment, student effort and student engagement" (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013, p.153).

Although the role of instructional leader requires principals to work closely with his or her staff and to equip them with the necessary skills that will enable their growth as professionals, this is not the reality in many schools (Fink & Resnick, 2001, p.1). In support of the above, Southworth (2008) alerts us to the fact that since principals have a multitude of tasks to perform, they do not have sufficient time to liaise with educators in their classrooms. Management of the organisation in many instances takes priority and there is a lot of conflict regarding the dual role. Educational reform has given rise to a change in the roles of principals. It is argued that the role of principals is indeed challenging (Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy & Muth, 2007). The principal is perceived as the heart of the school. A school's success depends on the effective leadership of principals. In addition, research claims that quality schools cannot be established without staffing them with efficient principals. We can thus deduce that principals undoubtedly make significant contributions to the degree of quality education that is delivered to learners at

their schools (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013). Since every school is different, it becomes challenging for principals to find alternative solutions to problems or to foster development. “Principals and leaders have found there is no one way to improve instruction” (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013, p.152).

Research suggests that principals of transformation need to take account of the following aspects: “They should employ the faculty of critical thinking and exhibit problem-solving skills. They should be open to creativity and innovation, display flexibility and be able to adapt to situations that arise, establish social and cross-cultural connections, portray responsibility and good leadership skills, display initiative and be computer literate” (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013, p.152-153). Principals have to handle everyday challenges as sensitively and ethically as possible so that their credibility is not questioned in any way. His or her decisions need to be made in a democratic manner so that some individuals are not favoured over others. For instance, two learners had been fighting during a lesson in my class. Although one of the boys was mainly to blame for the fight, according to the school code of conduct and the decision of the principal, both boys were suspended. The disciplinary measure had to be the same or fingers would be pointed at the principal labelling him as inefficient or discriminatory. “Principals have to deal effectively with daily challenges so that they and their schools are credible in the eyes of families and the community” (Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy & Muth, 2007, p.3).

Furthermore, school principals have the responsibility of hiring suitably qualified personnel, training and developing educators, making sure that all funds made available to the school are being used productively and judiciously, ensuring that the curriculum is being enacted effectively, seeing to it that educational laws and policies are being implemented correctly and moreover making certain that good discipline is maintained and that all the school is a safe and conducive environment for teachers and learners. “Principals are expected to overcome barriers to learning, show reliable student achievement, deal with resource constraints and political conflict about the role of schools” (Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy & Muth, 2007, p.3).

Hoadley and Ward (2009, p.4) further elucidate the pressures that principals and senior teachers are faced with today in addition to being instructional leaders. They state that “schools in South Africa are contending with multiple demands including new relations to communities, policy change and increased accountability”. (Hoadley&Ward, 2009, p.4). Again, it is proposed that more attention needs to be given to the practice of instructional

leadership, rather than formulating policies that look good on paper. In addition, Hoadley and Ward (2009, p.5) maintain that little consideration has been given to the fact that what is written is completely different to the real situation in schools. Christie (2010, p.694) shares the same view stating that “the work of principals is very different in different contexts”.

The findings of research conducted by Webb (2005, p.81) indicate that “the head teachers were aware of the potential adverse effects on their relationships with staff and the additional stress placed on them by the constant emphasis on raising performance”. This demonstrates that many principals do not have a firm grasp of the enormous role that they are expected to play as instructional leaders. How is quality education to be delivered if principals are in the dark about what this role really entails? It is argued that one of the main challenges that principals face at present is their inability to carry out their roles as instructional leaders. Several principals have a poor understanding regarding what they are expected to do as instructional leaders (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013).

Transformed methods of learner assessment can be easily formulated by the Department but its implementation and the delivery of quality education ultimately depends on the principal and their ability “to help create the pre-conditions for improvement in classrooms” (Gurr & Drysdale, 2010, p.4). Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013, p. 314) assert that principals are perceived as the key role players of schools. By comparison, Hoadley and Ward (2009, p.1) maintain that “it is primarily principals who create conditions of possibility for quality teaching and learning”. However, according to Hoadley and Ward (2009, p.4), there are no accounts of how school principals enact their role as instructional leaders in their schools; hence my research attempts to fill this gap.

2.2.5 The influence of context on the delivery of quality education

From personal experience and observation of what works in one school may not necessarily work in another. Every community is unique and each has its own shortcomings which are brought into school. Professional learning communities are valuable in that educators and parents can come together, discuss these problems and come up with creative solutions. West-Burnham (2009) strongly argues that schools are extensions of the social contexts in which they are embedded and that the quality of education is dependent upon this factor. In the United States, funds that are allocated to schools are being utilised judiciously, however it is still not enough to purchase resources that would

enhance the quality of education. Principals are left with no choice but to create their own resources for learners. This places additional pressure on them as they struggle to organise fund-raising drives such as fun runs, especially at schools situated in areas where communities are plagued by poverty. At my school, each class is expected to raise a minimum amount of six hundred rand for the upcoming debs' ball function. Each child is required to contribute an amount of eighteen rand that they cannot afford as many of their parents or guardians are either unemployed, have low paying jobs or are pensioners. "Schools serve a growing population of children that are victims of poverty, single-parent homes, lack of medical insurance etc" (Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy & Muth, 2007, p.2).

School discipline is quickly spiralling out of control. The busy work schedules of parents limits the amount of time that they spend with their children. As a result, many learners become involved in activities such as consuming drugs and alcohol, violence and truancy to name a few. Meanwhile, parents are at work thinking that their children are safe at school, when in reality they may not even be at school for the day. Again, at the end of the day, they are too busy to inquire about their child who falls prey to society's evils. A police inspector recently visited a school to give learners a talk on behaviour and the importance of good discipline. He shed light on the challenges facing schools today especially school violence and carrying weapons to school. They were made aware of the law and the repercussions of being found guilty of carrying or using weapons. It was quite disappointing to notice the nonchalant attitude of learners in this regard. It is argued that schools reflect the violence in society and due to the lack of time, parents tend to depend largely on schools for their children's supervision and care. Furthermore, the principal of my school was requested by the police inspector and parents from the community to draw up a school safety and security policy. "As parents demand safer schools, principals must allocate an increasing share of their effort and resources to non-academic concerns" (Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy & Muth, 2007, p.2). Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013) assert that it is the lack of understanding amongst principals that have caused the failure of several innovations. In addition, according to the above mentioned writer, principals are urged to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge that would equip them to cope with the various levels of transformation that their schools are currently undergoing.

2.3 Instructional leadership in Africa

In the context of Botswana Pansiri (2008) argues that the manner in which school leaders enact their roles has a direct influence on the type of education that is received by

learners. He asserts that school principals should involve the SMT consisting of the deputy principal, respective heads of department and other educators in devising strategies that would contribute positively to the development of teachers, so that students and parents can be assured that they are getting the best education possible. Pansiri (2008) further draws our attention to the Ministry of education. According to him, the Ministry needs to design or set in place a structured programme that would form the building blocks regarding the professional development of educators, including administrators.

If school management teams are not given opportunities for growth, they would be unable to foster effective change and improvement in education. “The SMT is viewed as a critical force that needs professional skills to foster change and quality in schools” (Pansiri, 2008, p.472). It is my firm belief that if all principals would take the initiative to remind educators about their roles, then this would get them to reflect on their own practices, enable them to identify areas of weakness and work on them so that they can become better teachers. Pansiri (2008) postulates that findings of a survey conducted at a primary school in Botswana elucidate various problems with regard to instructional leadership practices.

Amongst them is the “absence of school development plans, lack of competency in promoting educator development, lack of professionalism amongst members of staff, poor communication skills, poor management of resources, inadequate interpersonal skills, lack of parental involvement, lack of induction of novice educators and no understanding of the pastoral role that they are required to fulfil” (Pansiri, 2008, p. 473). It is important for principals to understand that schools are not islands of their own. Schools are extensions of the community and the context in which they are embedded. Getting parents involved is one of the qualities of an effective instructional leader (Megahed, Ginsburgh, Abdellah & Zohry, 2010). It is argued that provisions need to be made for the development of management skills for both principals and the SMT. Areas of focus should “include leadership skills, co- ordination of leadership functions, curriculum management, learner achievement and learner behaviours” (Pansiri, 2008, p. 473).

Furthermore, Pansiri (2008) strongly maintains that instructional leaders should be enlightened about the aspect of motivation and the powerful impact it has on educators and their performance in the classroom. “Well-developed teachers are better prepared to cope with current and emerging instructional challenges compared to their less developed colleagues” (Ngala & Odebero, 2009). Pansiri (2008) further sheds light on what

constitutes an effective instructional leader. He maintains that it is imperative that school leaders develop a “vision and mission for their schools, devise a system by which the goals and objectives of the institution will be achieved, organising and collaboratively marshalling the personnel and other resources for operations and implementation” (Pansiri, 2008, p. 474).

In the context of Kenya, the government recognises the relevance of teacher training in the delivery of quality education. Great strides have been made by the government in the formulation of policy that outlines the value of instructional leadership practices; however what is stated on paper is far from the reality (Ngala & Odebero, 2009). Many teachers and principals in the economically sound areas of Kenya embrace the idea of staff development programmes with open arms. They understand the immense benefits that staff development has to offer in terms of assisting them to perform their instructional roles more efficiently (Ngala & Odebero, 2009). In addition, significance is attached to the element of motivation in inspiring educators to give off their best at school. These Kenyan scholars assert that “well- developed, motivated workers are easier to maintain for the overall success of the organisation” (Ngala & Odebero, 2009, p. 2).

Furthermore, Ngala and Odebero (2009) maintain that staff development practices in the rural areas of Kenya are hindered by a number of factors such as time constraints, the negative attitude of principals and educators towards instructional leadership, inadequate financial resources and high levels of absenteeism amongst teachers and principals to name a few. The severe lack of funds to support the facilitation of staff development programmes is cause for concern as it affects the quality of education for Kenya’s children. Ngala and Odebero (2009) strongly assert that the government should make a concerted effort to provide the necessary funding to schools in Kenya that would make instructional leadership practices possible. It is their fervent belief that principals need to seriously alter their negative perceptions towards instructional leadership and staff development programmes to ensure the success and victory in education that the youth deserve (Ngala & Odebero, 2009).

In the context of Egypt, there has been a change in the mind-set of the Egyptian government from focusing on quantity in the past to the delivery of quality education at present. Instructional leadership practices have been recognised as an important component in raising the standard of education. Active-learning pedagogies place emphasis on learner-centred teaching strategies as opposed to traditional teacher-centred

approaches. It is argued that quality education is hampered by the abject poverty that many families and schools are faced with. Inadequate funds mean that resources that are necessary to facilitate the process of effective teaching and learning cannot be purchased. The government claims that educators need to break away from their dependence on textbooks as a resource to teach students. Instead, they are encouraged to embrace a form of instruction whereby pupils are active participants in the learning process (Megahed, Ginsburg, Abdellah & Zohry, 2010).

A community school project that was launched in 1992 by the Canadian International Development Agency and the Education Enhancement Programme of 1996 aims to remedy the problems that impede the delivery of quality education by enlightening educators about transformed strategies for teaching and curriculum training (Megahed, Ginsburg, Abdellah & Zohry, 2010). Furthermore, the former Egyptian president Mubarak emphasised the relevance of collaboration amongst educators and leaders at a meeting that was held by the World Education Forum for All. He added that government, including other Education Forum for All partners need a vision and commitment regarding education. “They must work together to ensure basic education of quality for all, regardless of gender, wealth, location, language or ethnic origin” (Megahed, Ginsburg, Abdellah & Zohry, 2010, p.7). The relevance of the professional development of educators was discussed at various workshops that had been attended by supervisors, administrators, educators and management. The knowledge that was gained by those appointed as teacher trainers was taken back to schools to be shared. Themes of instructional leadership practices, the significance of classroom supervision and support from those in management positions, assessment and feedback was discussed with other staff members and management (Megahed, Ginsburg, Abdellah & Zohry, 2010). Interview participants that formed part of the research stated that the new skills derived from these workshops definitely benefitted them in enacting their roles as instructional leaders and assisted teachers tremendously in the delivery of quality education at their schools (Megahed, Ginsburg, Abdellah & Zohry, 2010).

2.4 National literature

Instructional leadership in the context of South Africa entails the principal taking on new responsibilities. Their role as instructional leaders mean that they need to be equipped with the necessary skills to “define the school’s mission and aims, manage the instructional programme and curriculum, supervise teaching, monitor learner progress

and promote a positive instructional and learning environment” (van Deventer & Kruger, 2003, p.247). Instructional leadership practices strongly advocate the aspect of delegation due to the multitude of tasks that it deals with. Other respective heads for example deputy principals and HOD’s are required to step in and offer their assistance (van Deventer & Kruger, 2003).

It is argued that principals could gain knowledge regarding the new role that they are expected to fulfil through liaising with other principals from surrounding areas close by. Workshops and development programmes need to be organised for principals and educators to create awareness on the subject and to change negative attitudes and stereotypes regarding instructional leadership (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2007). The onus is on the principal and other managers to take responsibility for increasing their knowledge on the subject of instructional leadership and all the responsibilities that are part and parcel of it. Diagnosing development needs, designing professional development programmes, planning for professional development and its implementation, including providing support for staff which is integral to the delivery of quality education are all aspects of instructional leadership that principals should definitely take more seriously if quality education is to be delivered (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2006).

2.4.1 The role of performance appraisal

The key purpose of performance appraisal is to develop the educator as a professional. It creates opportunities for the growth of teachers. In addition, it promotes an improvement in instruction. Once an educator is evaluated on his or her performance in the classroom they will then be aware of strengths and potential weaknesses. This would enable them to take necessary steps that would contribute to their improvement in the identified weak areas. “Data obtained is used to reinforce strengths and identify deficiencies” (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2007, p. 249). Principals are encouraged to adopt a developmental approach to the appraisal process as opposed to a judgemental or critical approach which would discourage educators. To add, it is argued that performance appraisal could be unsuccessful due to the following reasons: A lack of integration, challenges pertaining to the design, failure to efficiently implement such a procedure, incompetence on the part of principals or other respective heads, lack of rewards for work that is well done, communication problems and language barriers, lack of proper motivation for staff and either a lack of evaluation or the skills thereof to provide an evaluation that is a true indication of the teacher’s performance (<http://www.regenesys.com>).

IQMS is a tool that is advocated by the South African government in support of the appraisal process. The purpose of IQMS is to identify specific needs of educators, schools and district offices for support and development. Secondly, it provides support for continued growth. Thirdly, it promotes accountability. Fourthly, it aims at monitoring an institution's overall effectiveness and lastly it aims to evaluate an educator's performance. (ELRC Collective Agreement 8 of 2003). In addition, there is a list of principles that underpin IQMS. They emerged out of a need to ensure fairness and equality through open discussion. There is also emphasis to use this instrument in a uniform and professional manner. It is the role and responsibility of the principal as the school manager, to ensure that the above principles are adhered to. Each teacher should be given a copy of this document. The principal together with the School Management Team needs to provide advocacy and training at school level. Many educators are poorly informed about appraisal systems (ELRC Collective Agreement 8 of 2003).

To add, workshops on IQMS need to be organised so that teachers can gain a better understanding of what is expected of them. Principals are responsible for internally moderating the evaluation results to ensure that consistency and fairness is maintained (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2007). I strongly believe that workshops need to be organised for managers to better equip them with the skills to effectively implement IQMS and to create awareness. Although IQMS has been put into place to improve the quality of teaching and learning, many educators react with defiance towards this instrument. The following findings from Steyn and van Niekerk(2007) shed light on the attitude of teachers regarding the appraisal system. "In my school many teachers showed resistance to the new staff appraisal system. Many perceived the appraisal as an attempt by the management team to monitor their movements and get a firm grip on the execution of their duties. Many felt that it was bringing back the archaic system of spying and accused management of being like their old bosses and saw the appraisal system as a tool merely cloaked as a new development programme" (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2007, p.248). In conversing with my colleagues I discovered that performance appraisal is not carried out on a continual basis. Some educators are not open to constructive criticism from their principals and take the comments made after the appraisal process personally (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2007). In addition, I have heard of many educators that are totally against the appraisal process. They say that it is questioning their credibility as educators and is morally demeaning. If constructive criticism is given to an educator by the principal for instance, the educator starts to rebel against the principal by not following instructions,

refusing to go on duty and so forth. Principals therefore often choose to give their personal relationships priority over the vision and goals of the school and the delivery of quality education.

Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) contend that several principals and respective heads have a weak understanding of their role as instructional leaders in South Africa. These writers continue to argue that the enactment of instructional leadership roles is sometimes challenging due to poverty. I fervently believe that the “lack of facilities, inadequate learning materials and overcrowded classrooms” has a great impact on educator stress (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2002, p.191). The shortage of learning materials such as text books makes teaching and learning difficult. The overwhelmingly large number of pupils in each class contributes to an increase in discomfort levels. Moreover, when learners are forced to share resources, they inevitably become noisy which in turn hinders the delivery of quality education.

2.4.2 Professional development

Principals should be mindful of the fact that not all the skills that constitute an effective teacher are developed at university. They need to understand that novice educators need extra support as well as motivation that will assist their growth as professionals. Staff development is especially significant in this regard. It is the duty of every school to take the initiative to increase its capacity to learn and improve as an organisation. This can be best achieved through effective team collaboration and a dedicated principal that is open to learning and improving of themselves.

Staff appraisal not only results in the development of the individual but is beneficial to the school as a whole. Since every school is unique due to the varied contexts in which they are situated, principals then need to develop ways of staff development that will suit the specific needs of the institution (van Deventer & Kruger, 2003). In addition, the principal is viewed as the key role player regarding the implementation of staff development programmes. Its success or failure depends on his or her ability to construct and efficiently facilitate the programme. Professional development entails a process of adult learning that takes place on a continual basis, establishing a culture of team collaboration among staff, mentoring peers and so forth (van Deventer & Kruger, 2003). Staff development activities that would be useful to principals include “staff meetings, formal and informal observations and consultations the coaching of educators on a one-to

one basis and making use of an instructional leadership team comprising the deputy principal and other respective heads” (van Deventer & Kruger, 2003, p. 251). Members of the instructional leadership team are responsible for carrying out tasks such as “scheduling subject meetings, interpretation of syllabi, discussion of learning area policies, checking the subject area files of educators and classroom observation” (van Deventer & Kruger, 2003, p. 251).

PDMS is an acronym for performance development management system. It is a system that has been put in place by the Department of Education. In addition, it is a framework which strongly advocates the professional development of staff such that structured and effective learning and teaching takes place. It normally entails a conversation between the SEM that is the reviewer and the principal, including the respective heads of the school whereby the goals and the progress of the school are discussed. Support is also offered wherever necessary to enhance the quality of education. I firmly believe that this is an effective model as it facilitates clear communication and team work collaboration. In addition, it addresses and promotes the development of the school on a continual basis. It is the duty of the Staff Development Team (SDT) that the school is being managed in a democratic manner. They are also responsible for internal moderation of evaluation results to ensure fairness (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2007). Moreover, assessment is an important tool that provides educators and principals with the necessary information that will assist them to evaluate and measure or amend their instructional techniques, regulate the school’s instructional climate and ensure that the outcomes and standards are achieved (van Deventer & Kruger, 2003).

2.4.3 The significance of staff motivation

Ensuring that educators are constantly enthusiastic about their work is an important part of being an instructional leader. It is argued that motivated teachers will in turn benefit the organisation and raise the standard of education since they are more productive. Principals should develop a sense of sensitivity for what affects educators positively and negatively so that challenges can be avoided and the educational environment will be a happy, conducive one for all (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2007). Smit and Cronje (1999) in van Deventer (2003, p. 251) assert that motivation is defined as “an inner state of mind that channels a worker’s behaviour and energy towards the attainment of aims”. To add, instructional leaders need to be aware of the external and internal aspects that govern motivation. Several principals create platforms for staff motivation through encouraging

them to attend workshops or holding staff development programmes (van Deventer & Kruger, 2003). For instance every Friday afternoon is dedicated to staff development and educator motivation at my school. The principal, together with the instructional leadership team compiled a booklet outlining the importance of a motivated teacher, including strategies to manage stress and keep oneself passionate about life and the profession of teaching. Methods by which principals encourage educators internally are through “work enlargement, work enrichment and the utilization of the work characteristics model” (van Deventer & Kruger, 2003).

2.4.4 Relevance of a mission and vision

The mission statement of a school is decided upon by the principal, deputy principal, heads of department, and the school management team comprising educators, learners and the school governing body. Before the mission statement is decided, the principal needs to have a vision for the school (van Deventer & Kruger, 2003). The vision can be defined as the goals regarding what the principal wants the school to achieve. A vision is imperative in that it keeps the principal focused on the direction that he or she wishes to steer the organisation in (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2007). Bush and Glover (2003, p. 5) refer to vision as “a dream that is expressed in written form”. In order for self-management to be favourable, principals are encouraged to revisit the vision and mission often. This would pave the way for motivation and reflection (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2007). The vision and mission are seen as critical components in the instructional climate of the school. Principals usually restate the mission and vision of their schools at important staff functions for example (van Deventer, 2003). The SMT refines the school’s long term objectives into expectations that are realistic, attainable, concise, simple to comprehend and implement in the form of a mission statement (van Deventer, 2003).

2.5 Theoretical frameworks

This study was underpinned by three theories namely, Leithwood’s instructional and transformational leadership theory, including distributed leadership theory. Mohlala (2011) asserts that instructional leadership is a fairly new concept in South Africa that principals have been introduced to. It is my belief that efficient support needs to be given to principals by district officials that will assist them to cope with managing transformation and instructional leadership in their schools. A report by Mohlala (2011) emphasises this point by stating that district offices are indeed the umbilical cord which

connects schools and the Department of Education. Furthermore, it is evident that the devolution of power from the Department of Education to the schools has resulted in numerous challenges for school principals. Hoadley and Ward (2009, p.3) assert that ‘principals especially those in disadvantaged settings, have to struggle with competing demands and the new performativity which are increased standardised testing, IQMS and NCS’.

2.5.1 Instructional leadership theory

According to research by Hallinger (2003), the main focus of this theory is what educational administrators and educators need to do to ensure the achievement of educational outcomes and the delivery of quality education at schools. Instructional leadership theory has its roots in the 1980’s (Hallinger, 2003). This writer also argues that a great deal of emphasis was placed on the principal who was viewed as the chief curriculum deliverer (Hallinger, 2003). It is evident that this perception still prevails today and is a popular model of choice in many countries such as the United States of America (Hallinger, 2003). Critiques of this theory argue that too much of attention is given to the principal as the focal point of “authority, power and expertise” (Hallinger, 2003, p. 330). The year 1990 signalled a shift in leadership models that encompassed the empowerment of educators, leadership of a collaborative nature and whole school learning. Furthermore, scholars that conducted research into this theory discovered that it is the effective leadership of school principals that leads to the delivery of quality education and the successful achievement of the vision and mission of the school. According to the instructional leadership model, instructional leaders namely principals need to display skills of inspiration and motivation. To add, they need to adopt a practical, hands-on approach to solving problems. They should exhibit good communication skills and share a good rapport with fellow educators. Moreover, principals need to focus on whole school development and the achievement of the vision and mission of the organisation through the provision of support and motivation (Hallinger, 2003).

The year 1980 paved the way for principals to be seen as instructional leaders and the idea of self-management was promoted. Self-management or devolution presents a shift in power from central government to the lowest level that is schools. Decision-making is placed in the hands of local bodies such as the school governing body. Participatory management developed from the view that more effective decisions could be made by those that are in direct contact with the school in contrast to the Department who may not

be able to understand its specific needs. I agree with the above statement. I definitely agree with the idea of devolution in that the creation of separate units will undoubtedly make schools more manageable. “Many developed countries began to devolve greater powers to schools often through governing bodies or boards” (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010, p.9).

The main task of principals was to take responsibility for the teaching and learning process. Literature reveals that principals discovered if more emphasis is placed on curriculum and instruction rather than on managerial tasks then this would have a positive impact on the quality of education that is delivered (Shields, 2011). It is the duty of instructional leaders to assist teachers by providing them with support and educating them with regard to the importance of team collaboration. Instructional leadership entails having suitable skills and knowledge to necessitate improvement in education and student results. Furthermore, principals as instructional leaders need to promote a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning. They need to possess a thorough knowledge of the professional development of educators, development in respect to curriculum and evaluation processes. Principals need to ensure that a bond of trust is developed amongst members of staff and management so that teachers will be more open to discussing issues of concern. It is imperative for principals to exhibit a positive attitude at all times, especially in respect to evaluation processes.

He or she should be mindful of the fact that the role of principal does not entail putting educators down by being over critical and judgemental of their work. Rather, the role of principals as instructional leaders is to facilitate the professional growth of teachers in a sensitive, understanding and caring manner (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013). It is argued that principals as instructional leaders need to gain as much knowledge as possible about the theory. Also, strategies to implement instructional leadership effectively should be learnt. This would require dedication, commitment and a concerted effort from principals. An efficient instructional leader should possess the following: “Good planning skills, maintains a strong instructional focus, evaluates instruction through conducting ongoing assessments for learning, good management skills and demonstrates professionalism by participating in ongoing professional growth, school or community organisations and events, completes routine assigned tasks and complies with district requirements, promotes the education profession, communicates effectively and

professionally with learners, colleagues and parents” (Whitehead, Boschee& Decker, 2013, p.279 – 280).

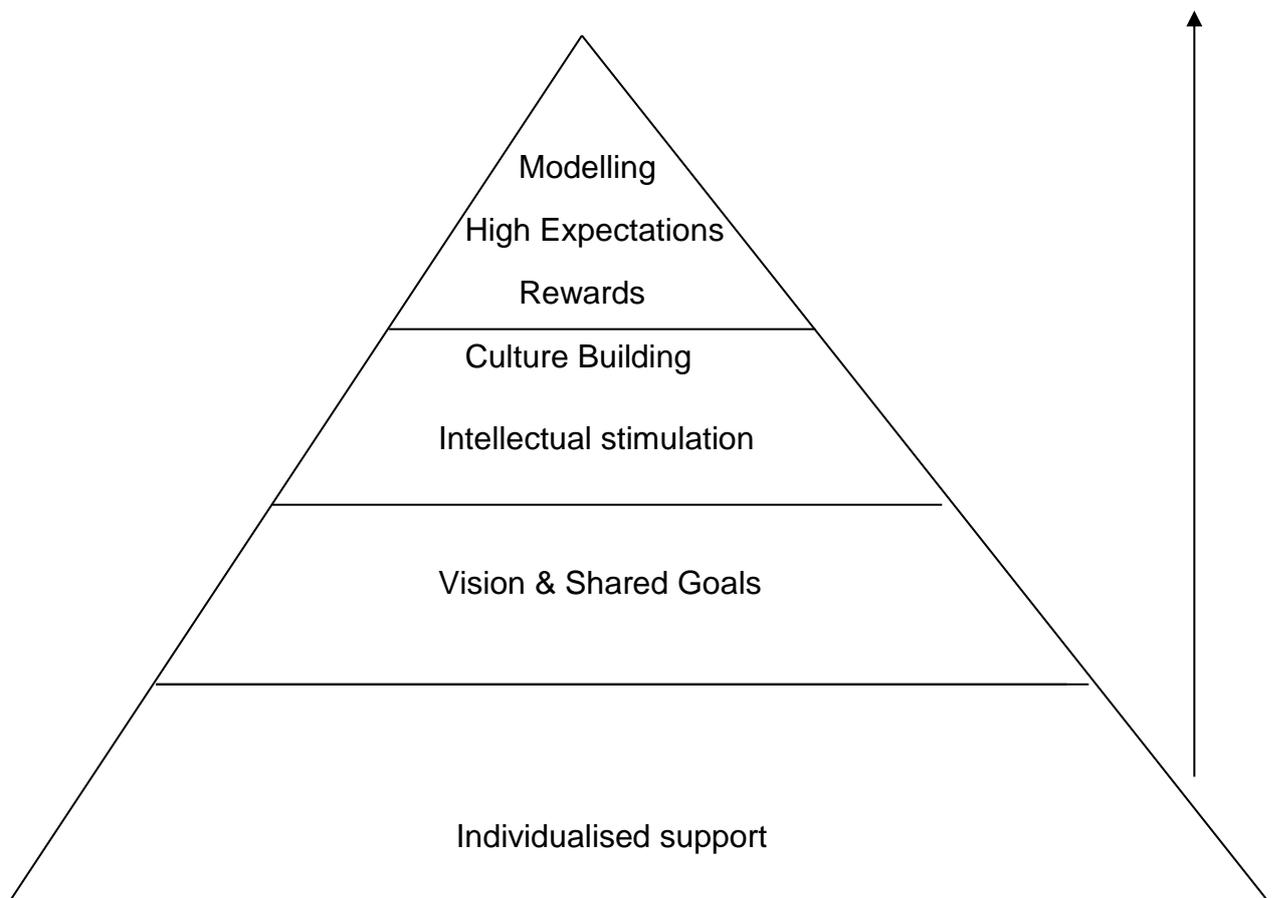
Principals have a powerful impact on instructional practices in schools and naturally on student achievement. The way to ensure that quality education is delivered in the classroom is for principals to possess the skills to lead staff members and assist them in their professional development (Steyn & van Niekerk, 2006). Principals have a direct influence on the school’s culture. It is in their hands to ensure that teachers and students are at ease in the classroom so that quality education can be delivered. Furthermore, instructional leaders need to keep themselves updated regarding the curriculum so that any changes can be identified and set in motion. The main functions of instructional leaders is to “define and communicate a clear mission, goals and objectives, manage curriculum and instruction, supervise teaching, monitor learner progress and promote an instructional climate” (Steyn& van Niekerk, 2006, p.204 – 205).

2.5.2 Transformational leadership theory

It is argued that the application of the principles of transformational learning theory is context-dependent (Hallinger, 2003). “The suitability or effectiveness of a particular leadership model is linked to the factors in the external environment and the local context of a school” (Hallinger,2003,p.329). According to Merriam,Caffarella and Baumgartner (2007), the backbone of transformational learning is naturally change in the manner in which one views the world as well as how an individual perceives themselves. In addition, it is an extension of psychoanalytic theory, including critical social theory.

Transformational learning theory was theorised by Jack Mezirow in 1978 (Hallinger, 2003). Hallinger (2003) further asserts that transformational learning and instructional leadership both foster critical thinking, the eradication of narrow-mindedness and being more accepting of the beliefs and ideas of others. Critiques of transformational leadership state that it is by far no simpler than instructional leadership. Secondly, it is certainly more difficult to provide training for (Hallinger, 2003). Other advocates of transformational leadership theory are Paulo Freire and Robert Boyd (Hallinger, 2003). The above mentioned theorists are popularly known as libertarian scholars due to their desire to break old threads of thought related to traditional, rigid, authoritarian methods of leadership (Hallinger, 2003).

The primary objective of Paulo Freire is to create social change. In the case of my study, I am concerned with change in relation to the delivery of quality education in the school context and specifically the role of school principals as instructional leaders. Hallinger (2003) highlights important points for instructional leaders to remember when applying the theory of transformation. They are as follows: Firstly, the instructional leader needs to create an ideal learning atmosphere which is absolutely imperative. A conducive teaching and learning environment will in turn foster a feeling of safety, openness, and trust in the organisation. The principal should concentrate on “focusing on developing a climate of high expectations” (Hallinger,2003,p.343). Next, the instructional leader needs to demonstrate that they are committed to the aims of the school. Thirdly, he or she needs to have insight into the instructional programme of the school. In addition, the instructional leader needs to demonstrate a positive rapport with teachers and learners and show consideration for them and most importantly support staff and learners in order for there to be quality education taking place at school. “The transformative approach to leadership requires innovation, creativity, teamwork and stimulating educators to maximise their full potentials” (Pansiri, 2008, p. 474).The instructional leader also needs to practice participative management which should include teachers, learners as well as the community (Hallinger, 2003). The following diagram encapsulates the principles of the transformational leadership model which aims to exercise influence on individuals from the bottom-up.



Leithwood's Transformational Leadership Model (Hallinger, 2003, p.337)

The transformational leadership model pays close attention to the principals of schools rather than the organisation itself. It is argued that if significance is attached to the development of principals with regard to problem-solving, teacher development and so forth, then inevitably there will be an improvement in the standard of education (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013). One of the key aims of transformational leadership is to get to the root of educational inequalities and coming up with creative ways to address these issues in the hope of rectifying them so that quality education can be enjoyed by all learners. Jill Blackmore in a book edited by Shields (2011, p.21) postulates that “transformational theory redresses past neglect and inequality of student learning outcomes”.

2.5.3 Distributed leadership theory

The delivery of education is quite a complex task. There were numerous challenges that the transformational leadership model failed to address, hence a new concept that is

closely related to transformational leadership was born. The distributed leadership model emphasises the importance of educators themselves becoming involved in leadership practices. To add, distributed leadership is also known as participative leadership. This theory is characterised by collaborative decision-making. Furthermore, it is based on democratic ideals and gained popularity in the twenty first century (Bush & Glover, 2003). The distributive leadership theory entails a two-way interaction between management, principals and educators. It also highlights the relevance of teacher-pupil interaction in the achievement of learner outcomes. It is imperative for principals to share a good rapport with members of staff and learners. This will in turn contribute to an atmosphere that is conducive to teaching and learning. “Good leadership is associated with effective communication skills” (Pansiri, 2008, p.474). The aspect of delegation is an integral component of distributive leadership. Tasks are delegated or shared amongst colleagues. This would entail team collaboration on the part of management and educators. It is the principal’s role to provide the necessary skills that would encourage team collaboration. It is the duty of school principals to “broaden responsibilities whenever the job is too large for one person. This is where teacher leaders as well as other staff can lend a hand” (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013, p.9).

The link between transformational leadership and distributive leadership is the element of democracy. All educators, administrators and management should work together and have an equal say in the decision-making process. During staff meetings my principal usually explains a problem situation at school. He then creates room for educators to air their concerns over the matter. The staff is encouraged to arrive at solutions to the problem in a democratic manner after which a final decision is taken. Again, Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013, p.9) advocates that “effective principals have learned how to make sure all individuals feel they have ownership in their school. School principals should be willing to involve teachers in discussions”.

Furthermore, this theory takes full account of how the working environment of teachers has a direct influence on the manner in which learners are able to learn. If for instance principals do not provide adequate support for educators that may be stressed, the learners are definitely going to sense the unease that the teacher is experiencing which will have an influence on the type of lesson that is delivered. The same would apply if there is a shortage of resources which I have observed in my own school. “The work conditions of teachers are also the work conditions of students” (Shields, 2011, p.26).

Literature by Shields (2011) further adds that transformational leadership goes beyond merely having an awareness of potential problems and disparities that exist in education. “It should entail a critical analysis of issues related to inequalities in education and a courageous step of action from principals so that a positive revelation is achieved. Again, the above vision can only become a reality if there is effective team work collaboration and a strong sense of commitment amongst the staff, management and principals” (Shields, 2011, p. 68). Furthermore, this theory fosters the element of unity within diversity and certainly shuns any idea of divisiveness. An efficient principal should aim to “build connections with teachers and students, parents and the community” (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013, p. 62). The focal point of transformational leadership theory is to firstly promote the development of staff so that teacher efficacy including the quality of education is improved. In order for this to happen, “leaders of schools, namely principals need to be pillars of virtue and ethics, sources of inspiration and advocates of creativity. Furthermore, he or she should definitely have a vision which is imperative for the overall success of the school” (Shields, 2011, p.25). The following is a list of principles that the transformational leadership model postulates. “It acknowledges aspects of power and privilege, effects deep and equitable change, balances critique and promise, articulates individual and collective purposes, deconstructs socio- cultural knowledge frameworks that generate inequity, works towards emancipation, transformation, democracy, liberation, equity and academic and professional excellence and demonstrates activism and moral courage” (Shields, 2011, p.5).

2.6 Chapter summary

This chapter delved into the literature and theoretical aspects that informed my study. Firstly, an introduction was presented followed by an exploration of international literature on instructional leadership, instructional leadership in Africa and national literature. The chapter concludes by discussing the three theoretical frameworks that underpin the study. The following chapter deals with the research design and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter dealt with an exploration of literature related to the topic of my study. This chapter provides an in-depth description of the research design and methodology that was utilised in order to carry out my investigation. The following aspects are elucidated: firstly, the research methodology and research paradigm, followed by the research design, sampling, research methods, ethical issues, issues of trustworthiness and limitations of the study. Finally a chapter summary is presented.

3.2 Research design and methodology

3.2.1 Research methodology

The research methodology section provides an overview of the research design, the research instruments, participants and procedures that are to be utilised in the investigation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Qualitative research is understood to make use of data that uses words as opposed to numbers in the quantitative approach. The main focus of qualitative research methods is the creation of meaning and a deep sense of understanding from the data that is generated (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The most commonly used sources of data collection that form part of the qualitative method are “people, organisations, texts, settings and environments, objects, artefacts, media products, events and happenings” (Mason, 2002). It is argued that qualitative research is considered to be an integral contributory factor to theory and its practice, issues pertaining to society and the community, policy and implementation, including its modification (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

It is strongly asserted that qualitative research leads to an accumulation of knowledge and wisdom through examining evidence that had been collected over several years. Furthermore, qualitative studies focus on enhancing the participants’ personal understanding of their practice so that they can reflect on and improve that practice which is what I was particularly interested in (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Moreover, qualitative studies are suitable for individuals that are usually busy (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). According to Cresswell (2007, p.37) in McMillan and Schumacher

(2010, p. 320) “qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflectivity of the researcher and a complex description and interpretation of the problem”.

A case-study is an in-depth examination of a particular case. Case-studies fall under the category of naturalistic research. The issue being interrogated can either focus on a single participant or a group of individuals. The main aim is for the researcher to interrogate the experiences of the participants and to find out what they think about a particular issue (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). In my instance I aimed to find out about the role of principals as instructional leaders. I was particularly concerned with what their experiences were regarding the practice of instructional leadership within the school setting. To add, McMillan and Schumacher (2010) assert that a case-study is a system that is confined to a particular setting or individuals. The reason for selecting a particular case is to grasp the degree of uniqueness and then use this aspect to highlight an issue. Stake (1995) postulates in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) that “the focus may be one - entity (within - site study) or several entities (multisite study)”. Case-studies are excellent for exploratory purposes, that is, if one desires to find out more about a particular topic that has not yet been fully interrogated. Furthermore, case-studies are valuable tools in that they result in the development or expansion of concepts; hence they contribute to an enhanced understanding (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The process of planning a case-study entails thinking about the main research question and then linking it to related aspects that would make a positive contribution to the investigation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

3.2.2 Research paradigms

According to Mason (2002), there are different ways in which people view the world. These varied perceptions have been categorised into three research paradigms, namely the interpretive, positivist and the critical approach. Each paradigm has its own ontology, epistemology and methodology. I aimed to examine the issues related to my research from an interpretive perspective. The interpretive paradigm is associated with the research

of people's behaviour, their attitudes as well as their beliefs which I was concerned with in respect of instructional leadership practices (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Mason (2002) suggests that interpretivists are interested in finding out more about the social world and the creation of meaning from the various societal contexts. An interpretivist becomes a part of the research and cannot be an objective outsider. "Interpretivists seek to understand the social constructs around them in order to formulate meanings and interpretations which calls for the insider view rather than imposing an outsider view" (Mason, 2002, p.56).

The interpretive paradigm also exhibits concern for the individual or participants. The essence of this paradigm is to comprehend "the subjective world of human experience" (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.17). It is argued that the researcher needs to develop an understanding from the viewpoints of the participants. Action is at the heart of the interpretive paradigm. In carrying out his or her research investigation, the researcher needs to always be mindful of the fact that behaviour is closely related to the meaning that is generated. The researcher aims to establish a rapport with the research participants and sets out to understand the concept of focus from their viewpoint. The data that is obtained then forms a tapestry of meanings and experiences of the source of information (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011, p. 3) define a paradigm as "the search for truth". There is a strong link between ontological and epistemological assumptions that is the assumptions that are related to the nature of things and the research techniques that enable us to delve into the actual nature of things. Methodological considerations and the data collection instruments are thought to stem from the ontology and epistemology that suits a particular type of research. Paradigms are conceptions or beliefs about social reality. Since different individuals are of varied societal backgrounds, their perceptions and interpretation of the world around them is different (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

3.2.3 Research design

A research design is an outline or plan of the type of research one is to embark on (Mason, 2002). It can be compared to a map that shows the exact route one is to take in order to reach ones' desired destination. It entails an outline of how the researcher is to generate and analyse the data required to answer the key research questions (Mason, 2002). The essence of the research design serves to answer questions such as what

procedures will be employed to generate data, when will the investigation be conducted, where the research shall be conducted that is the setting, who the participants shall be and what measures the researcher shall take to conduct the research such that it is in keeping with the code of ethics that governs all research. Data-generation methods and instruments are also important elements of a research design (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

In addition, it is absolutely imperative for one to make use of a research design that will result in the generation of data that is as close to the truth as possible. In other words, the research design should take account of issues related to trustworthiness such that credible conclusions can be drawn from the study. To add, the research design encapsulates data-collection methods and instruments. The type of research design that the researcher chooses to utilize is dependent on the question of his or her investigation. The researcher needs to also be aware of the fact that the analysis of data is contingent upon the research design. There are four categories of research designs and methodologies, namely quantitative, qualitative, the mixed method approach and analytic (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). For the purpose of my research, a qualitative design, involving a case-study was employed.

3.4 Sampling

Sampling refers to a set of procedures or principles that “enable one to identify, choose and gain access to relevant data sources from which you will generate data using your chosen methods” (Mason, 2002, p.120). It is argued that qualitative researchers usually make use of purposive sampling (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Qualitative researchers may utilise individuals, focus groups, certain sites, context, a document or report review as their source of information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Purposive sampling entails the selection of a specific group of individuals, setting, or document etcetera to investigate depending on its significance in answering the research questions and theoretical aspects that the researcher is concerned with (Mason, 2002). “Purposive sampling involves the choice of small groups or individuals that are likely to yield valid data about the phenomenon of interest” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p.351).

“The logic of the sample size is related to the purpose, the research problem, the major data collection strategy and the availability of information-rich cases (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010, p.328). My sample included four principals from four schools (two

from a primary and two from secondary schools) of different social contexts in Durban. Since four principals were interviewed, the data that was obtained had been compared and contrasted analytically. This was undoubtedly useful for triangulation purposes. I chose to speak to principals since the topic dealt directly with their role as instructional leaders in the delivery of quality education. From the above, it is evident that purposive sampling was used. In addition, the schools that constituted my sample are of differing socio-economic contexts. “Qualitative research assumes that since knowledge is situated within its context, it is the responsibility of the researcher to choose samples of varied backgrounds” (Mason, 2002, p.62).

3.5 Research methods

Research methods refer to the data generation instruments that will be utilised in the research. They include the tools of observation, interviews, questionnaires, etcetera (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). The data collecting instrument was a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions. “Semi-structured interviews are designed to have a fluid and flexible structure to allow the participants and researcher to develop unexpected themes” (Mason, 2002, p.62). The interviews were audio-taped and conducted in English. “Interviews are valuable instruments when investigating the perceptions and attitudes of individuals” (Mason, 2002, p.63). Principals were interviewed individually so that they would be able to converse more openly.

The interview process entailed a face-to-face discussion. Some agreed to the interviews being conducted at their home, whilst others agreed to being interviewed in their offices after school hours. All the schools that agreed to assist me viewed classroom observation as intrusive; therefore I chose to use an interview. I am of the firm belief that observations are not intrusive as the participants would be informed of the researcher’s visit well in advance. Furthermore, if he or she is confident in themselves then it should not be a problem. The interview participants were informed about the questions that they were asked prior to conducting the investigation. The principals were presented with a set of questions. One question at a time was posed and thereafter the respondents were given the opportunity to speak openly about what he or she was asked. If a question was not clear, then I asked further questions to aid understanding.

3.5.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews are excellent tools in that they allow convenient interaction. It is much easier for someone to articulate their ideas or beliefs verbally than they would in writing. Mason (2002, p.64) proposes that “interviews make it easy to ask questions, to listen to respondents, to gain access to their accounts and to analyse their body language” as opposed to a questionnaire for example. After the audio - recording, the interviews were transcribed, analysed and reduced, such that themes or patterns could be identified. The potential disadvantage is that interviews tend to generate extremely large amounts of data in the form of text. This can be quite a daunting task unless the researcher has a good understanding about how they are going to analyse the textual data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

3.6 Ethical considerations

It is of utmost importance for a researcher to demonstrate a clear awareness of the ethical responsibilities that he or she is bound by. As researchers, it is our duty to strictly abide by ethical principles such as autonomy, non-maleficence and beneficence. In other words maintaining confidentiality of the institution and research subjects should be the primary concern of the researcher at all times. In addition, the researcher should ensure that the image of the school is not tarnished in any way and that the participants are not brought to any sort of harm. According to Neuman (2006, p.129) “researchers have a moral and professional obligation to be ethical even when participants may not be aware or concerned about ethics”. Firstly, I worked within an already approved project so ethical clearance was granted by the University. A letter of application was sent to the KZN Department of Education requesting their permission to conduct research at the various schools that constituted my sample. I obtained written consent from the school principals that formed part of my study. All letters that were sent to schools provided a clear indication of the topic and questions that were posed so that my participants would be aware of what was required of them. All schools and participants were given pseudonyms in keeping with the ethical principles of confidentiality. The pseudonyms were Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary, Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary, MrJade of Rose Secondary and Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary. Once the data was generated, the participants were free to read the information so that they would be assured that the data being presented was an accurate representation of what was stated during the interview. The actual names of the schools were not used, instead pseudonyms were used in the write-up of the

dissertation. Participants were informed that they are free to withdraw from the research at any time if they wished to do so without incurring any harm.

3.7 Issues of trustworthiness

Cohen Manion and Morrison (2011) argue that certain factors that may affect the trustworthiness of data cannot be avoided however, one can employ certain strategies to ensure that the data that is obtained is as close to the truth as possible. Winter (2000) in Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) asserts that “validity may be addressed through the honesty, depth, richness and scope of the data achieved, the participants, the extent of triangulation and the objectivity of the researcher”. Construct validity was employed. “It concerns the extent to which a particular measure or instrument for data-collection conforms to the theoretical context in which it is located” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.188). Reliability refers to how trustworthy or accurate one’s data is. If a particular type of research is to be reliable, then the same investigation, if conducted in another context should reveal similar results (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Triangulation was employed thereby enhancing the validity of the data by comparing and contrasting the findings of the various settings. Triangulation involves collecting data from different sources (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). For the purpose of my research, the participants were school principals.

Internal validity was carried out. Internal validity refers to “the truth value, applicability, consistency, neutrality, dependability or credibility of interpretations and conclusions within the underlying setting or group” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.183). The findings that emerged from the interview were presented in text. Internal validity was maintained by requesting a peer to review the data. I also avoided bringing in my personal opinion that may have affected the accuracy of the findings. In other words, I avoided bias and aimed to remain neutral. The fact that the interview was audio-taped ensured that relevant points were not left out if I were to write it down. Thus, all data was an accurate reflection of what the respondents stated during the interview (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Moreover, the participants were allowed to read through the interview transcripts once they were complete. Respondents were asked whether or not they thought the transcripts were valid and authentic (Neuman, 2006).

3.8 Limitations

The quality of the type of data to be generated relied on the research participants' ability to articulate, understand what was required of them and recall information (Mason, 2002). In order to mitigate the above limitation, it was imperative to consider a strategy that would assist in the smooth flow of the conversation. I prepared a set of questions in advance and handed it to participants well before the interview process so that they would have a thorough understanding of the concept and the type of information that I was interested in obtaining (Mason, 2002). "A qualitative interviewer has to be ready to make on the spot decisions about the content and the sequence of the interview as it progresses" (Mason, 2002, p.67).

3.9 Chapter summary

This chapter dealt with the research design and methodology. It entailed an introduction, a discussion regarding the research design, outline of the research methodology, research paradigm, sampling method, research methods, ethics, issues of trustworthiness and limitations. The next chapter shall entail data presentation and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter dealt with the research design and methodology which was employed in conducting this research project. This chapter entails a detailed description and interrogation of data that was obtained from interviews conducted with the four principals of both primary and secondary schools. An in-depth discussion of the findings forms the basis of this chapter upon which common themes and patterns were constructed. Themes that are highlighted were extensions of the four critical questions that were posed to all principals during the interview process. In order to protect the identity of the participants including the schools, pseudonyms were used. A discussion of the findings is presented followed by a chapter summary.

4.2 Discussion of findings

Various themes guided by the critical questions of the study were identified and are discussed below.

4.2.1 The principals' understandings of their role in supporting teaching and learning

The findings suggest that the principals appear to have a good grasp of what their roles are in supporting teaching and learning in schools and what is required of them as instructional leaders. All four school principals had either the same or similar things to share regarding instructional leadership practices. The outcome of the interview process was certainly favourable as the bulk of what was stated could be linked and compared to the literature in Chapter Two. The principal of Petunia Primary clearly expressed that it is an extremely difficult task to ensure that the school has as little conflict as possible and to deal with that which arises. She further explained that it is the responsibility of the respective heads of the organisation to ensure that a conducive educational environment is maintained. Ms Topaz also attached tremendous importance to the creation of a suitable teaching and learning atmosphere:

Next at our school there is definitely a dire need for the development of human relations. Teachers need to be taught how to collaborate with one another and to leave their politics aside which often arises. (Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

By comparison, in relation to conflict management, the principals of Rose Secondary and Sunflower Primary respectively asserted that:

Recognising flagging teacher morale and addressing it is a crucial task of the manager. In addition the manager should, maintain neutrality so that he or she may be seen as an honest broker in so far a conflict resolution is concerned.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

The principal is seen as someone that has the solution to all problems when in reality we are often reluctant to admit that we don't.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

When asked about her understanding about her role as an instructional leader, Ms Topaz responded:

I strongly believe that it means creating a positive learning and teaching environment so that learning outcomes are achieved. Quality teaching and learning cannot possibly take place unless the principal is aware of his or her role as an instructional leader and provides adequate support for both our pupils and band of educators so that learning outcomes are achieved.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

The principals of Daisy Secondary, Rose Secondary and Sunflower Primary expressed similar points. Mr Amethyst firmly asserted that the success of any organisation is largely the responsibility of the principal. Naturally, one person doing everything by him or herself is a mammoth task. He stated that responsibility for the delivery of quality education should not only be the principal's. To add, he claimed that effective leadership for learning involves the roping in of other respective heads to assist in managing the school, making sure everything is on track, that the school is being run in an orderly fashion and that both teachers as well as students are happy at school:

Academic excellence and success rests on the head of the institution.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

By comparison, the principal of Rose Secondary also highlighted the importance of maintaining a conducive teaching environment for quality education to prevail. He is also of the belief that the conditions of the school, how it is maintained etcetera largely influences the type of education that students receive. In addition, Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary echoes the very same sentiments. She too elucidated the relevance of

the school environment and its repercussions for teaching and learning. Mr Jade claimed that:

In consultation with all role players, I provide a proper climate within which teaching and learning can take place in an effective manner. I definitely think that the atmosphere created by the physical conditions at school impacts greatly on teaching and learning. A degenerating plant can have a negative impact.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

Mrs Quartz asserted that:

It's also my duty to ensure that the environment in and around the school is conducive. This would include making sure that the grass is neat and short, trees are felled to avoid learners being bitten by snakes. Fixing broken windows and desks also.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

Furthermore, the elements of support and delegation came through strongly during the interviews. The effective delegation of tasks is an integral component of a good instructional leader. Naturally, one person doing everything by him or herself is a mammoth task. The respondents stated that responsibility for the delivery of quality education should not only be the principal's. To add, data obtained revealed that effective leadership for learning involves the roping in of other respective heads to assist in managing the school, making sure everything is on track, that the school is being run in an orderly fashion and that both teachers as well as students are happy at school.

Drawing from Southworth (2004) in Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010), this researcher strongly advocates that school principals are the heart of teaching and learning. This means that all activities that take place at school centre around the principal's ability to effectively plan, manage, support, problem-solve, etcetera. To add, Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013, p. 314) assert that "principals are perceived as the key role players of schools". Furthermore, in support of what had been claimed by Ms Topaz and Mr Amethyst, Southworth (2004) in Bush, Bell and Middlewood asserts that instructional leaders need to work collaboratively with other members of management and educators to devise strategies that will result in positive outcomes. In addition, from the above quotes it is evident that the principals of both schools equate their role as instructional leaders with ensuring the success of their schools through promoting high performance amongst learners. Literature suggests that according to Leithwood, *et al.* (2006) and Robinson

(2007) in Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010), the element of leadership is directly linked to the achievement of student outcomes.

It is of utmost importance that principals possess a good understanding of the curriculum and learning programmes. It is not enough to merely have a thorough knowledge of curriculum but also to ensure that educators are on the same page in this regard. The principal of Petunia Primary explained that principals need to ensure that teachers are aware of what the curriculum outlines and expects of them in order for quality education to be delivered. She was quite confident in getting her point across:

I strongly think that an enhanced knowledge of the curriculum and learning programmes needs to be understood by the heads of schools and also he or she needs to understand the importance of sharing this knowledge with the staff and checking up on them to make sure that they are on the right track. A principal can't just assume that all is well without following up on what is taking place in the classroom.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

It would be expected of a leader from a secondary school to make mention of curriculum delivery and learning programmes; however Mr Amethyst has not elaborated on this point. Perhaps we can assume that since he is so busy, he simply does not have the time to monitor what teachers are teaching their students. Bellamy, Fulmer and Muth (2007, p. 3) assert that “school principals have the responsibility of making sure that the curriculum is being enacted effectively”. In addition, Steyn and Van Niekerk, (2006) state that instructional leaders need to keep themselves updated regarding the curriculum so that any changes can be identified and set in motion”. The principal of School B elucidates the hierarchy of management that exists at school level. The proper channels need to be followed in dealing with problems for instance. Despite the expected awareness that teachers have regarding protocol that needs to be followed, many do not adhere to it. Mr Amethyst stated that:

I try my best to ensure that a proper organogram is set up to show the line function roles and responsibility of each manager and the line function. The correct procedures are not always followed so I remind my educators and managers of their function.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

Literature suggests that principals are expected to work more closely with educators and learners and should provide assistance and support for educators that may be experiencing problems. Furthermore, the principal of Daisy Secondary expressed concern over the large workloads and responsibilities of principals. It is sometimes difficult for principals to work closely with staff members due to time constraints and copious amounts of stress that is placed on them as leaders. Mr Amethyst asserted that:

The role and the duties for one principal are numerous and total accountability to be honest cannot all be done by the principal.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

If one is a principal of a school, the expectations of him or her are great. There is a tremendous amount of work that he or she needs to do.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

The principal of Petunia Primary asserted that she understands the role of the principal as follows:

To develop competence and accountability in monitoring and assessing learner progress and achievement as well as planning, preparation and presentation.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

By contrast, the principal of Petunia Primary did not voice any difficulty in this regard. One would assume that this can be attributed to the fact that this is a primary school therefore the responsibilities are not as many compared to that of principals of secondary schools. However, the quote provided by Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary proves otherwise. Her response clearly indicates that irrespective of what type of school one is a principal of, the demands placed on him or her are still innumerable. Literature claims that “in countries such as South Africa principals undergo a tremendous amount of pressure due to their multiple roles” (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010, p. 6). From the conversation it is evident that the principal’s role is not only to ensure the educational growth of pupils but they also have a responsibility towards the growth and development of teachers. When I further interrogated the text I discovered that the best way to teach educators about management or assessment skills is for principals to reach out to other professionals from other communities so that they can share ideas in this regard. The following quotation confirms my point:

Teachers need to be assisted in their growth, especially the new educators. There is no limit to learning so definitely the participation in professional bodies is important.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

Surprisingly, I have noticed that the principal of Daisy Secondary has completely left out an extremely important aspect of instructional leadership that is the professional development of his staff. Although the points he mentioned throughout the conversation were powerful, he seemed to be in a hurry to get the interview over with. When I probed regarding the point of educator development, I simply got a yes answer and then the respondent quickly brushed it aside and asked for me to move on to the next question. I am tempted to state that I believe it would be a natural reaction for somebody with limited knowledge about something to change the topic. From this I was able to deduce that training without reservation needs to be provided for principals about instructional leadership practices and the element of professional development.

I think that since a secondary school has more serious issues to deal with, it is immensely invaluable for teachers and leaders to be provided with opportunities that will aid in their growth as professionals so that they will be better equipped to handle problems that may arise. It will also help in decreasing the amount of stress on these individuals. Research conducted by Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) reveals that there is a lack of adequate training for school leaders that will equip them for their new roles. Secondly, they state that with the newly found status comes responsibility and new skills have to be learnt. According to the instructional leadership theory, strategies to implement instructional leadership effectively should be learnt requiring a concerted effort from principals.

The principal of Petunia Primary elucidated the contingency of an organisation's development upon the relationship or rapport that is shared among colleagues at the work place. She claimed that at their school there is tension among staff members and that the needs of the learners need to be put first so that quality education can occur. She stated:

At our school there is definitely a dire need for the development of human relations. Teachers need to be taught how to collaborate with one another and to leave their politics aside which often arises.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

Mr Amethyst draws our attention to the aspect of delegation. Proper delegation skills are absolutely imperative for a principal. It is the element that sets apart successful leaders from the rest. He proclaimed that:

I think that accountability rests on the head of the institution as well as bringing in others like HOD's to ensure a productive educational environment. The role and the duties for one principal are numerous and total accountability to be honest cannot all be done by the principal. Good delegation defines a good instructional leader.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

By comparison, Ms Topaz highlights the relevance of democratic decision-making and delegation. She stated that:

Democratic decision-making, accountability and delegation is very important as a leader of the school. Principals need to realise the importance of team work. As the saying goes, many hands make work lighter.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

Similarly, the principals of Rose Secondary and Sunflower Primary also share the above perceptions. Their responses indicate that their understanding of the role of a principal in ensuring the delivery of quality education should entail good team collaboration and a reliable and supportive management:

In relation to the human aspects concerning support, a decent, democratic and acceptable context must be provided for teaching and learning to take place. One needs to observe basic decency in interactions. Constant support provided by encouraging and rewarding must prevail.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

My role as a principal is to support my staff and to help them grow as professionals. I need to be sensitive to their needs and give them a platform to voice their views. I get all the teachers involved in decision-making.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

I definitely agree with his view. According to the instructional leadership theory, it is the duty of instructional leaders to assist teachers by providing them with support and educating them regarding the value of team collaboration. In addition, the transformational leadership theory states that the instructional leader also needs to practice participative management which should include teachers, learners as well as the community (Hallinger, 2003). Furthermore, the distributed leadership theory asserts that the aspect of delegation is an integral component of distributed leadership. Tasks are delegated or shared amongst colleagues. The common thread that runs between

transformational leadership and distributive leadership is democracy (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013).

To add, the principals mentioned that motivating educators, including learners augurs well for the smooth and effective functioning of the school. It is evident that they feel it is vital to keep sight of the school's vision so that the school is steered towards success. A well-motivated individual would mean that he or she has positive morale, good attitude towards work and inevitably this energy would rub off onto others that become associated with that person. One who is motivated is always optimistic. This mind-set would make problem-solving so much simpler. Room also needs to be created for the professional development of all educators including principals that should exhibit the desire to grow themselves. Managers, principals and educators need to foster the element of motivation either by addressing it during staff development meetings, attending workshops pertaining to the subjects and shedding light on this important life skill during lessons. The following quotations from the various participants attest to this:

Another very important role of the principal is professional development. Teachers need to be assisted in their growth, especially the new educators. We need to be patient with them and help them to grow as professionals in the field of work, with tolerance, understanding and a willingness to lend a helping hand or some encouragement.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

So the role is to set up a system that that you would realise the vision and mission of the school.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

Constant support provided by encouraging and rewarding must prevail. There must be professional growth programmes for effective support to take place.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

My role as a principal is to support my staff and to help them grow as professionals. We have a vision and mission to abide by and it's my duty to regularly emphasise its importance. Staff development meetings are held each week. Teachers gain insight on how to improve themselves as professionals, how to keep themselves motivated and so on. It is our responsibility to keep ourselves updated with new leadership styles and knowledge for example.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

Literature supports the claims made during the interview process. Bush, Bell and Middlewood, 2010 assert that school principals need to understand that their own development is equally significant in raising student performance. In addition, Gurr and Drysdale (2010, p.3) advocate that “effective principals were described as having a vision and the ability to develop shared purpose through the way they communicated their vision for their school”. Furthermore, Bush and Glover (2003) propose that educators need to be informed of its importance on a regular basis and should be encouraged to practice it in their classrooms. Steyn and van Niekerk (2007) argue that motivated teachers will in turn benefit the organisation and raise the standard of education since they are more productive. Van Deventer and Kruger (2003) postulate that several principles create platforms for staff motivation through encouraging them to attend workshops or holding staff development programmes. Although the principals from Petunia Primary, Rose Secondary and Sunflower Primary elaborated more on staff development and motivation, the principal of Daisy Secondary did not mention it. Perhaps at Mr Amethyst’s school, there are no problems amongst the staff as far as motivation and team collaboration is concerned; hence he does not see the need for professional development.

Furthermore, the management of a school needs to be treated in the same way that one would treat the running of a business. All care needs to be taken to ensure that the business does not run at a loss. Principals together with management and clerical staff need to assume responsibility for the use and planning of resources at their schools so that learners can profit from the education they receive:

It is vital that that the administration of resources and records is done in an effective manner especially because if this is not done, resources will inevitably be misused. At the end of the year when stock taking is done teachers have to sign again for the number of books they are returning.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

Obviously, to support teaching and learning, provision needs to be made for learner support materials. There should be evidence of long-term planning with respect to these resources to ensure that they are provided timeously.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

Controlling the budget is also important and making sure that there is an adequate supply of resources for learning and teaching to be effective.

The principal of Daisy Secondary, Mr Amethyst did not state anything about proper resource management at this stage. An examination of the literature revealed that team collaboration allows for the sharing of knowledge with regard to the management of resources and how to deal with challenges in this regard (West-Burnham, 2009). I firmly believe that the instructional leadership theory is fitting to resource management. According to Hallinger (2003) principals need to adopt a practical, hands-on approach to solving problems. With regard to parental involvement in the results of their children, Pansiri (2008) highlights the absence of parental involvement in the schooling life of their children. In addition, Megahed, Ginsburgh, Abdellah and Zohry (2010) assert that getting parents involved is one of the qualities of an effective instructional leader. According to the distributive leadership theory, an efficient principal should aim to “build connections with parents and the community” (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013, p. 62). Furthermore, the transformational leadership theory claims that instructional leaders should enact participative management which includes members of the community (Hallinger, 2003).

The above information portrays the different views of principals regarding their understandings of their role in supporting teaching and learning at school. The discussion radiates from data generated during the interviews. The responses from participants have been supported by relevant quotations from the literature review section. Reference was also made to relevant theories associated with the data. Next, a discussion related to the second theme will be provided.

4.2.2 How principals support teaching and learning at schools

Two out of four principals that were interviewed emphasised the relevance of the proper training of educators regarding teaching methods and facilitating effective learning. According to them, it is vital to share a good relationship with principals of other schools that would contribute to a better understanding about how to enact their roles and the various responsibilities that come with the title of principal, how to effectively solve problems and so forth. Furthermore, the role of being a life-long learner was also elucidated. The principals explained how they go about increasing their knowledge about

managing teaching and learning. There is a clear indication that the professional learning communities in their context enable them to develop in this regard. The principal should see the value of professional learning communities and display initiative, including a passion for discovering new things through this interaction:

I try as much as possible to ensure that all staff members are trained on procedures and processes of teaching and learning at school. I interact with principals of other schools to find out about workshops that I as well as educators at my school can attend to learn to be better managers, leaders and teachers.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

As I mentioned earlier, I find out about workshops that I myself or my staff can attend to broaden our knowledge. Principals of other schools and myself meet regularly where we discuss leadership styles, discipline problems or maybe the financial position of our school.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

Again, in comparing the data obtained from the interviews, the principal of Daisy Secondary, Mr Amethyst did not mention anything pertaining to enhancing the management skills of the respective heads at his school, his personal development or the skills of the staff. Perhaps this is due to limited time and the immense pressure that they are under in leading and managing a secondary school with so many problems that will be discussed later on. According to literature, Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013) strongly emphasise that principals themselves have to demonstrate a willingness to learn and to develop their skills as instructional leaders. In addition West-Burnham (2009, p.6) postulates that “principals should give high priority to their own growth, development and learning”. Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) advocate the need for principals and teachers to be trained and supported on an on-going basis so that there is enhanced teaching and learning.

Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013) postulate that according to the instructional leadership theory, school leaders need to exhibit dedication, commitment and they should make a concerted effort to learn new strategies in order to support and manage teaching and learning efficiently. To add, the instructional leadership theory promotes good communication skills (Hallinger, 2003). Furthermore, van Deventer and Kruger (2003) claim that principals need to develop ways of staff development that will suit the specific

needs of the organisation. Shields (2011) argues that the instructional leadership theory promotes the professional development of staff. Principals are expected to have a thorough knowledge of this significant component of leadership for learning.

The principal of Daisy Secondary presents a different take on supporting teaching and learning at his school. He shed light on the significance of a coherent system that needs to be in place which will guide educators regarding what they are required to do. He stated that:

You need to set up a system that would work. The organogram will show who is responsible for what.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

He goes on to explain the relevance of adequate organisation, teacher guidance and support from other respective heads at the school. It is clear that Mr Amethyst believes that delegation and effective communication are the keys to effectively managing the school:

After teachers are allocated teaching loads we need to ensure that they have all the documents, work schedules, lesson plans etcetera. Then the subject heads must check and you have to do a random sample to check if it in fact exists and it doesn't end here. (Sigh). One has to check the forecast to see exactly what an educator is doing in each period so you see it's quite a bit (cough). HOD's must visit and draw up reports on lessons and advise educators where there are shortcomings to ensure growth of the staff.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

The slight pause and fact that he sighed is perhaps indicative of the strain he is under at his school. This principal appears to be highly stressed. The look on his face and the fact that he is ill suggests this. His body language speaks well of his attitude to running the school, however he appears to be a bit burnt-out. He seems to be taking on much more than he is able to handle on his own. Even though he speaks about the role of HOD's here we are later to discover that they are indeed not doing their part in assisting him.

By comparison, the principals of Petunia Primary, Rose Secondary and Sunflower Primary echo similar viewpoints. They asserted that:

It is important to co-ordinate all activities pertaining to staff development. I strongly believe that principals need to prepare and monitor management plans for quality teaching and facilitate and give guidance on managing teaching and

learning. Then as a principal you need to monitor the effectiveness of quality management. Here again communication is key.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

Assessing educator needs and learner needs is of tremendous importance to us. We practice the delegation of duties amongst staff to lessen the work load. We have morning briefings which give an opportunity to staff to raise concerns and to address them. There is ongoing assessment of the syllabus coverage in the classroom that I feel is very important. This may mean classroom visits, meetings with the department heads, supervising learner output and things like that.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

Teachers are empowered and briefed on the power of a positive attitude on a regular basis. The SGB, staff members and myself hold meetings regularly to discuss matters pertaining to school including finances. We have staff development meetings to assist educators to grow as professionals.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

There is a distinct pattern that emerged with regard to the effective communication with parents and their active involvement in their children's education. This may indicate that keeping the communication between teachers and parents open is vital to the acquisition of quality education. Others went on to state that they support teaching and learning through effective conflict management. They also had something along similar lines to say about maintenance of the physical conditions of the school and fund-raising to ensure that the students receive a sound education. These could thus be perceived as relevant facets of a principal that displays good support of teaching and learning at their schools.

The principal of Petunia Primary did not have anything to say about parental involvement, conflict management, and maintenance of the physical conditions of the school or fund-raising initiatives at this point. These concerns were addressed later on during the interview. She does however shed light on the significance of having an improvement plan for one's school that needs to be revised and amended regularly. Mr Amethyst from Daisy Secondary also did not mention fund-raising or maintaining the school environment here. Perhaps these are the duties that are delegated to other members of management to handle. The principal from Sunflower Primary did not comment on the development of a year plan:

A year plan reflecting all the testing dates for all subjects should be given to all learners. Discipline is of utmost importance. Control to be kept is essential. We schedule regular parent meetings per term.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

We do an ongoing assessment of the physical plant and ensure that maintenance is undertaken regularly. Resolving conflicts is also the task of the principal or deputy principal. We address matters of indiscipline with err both teachers and learners. We make sure that all parents are informed regularly via newsletters, letters etcetera. Seeking funding from parents and err big businesses secures sponsorship of items needed by our school.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

To assist us with financial constraints we organise fun walks, cake sales, market days and recently a debs' ball for grade seven learners. We schedule regular parent meetings whereby teachers can communicate the progress of a child with his or her parent. We send home letters and notices with the children to keep parents informed. We keep a record of learner absenteeism and the child's parent is telephoned if the child is not in school for more than three days.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

Research conducted by Southworth (2008, p. 428) states that “instructional leadership rests on head teachers focusing their time on the quality of teaching through helping adults to learn”. Furthermore, principals as instructional leaders are called to monitor that all instructions are adhered to (Southworth, 2008). Moreover, in support of the above, “continuing professional development, support, guidance and feedback is central to school reform” (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010, p. 7-8). Furthermore, Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) assert that the inclusion of parents as important stakeholders of the community and major influencers in their children’s lives is extremely integral as it impacts greatly on the performance of learners at school.

Moreover, West-Burnham (2009) posits that the connections that are forged amongst principals from various societal backgrounds shall indeed pose advantageous to the quality of education at schools. Southworth (2008) alerts us to the fact that since principals have a multitude of tasks to perform, they do not have sufficient time to liaise with educators in their classrooms. The aforementioned writer further illuminates the

reality that management of the organisation in many instances takes priority and there is a lot of conflict (Southworth, 2008). Hoadley and Ward (2009) assert that school principals are now increasingly being held accountable for policy change in South Africa. To add, “principals are expected to deal with resource constraints” (Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy & Muth, 2007, p. 3).

The data that was presented thus far without doubt encapsulates both the instructional leadership and the transformational leadership theories. Firstly, the instructional leadership theory portrays the instructional leader as a pillar of inspiration and motivation which links to the aspect of staff development and support (Hallinger, 2003). Also, according to this theory, if more emphasis is placed on curriculum and instruction rather than on managerial tasks then this would have a positive impact on the quality of education that is delivered (Shields, 2011). Again, the element of curriculum and instruction and its relevance is evident in the data. Another facet of this theory is that principals as instructional leaders need to promote a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013). The second theory that is pertinent to the discussion is the transformational leadership theory. The following branches of this theory constitute the centre of instructional leadership practices that were mentioned by the principals during my research: They are from the bottom-up “individualised support, vision and shared goals intellectual stimulation and culture building, rewards, high expectations and modelling” (Hallinger, 2003, p. 337). The aforementioned researcher asserts according to the instructional leadership theory, principals should exhibit good communication skills and share a good rapport with fellow educators (Hallinger, 2003).

According to the distributive leadership theory, principals need to be aware of potential problems, critically analyse them and make a concerted effort to remedy the situation (Shields, 2011). This writer further postulates that according to the distributive leadership theory, “the work conditions of teachers are also the work conditions of students” (Shields, 2011, p. 26) therefore principals should ensure that there is an adequate supply of resources for instance so that quality education can be delivered. According to the instructional leadership theory, instructional leaders should display a practical, hands-on approach to solving problems (Hallinger, 2003). Moreover, Whitehead, Boschee and Decker (2013) advocate the necessity of principals to communicate efficiently with parents, a suitable characteristic of instructional leadership theory.

The text above is a presentation of the various viewpoints of principals regarding the second theme that is, the support and management of teaching and learning. Again, the discussion is supported by evidence from the interview transcripts including information from literature. The main points related to the question posed to all four interview participants were discussed. It is evident that a distinct pattern was identified in examining the data. Literature as well as the theories that link to the discussion was elucidated. Theme three will be presented in the next section.

4.2.3 The challenges experienced by principals that affect their enactment of teaching and learning

There are countless barriers to teaching and learning that emerged from the conversations which took place with all principals. Although the majority of principals that were interviewed expressed similar concerns, there were a few differences. The main concerns that were verbalised were firstly the severe strain that is placed on educators as a result of too many learners that can be accommodated by a single classroom. Even though it is a reality that the PPN numbers are quickly declining at schools, many teachers have to cope with the daily challenge of educating a large number of learners and moulding them such that they become productive individuals in society. The severe shortage of resources does not make their jobs any easier. It was evident that this shortcoming is one of the factors that negatively affect the delivery of quality education due to several learners becoming distracted, unfocused or disruptive:

The large class sizes pose a great challenge for us. There are too few classrooms and as a result classrooms are overcrowded. Children become uncomfortable especially during hot weather. Students have no option but to share resources like textbooks. Teachers often complain about stress and being excessively tired at the end of the school day.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

It is interesting to note that only the principal from Petunia Primary mentioned the challenge of overcrowding and its link to discipline problems in class and stress. The others plainly stated that their schools don't have the money to buy the resources that they need. There is a strong indication of educator stress and burnout. This also affects

principals. Only the principal of Rose Secondary spoke about the negative effect that the lack of funding has on the hiring of suitably qualified personnel. Perhaps this school has learners that come from backgrounds that are extremely poverty-stricken:

There is definitely a serious problem with financing at school. No textbooks are supplied to our school. It is not enough for one book for one grade. Heavy work load.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

The financial challenges mean that only a small percentage can be allocated to such crucial areas as textbook purchases. Given the financial challenges, my school cannot attract the best educators.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

Like other schools, my school also has a shortage of resources. It leads to a large amount of stress on the principal.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

From the evidence provided that follows, it is evident that schools in the Durban area are plagued by an array of social ills that is an extension of the community from which these problem-learners emanate. One might think that primary schools would have fewer problems than secondary schools but this is not the case. Discipline in the primary schools is just as bad as it is at high school. The principals explained that educators also contravened the school's code of conduct by coming to school drunk or by the negative manner in which they get along with other colleagues. Staff conflict is prevalent. Many educators fail to understand the value of good team collaboration and professionalism. Teacher and learner absenteeism and corporal punishment are also serious issues that need to be addressed. It is obvious that there is a dire need to foster the professional development of teachers:

Discipline is adversely affected. Teachers tend to stay away from school. Learner absenteeism is a serious problem. There is definitely a lack of tact and courtesy from some learners and surprisingly some teachers. I have spoken to teachers about team collaboration on numerous occasions. There have been numerous instances whereby teachers say that they will be attending so and so meeting but they either go home or use the time for their own personal interests.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

When they are spoken with, there is a display of a disruptive and arrogant attitude and aggressive behaviour. Then there is the issue of late-coming. Heads of department are only prepared to help teachers sometimes so they are forced to come to me for assistance and sometimes I don't have time.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

Learner indiscipline is prevalent. The democratisation of education has been accompanied by its own set of challenges including greater resistance on the part of some educators to perform after-hours duties. Declining of learner discipline is impacting negatively on the standard of education.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

Learners become chaotic also. Learners are very noisy during lessons. Teachers resort to hitting them that is not allowed. Instead of paying attention to providing an education for the pupils some are too busy minding other's personal business. Others use class time to keep abreast with the latest fashion magazine.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

It is also evident that opposition by management and other teachers is one of the problems that principals have to deal with. Many educators do not produce evidence of proper planning for lessons. Lesson plans and their daily forecast are not handed in on time. As a result, principals are left in the dark about what is going on in the classroom. The element of de-motivation among teachers was clearly articulated. In addition, teachers as well as educators need to change their apathetic attitudes if quality teaching and learning is to take place. Some of the discipline problems that emerged are drug and alcohol abuse, gambling, late-coming and absenteeism, peer pressure, bullying, violence, vandalism and teenage pregnancy to mention a few:

At the moment there is a huge problem with human relation skills amongst the staff. For example if there's a new member of staff then the teachers from certain cliques bully the new-comer. They do not hand in lesson plans and resources they are using on time.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

We have the problem of substance abuse not only among learners. There are a few teachers that come to school smelling of alcohol. The learner's attitude to work is one of indifference. The attitude of parents and certain heads of department is unacceptable. Pregnancy seems fashionable.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

Teachers are de-motivated. Their attitudes are reflective of it. We have a problem with declining educator morale in the face of an ever-challenging educational climate.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

The problem with teachers here is that many are de-motivated. They just teach what they have to then sit and relax. They then become aggressive towards the HOD who is seen as a spy. Vandalism is another problem.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

Furthermore, the principals responses regarding the department of education leads one to believe that there is a definite need for the department to reach out to schools more and to show greater support and assistance that would help them cope better with the challenges they encounter. It is the firm belief of the principals of two schools for the union to display greater sensitivity and consideration for the education of learners and their examinations that they prepare so hard for before arranging any protest. Their concerns were that a huge amount of syllabus coverage time is wasted in the process of fighting for increased salaries for example. Parental involvement is at an all-time low. They do not see the importance of attending parent meetings or responding to newsletters that are sent home. Some do not pay school fees. Many learners display a nonchalant attitude towards their school work and are aggressive towards teachers because they come from disruptive backgrounds or are forced to fend for themselves due to having no parents to care for them. It is surprising that the principals of Daisy Secondary and Sunflower Primary did not mention anything about the union. Mr Jade of Rose Secondary did not comment on the challenges of the department perhaps since he feels that mentioning the challenges would be futile as he can't do anything to solve the problems on his own:

When it comes to the department of education, there is a lack of co-ordination. Teacher unions need to be sensitive to the fact that meetings that are held during school hours results in valuable teaching time being lost. Many parents are too busy to check on their children due to demanding work hours. Their non-attendance at parent meetings to discuss the progress of their children is another concern. Also, they need to be more accountable when it comes to paying school fees.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

Sometimes marks are upped to show a credible pass rate due to department pressure. Regarding parental interest, parents do not show attention or interest in their child's work. Many have no parents and are living alone. They feel that like puppies they can fend for themselves. Many parents or guardians do not pay school fees or are either unable to do so because of poverty.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

In addition, a lack of interest or control by parents worsens the situation. Then the stringent educator ration if I may say per school must employ and pay SGB educators.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

I'd like to begin with the teacher unions. I really feel that they are a bit selfish. Our teachers are given deadlines to complete the syllabus. How do they do this in the face of disruption? Many parents don't pay school fund because they can't afford it. Many of their parents are divorced or separated. The parents often don't bother about attending meetings. The department needs to up the funding they provide to schools and need to provide more training for teachers and managers.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

If parents are called to school to discuss their child's poor behaviour, they react with hostility towards the principal or teachers. In their eyes their child is incapable of doing anything wrong. They threaten to bring in the media to pin the blame on educators and the school principal, which adds to increased levels of disrespect in the classroom as the child then feels that they have won. The authority of teachers is undermined in this way. Evidently, School Governing Body members are unsure of their roles. They often appear to be bossy and abuse the power that they wield. The principals of Petunia Primary, Daisy Secondary and Sunflower Primary did not speak about the SGB over-playing their roles. Perhaps the parents that serve on the SGB of their schools are more submissive and understanding or maybe the principals of those schools are more assertive and take the initiative to explain their role to them:

Then what is also frustrating is the lack of discipline among parents. There is a blatant disregard of the school rules.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

Parents get worked up and come to fight at school believing their child is right. Parents do not show interest; do not come for meetings and only show up if

something bad has to happen. When the parents get involved they fight amongst each other. Gangs are alerted before you know and stand by for school to close.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

Parents at my school are fond of openly degrading educators in the presence of their children. Parents' seeking their pound of flesh upon arriving at school following a one-sided report by their child is a challenge. Bossy SGB elected parents who do not understand the limits of their role functions makes joint decision-making difficult.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

My mum said she has better things to do than come to this meeting. She has no time. They will tell you when you ask them.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

There is an abundance of literature that supports the above discussion and findings. It is argued that the crux of instructional leadership is the emphasis on the relationship amongst staff, manager's etcetera by the school principal (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). To add, West-Burnham (2009) highlights the relevance of the relationships we share at school and team collaboration. From the evidence above, it is clear that every school is different; hence it becomes challenging for principals to find different ways to resolve problem situations and to ensure development of the organisation (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013).

From what Mr Amethyst had to say about the challenges experienced at his school, it is obvious that South African schools are indeed contending with increased accountability from the department, parents, etcetera (Hoadley & Ward, 2009). Furthermore, in examining the findings, we are able to clearly see that "the work of principals is very different in different contexts" (Christie, 2010, p. 694). From the comments that the principals provided, it is distinct that instructional leaders have to display an awareness of the response or reaction they would evoke from teachers that may not be applying themselves seriously enough to their work (Webb, 2005). The findings further suggest that it's the duty of principals to employ suitably qualified personnel and to deal with matters pertaining to resource constraints (Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy & Muth, 2007, p. 3). The aforementioned writers further assert that one of the reasons that discipline is at its worst is due to the demanding jobs that parents have and the lack of time they spend with

them as a result; therefore a large majority indulge in unrighteous practices such as consuming drugs and alcohol. Also, many children are being raised in single-parent homes (Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy & Muth, 2007, p. 3). Ngala and Odebero (2009) assert that the department should make a concerted effort to make provisions for extra funding that would supplement instructional leadership practices. Steyn and van Niekerk (2002, p. 191) advocate that “the lack of facilities, inadequate learning materials and overcrowded classrooms” have serious repercussions for educator stress.

In addition, principals need to understand that teachers especially novice teachers need added support and motivation to assist their growth as professionals (van Deventer & Kruger, 2003). Interestingly, literature did not state anything outlining the need to prepare parents for their role as members of the School Governing Body. In light of the above discussion, the instructional leadership theory encompasses the empowerment of educators and team collaboration (Hallinger, 2003). It further promotes participatory management, whereby decisions are made by the SGB and SMT (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). The transformational leadership theory also encompasses participative management that is inclusive of learners, teachers and the community (Hallinger, 2003). According to Shields (2011), the distributive leadership theory draws our attention to staff development, team collaboration, equity and democratic decision-making.

The text above presents a discussion around the main challenges that school principals face in enacting their role as instructional leaders. In addition, it provides the reader with a broad overview of the different kinds of problems faced by them within a similar context. I shall next explore what is being done by the school principals that constituted my sample to curb the problems that they previously mentioned.

4.2.4 Strategies employed by school principals to overcome the challenges they experienced in managing teaching and learning at schools

There is undoubtedly a common thread that can be seen in the manner in which these school principals respond to challenges. It is definitely not an easy task to attend to so many challenges and simultaneously attend to other tasks. I found that problem resolution can be frustrating and stressful for principals. These emotions were clearly communicated

by their tone, body language and facial expressions. One cannot generalise that primary schools have fewer problems to deal with. They are equally prone to similar types of problems that instructional leaders from secondary schools encounter.

Regarding discipline problems of learners, the principals mentioned reeling in prominent figures from the community that is inclusive of parents, in order to enhance learners' understanding of the importance of ethical behaviour and good conduct. They also emphasised the value of good communication as the key to getting a specific message across. Teachers are encouraged to talk to learners about values and other life skills. This is integrated into the various subjects that pupils are taught. When it comes to addressing educator misconduct, again communication is essential including a non-judgemental attitude on behalf of the principal. A significant point that one particular principal made is that the mind-set of individuals has a lot to do with their conduct. Good communication plays a major role in motivation. The pertinence of revisiting the school's code of conduct frequently and making the necessary changes was also highlighted. The principals regularly arrange for meetings with parents to ensure that they are well-informed about their children's education. They added that newsletters and communication books are means that aid communication:

Our discipline procedures have been stringently amended regarding school rules and parental involvement. Regarding tact and courtesy among learners, I call in the parents. In the case of educators, I call them to my office and address the issues brought forth with them in private. I then get to hear both sides of the story without favouring one teacher over another. To assist parents, I send many reminders about due dates, discipline, school fees, uniform, and etcetera.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

There are talks by the NGO (non-governmental organisation). We make use of case-studies during lessons to inform learners about the reality of substance abuse and the consequences. Teachers are encouraged to make lessons more interesting to avoid bunking. To get the parents involved in the lives of their children, we plan parent orientation meetings.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

Next in the face of increasing educator resistance the principal should adopt a well measured line between the resistance of a few and the majority. Then Chris addressing educator morale is a difficult matter, one that may take months or even

years to remedy. Educator frustration and declining morale is an issue of the mind triggered most times by a set of minor issues most of which with a positive mind-set may clear in a short space of time.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

We also during meetings with the SEM discuss the problems we are faced with. Learners are warned. Our staff development programmes are currently addressing the behaviour of teachers I mentioned to you before what it means to be a professional. Teachers that fail to comply with the school rules are called in to account for their behaviour at my office where we have a talk in private. I do not pass judgement. We explain the importance of parental involvement in their children's education at meetings and the importance of keeping the channels of communication between themselves and the school open.

(Mrs Quartz of Sunflower Primary)

The principal of Daisy Secondary did not mention the measures that he employs in dealing with educator misconduct at his school. Perhaps he is extremely busy or stressed. Maybe he is afraid to talk to these teachers in fear of their reaction. Also, perhaps he lacks the necessary skills to approach the topic with them. Furthermore, Mr Amethyst did not state anything pertaining to the amendment of his school's code of conduct. The principal of Rose Secondary also did not state anything in this regard. Again, probably they lack the skills of proper time management and delegation; hence may need additional training. The principal of Rose Secondary was the only participant who asserted that the behaviour of teachers all boils down to the frame of mind that he or she is in. To add, Mr Jade did not contribute anything about parent meetings. Even though naturally they may have meetings for parents, perhaps their main problem is dealing with infuriated parents that come to school and create a scene whenever their child is involved in a problem. Moreover, the principal of Sunflower Primary talked about the relevance of keeping the lines of communication open with the SEM to get their voices heard.

In the context of Egypt, the findings from research conducted by Megahed, Ginsburgh, Abdellah and Zohry (2010) postulate that workshops attended by interview participants definitely was useful in enhancing their skills as instructional leaders. According to Steyn and van Niekerk (2007) principals often choose to give their personal relationship with teachers' priority over the quality of education that is being delivered. Also, it is argued that several principals have a poor understanding regarding what is expected of them as

instructional leaders (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013). Principals have the responsibility to ensure that there is effective team collaboration that the educational laws and policies are being implemented correctly and that sound discipline is being maintained (Bellamy, Fulmer, Murphy & Muth, 2007). In addition, West-Burnham (2009) posits that focusing on the positive aspects of a person or organisation as opposed to fault-finding is more effective in remedying a problem situation. The aforementioned writer also advocates that “community interaction lends itself to transformation” (West-Burnham, 2009, p. 104). According to the instructional leadership theory, school leaders should enact their instructional roles in a non-judgemental, caring manner (Whitehead, Boschee & Decker, 2013). The transformational leadership theory advocates team collaboration and participative management that is inclusive of the community (Hallinger, 2003).

Another poignant point that the principals brought up is the issue of inadequate funds that hinders the proper functioning of the school. Teachers are encouraged to improvise in the case of a lack of resources. Furthermore, unemployment is rife. As a result, many parents and guardians are unable to pay school fees. Moreover, the lack of funds affects the salary that is earned by SGB educators, including the number of educators that are employed. Due to financial constraints the best educators cannot be recruited.

This is seen as a factor that prevents the delivery of quality education in one school. The principals strongly feel that more needs to be done on the part of the department to assist them in the delivery of quality education at their schools. One particular principal voiced concern over school governing body parents that may be unsure of their role. More training is called for in this regard that will shed light on what SGB parents are expected to do and more importantly what they are not expected to do. There is also an indication of poor pastoral care at schools, including language barriers that hinder communication. Principals went on to explain what they are doing to manage these challenges:

I try to employ SGB educators but only if funds are available. With regard to the language barrier, I request an IsiZulu-English conversant teacher to interpret and explain issues to some parents. In terms of pastoral care, I have appointed two educators to control pastoral care issues. To curb the problem of a shortage of

resources, fund-raising drives are organised and the money is used to purchase resources.

(Ms Topaz of Petunia Primary)

The department of education definitely needs to increase funding and quality of schools. They need to devise a way to attract rural and orphaned children. There should be no fee paying schools. At our school, we have fund-raising that is done during market day, fun-run, debs' ball and rental of premises. Then I feel that the department of education needs to supply textbooks. Notes and articles are duplicated by teachers in the form of notes and worksheets.

(Mr Amethyst of Daisy Secondary)

Addressing the financial challenges is no easy task in an area of economic depression and during times of high unemployment. Many parents of the learners that attend my school are unemployed or their guardians collect a state grant that is too little for them to pay school fees. Fund-raising via fun runs and debs ball rakes in some badly needed funding. "The quota of SGB educators has to keep to the bare minimum as these SGB educator salaries constitute a major drain on school's finances. On-going training of parents who serve on the governing body is needed so that role functions are clearly understood.

(Mr Jade of Rose Secondary)

The principal of Sunflower Primary stated that the department needs to increase the funding to schools and provide more training for teachers but this was said in question three of the interview. To add, she didn't state what is being done in the realm of pastoral care and SGB teachers and parents. Language barrier issues were also not highlighted by Daisy Secondary, Rose Secondary and Sunflower Primary. The principal of Daisy Secondary also didn't mention anything pertaining to how the lack of funds affects the running of the school or that there are any language barriers. The problems experienced by one school and the manner in which they are resolved are unique to the socio-economic context.

Pansiri (2008, p. 473) postulates that "a lack of funding and a poor understanding of the pastoral role" prevents the delivery of quality education by an instructional leader. In addition, Megahed, Ginsburgh, Abdellah & Zohry (2010) advocate that schools are extensions of the community and context in which they are embedded. These writers also

state that quality education is hampered by the abject poverty that many schools and families are faced with (Megahed, Ginsburgh, Abdellah & Zohry (2010). Pansiri (2008) further argues that provisions need to be made for the development of management skills for both principals and the SMT. According to Megahed, Ginsburgh, Abdellah & Zohry (2010) the Egyptian government is encouraging educators to break away from their dependence on textbooks and to discover creative alternatives instead.

According to Steyn and van Niekerk (2007), principals are encouraged to revisit the vision and mission often. Although principals mentioned this as an integral aspect of their roles as instructional leaders, they did not explain how they ensure that the vision for their schools is not lost sight of in this question. Shields (2011, p. 26) argues that according to the distributive leadership theory, “the work conditions of teachers are also the work conditions of students”. Instructional leaders need to be mindful of this. Hallinger (2003) argues that instructional leadership theorists are all for the achievement of the vision and mission of the organisation. Transformational leadership theory encapsulates the faculty of critical thinking in order to aid problem resolution (Hallinger, 2003). Moreover, “the transformative approach to leadership requires innovation, creativity, teamwork and stimulating educators to maximise their full potentials” (Pansiri, 2008, p. 474).

The above discussion entails a detailed description of what principals are doing in their specific schools to curb the problems associated with their enactment of instructional leadership practices. It enables us to gain a bird’s eye view of the steps being undertaken to eradicate these shortcomings and also creates a window for us to peer in and see where greater assistance is needed. Perhaps this could then pave the way for further research.

4.3 Chapter summary

This chapter provided an in-depth discussion of the important findings that were gathered from the data generation. It entailed an explanation of the main points, including quotations from the interview transcripts in support of and strengthening what was stated. Furthermore, literature from Chapter Two, including the various theories that informed my research strengthened my argument. The next chapter elucidates poignant conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a detailed discussion of the data obtained from the various interviews that I conducted. The data was analysed and the findings that emerged were thereafter elucidated in the form of themes. In addition, the findings that I presented were supported by evidence retrieved from Chapter Two of the literature review and the theories that underpinned my study. This chapter serves as a summary of the entire research investigation. Conclusions based on the findings and my study objectives are then presented. Pertinent recommendations are presented based on the conclusions. A chapter summary provides a final close to this research project.

5.2 Summary of the study

Chapter One served as an introduction to the study. The chapter presented a rationale for the study, the objectives, key questions, a definition of concepts, literature review and associated theoretical frameworks, followed by an outline of the chosen research design and methodology. Next, the limitations and delimitations of my study were elucidated.

Chapter Two dealt with a literature review and theoretical frameworks that informed my study. In this section, I drew on several studies around the topic of instructional leadership and the role of principals in the delivery of quality education in schools.

Chapter Three zoomed in on the research design and methodology, including the research paradigms best suited to my particular study.

Chapter Four outlined an analysis and interpretation of the data that was obtained from the interview process. The discussion had been guided by the objectives and key research questions. The arguments were supported with evidence from the literature reviewed in chapter two and the essence of instructional leadership theory, transformative leadership theory and the distributive leadership theory.

Chapter Five entails drawing conclusions from the findings stated in Chapter Four. In addition, recommendations are made, followed by implications for the study and further research.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings from the previous chapter, the following conclusions are made. Upon interviewing the various school principals, I concluded that their level of understanding regarding instructional leadership practices was in line with their job descriptions. The different aspects related to their role as instructional leaders could easily be linked back to the definition of the concept instructional leadership that was presented right at the outset in Chapter One. The fact that all four principals had similar ideas to share about their role as instructional leaders confirmed that they have a sound grasp of the concept as well as their roles in managing and supporting learning and teaching in their schools. Through the quotes that were employed in Chapter Four, the degree of similarity is clearly evident.

5.3.1 The principals' understandings of their role in supporting teaching and learning

The main idea of what it means to be an instructional leader was provided in the principals mentioning key elements such as the creation of a positive atmosphere that favours team collaboration and conflict resolution. This is distinct in the dialogues presented. In addition, the principals' role is to effectively arrive at solutions to problems in a manner that is sensitive and non-judgemental. It can also be concluded that a degree of objectivity and tact is indeed required and employed by principals in dealing with educator or learner misconduct regardless of how minor or serious the problem may be. The principals also articulated the need for themselves and other principals or potential managers to display a degree of humility and take that step to develop themselves further as professionals so that they can be better instructional leaders and set a good example for others to follow.

Self-awareness and a vision for the organisation emerged as integral aspects of an effective instructional leader. We can thus deduce that principals see the need and understand the importance of a personal vision for themselves and for their schools. Having a plan of where he or she sees the organisation in future, what they aim to achieve and so on assists to steer their schools in the right direction. The findings have also led us to conclude that if one has no personal vision and sees no need for development of the self, then the school's success would appear to be bleak and a mere mirage. According to the participants, the development of a positive learning and teaching environment entails

the element of support, not only for the children but for the staff as well as for the parents and school governing body. We therefore can deduce that the principals' perceive their role as support-givers and care-givers. This means that their role extends beyond the school environment and radiates to the community. Gaining knowledge, strength and support from other school principals in the form of PLC's or professional learning committees was also evident. We can conclude that the sharing of knowledge and skills through the interaction of various professionals adds to their expertise and enhances their understanding of their role as instructional leaders. The creation of a supportive teaching and learning environment can thus be equated with a successful institution in which quality education is delivered.

The principals spoke about academic excellence. This therefore influences me to conclude that this is achieved by the principal closely monitoring the process of teaching and learning. This means that the principal's role is no longer to stay in his or her office and deal with issues that are referred to them. Their role as instructional leaders means that they have to be active and on their feet. We can conclude that principals presently understand the need to visit teachers in their classrooms and offer their assistance. This is indeed necessary to ascertain that all is in order at school. It is obvious that they understood the importance of delegation. As an instructional leader one cannot do everything by him or herself; hence the roping in of other respective heads, teachers, RCL's, SGB, and stakeholders from the community. We are able to conclude that the delegation of duties results in the overall smooth functioning of the organisation. In a school where there is the practice of effective delegation, more time would be available for instructional leaders to attend to other relevant matters and to reflect on creative ways to further improve the quality of education at his or her school. Maintenance of the physical environment also supports quality teaching and learning. We can infer that a school that is not properly maintained would have an adverse effect on the quality of teaching and learning.

A thorough knowledge of the curriculum and learning programmes was viewed as a role of an instructional leader. The principals understand the contribution of these elements to quality teaching and learning. We can infer that the principals take the initiative to keep themselves informed regarding the aforementioned aspects and see to it that teachers are implementing it in their classrooms. Good communication skills are also imperative in getting educators to do what is stated in the curriculum. School principals make a

concerted effort to ascertain whether the duties of educators are being effectively carried out and this goes beyond providing children with knowledge and creating meaningful learning experiences for them. Principals' check that educators are in fact planning for lessons in advance, making use of creative resources etcetera and there needs to be evidence of this. This tells us that they take the delivery of quality education at their schools and their role as instructional leaders seriously. We can also be led to conclude that principals attach relevance to the organogram outlining the various roles that teachers are required to perform. The hierarchy is clearly understood and instructional leaders ensure that the correct procedures are followed. The organogram serves as a map outlining the role that each individual on the SMT and SGB is required to fulfill.

The aspect of accountability was clearly demonstrated. We can conclude that school principals understand their role as instructional leaders as follows: to take care of discipline related problems of teachers and learners, purchasing of resources, fund-raising, safety and security etcetera. We can thereby infer that school principals have a multitude of tasks to perform that can prove to be trying at times. Professional development of the principal and staff was articulated as an integral role of an instructional leader. This tells us that the principals try their best to ensure there is good team collaboration among staff and parents and that there is democratic decision-making so that quality education can be delivered. They also understand that if they are not aware of their roles and do not practice the above mentioned elements then the delivery of quality education will inevitably be hindered. The proper functioning of the school will be negatively affected.

5.3.2 How principals support teaching and learning at schools

In terms of what school principals are actually doing to support instructional leadership practices, the following conclusions can be made. Firstly, the principals identified the need to find out about workshops etcetera that they or educators from their school can attend. We can thus conclude that school principals understand the need for personal growth and that of their staff so that there can be an improvement in the standard of education. In addition, this tells us that instructional leaders identify the relevance of keeping updated as new techniques and methods of teaching and strategies for handling matters of indiscipline are continuously emerging. The principals also mentioned their engagement with PLC's on a regular basis. We are led to conclude that these meetings contribute positively to broadening or increasing their knowledge about judicious

management of resources and how to be effective instructional leaders for instance. Some principals mentioned the value of PLC's and its contribution to personal and professional development, whilst others did not. This tells us that principals still require training in this regard. Principals make sure that the organogram is being followed and that each person that is in charge of something is doing their job. They make sure that there is proper communication among staff and that there is minimal staff conflict. This means that they are efficiently carrying out their role in supporting teaching and learning and shows that they display a good grasp of the value of team collaboration and its contribution to the delivery of quality education.

The school principals that I interviewed also try their best to ensure that all educators are adequately supported in order for conducive teaching and learning to take place. HOD's are assigned the task of checking that all is in order and that educators are assisted especially during times of crisis. Furthermore, they ensure that educators are properly guided and motivated so that they can give off their best. Keeping parents well informed about what is happening at school and their children's behaviour and education is done on a regular basis. We are led to understand that school principals enact their roles as instructional leaders by organising regular meetings with parents and requesting community stakeholders to assist with fund-raising. This tells us that the support system that these principals have in place at their schools is extremely efficient. They understand that due to the pressure that teachers face, a consistent motivational programme ensures that they give off their best in the classroom. Principals understand that parents are the child's first teachers; hence they need to be in the know about their children's progress. We can also conclude that the principals understand that schools are extensions of the communities in which they are situated; hence community involvement is a must especially when it comes to fund-raising so that learners can receive an education of quality.

5.3.3 The challenges experienced by principals that affect their enactment of teaching and learning

We can conclude that principals of both primary and secondary schools experience similar challenges. We can deduce that age may not be so much of a factor when it comes to discipline problems, but rather the communities from which the learners come. In addition, we could conclude that the problems that are experienced are closely linked with the cycle of socialisation of the child and the context that the school is situated in. The

principals mentioned a lack of finances as one of the challenges they experience. This can be attributed to the fact that the sum of money allocated by the department is too little to ensure the smooth functioning of the school. This shows that school principals have little control over financial constraints. We can conclude that school principals are in dire need to have their voices heard by the Department of Education in terms of finances so the delivery of quality education will not be hindered.

Large class sizes were identified as another challenge. We can conclude that schools simply do not have adequate funds to hire additional personnel so that more classes can be created to alleviate this problem. School principals are thus helpless regarding the overcrowding of classrooms and uncomfortable teaching and learning conditions. Discipline problems of learners ranged from minor problems such as absenteeism, vandalism and bunking to more serious ones such as gang fights and the consumption of drugs and alcohol, including pregnancy. From this we can conclude that school principals and teachers are under an immense amount of stress to mitigate these problems. There is also an attitude of apathy from learners and parents that are ready to defend their children by threatening exposure to the media even if they are wrong. This means that the parents perceive principals and educators that address acts of indiscipline as a personal attack on their children and they do not understand that it is also to the benefit of the child in the long run. We can conclude that the non-involvement of parents and their failure to pitch up at meetings adds to discipline problems. Extreme poverty, unemployment and children without parents to guide them are other possibilities.

Principals also voiced concern of SGB members that may often overstep their mark in certain instances. We can thus deduce that members of the SGB are unsure of their roles and require training to equip them for their role. Educator misconduct is rife with many teachers displaying a nonchalant attitude towards their work. This can be attributed to the fact that many may be de-motivated and suffering from stress. Teacher absenteeism is a direct result of this. We can conclude that the high rate of teachers being absent from school compromises the quality of education that students receive. Principals voiced concern over the Department of education that provides minimal support for instructional leaders and schools. This means that principals feel that their needs are not fully being met by the Department and that more effort needs to be put in by department officials, so that the standard of education will improve. Unions need to be more concerned about learners' education than striking. This means that principals may perceive teacher unions

as a little inconsiderate when it comes to the learners since they miss out on valuable learning time as a result of strikes.

5.3.4 Strategies employed by school principals to overcome the challenges they experienced in managing teaching and learning at schools

We can conclude that principals navigate the challenges they experience by constantly communicating with learners, educators and parents regarding discipline problems. The principals perceive communication as an effective tool to necessitate the changes that the principal wishes to make, for example in terms of proper team collaboration. Staff development programmes is an essential that the principals use. This means that they value it as a means to assist the personal and professional growth of educators, especially the novice teachers that enter the profession. Principals communicated regularly with parents via newsletters and in arranging for parent meetings that are successful most of the time. Regular talks from NGO's are scheduled in keeping learners motivated and on the right track. Educators are encouraged to speak to learners about proper conduct during lessons. Principals also found re-stating the vision and mission of their school at important functions to be useful in keeping teachers, learners and parents focused on steering the organisation in the correct direction. From the above, we can conclude that school principals generally try their best to ensure the delivery of quality education at their schools, despite the challenges that come their way. Good communication and team collaboration is essential as it ensures the delivery of quality education on an on-going basis.

5.4 Recommendations

As a result of the aforementioned conclusions, I recommend the following:

5.4.1 Professional growth of principals

Firstly, although the principals displayed a good grasp of what it means to be an instructional leader, opportunities need to be created for other school principals that may need further training in this regard. I state this due to my sample being representative only of the context in which the research was conducted. They need to be trained about problem-resolution and managing staff conflicts, for example. I also firmly believe that the generation of children that we are currently educating are different compared to the past; hence school principals need to value the interaction with PLC's and attending seminars and workshops to broaden their knowledge pertaining to discipline problems

and their effective resolution so that they can take this knowledge back to school resulting in whole school development.

5.4.2 Staff development

Principals should make a concerted effort to ensure the maximum development of their staff. They should foster team collaboration and delegation of tasks and explain its importance on a regular basis. Principals need to show educators that they care for them by adopting an active, hands-on approach to assist teachers in their classrooms. They should understand the relevance of making sure that all records are kept up-to-date and that there is adequate evidence that quality teaching and learning is taking place. They need to show teachers, learners and the community that they are efficient in the realm of accountability. They need to know what is happening around the school; hence should not only remain within the confines of the office. Principals should enforce discipline of educators and learners and they should not turn a blind eye to transgressions. I believe that if an example is made, then others will opt to follow the correct path.

5.4.3 Communication

Regular meetings should be held with RCL's, teachers and parents, including PLC's so that problem areas can be identified before they become too large to resolve. Principals should take the initiative to grow on a personal level and as professionals by interacting with PLC's and attending workshops and seminars. More training definitely needs to be provided for SGB members that experience role conflict. All decisions should be made in a democratic manner and all educators, RCL's and parents represented by the SGB should have an equal and fair say in the decision-making process. Everyone should be included in the decision-making process. Principals need to create opportunities that would shed light on educator stress management and encourage educators to speak out if there is a problem.

5.4.4 Motivation

I fervently believe that principals should understand the need to motivate themselves and encourage their educators on a continual basis in order for them to perform optimally. School principals should familiarise themselves with various motivational techniques such as praise for a task well done, rewards, and empowerment, etcetera. Naturally, the element of praise would reinforce an educator's efforts. If instructional leaders show their

staff that their contributions are valued then they will be encouraged to keep up the good work.

5.5 Implications for future research

My particular research was a qualitative case-study of four schools in Durban. Since the sample is small, the findings and conclusions cannot be generalised to all schools in Durban. Each school is unique due to the societal contexts in which they are embedded. Although the school principals that were interviewed had similar ideas to share regarding their understandings of their role as instructional leaders, there is a significant gap related to what they actually do in order to support teaching and learning. There are a number of factors that influences this such as a lack of skills of how to actually go about supporting teaching and learning. Another shortcoming that could be identified is that the sample constituted school principals that were in the profession for a number of years. Their experiences compared to younger school principals would be different. It would have been interesting to have a novice principal as a participant to gain an understanding of the degree of uniqueness in their experience as instructional leaders. There is therefore room for a larger investigation to be carried out with the use of different methodologies and research methods that would contribute to a broader understanding of the subject.

I fervently believe that the media should be used in a positive way to get the concerns of school principals across to the unions and the department of education. Greater financial support and funding needs to be provided for schools by the department. Extremely poverty-stricken schools should be declared no fee paying schools. To add, the Department of Education should also fund security for schools, especially those with discipline problems that are escalating. Schools need to ensure the safety and security of all individuals on its premises. The department should fund security for schools so that the money that is used to pay security personnel can be used for alternative needs such as paying SGB teachers. More stable employment should be provided for SGB educators with better paying salaries.

Furthermore, the principals expressed the need for greater support from the Department of Education in order to assist them in the delivery of quality education. They further explained that the funding that is currently provided by the department to purchase textbooks and other stationery is not enough. More support needs to be given by the department to alleviate teenage pregnancy and substance abuse amongst youth. In

addition, the department needs to provide more training for principals to assist them to enact their roles as instructional leaders efficiently as there is always room for growth. SGB's also need to be trained to avoid role conflict. Moreover, the department of education needs to make a concerted effort to prevent the disruption of lessons, especially the matriculation examinations by educator unions. In light of the above discussion, future research could be conducted in these areas to find out what the department is currently doing or plans on doing to address these issues or needs.

5.6 Chapter summary

This chapter entailed a final summing up of my research project. It presented significant conclusions that were drawn from the findings in chapter four. The conclusions then informed the proposed recommendations. The implications that could pave the way for future research were thereafter elucidated.

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APPENDIX : A

203 Parkside Drive

Silverglen

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19 June 2013

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

I am a student at the University of KwaZulu – Natal Edgewood campus. I am currently studying towards a Masters degree. As part of my work, I am conducting research on the topic of Instructional Leadership in Education. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in the following schools under your jurisdiction in KwaZulu – Natal. The schools are: _____Secondary School , _____ Secondary School , _____ Primary School and _____Primary School. The title of my research project is: An exploration of instructional leadership practices of school principals: A case study of four schools in Durban.

This study is qualitative and I will use semi – structured interviews to collect data. Participants will be interviewed for approximately half an hour to forty five minutes at a time that is suitable to them. Each interview will be audio recorded. All responses will be treated with confidentiality in accordance with the code of ethics that governs research. Pseudonyms will be used in the write – up of my dissertation. Participants will be contacted in advance for interviews and they have been purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary.

For further information on this research project please feel free to contact me on 0832030192 or email me at the following address: chrisreddy@mtn.blackberry.com **OR** my supervisor – Mr. S.E Mthiyane (031 – 2601870) or mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za

Research tools are attached herewith for your perusal.

Your positive response will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Mr. L. C. Reddy

APPENDIX: B

203 Parkside Drive

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Chatsworth

4092

19 June 2013

Attention: The School Principal

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH PROJECT

I am a student at the University of KwaZulu – Natal Edgewood campus. I am currently studying towards a Masters degree. As part of my work, I am conducting research on the topic of Instructional Leadership in Education. Please be informed that I have already sought and received the necessary permission from the KwaZulu – Natal Department of Basic Education to conduct this research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in your school. In addition, I request you and a willing senior educator/s to take part in this project as one of the participants. The title of my research project is: An exploration of instructional leadership practices of school principals: A case study of four schools in Durban. This study is qualitative and I will use semi – structured interviews to collect data. Participants will be interviewed for approximately half an hour to forty five minutes at a time that is suitable to them. Each interview will be audio recorded. All responses will be treated with confidentiality in accordance with the code of ethics that governs research. Pseudonyms will be used in the write – up of my dissertation. The name of the school will also not be mentioned in the write – up. Participants will be contacted in advance for interviews and they have been purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary that means that they are free to withdraw from the research at any time.

For further information on this research project please feel free to contact me on 0832030192 or email me at the following address: chrisreddy@mtn.blackberry.com

Your positive response will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Mr L.C Reddy

APPENDIX: C

Declaration/Consent form

I _____(Full name of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **An exploration of instructional leadership practices of school principals: A case study of four schools in Durban.**

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the research project any time I so desire

Signature of Participant: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Witness/Research Assistant: _____ Date: _____

Thanking you in advance

Mr L.C. Reddy

APPENDIX: D

Interview Schedule

Interview questions to be posed to the principal

1. What do you understand to be your role in supporting teaching and learning at your school? Please elaborate.
2. What do you actually do to support and manage teaching and learning at your school? Please explain.
3. What are the challenges or barriers that you experience (from teachers, learners, DOE, teacher unions, parents etcetera) as you enact your practices in terms of teaching and learning at your school? Please elaborate.
4. How do you overcome the challenges you have mentioned? Please elaborate.

NB: The comprehension of questions was enhanced through further probing where necessary in order to provide direction and guidance.

APPENDIX E

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Dr Saths Govender

6 DECEMBER 2013

LANGUAGE CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

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

‘An exploration of instructional leadership practices of school principals: A case study of four schools in Durban’ by L. C. Reddy.

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



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

