

**A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF
THE INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
PRACTICES OF SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS IN THREE HIGH-
PERFORMING INDEPENDENT
SCHOOLS IN GAUTENG**

By:

Zerina Kathrada

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PRACTICES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THREE HIGH-PERFORMING
INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS IN GAUTENG**

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A phenomenological study of the instructional leadership practices of school principals in three high- performing independent schools in Gauteng

I declare that:

- The above dissertation is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.
- I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at UNISA for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.
- I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted parameters for originality.



Zerina Kathrada

16 August 2018

Date

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SUMMARY

The core role and responsibility of the school principal is to be an instructional leader. The principal sets the tone in terms of teaching and learning in the school. In this study I focus on school principals at independent schools in Gauteng and explore their instructional leadership practices. To understand these practices I drew on Weber's instructional leadership model and distributed leadership.

In this interpretive, qualitative, phenomenological study I purposively sampled three independent schools in the Gauteng province based on exceptional academic achievement. I selected their school principals as participants. Data was generated using semi-structured interviews, collage inquiry and artefact inquiry. The findings indicate that the day-to-day instructional leadership practices of the participants are quite expansive and are geared towards ensuring quality in teaching and learning. Furthermore, they receive the requisite support from stakeholders and mediate the challenges they experience in their instructional leadership in multiple ways.

Key terms: artefact inquiry, collage inquiry, distributed leadership, instructional leadership, independent schools, leadership practices, management, phenomenology, school principals, teaching and learning.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

- ACE – Advanced Certificate in Education (Postgraduate qualification in Educational Management).
- ANA – Annual National Assessment
- DBE – Department of Basic Education
- HOD - Head of Department
- HDipEd- Higher Diploma of Education
- IT- Information Technology
- MTL – Management of Teaching and Learning
- NSC- National Senior Certificate (Matric Examination).
- SACE- South African Council for Educators
- SMT- School Management Team
- UNISA- University of South Africa

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter makes the reader aware of the overall direction and orientation of the study. The background to the study is explained followed by the presentation of the research problem and the aim and objectives of the study. The limitations of the study are then addressed. The research methodology is thereafter elaborated upon followed by an explanation of the key concepts used in the study. The chapter is brought to conclusion by a presentation of an overview of the study.

1.2 Background to the study

In many schools, teachers and principals are faced with challenges such as large class sizes, difficult teaching and learning conditions, poor learner discipline and constant changes in the curriculum (Thrupp & Lupton 2011:289). Often teaching and learning takes place in unfavourable conditions such as low socio-economic contexts, unemployed and illiterate parents, divorced parents and the absence of parental involvement (Maringe, Masinire & Nkambule 2015:1). In such contexts teachers experience difficulty in achieving satisfactory learner outcomes. In some schools, despite these challenges, they are able to overcome these conditions and achieve good results. Naicker, Chikoko and Mthiyane (2013:137) found that although some schools experience unfavourable conditions, if the instructional leadership is strong, learner achievement will improve. When teaching and learning are undertaken by committed educators and school leadership is effective, school outcomes are bound to improve (Drysdale & Gurr 2011:360). Immaterial of the conditions, if the instructional leadership is strong, learner results will be excellent (Drysdale & Gurr 2011: 61).

In South Africa, learner achievement in secondary schools is often measured by performance in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination and great emphasis is placed on the NSC results

of learners in order to rate the best performing schools (The Citizen 2014:7, Molefe, 2014:3). These results are widely advertised across various media such as national television, newspapers and social media such as Facebook and Twitter. When the results are released interviews are conducted with the top achieving learners and their respective principals. School principals of high achieving schools use the media to boast about their excellent achievements as part of school marketing. They seldom share the secrets of their school's academic achievement (The Citizen 2014:1). Thus, this study focuses on the instructional leadership practices of high performing schools. The purpose is to make visible the instructional leadership practices of the school principals. According to Moodley (2015:3) the University of Witwatersrand's Annual Report shows that learner achievement is better in independent schools than in public schools. In an attempt to learn from the practices at independent schools this study focuses on the instructional leadership in independent schools.

Literature seems to suggest that a school principal's role is pivotal to learner success (Liethwood & Reihl 2003:13). The school principal is seen as the fulcrum around which successful learner outcomes revolves. This is supported by Bush, Kiggundu and Moorosi (2011:33) who observe that sound leadership practices impact positively on learner achievement. Thus effective leadership of schools has the possibility of leading to success in the academic performance of learners and schools earning the reputation of being a high performing school (Triegaart 2013:33). The extent of the success of changes made to improve the learning experiences of students is highly dependent on the nature of the instructional leadership practices (Marishane & Botha, 2011:15).

Personally, I have taught in both, public and independent schools. My observation has been that the instructional leadership practices of school leaders differed markedly in these two contexts. The quality of the instructional leadership at independent schools has resulted in better learner achievement. Consequently, annually independent schools receive accolades at district and national level for their excellent learner outcomes. This got me interested in wanting to know more about the instructional leadership practices in high-performing independent schools. What is it that they are doing in terms of leading teaching and learning that makes them so effective?

When it comes to high-performing schools, a particular brand of leadership and leadership practices are prevalent. Of importance, is the type of practices the leaders of these schools engage in order to ensure effective teaching and learning (Naicker et al 2013:144). In South Africa there

have been a limited number of studies with high performing schools that aim to make visible the instructional leadership practices of school principals (Hoadley, Christie & Ward 2009:22). Moreover, little is known about the instructional leadership of school principals of high-performing independent schools (Grobler and Conley 2014:5208). High-performing schools are schools that produce excellent results academically, and have exceptional instructional leaders who promote and motivate learners to excel (Moore & Womack 2018: 35).

Studies on independent schools are rare in South Africa. These schools are partially government subsidised (Umalusi 2013:2). Independent schools often achieve excellent results in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination , promote an advanced standard of education and excel in learner discipline (Citizen 2014:7; Moodley 2015:5; Williams 2017:1). Hence the rationale for conducting this study.

1.3 The significance of the study

Leadership development for school principals in South Africa is very limited. School principals are usually left to their own devices and learn leadership on the job (Krause & Powell 2002:64). This is confirmed by Bush, Kiggundu, Joubert and Van Rooyen (2011:162) who found that many principals are ill-equipped as leaders because of their lack of training in this position. Principals seldom receive training especially in areas such as financial leadership and instructional leadership (Mestry & Naidoo 2009:108). Furthermore, only a few principals are instructional leaders (Triegaadt 2013:28). Through this study, I hope to make visible the leadership practices of school principals in high-performing independent schools. Hence, this study may be significant in that it may provide examples to school principals in other schools as to what can be done to be effective instructional leaders. Bush, Kiggundu and Moorosi (2011:33) confirm that very limited literature exists specifically on successful instructional leadership practices in South Africa and in Africa, as a continent. Hence, this study is significant in that it may add to the literature base on successful instructional leadership practices in South Africa.

Although there are many books and articles (Botha 2004:241; Bush 2003:9; Kruger 2003:208; Harris 2002:18; Hallinger 2003:332, Naicker et al 2013:138) on instructional leadership, the focus is mainly on public schools. Research on instructional leadership in independent schools in South

Africa is thus very limited. This research thus fills this gap in the existing literature by exploring school principal instructional leadership practices in independent schools.

1.4 Statement of the problem

Many independent schools are known for their excellent academic performance and are known as ‘high-performing schools’ (Willam 2017:1). In contrast, there are many public schools in South Africa which are dysfunctional and regularly perform poorly academically (Maringe, Masinire & Nkambule 2015:1). The literature highlights that only through the effective leadership of the school principal (in collaboration with other stakeholders) can learner achievement be enhanced (Triegaart 2013:12). School principals need to be strong instructional leaders so that better learner outcomes are realised (Mrishane & Botha 2011:9).

Thus, the problem in this study centres around the instructional leadership practices of school principals in high performing independent schools. The aim is to discover what they are doing “right” to ensure excellent learner performance. Knowing this can be of enormous benefit to the many poor performing public schools in South Africa. Rarely do these poor performing schools know how to overcome their challenges. This can be achieved by examining lessons and examples from schools that succeed in their performance such as high-performing schools (Moore & Womack 2018:33). Thus, they may be able to model some of the practices of these high performing independent schools to improve their learner performance. Given this, the focus of my study is to make visible the lived instructional leadership practices of school principals in high performing independent schools.

1.5 Research questions

Through this study I aim to explore the instructional leadership practices of school principals of high performing independent schools. Thus, the key research question that informs this study is:

What are the lived instructional leadership practices of school principals in high-performing independent schools?

The following sub-research questions will be explored:

- *What day-to-day instructional leadership practices do school principals of high-performing independent schools engage in?*
- *How are school principals supported in their instructional leadership practices by relevant education stakeholders in high-performing independent schools?*
- *What obstacles do school principals encounter in their instructional leadership endeavours in high-performing independent schools?*
- *How do school principals mediate/negotiate the obstacles they encounter in their instructional leadership practices in high-performing independent schools?*

1.6 The aim and objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to explore the instructional leadership practices of school principals in high performing independent schools.

To accomplish this, the following objectives inform the study:

- To establish the day-to-day instructional leadership practices school principals of high-performing independent schools engage in.
- To determine the support that school principals receive from educational stakeholders in their leadership practices in high-performing independent schools.
- To make transparent the obstacles that school principals encounter in their instructional leadership endeavours in high-performing independent schools.
- To determine how school principals mediate/negotiate the obstacles they encounter in their instructional leadership practices in high-performing independent schools.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

The following are the delimitations of the study:

- The study is delimited to independent schools only. More specifically, to three high-performing independent schools in the Gauteng province.

- Secondly, it is delimited only to the experiences of the school principals of these, three schools.

1.8 Research design and methodology

Owing to a detailed account of the research design and methodology being presented in chapter 3, in this section I provide a very brief overview of the research design and methodology of the study. In this study, I adopt a qualitative research approach because my intention is not to predict a particular educational phenomenon, but to understand, explain and make meaning of the instructional leadership practices of school principals in independent schools (Neil 2012:2). Furthermore, this research will be located within the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism proceeds from the assumption that reality is subjective and meanings are socially constructed (Chowdhury 2014:434).

In this study, I adopt a phenomenology as methodology. A phenomenological study is one which focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how they experience the phenomenon (in other words “what it is like”). The purpose of phenomenological inquiry is description, interpretation and self-reflection (Van Manen 1990:23). The central thrust of phenomenology is to understand the everyday experience from the participants’ perspectives.

For logistical reasons such as resources and time, only three high-performing independent schools in the Gauteng province formed the sample and were selected purposefully (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:79). The school principals were the primary focus of the study because they are the “leader of leaders” at a school. This is a phenomenological study of the principals’ perspectives of instructional leadership, hence they formed the basis of data generation.

In phenomenology the researcher generates data from individuals who have experienced the phenomenon. I therefore interviewed the school principals of the three schools. This interviews allowed the principals the freedom to tell their stories about their experience as instructional leaders. Semi-structured interviews were used (Bernard 2002:46). An interview schedule, with open-ended questions guided the interviews. In order to assist principals to communicate their

instructional leadership in their schools, arts-based methods such as artefacts in the form of photographs and collage inquiry were used (Bagley & Castro-Salazar 2012:242).

All the interviews were digitally audio-recorded. After audio-recording, a *verbatim* transcription of each interview was done. The interview transcripts were then analysed according to Giorgi, Fisher and Murray's (1975:91) phenomenological steps (this is discussed fully in chapter 3).

1.9 Definition of key terms used in the study

Leadership

One of the traditional and widely accepted definitions of leadership is that of Greenberg and Baron (1993: 444) who describe leadership as “the process whereby one person influences individual and group members towards goal setting and goal achievement with no force or coercion”. According to Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001:9), “leadership occurs whenever one person attempts to influence the behaviour of an individual or group” in order to attain particular ends. In this study I use the term leadership to refer to the influence of a person or group by an individual in order to attain a particular vision. For example, it could refer to the school principal motivating a group of teachers to raise the performance of learners in a school to above the 80% mark.

Management

Trewatha and Newport (1976:22) define management as a process of planning, organising, actuating and controlling an organisations operation “in order to achieve a co-ordination of human and material resources essential in the effective and efficient attainment of objectives”. Similarly, Kolde (1977:2696) views management as comprising planning, organising, guiding and supervising in order to achieve a specific set of goals. In this study I use management to refer to processes that keep the school functional. For example having a functional school time-table is a management process. However, management and leadership are related processes and both are needed for a school to function efficiently.

Instructional Leadership

King (2002:62) views instructional leadership as “anything that leaders do to improve teaching and learning in their schools and districts”. Bush and Glover (2003:11) define instructional leadership as “leadership that focuses on learning and teaching and on the behaviour of teachers in working with students”. Southworth (2002:79) asserts that instructional leadership is mainly concerned with teaching and learning and student growth. From the above definitions it is clear that instructional leadership is about what leaders do in order to ensure effective teaching and learning at their schools.

Independent Schools

According to the *South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996* there are two types of schools: public schools and independent schools (Republic of South Africa, 1996). In public schools the Department of Education is the employer of teachers (except governing body paid teachers) and is responsible for educators’ salaries and supporting teaching and learning. Independent schools are privately owned schools. The board of directors is usually responsible for the school’s finances, employment of staff and overall management of the school including provisioning of resources (Edward 2017:20). Independent schools enjoy the reputation of academic excellence. They generally have smaller class sizes and better learning discipline. Higher standards of education and individual attention is thus encouraged (Williams 2017:1).

Distributive Leadership

Copland (2003:377) defines distributive leadership as a set of functions or responsibilities shared by the principal with other stakeholders of the school such as the deputy principal and other school management members. This is also known as shared leadership. According to Harris (2005:256) distributive leadership involves multiple leaders, engaging in a wide range of leadership and management activities.

High-Performing Schools

According to Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2009:22) high-performing schools are schools that achieve excellent academic results and maintain this status by producing excellent results repeatedly. In this study high performing schools refer to independent schools that perform well in the National

Senior Certificate (NSC) Examination. They attain pass rates in excess of 90% regularly. High-performing schools do not achieve excellent results by chance. They have excellent instructional leaders who motivate learners, teachers and staff members continuously (Chenoweth 2015:17).

1.10 Outline of the chapters

Chapter One – This chapter provides an overview of the study. It provides the background to the study, significance and aims thereof. It also touches on the research problem, the methodology the delimitations of the study and explanations of terms used in the study.

Chapter Two – This chapter defines the term instructional leadership and touches on different terms found in instructional leadership. It also provides an insight into a literature review from other research studies on instructional leadership in South Africa and internationally. Some aspects which are related to instructional leadership are also discussed in-depth. The theoretical framework is also touched upon.

Chapter Three – The research design and methodology are discussed. Aspects dealt with include the research approach, the research methodology, population and sampling, research methods and instrumentation, data analysis, issues of trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four – This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and discussion of the data. The chapter presents the findings using each of the three sub-research questions as an organising framework.

Chapter Five – The summary of the study, conclusions and study recommendations are presented in this chapter.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter presented an orientation to this research study which included a brief background, the significance of the study, the research problem and the objectives of the study. Key terms were defined in the chapter. The research methodology was discussed as well as the overall outline the chapters. The next chapter presents the theoretical framework informing this study and the review of the related literature.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter an overall orientation to the study was presented. The research problem was discussed. The significance, aim and delimitations of the research were discussed. The research methodology was explained. Key terms used in the study were explained and an outline of all the chapters was provided.

In this chapter, I present the theoretical framework and a review of the related literature. I commence the chapter by giving insight into the theoretical frameworks of instructional leadership and distributive leadership which is related to this study. Thereafter the related literature is presented commencing with the unpacking of the terms leadership and management followed by instructional leadership in schools. Instructional leadership literature is reviewed from a South African and international perspective. This chapter discusses instructional leadership strategies and how it is practised by principals. Shared instructional leadership practises and approaches are discussed within the context of promoting effective teaching and learning.

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks

There are two theories that inform this study namely, models of instructional leadership and distributed leadership.

2.2.1 Models of instructional leadership

Several models of instructional leadership have emerged since the early 1980's. Among these models are two which stand out with regularity. These are the Hallinger and Murphy model (1985:223) and the Weber model of instructional leadership (1996:259). The Weber model builds on the Hallinger and Murphy model. Consequently, this study draws on the Weber model.

The Hallinger and Murphy model (1985:223) has three main dimensions, the first, being to *define the school's mission*. All stakeholders of the school (for example, the principal, educators, board members and parents) must be aware of the schools mission, vision and goals. Each stakeholder grouping should be actively involved in the implementation of the school's mission and vision.

Managing the curriculum and instruction is the second dimension. It is the instructional leader's responsibility to initiate joint curriculum development activities for teachers. The educators must be involved in all matters concerning the delivery of the curriculum. The instructional leader is also responsible for providing in-service training and assistance to new and other educators. It is the principal as an instructional leader to motivate educators to attend DOE curriculum workshops and take new learnings back to the school staff. Parents and SGB or board members must also be made aware of changes to the curriculum.

The third dimension is to create *a positive learning climate*. It is the responsibility of the instructional leader or principal to promote a positive learning environment where school goals are communicated to all stakeholders and discipline is the order of the day. A positive learning climate initially starts in the classroom. The principal needs to build a healthy learning environment by ensuring all stakeholders work towards effective teaching and learning in the school.

Weber's (1996:259) model of instructional leadership aligns with the above dimensions of Hallinger and Murphy (1985:224). However, Weber (1996:259) added another two dimensions. The fourth dimension being, *observing and improving instruction*. The instructional leader is responsible for observing learning and teaching through classroom observation and focusing on aspects that need improvement. This will also include class visits by SMT members with the aim of monitoring teaching and learning processes. The final dimension is *assessing the instructional programme*. This means that the instructional leader, the SMT members and the educators are all responsible for evaluating the schools teaching and learning programme. The instructional leader, which in the school context is the school principal, will then assess whether the instructional programme is successful or not. If the instructional programme is not successful the instructional leader has to find alternatives to improve the instructional programme.

In this study I draw on the Weber Model (1996:259) of instructional leadership since it incorporates the Hallinger and Murphy (1985:223) model.

2.2.2 Distributed Leadership

Leadership must be understood as a shared process amongst the principal, SMT members and educators (DOE 2008). Distributed leadership or shared leadership “derives its theoretical underpinnings from concepts of distributed cognition and activity theory” (Latuour 1987:113, Pea 1993:92). MacBeath, Oduro and Waterhouse (2004:6) view distributed leadership as being similar to “shared leadership, collaborative leadership and democratic leadership”. Harris (2002:19) stresses that distributed leadership focuses less on the characteristics of the leader and more on creating a successful school environment for shared learning and developing leadership capabilities. Gronn (2000:323) indicates that distributed leadership is the responsibility of a group or network of individuals. In a school, leadership should not only be concentrated on the principal but can be stretched over a number of leaders who take the initiative of sharing responsibility wisely and maturely by interacting with leaders and followers (educators) in specific situations (Spillane 2005:149). Sims and Lorenzi (1992:46) are of the opinion that followers must be stimulated and encouraged to become leaders by the principal or middle leaders.

Gunter (2005:57) identifies three forms of distributed leadership namely, authorised, dispersed and democratic. *Authorised distributed leadership* occurs when tasks are distributed by the principal to the others in a hierarchical system. The principal being the head of the school authorises others to lead certain tasks (Spillane & Diamond 2007:34). Dispersed distributed leadership refers to a process where much of the work is done on an informal basis in groups (Hulpia, Devos & Van Keer 2010:42). Gunter (2005:59) explains this leadership as an emergent process through which private interest of individuals are promoted through group efforts. Gronn (2002:425) explains that this type of leadership opens space for terms like “co-partner principalship” which centres on “spontaneity” and “intuitive working relations”. Lee, Hallinger and Walker (2012:669) believes that dispersed distributive leadership is about sharing leadership tasks. Democratic distributive leadership is similar to dispersed distributive leadership in that both, the principal and other members have the potential for concerted action (Gunter 2005:60). It is different in a way that it does not assume political neutrality, but engages critically with organisational values and goals which involves development, experiences and change.

The role of the school principal in South Africa has changed since the installation of a democratic order. Swanepoel and Booysen (2006:191) explain that the culture of the democratic order requires

“school principals to exercise leadership that fully promotes the participation of all stakeholders”. It therefore, becomes the responsibility of the school principal to decide which tasks can be distributed in order to meet the needs of the school. However the school principal has to possess the skills and ability to decide which teacher will carry out the tasks effectively. Leadership should thus become the responsibility of every educator on the school staff.

2.3 Defining Leadership and Management

Defining leadership is one of the most challenging tasks (Triegaardt 2013:28). The concept is complex and its definition is contested (Triegaardt 2013:28). Pushpanadham (2006:43) states that definitions of leadership depend on the position and context it is viewed from. One of the traditional definitions of leadership is offered by Greenberg and Baron (1993:8). They describe leadership as being the process whereby one person influences an individual or group to attain goals which have been set. These goals are achieved with no force or coercion. Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson (2001:26) agree that leadership is not a matter of passive status or mere possession of some combination of traits. Rather, it is a working relationship among members of a group where leaders acquire status through active participation to reach certain goals. Leithwood and Riehl (2003:11) claim that school leadership is about setting direction, managing teaching and learning and developing people. Bush (2008:6), on the other hand, believes that leadership is demonstrated when individuals influence team members to achieve organisational goals.

The goal of leadership in education is to improve the quality of learning and teaching. Harris and Lambert (2003:5) explain that the function of leadership is to get teachers to learn and teach as a collective; to collaborate in order to improve the quality of education. Leadership also involves getting teachers to generate ideas together, making sense of new information and creating new understandings of teaching and learning all with the aim of improving learner outcomes (Harris & Lambert 2003:7). Bolden (2004:4) claims that leadership is dependent on how people are inspired to work towards school goals immaterial of individual or group goals via personal motivation and not through coercion. Successful leaders develop a shared vision or a programme for their school based on personal and professional goals and values (Bush & Glover 2003:13).

Closely related to leadership is the term management. Leadership and management are two entirely different entities yet they overlap each other. Some scholars claim they are two sides of the same coin. Both, leadership and management, are needed for the effective functioning of an educational institution (Bush 2008:15). Cuban (1988:18) agrees that leadership and management overlap, however, each aspect has their own functions. Cuban (1988:18) explains that leadership is distinguished from management by involving change while management is defined greatly as part of organisational maintenance involving planning, organising, controlling and co-ordination. Bush (2008:16) differentiates the definitions of leadership and management by saying that leadership is about reaching goals, improving teaching and learning and taking responsibility of resources while management includes things like maintenance of infrastructure. In a school, the principal needs to be both a leader and a manager.

An instructional leader must practise both leadership and management. Bush (2008:16) advocates that both leadership and management need to be given equal prominence if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their goals. In fact, effective leadership and management are increasingly regarded as essential ingredients for any school to be successful. There is the widespread belief that raising the standards of leadership and management simultaneously improves the quality of the school and its education (Bush 2008:17).

Grace (1995:17) argues that leadership is synonymous with school management. In her study in England she observed that a leader has to practise management in order to lead successfully. She further states that an educational leader has to manage certain responsibilities on his/her own and on the other hand delegate other responsibilities to other management members. Grace (1995:18) continues that a leader must be vigilant when distributing both leadership and management duties. Kruger (2003:208) contributes to this debate by acknowledging that leadership and management are closely related activities. From Grace (1995:18) and Kruger's (2003:208) opinions we can deduce that leadership and management works hand in hand.

2.4 Instructional Leadership in Schools

2.4.1 Understanding Instructional Leadership and its related activities

According to Mestry, Moonsamy-Koopasammy and Schmidt (2013:551) instructional leadership first appeared in the literature in the 1960s'. However, since the 1980's, there has been a considerable emphasis on instructional leadership with attention being paid to improving learning environments as well as teaching practises. The school principal's gaze has shifted to curriculum and instructional leadership and is less focused on managerial and administrative tasks (Hallinger 2009:14). This has enabled schools to perform better academically. The school effectiveness research of the 1980s portrayed the principal's role as being an instructional leader, however, as pointed out later in this chapter, the principal alone can no longer carry out this job. It therefore becomes incumbent on the entire School Management Team (SMT) to be involved in the instructional leadership process (Lambert 2005: 63). Hallinger (2009:14) explains that principals have shifted to a new paradigm of shared, distributed, instructional leadership in order to achieve better results. Principals are now even expected to share leadership responsibilities with teachers in order to manage the curriculum and instruction better in order to improve learning and teaching (Mark & Printy 2003:376).

Over the years, literature on instructional leadership has contributed to the blurring of meanings of instructional leadership (Witziers, Roel & Meta 2003:401). Consequently, instructional leadership means different things to different people (Witzieret al 2003: 401). In South Africa the term 'managing teaching and learning' (MTL) is used more frequently. Bush, Kiggundu and Moorosi (2011:34) explain that although MTL is more widely used the purpose or goal is the same i.e. instructional improvement. A basic understanding of instructional leadership relates it to the leadership of tasks associated with teaching and learning (Bush et al 2011:34). Hallinger (2005:223) explains that instructional leadership involves activities such as focusing on learner achievement, improving infrastructure, co-ordinating the curriculum, assessing, recording and monitoring teaching and learning. Instructional leadership is seen as a significant factor in facilitating, improving and promoting the academic progress of students (Naicker et al 2013:138). Drysdale and Gurr (2011:358) indicate that instructional leadership plays a central role in shifting

the emphasis of school-level activities to instructional improvements in order to improve learner achievement.

Instructional leadership “provides direction, resources and support to educators and learners”, with the objective of bringing about improvement in teaching and learning in the school (Keefe & Jenkins 2002:444). King (2002:62) views instructional leadership as “anything that leaders do to improve teaching and learning in their schools and districts” (King 2002:62). Bush and Glover (2003:27) believe that instructional leadership is a leadership that focuses on teaching and learning between learner and educator. Instructional leadership, according to a KwaZulu-Natal Department of education circular (2004:40), is “a process of striving towards the goal of effective teaching and learning”.

Successful instructional leadership has been widely accepted as a key constituent in school improvement because it focuses on effective learning and teaching (Lee, Hallinger & Walker 2012:668). Put differently, instructional leadership is critical to the promotion of learner achievement and school effectiveness (Van der Merwe & Schenk 2014:4). Effective instructional leaders influence learner performance by empowering teachers in creative ways to effectively transmit knowledge of the subject matters to learners (Drysdale & Gurr 2011:359). They ensure that appropriate resources are deployed for the benefit of learning and learner achievement. Good instructional leaders focus on the improvement of learner performance irrespective of the context in which they may be located (Naicker et al 2013:147). Presently our schools are seeing the integration of technology. Kruger (2003:209) advances that instructional leadership should include drawing on information and communications technology (ICT) in the instructional programme.

Hallinger (2011:129) identifies three dimensions to instructional leadership: defining the school’s mission, managing the instructional programme and promoting a positive school-learning culture. Given these dimensions, an instructional leader needs to be able to multi-task in an institution. She/he must cope with multiple activities such as setting clear goals, achieving the mission of the school, managing the curriculum, monitoring teaching and learning, allocating resources and evaluating teachers (Van der Merwe & Schnek 2014:6). Given these multiple activities, the principal should meet regularly with staff to monitor the extent to which these tasks are accomplished (Bush 2008:23). It is therefore imperative that the instructional leader must be

vigilant at all times and must be knowledgeable about the various tasks under her/his responsibility.

Southworth (2002 cited in Bush 2013:7) explains that instructional leadership is strongly concerned with the professional learning of teachers as well as student growth. Bush and Glover (2003:10) add that “instructional leadership focuses on teaching strategies and on the behaviour of teachers in working with learners”. Jenkins (2009:35) explains that instructional principals need to free themselves from bureaucratic tasks and instead focus on teaching and learning, provide resources, be up to date with curriculum changes as well as curriculum coverage, assessment practices, and monitoring and recording learners’ achievements.

Class visits are an important task for instructional leaders. Blasé and Blasé (1999, cited in Grobler & Conley 2013:205) state that instructional leadership must include supervision of classrooms instruction. They (Blasé & Blasé 2000:22 cited in Grobler & Conley 2013:5206) posit that instructional leadership is “embedded in class visits”, pointing out its central role in the school improvement process. Classroom supervision, modelling and monitoring are keys to successful instructional leadership (Bush 2013:9). Instructional leaders have to monitor classroom activities regularly in order to improve learning and teaching.

2.4.2 A South African perspective on leadership and schooling

In South Africa instructional leadership is known as leadership for learning or management of teaching and learning (Mestry et al 2013:553). During the apartheid era, leadership was hierarchical and power and control were exercised from the top down. The principal had to run the school with the department of education making all managerial decisions and was controlled by them (Hoadley, Christie & Ward 2009:23). During apartheid the principal was more of an administrator than an instructional manager (Hoadley et al 2009:23). All this has changed in the new South Africa (DOE 2008). Leadership has changed from one of autocratic control to one of collaboration (teamwork) and democracy (Bush 2013:9). Currently, the school instructional leader (the principal) works together with the SMT members in a democratic environment.

In post-apartheid South Africa, the National Department of Education (2008) has created new policies and regulations that redefine the leading, managing and governing public schools. The

school principal is no longer expected to carry the responsibility of leadership and management of schools alone (Hoadley et al 2009:24). School leadership and management tasks are to be shared with members of the School Management Team (SMT) comprising the principal, deputy principal and school level heads of department (HoD). In so doing the assumption is that the quality of learning and teaching will improve. However, in the post- apartheid era many public schools are not performing to their full potential. There is a great concern that many South African public schools are not functioning effectively (Naicker, Chikoko & Mthiyane 2013:138). There is sufficient evidence that shows former white schools achieve better results than former African township or rural schools (Hoadley et al 2009: 33). Naicker, Chikoko and Mthiyane (2013:138) observe that there exist two types of schools in South Africa namely, dysfunctional schools where teaching and learning barely exists and functional schools where school performance ranges from average to excellent. Evidence from the Annual National Assessments (ANA) (DoBE 2012) indicates that only 50% of grade 3's passed in their home language and only 2.3% of grade 9 passed in mathematics the ANA examinations in 2012 (Grobler & Conley 2013:205). Grade 6 learners achieved a pass rate of 28% in Language and 30% in Mathematics (Joseph, 2011:1). Mestry and Singh (2007:481) believe that numerous reasons exist for this poor learner performance which includes the lack of effective leadership skills on the part of the principal. Goslin (2009:4) agrees that many principals overlook their responsibilities as instructional leaders and are too busy attending to administrative tasks. Many instructional leaders are guilty of neglecting their responsibilities; thus teaching and learning and the learner achievement suffers. Many South African schools are still plagued by the effects of apartheid. Despite intervention programmes to assist principals to become effective instructional leader's poor performance of some schools continue (Moorosi 2010:551).

Independent schools on the other hand are known for performing better. Taking the NSC results into consideration, most of the top achieving schools are independent schools (Moodley 2015:4). Independent schools are autonomous institutions that are self-managing. They do however get partial financial support from the Department of Education (Umalusi 2013:2). The Department of Education deposits an allocation or a subsidy at the beginning of every financial year to the school provided the independent school submits an audited financial statement (Umalusi 2013:3). The principals of independent schools are responsible for the day-to-day professional leadership and management of the school (Umalusi 2013:4). Umalusi, a state quality assurance body audits

independent schools every five to seven years and provides accreditation for that period if all the leadership, management and governance tasks are accomplished effectively (Umalusi 2013:8).

2.4.3 Some recent studies on Instructional Leadership in South African schools

A qualitative study was conducted by Mestry, Moonsamy-Koopasammy and Schmidt (2013:556) using purposive sampling to select and interview six primary school principals in the Gauteng East District. Three principals were selected from needy schools and three were from schools whose learners obtained more than 60% in both numeracy and literacy in 2010 in ANA tests. The researchers found that the principals in this study displayed very traditional roles of instructional leadership (Mestry et al 2013:565). They engaged with management and administrative duties such as scheduling, reporting, parent issues, and finance and maintenance management. However, the majority of the principals considered promoting teaching and learning as a core responsibility. The researchers' findings also revealed that principals had a limited understanding of instructional leadership which included setting clear goals, managing the curriculum, and monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. Many principals conducted informal supervision because they felt that formal supervision is not a true reflection of teacher ability.

A study was conducted by Naicker, Chikoko and Mthiyane (2013:140) in the province of KwaZulu-Natal with the aim of exploring instructional leadership practices of school principals in high performing schools located in challenged contexts. The schools were located in informal settlements and township areas with conditions such as overcrowded classrooms, poverty, unemployed parents and single parent families. The number of learners in the classroom was extremely high (sometimes sixty in a class). Teaching resources were extremely limited. Despite the contextual conditions, these schools performed exceptionally well academically. This proved that poor environmental conditions are no excuse for poor school performance. The results of the National Senior Certificate examinations for three consecutive years were used (namely, 2010, 2011 and 2012) to show learner achievement. These results were compared in 2012 to other neighbouring high schools who served the same community. The combined average of the seven other high schools was 55% far lower than the sampled schools. According to Naicker et al (2013:141) the principals' responses showed that they were totally committed to their schools. They created extra teaching and learning time e.g. afternoons, Saturdays and at times Sundays to

work with learners so that they can achieve good results in the NSC exams. The principals served as excellent role models to the learners and teachers. They led by example and set the status of the school as ‘moving’ or ‘high-performing’ schools. Much of the schools success was achieved by the combined efforts of the principal, head of departments, senior staff members. However very little credit was given to the Department of Education (KwaZulu-Natal) for their lack regular support to these schools. (Naicker et al 2013:146).

In his study, Mbokazi (2013:2) researched three secondary schools in Soweto. Although the schools were surrounded by communities that experienced certain barriers like poverty, unemployment, ill-health and poor housing, the learners rose above the challenges and performed well in the NSC. Mbokazi (2013:3) ascribes this to effective leadership. The findings were very similar to Naicker et. al.’s (2013:147) study. Mbokazi (2013:5) also found that the school principals had upgraded themselves by achieving an ACE (Advanced Certificate of Education). The ACE programme serves to equip school principals with leadership and management skills (Bush, Kiggundu, Moorosi 2011:34). Time management also became a significant dimension of their instructional leadership practice by insisting on teacher and learner punctuality. Mbokazi (2013:5) also stressed that the three principals in his Soweto case study prioritised management, teaching and learning (MTL). They enforced regular learner and teacher attendance and monitored teaching and learning.

Steyn (2014:348) conducted a longitudinal study wherein he researched one principal from an Afrikaans medium school. This same principal was researched at different time intervals. A qualitative design was used with a number of interviews with open-ended questions. This particular principal was chosen because of his excellent leadership skills and his school winning an international award. From the interviews, Steyn (2014:365) found that the principal is “a peoples’ person” he always helps people and wants the staff to be happy. He also found that the principal had a strong passion for education and learners’ needs are a priority.

Chikoko, Naicker, and Mthiyane (2015:453) report on a qualitative research study conducted in multiply deprived contexts in KwaZulu-Natal. Five school principals were interviewed in Umlazi Township. The school faced multiple deprivation on four dimensions: income and material deprivation, employment deprivation, education deprivation and living environment deprivation.

The researchers found that despite the schools' challenges, the schools achieved excellent matric results owing to the strong instructional leadership of the school principals. The principals' practice involved guiding new teachers in various ways and ensuring that educators attend workshops. The HoDs at the school were valued and worked collaboratively with the principal. The principals had great trust in the HoDs to manage the educators. An interesting finding in this research was the continuous learning that the teachers engaged in.

Bhengu and Mkhize (2013:534) conducted a study to show that a principals' instructional leadership practises improves learner achievement. This research was conducted with five principals from Umbumbulu, KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The schools belonged to the socio-economically deprived communities in the south of Durban in South Africa. The focus of the research was on how principals practise instructional leadership. After years of underperformance these schools did not show improvement in learner performance (Bhengu & Mkhize 2013:536). Owing to the school principals implementing instructional leadership strategies, these schools showed a 'turn around' in terms of National Senior Certificate (NSC) results in recent years. Some of the schools showed a drastic increase in the NSC results (Bhengu & Mkhize 2013:546). The findings point to regular monitoring of teachers' and learners' work, supporting instruction, minimising disruption to teaching and learning time and modelling good practices. The findings also showed that schools need a positive climate to achieve high learner outcomes.

Ogina (2017:153) conducted a qualitative case study in Limpopo and Mpumalanga on school principals' perceived roles as instructional leaders including their own leadership abilities, attributes and responsibilities. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 principals to generate data. Ogina (2017:156) found that a lack of standardised training for school principals and the lack of development of a leadership identity among school principals was evident. In the absence of standardised guidelines and training, leadership relationships were grounded in individual values and based on each principal's individual traits. They further described personal traits and values that underpinned relationships with stakeholders. Notably, they mentioned good listening skills, commitment, innovativeness, punctuality, empathy and resonance. Principals also viewed their key role as curriculum implementation and explained their involvement with teaching and learning such as class visits (Ogina, 2017:159). Findings suggest a possible link between self-perceptions, attributes and leadership quality (Ogina 2017:159). Interestingly, the principals did

not see themselves as instructional leaders – this suggests the role they play as instructional leaders is not internalised or used as part of their description (Ogina 2017:159). For principals to be effective leaders they need to internalise the attributes which enhance instructional leadership (Ogina, 2017:160).

Marishane and Motona (2016:284) examined how management of an instructional programme for grade 3 first additional language reading is carried out in some South African schools. This was done through qualitative research and explored through observations, interviews and document analysis (Marishane & Motona 2016:285). Results from this study indicate that English teachers lacked supervision, motivation and support from some principals and management or head of departments (Marishane & Motona 2016:290). From this study it was noted that instructional leadership (or lack thereof) negatively impacts learner outcomes (Marishane & Motona 2016:290). It was found that teachers' work schedules were not regularly checked nor did supervision occur frequently. It was also observed that teachers who were not motivated by leaders underperformed in terms of teaching and achieving learner outcomes (Marishane & Motona 2016:292). The lack of understanding by the management team with regards to their roles and responsibilities was highlighted as an attributed weakness in this particular area in South Africa (Marishane & Motona 2016:292). It was further illustrated by this study, that whilst strategies are in place for management teams in terms of instructional supervision, they appear detached from the actual situations going on in the classrooms. It was a recommendation of this study that the department of education conduct workshops on a more regular basis in order to clearly outline and provide strategies so that the school management teams are better able to know their roles and in doing so are more effective in carrying out their responsibilities (Marishane & Motona, 2016:292).

A study in the North-West province highlighted the transformative role of principals in previously underperforming schools (Shava & Heystek 2018:1). A case study approach was used within a qualitative study framework. Six schools participated in this study and purposive sampling was used to select the schools (Shava & Heystek, (2018:9). The principals highlighted a number of different methods they used in order to improve learner performance. These included monitoring teachers' and learners' work frequently, quality assurance tests, ensuring resources are available for teaching, class visits from the principal/school management team and having open lines of communication (Shava & Heystek, 2018: 11). Principals echoed that keeping teachers motivated

is key. They also stressed that providing direction and resources is critical to the successful implementation of instructional leadership (Shava & Heystek, 2018:12). Distributed leadership was also practised, whereby members of the staff belong to different groups or committees in order to assist with effective functioning of the school. In areas, where teachers have special expertise, their opinions were sought which allowed for a greater sense of unity and participation amongst all staff, which leads to increased motivation among staff (Shava & Heystek 2018:13). Principals at these schools actively involved the parents in school activities. These included hosting parent's evenings and hosting open days (Shava & Heystek 2018:15).

2.4.4 Some recent studies on International Instructional Leadership

In Kenya, there are challenges around teacher quality in schools (Wanzare 2011:189). Teacher quality refers to the ability of teachers to discharge their teachings duties efficiently. This was found wanting in some schools (Wanzare 2011:189). Consequently, instructional supervision is looked upon as a strategy to improve teaching and learning in schools using head teachers as instructional supervisors. These HODs have the responsibility or ensuring that teachers implement the curriculum and maximum learning takes place (Wanzare 2011:192). Wanzare (2011:195) undertook a study regarding the practises of instructional supervision in public secondary schools in Kenya. He included secondary school teachers, secondary school head teachers and senior government education officers in a sample of two hundred public secondary schools. The research design was mixed methods involving a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches, where interviews and questionnaires were utilised. The findings indicated that instructional supervision was carried out by the head teachers and principals who monitored other teachers' work in order to ensure that regulations and procedures were followed so that academic learner performance is achieved.

Gumus and Akcaoglu (2013:294) researched instructional leadership in Turkey. Instructional leadership is a relatively new concept in Turkey (Gumus & Akcaoglu 2013:290). They looked at the instructional leadership skills of principals from primary schools in five different cities in Turkey. Turkey possesses a highly centralised educational system. In Turkey there was no formal training for principals nor was there any specific degree or certificate that was required for principalship. However, recently a course for principals was introduced. They were required to

write an examination and score at least 70% to be given a principal post. Furthermore, they had to attend a three-week training course to improve their leadership skills. The findings show that in terms of practice, Turkish principals generally devote much time to bureaucratic and managerial responsibilities thus neglecting instructional duties which results in a lack of support and guidance for educators. This has invariably impacted on learner performance.

Van der Merwe and Schenck (2014:4) conducted a qualitative research study to understand the 'what' of instructional leadership practises in Swaziland primary schools. Swaziland has four administrative regions namely Hhohho, Manzini, Shiselweni and Lumbumbo (Van der Merwe & Schenck 2014). Based on convenience, accessibility and purposive selection all eight primary schools sampled were drawn from the Hhohho area. Schools were selected according to the condition of the infrastructure and academic achievement. Schools equipped with good infrastructure and an annual pass rate of minimum 90% were selected. The total number of participants selected was 48. The school principals were selected for individual interviews because they were the executive instructional leaders. Five teachers from each school were selected for group focus interviews. Selection was done based on years of experience and involvement as instructional leaders. All participants shared a commonality of being actively involved in the functioning of the curricular programme at school. Van der Merwe and Schenck (2014:6) agree with Bush (2013:12) and with Drysdale and Gurr (2011:360) who believe that quality of leadership has a strong link to learner performance and teaching and learning. Van der Merwe and Schenck (2014:8) also mention that instructional leadership is motivated by the demand on school leaders for efficiency or classroom achievement. The researchers' findings centred on four themes in respect of instructional leadership namely, the role of the principal, the influence of the school culture, factors pertaining to instructional leadership and school success. The instructional leadership practised involved supervision, guidance, and support to teachers, implementation of the school curriculum, monitoring teaching and learning, discipline issues and culture of teaching and learning and shared instructional leadership.

Salo, Nyland and Stjernstrom (2015:494) conducted a twofold study in Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden and Finland) which focused on the concept of instructional leadership and its evolution as well as principals' perceptions of and approaches to instructional leadership. These researcher analysed the narratives of principals with regard to the aforementioned issues. Salo et al (2015:497)

found that instructional leadership was downplayed and there has been very little research conducted regarding how principals guide teachers in the classroom. Their study asserted that research has focused largely on individual leadership and concluded that principals do not engage in the direct guidance of teaching in classrooms but rather build an educational infrastructure for professional resilience and respect. They postulate that this needs to change and that face- to-face guidance and direct professional relationships need to be encouraged in order to move from a more individualised form of leadership to a more definitive one which aims to enhance learning and growth in both educational and organisational practices.

In the United States of America, Backor and Gordon (2015:108) conducted a study using a qualitative approach titled *Preparing Principals as Instructional Leaders: Perceptions of University Faculty, Expert Principals, and Expert Teacher Leaders*. The study generated data using open ended interviews with university scholars, practicing principals who were strong instructional leaders, and outstanding teacher leaders in order to determine better training methods for instructional leadership. The findings revealed that many participants related that there should be applicant screening for principals which includes a personal interview, leadership experience and a small group leadership exercise. They also highlighted functions of instructional leadership which included elements such as teacher evaluation, professional development, curriculum development, non-evaluative clinical supervision, and observation and action research. The findings also noted the skills and dispositions principals needed included skills noted were communication skills, teaching assessment skills, observation and conferencing skills as well as development of group facilitation skills, teaching and learning strategies, modelling of outstanding teaching as well as modelling instructional leadership and collaborative learning (Backor & Gordon 2015: 113). They concluded “that traditional principal preparation programs [must] place a greater emphasis on the preparation of instructional leaders” (Backor & Gordon 2015:126). They further emphasised “that if instructional leadership is to be [effectively] integrated into principal preparation, it will be necessary for preparation programs to include faculty members who have expertise in this area. Indicators of such expertise include successful practice in instructional leadership, advanced academic preparation in the area, and either a scholarly track record or research agenda focused on instructional leadership” (Backor & Gordon 2015:126).

A study in New York City explored the actions of principals who are noted for upholding instructional leadership practices from level K-grade 12 in urban public schools (Terosky 2016:312). Terosky (2016:314) used a qualitative research approach and generated data using interviews, observations and document analysis. Purposeful sampling methods were used because the researcher asked the Department of Education of New York City (DOE-NYC) to nominate instructional leaders as participants. 18 participants were used in the study. There were four phases in the study. Phase one involved an open-ended interview concerning instructional leadership strategies which lasted 45 minutes to 2 hours. Phase two was a self - report time usage survey which provided actual time spent by the participants on certain categories of instructional leadership in a day such as logistics, building maintenance, staff issues, finance, student or parent's affairs, professional development and community relations. Phase three was a full day shadowing with a follow up interview. Phase four was where the researcher collected supplemental data such as resumes, portfolios of other documentation that participants were willing to share. The common findings were that learners are a primary priority, especially regarding curriculum and learning and teaching. Proper planning and good organisation is imperative for instructional leadership. Investing in teacher development and collaboration and promotion of teacher leadership is a must. Strategies that can help an instructional leader is self- development, excellent communication skills with all stakeholders, limit unplanned issues, set boundaries for work during school hours and investment in the school to provide a better place for education.

Bush (2015:487) summarised a number of international studies which highlighted instructional leadership. He notes the recurrence of common themes in instructional leadership namely, supervision and monitoring of teaching and learning, guidance to staff and students, support to teachers, effective implementation of the school curriculum, addressing discipline issues, ensuring a culture for teaching and learning and shared instructional leadership.

2.5 Instructional Leadership Tasks

The main task of an instructional leader is to improve the quality of learning and teaching in the school because this will improve learner achievement. Marks and Printy (2003:379) focus on the leaders' direct relationship with teaching and learning. In other words, the gaze is cast upon what

leaders do to improve teaching and learning. They recommend viewing instructional leadership in terms of functions that contribute to learning, including the managerial behaviours of leaders. Bush (2011:791) indicates that every educator must be committed to teaching and learning because of its influence on learner achievement. Bush (2003:39) indicates that instructional leadership is about improving learning and teaching. When learning and teaching improves learner outcomes improves. Van der Merwe and Schenk (2014:7) concur and point out that the instructional leader must be committed to teaching and learning improvement. This should supersede all other leadership tasks.

Naicker et al (2013:138) also identified instructional leadership behaviours. They state that setting the school climate and promoting high academic expectations among learners is important. Further, instructional leaders should have clear instructional goals and must supervise how instructional strategies are transformed into learning activities. Southworth (2004 cited by Bush 2013:13) adds that a key task of the instructional leader is monitoring. This involves analysing learner progress and acting on the data to improve teaching and learning. Larry (2002:8) believes that instructional leadership tasks should involve setting clear goals, allocating appropriate resources, managing the curriculum, monitoring lesson plan development and evaluating teachers. Bhengu and Mkhize (2013:542) point out that instructional leaders should engage in tasks such as advancing curriculum development and professional development among teachers.

Blasé and Blasé (1998:101) have identified effective instructional practises which include communicating with educators, promoting educators' professional growth and fostering educator reflection. In their study of principals' roles in schools, they state that, to be effective, instructional leaders must grow professionally. They must foster collaboration and develop teamwork, support peer coaching, empower educators and above all, maintain visibility in their schools. The instructional leader must promote the professional growth of teachers by supporting and encouraging the acquisition and practice of new skills (Bush 2013:16). Hallinger (2003:343) advises encouraging of risk-taking, innovation and creativity, and the provision of effective staff development programmes. In South Africa, the South African Council of Educators (SACE) implemented a new point system to monitor the professional development of teachers (SACE 2014:6).

Hallinger (2003:344) has identified some specific tasks which must be undertaken by instructional leaders in order to achieve school success. Some of these practices are reviewing the work of learners, conducting formal and informal classroom visits and observations with written feedback or formal conferences. Bush et al (2011:37) indicate that monitoring should be a continuous process to determine whether teaching and learning takes place in a positive way. Bush (2013:16) states that if instructional leaders fail to monitor learners' progress, the outcome can be poor results. Class visits, observations and reviewing of learners' books help to identify weak learners so that necessary interventions can be put in place timeously.

Learning from modelling the behaviours of competent teachers is another practice that educators can rely on if the instructional leader is competent enough to include it in his/her practices. Southworth (2004:78) suggests that modelling is to 'learn by example'. This is rarely used by teachers or practiced by instructional leaders (Bush 2013:16). When educators' pedagogic skills are weak at times, monitoring cannot be a solution and workshops also prove to be limited. Modelling of the principal or deputy and HOD can be useful to increase an educators teaching skills. Bush (2013:17) regrets that in South African schools modelling is very rare. Instructional leaders in South Africa must be made more aware of practising modelling.

One of the main issues in schools are when the mission and vision of the school are not known or implemented. Van der Merwe and Schenck (2014:9) indicate that the principal must ensure that staff members meet regularly to monitor the implementation of the school's mission and vision. Hallinger (2011:134) agrees that the mission and vision of the school play a vital role because they give direction to the school which should be emphasised by the school principal. He further states that the mission and the vision of the school should also include the goals of the school.

Quality assurance of independent schools is carried out by Umalusi. The criteria for assessment involve many instructional leadership tasks of the school principal. The requirements of assessment includes the principal as an assessor, a leader, manager, curriculum co-ordinator, a monitor, an observer, an evaluator and as a model. Further, the percentage of qualified teachers in the school is also considered for accreditation (Umalusi 2013:6). The SMT members are assessed on their monitoring, evaluating, assessing, observing, modelling, teaching and learning as a subject advisor. The educators are monitored on teaching, assessing, recording, and subject proficiency

(Umalusi 2013:6). The learners are be assessed on their work, capabilities and progress. The school is assessed as a whole school in relation to the infrastructure, the school climate, the goals, the vision, the mission and the school atmosphere. From the above criteria it can be seen that Umalusi's accreditation criteria strongly favours instructional leadership tasks.

2.6 Shared Instructional Leadership

The traditional conception of leadership assumes that there is one central person who is the leader. In recent times it is clear that this conception is no longer appropriate (Hallinger 2003:333). Leadership should exist through a group of people who work closely together towards achieving school goals. Principals and other members of the School Management Team (SMT) as well as teachers have leadership functions as part of their duties (KZNDoe, 2013). This lends credence to shared leadership. Shared instructional leadership practices involves multiple leaders who are engaged in a wide range of leadership and management activities (Harris & Lambert 2003:63). Shared leadership is leadership that is not only confined to the principal. It includes multiple leaders such as the deputy principal, HODs and teachers (Spillane 2006:56). Shared instructional leadership is an approach that helps in building leadership capacity across the school and thus contributes significantly to school improvement. The approach requires collaboration and teamwork among staff in order to enhance planning, teaching and learning and improved learner performance (Triegaardt 2013:47). Shared leadership in essence is about sharing the responsibilities among all staff members.

Shared leadership is a fairly recent form of leadership which enhances the task of teaching and learning. Shared instructional leadership is an emerging approach to the improvement of teaching and learning in schools (Harris, 2002:4). Harris and Lambert (2003:12) have indicated that shared instructional leadership involves a network of leaders who concentrate on teaching and learning within the school. Elmore (2000:21) indicates that in a knowledge-intensive enterprise such as a school, it is not possible to carry out the complex tasks of a school without widely distributing or sharing the responsibilities with others within the school. This does not suggest that there should not be one person responsible for the overall performance of instructional activities. On the contrary, those entrusted with formal responsibilities within the school are primarily to hold the pieces of the organisation together in a productive relationship.

Teamwork is the key to shared leadership. Bush (2013:16) adds that the principal of the school does not necessarily have to do everything alone instead it means that the work of leading the school is shared or done in a group within a team approach. The different functions of the school are then delegated, which means passing certain leadership duties on to others. However, it must be pointed out that even though the SMT may share in the instructional roles of leading and managing the school, the principal still holds the ultimate responsibility to ensure that the work is effectively carried out (Bush 2013:16). The principal is accountable for the school all activities in the school (Bush et al 2011:41). Consequently, the principal must ensure that everything relating to teaching and learning is well co-ordinated and executed to the benefit of all stakeholders (Bush et al 2011:41).

The SMT shares a large portion of the responsibilities with the instructional leader. Quinn (2002:456) declares that instructional leadership should be perceived as a series of behaviours and attitudes designed by school leaders which is discussed with other staff members. Bredeson and Johansson (2000:7) identify ten managerial functions engaged in by school leaders and is shared with other staff members. These tasks are engaged in with a view to creating and maintaining a positive culture for teaching and learning and include:

- recruiting and hiring teachers
- co-ordinating professional development activities
- making decisions on resources and school priorities
- scheduling time, space and opportunities for teachers to work and learn together
- identifying resources and providing information to the staff
- aligning available incentives with professional development priorities
- arranging for substitute teachers
- visiting classrooms
- developing and implementing teacher evaluation practices that support growth and improvement
- acting as buffers against overly instructive and debilitating external forces.

The DoE (2000) supports the viewpoint that the members of the SMT in South African schools are instructional leaders. The SMT must assist the principal to monitor learner progress by liaising

with teachers to inquire about learner achievement. They must scrutinise the books of learners, check on learner's marks and learner and teacher portfolios and provide relevant reports to the principal. This means that, the members of the SMT share responsibility for the effectiveness of curriculum delivery in the school. Shared instructional leadership in this context is not something done to others rather it is an "emergent property of a group or network of individuals in a group in which members pool their expertise" (Bennett, Wise, Wood & Harvey 2003:3).

The entire school team at school should work collectively to achieve success. Spillane, Diamond and Jita (2003:11), view shared instructional leadership as "collective agency incorporating the activities of many individuals in a school who work at mobilising and guiding others in the process of instructional change". The instructional process within schools, according to the KZNDEC (2013), involves outlining shared vision and goals, and acting in ways to achieve them. The new education policy, thus, requires school leaders and managers to work in democratic and participatory ways to build relationships and to ensure efficient and effective curriculum delivery (Treigaardt 2013:41). The SMT is responsible for guiding and inspiring other staff, while at the same time being responsible for getting things done in the most effective and efficient way. In this way they are responsible for leading and managing the school (Mbokazi 2013:9). An effective SMT should be able to combine the skills of both good leadership and management and work together with the principal to attain school success (Hallinger 2003: 347).

2.7 Conclusion

The key purpose of this Chapter was to present the theoretical framework that informs this study and a review of the related literature. The Chapter accomplished this purpose by firstly presenting the models of instructional leadership and theory of distributed leadership. Secondly the chapter presented the following aspects in the literature: the definitions of leadership and management, the meanings of instructional leadership, instructional leadership in South Africa, instructional leadership internationally, tasks of the instructional leader and distributed instructional leadership. In the next Chapter I present the research design and methodology of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the theoretical framework and a review of the related literature. With regard to the theoretical framework, the two theories that inform this study namely, instructional leadership and distributive leadership were discussed. In terms of the related literature, some recent scholarship which informs this study was presented.

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research design and methodology that underpins this study. I remind the reader of the key research questions and sub-questions that inform this study. The key research question that drives this study is:

What are the lived instructional leadership practices of school principals in high-performing independent schools?

The following sub-research questions will be explored:

- *What day to day instructional leadership practices do school principals of high-performing independent schools engage in?*
- *How are the school principals supported in their instructional leadership practices by the relevant education stakeholders in high-performing independent schools?*
- *What obstacles do school principals encounter in the in their instructional leadership endeavours in high-performing independent schools?*
- *How do school principals mediate/negotiate the obstacles they encounter in their instructional leadership practices in high-performing independent schools?*

I commence the chapter by discussing the three major research paradigms namely, positivism, criticalism and interpretivism. I thereafter discuss the paradigm within which I locate my study. The research approach and methodology will then be discussed. Next, the research methods

employed in this study will be explained. I thereafter discuss the population and sampling methods used in the study and the biography of the schools and participants. The trustworthiness principles and ethical issues observed in the study are then explained.

3.2 Research Paradigm

Educational research is mainly concerned with exploring and understanding educational phenomena. My intention in this study is to explore and understand the instructional leadership practices of school principals in high performing independent schools. The lens through which we explore phenomena depends on the paradigm we employ. Different paradigms have emerged that determine the criteria that underpin our conceptions and interpretation of phenomena (Dash, 2005:3). There are three major research paradigms: positivism, interpretivism and criticalism. Each of these paradigms will be discussed in order to make clear their epistemological (the relationship between the researcher and reality as well as assumption of knowledge production), ontological (the nature of reality) and methodological (the method used to conduct research) assumptions (Carson, Gilmore, Perry & Gronhang, 2001:4).

3.2.1 Positivism

Positivism is a philosophy which embraces the notion that only factual knowledge is important (Elster, 2007:14). The positivist ontology believes that the world is external (Carson et al, 2001:6) and there is a single objective reality to any research phenomenon or situation regardless of the researcher's perspective or belief (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988:510). The researcher takes a controlled and structured approach in conducting research by identifying a clear research topic, constructing an appropriate hypothesis and adopting a suitable research methodology (Carson et al, 2001:7). Positivism believes that knowledge stems from human experience (Lin, 1998:163).

Positivist researchers remain detached from the participants of the research by creating a distance, which to them is important in remaining emotionally neutral to make clear distinctions between reason and feelings (Carson et al, 2001:8). The researcher also maintains a clear distinction between science and personal experience and fact and value judgement. The goal of the positivist researcher is to make time and context free generalisations. They also believe that this is possible

because human actions can be explained as a result of real causes that temporarily precedes their behaviour and the researcher. The research subjects are independent and do not influence each other (Hudson & Ozanneto, 1988:571). Positivist researchers seek objectivity and use consistently rational and logical approaches to research (Carson, 2001:8).

Positivism employs scientific quantitative methods. Positivism consists of ‘social facts’ (Lin, 1998:164). People’s actions are generally explained by the social norms that they are exposed to through their socialisation, social class, gender and ethnic background (Hunt, 1989:35). Positivists believe that reality is stable and can be observed and described from an objective viewpoint (Lewis, 1998:6). Statistical and mathematical techniques are central to positivist research, which adheres to specifically structured research techniques to uncover single and objective reality (Carson, 2001:9).

3.2.2 Interpretivism

An interpretivist approach to a study emphasises the meanings and understanding people ascribe to a phenomenon. The goal of the interpretivist is to understand and interpret the meaning of human behaviour and not to generalise and predict causes and effects (Neuman, 2000:53). For the researcher it is important to understand the motives, meanings, actions, reasons and other subjective experiences which are time and content bound (Neuman, 2000:55). Researchers want to experience what is being studied by allowing their feelings to govern some actions (Carson et al, 2001:11). It draws on people’s knowledge of reality (Elster, 2007:18). Interpretivism has its roots in hermeneutics and phenomenology (Chowdhury, 2014:434). The position of interpretivism in relationship to ontology is that the interpretivist believes that reality is multiple and relative (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988:513). Lincoln and Guba (1985:46 cited in Neuman, 2000:57) explain that “these multiple realities also depend on other systems for meanings, which make it more difficult to interpret in terms of fixed realities”. The knowledge acquired in this paradigm is socially constructed and perceived (Carson et al, 2001:12).

Interpretivists avoid rigid structural frameworks. Instead they adopt a more personal and flexible research structures (Carson, 2001:13). Black (2006:321) adds that these structures “are receptive to capturing meanings in human interaction and make sense of what is perceived as reality”. Interpretivist researchers are mutually interactive and interdependent with their informants

(Hudson & Ozanne, 1988:515). “The interpretivist researcher enters the field with some sort of prior insight of the research context but assumes that this is insufficient in developing a fixed research design due to complex, multiple and unpredictable nature as what is perceived as reality” (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988:515). The researcher remains open to new knowledge throughout the study and allows it to develop with the help of the participants (Hudson & Ozanne, 1998:516).

Interpretivism is employed when data is collected from the natural environment (Chowdhury, 2014:435). Interpretivism draws on naturalistic approaches of data collection such as interviews and observation argues that value free data cannot be obtained since the inquirers use their own preconceptions in order to guide the process of inquiry (Chowdhury, 2014:435). Interpretivism integrates human interest, opinions, views and meanings into a study (Lin 1998:165).

3.2.3 Criticalism

A critical ontology assumes that there is a ‘reality’ that is apprehendable (Kincheloe & McLaren 1994:141). This reality is created and shaped by social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic and gender-based forces that have been crystallised over time into structures that are taken to be natural or real. Critical research exposes how some groups in society hold privileges over others and how this privilege is maintained because subordinates accept their status as natural. Critical research aims to expose class, race and gender oppression (Stage 2007:59).

Critical approaches to research tend “to rely on dialogic methods; methods combining observation and interviewing with approaches that foster conversation and reflection” (Giroux, 1988:1743). Criticalism precipitates action (Briscoe 2008:82). This approach does not merely seek to verify models, but it also new models and ways of measuring data instead of focusing on explanations, interviews or fairness. “The focus is on equity concerns that can be highlighted through analysis of large data sets and examining the differences in race, class and gender” (Briscoe 2008:83).

3.2.4 The research paradigm chosen for this study

The research paradigm employed in this study is interpretivism. I chose this because I see myself as an interpretivist. I do not see the world as being fixed nor do I believe in an objective reality. I believe that there are multiple realities. In the context of my study, I therefore, believe that the school principals hold multiple views of instructional leadership practices in their schools. I also

believe that knowledge is socially constructed. Through interaction with the school principals I familiarise myself with their instructional leadership practices.

3.3 Research Approach

Social science research is underpinned by three basic approaches: quantitative, qualitative and the mixed methods approach. Neil (2012:2) identifies the quantitative and qualitative approaches as the most common for social science research. Creswell (2007:7) defines qualitative research design as an inquiring process of understanding a human problem. It is a holistic approach drawing on the words and detailed views of participants, conducted in a natural setting. According to Neil (2012:2), the qualitative approach strives to explore a phenomenon in depth using open ended questions and interviews to generate data. In contrast, Neil (2012:2) states that a quantitative approach is used in studies where the population and sample sizes are large and the information gathered is converted into statistical data. Mixed method designs comprise of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:24). There are three types of mixed method designs: explanatory design (first quantitative and then qualitative); exploratory design (first qualitative and then quantitative) and triangular design (both qualitative and quantitative simultaneously) (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:25).

In this study, I adopt a qualitative approach in order not to predict the phenomenon but rather to understand it (McMillan & Schmacher 2010: 24). This stems firstly, from my locating the study within the interpretive paradigm because I prefer a more personal and flexible structure compared to a rigid one (Black 2006:321). Secondly, I did not want to predict and use statistical data as in a quantitative study (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:24), but rather to understand the instructional leadership practices of school principals in high-performing independent schools from their lived experience (McMillan & Schumacher 2010: 31). Therefore, the qualitative approach assisted me to give a voice to school principals by allowing the participants to talk from their experiences (McMillan & Schmacher 2010:24).

3.4 Methodology

In this study I will be using phenomenology as a methodology. A phenomenological study is one which focuses on descriptions of what people experience and how they experience the phenomenon (Creswell, 2009:69). The nub of phenomenology is to get to know what is like to experience a particular phenomenon. Creswell (2009:71) comments that researchers search for essentials such as the central meaning of the experience in phenomenological research based on memory, image and meaning. The purpose of phenomenological inquiry is description, interpretation and self-reflection (Van Manen, 1990:83). A phenomenological methodology involves the interpretation of a lived experience and necessitates sensitivity of stories from a human or personal dimension of experiences (Caine, Esterfan & Clandinin, 2013:576). The researcher inquires about the essence of the lived experience. The central thrust of phenomenology is to understand the everyday experience from the participant's perspective.

In this study I adopt phenomenology for two reasons. Firstly, I want to learn from the school principals' perspectives the instructional leadership practices they employ. Secondly, I want to know what it is like enacting these leadership practices. What challenges they face and how they negotiate these challenges.

3.5 Research Methods

In this study I employ three methods of data generation: interviews, artefact inquiry and collage inquiry. Interviews were my primary data generating method. Artefact inquiry and collage inquiry were my secondary data generating methods.

3.5.1 Interviews

3.5.1.1 Choosing an appropriate interview type

McMillan and Schumacher (2010:131) identify three types of interviews associated with qualitative research. They are structured interviews, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews.

With structured interviews, the goals and questions for the interview are predetermined and mapped out prior to the interview. The interview is usually a question and answer session with detailed and specified questions (McMillan & Schmacher 2010:132). It is a rigid interview that demands specific answers (Carson et al 2001:14).

The unstructured interview, in contrast, is an informal discussion that has no strict guidelines, it allows the discussion to be open but not necessarily concise (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:134). A major shortcoming of unstructured interviews is that the information received from the participant may be too vast, unnecessary information may be given and it will be too time-consuming (McMillan & Schmacher 2010: 134). Semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, combine a highly structured agenda with the flexibility to ask probing questions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:135). Semi-structured interviews are guided by the researcher and simultaneously, gives the participant room and time to comment freely, within limits (Bernard 2002:46).

Considering McMillan and Schumacher's (2010:138) explanation of interviews, the most suitable interview to use in this study are semi- structured interviews. The open-ended questions enabled me to use prompts and probes to obtain deeper meanings of experience from the participants during the interview process (Caine, Esterfan & Clandinin, 2013: 577). These prompts required giving examples, further explication of points made or issues raised and these were useful as they encouraged open communication and allowed participants the freedom to elaborate on their responses (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:140).

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:119) explain that open-ended type of questions help to elicit appropriate data responses from the participants, and help to focus specific information. Open-ended questions try to solicit additional data from the participants. With these questions the participants are encouraged to talk about whatever that was essential to them of their instructional leadership practises. This approach allowed participants to elaborate on their own experiences or attitudes towards their instructional leadership practices in terms of how their instructional roles were enacted.

3.5.1.2 The interview protocol

I employed the following interview protocols during the research. The school principals were contacted and I explained the demands of the research to them. Thereafter the principals contacted the board of governors to gain permission from them to participate in the research. After the governing board's approval of participation, the principals were explained the nature of the interviews. I gave the principals the prerogative to decide on the date and time for the interviews.

The interviews were held in the school principals' offices. I opted for their personal occupational space because when participants talk in their natural setting they somehow feel more comfortable to share their experiences (Caine, Esterfan & Clandinin, 2013: 578). All the interviews were conducted after school hours and lasted for approximately forty-five minutes to an hour with each participant. The aim was not to disrupt their instructional leadership duties. The time for each interview was negotiated with the participant.

3.5.1.3 The Interview Schedule

An interview schedule (Appendix D: 111) was designed to guide the interview process. An interview schedule is a checklist to ensure that all relevant issues pertaining to the research phenomenon are covered for each participant (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993:124). The schedule also ensured that the same basic issues were pursued with each individual participant. I therefore made a list of the questions or issues that I needed to be discussed or explored in the course of the interview.

The schedule comprised of the following issues: the biography of the principal and the school was touched upon, the principal was given an opportunity to discuss his/her career, discussions on the context of the school involved socio-economic background of the learners, resources, infrastructure and the school climate and ethos. The interview schedule also included leadership and management issues such as mentoring, professional development and induction. The principals were asked to share how they promote quality learning and teaching at the school and how this was achieved over the years. They were also asked about the vision mission and goals of the school. Insight concerning the school within the context of the community was discussed. Obstacles affecting their instructional leadership practices was touched upon as well as solutions

to overcome these hurdles. I gave the principals opportunities to share their ideas, suggestions and advice on instructional leadership and learner achievement.

3.5.2 Artefact Inquiry

The second method of data generation involved artefacts such as photographs. Visual artefacts such as photographs were used to prompt participants to be consciously aware of what they feel is important and makes them feel comfortable to talk about it (Pithouse & Van Laren, 2012:4). The visual artefacts promotes reflexive dialogue and reflection through past experiences or memories. It allows the participant to think deeply about work and responsibilities in a broader sensual form (Mitchell, 2011:13). Each principal was asked to bring five photographs that spoke to their instructional leadership of the school. The principals sent the photographs to me via social media. I took the responsibility of printing the photographs. During the artefact inquiry the principals spoke about how each photograph depicts their instructional leadership practice. He/she also showed the relevance the photographs have to teaching and learning. The principal was given an opportunity to explain why he/she has chosen the particular photographs and in what way it represented his/her instructional leadership. This conversation lasted for approximately thirty minutes and was also audio-recorded and transcribed.

3.5.3 Collage inquiry

The third method of data generation consisted of a collage construction. Visual inquiry is used to yield insights and construct data in order to understand phenomena (Rose, 2001:93). Visual inquiry approaches, such as collage making, are a means for formulating ideas and articulating relationships among these. Collage making in particular, are useful ways of “listening visually” and getting into “liminal spaces” where “knowledge ... never arrives ... it is always on the brink” (Neilsen, 2002:208). Each principal was given four to five magazines to choose pictures and then develop a collage on an A3 art sheet. The principal was asked to cut and paste pictures and words that depicted his/her instructional leadership practices onto the art sheet. Some principals added their own pictures that spoke about their instructional leadership practices onto the collage. Once this was done, it was laminated and the principal was asked to talk about each picture and how it involves their instructional leadership practices. This conversation lasted for about thirty minutes. This inquiry was recorded and transcribed verbatim.

3.6 Population and Sampling

A population is defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2010:147) as a group of elements, individuals, objects or events that are bound to specific criteria to gain results. A sample according to Churchill and Lacobucci (2002:79) refers to the elements of the population that are selected to participate in the study. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:148) also indicate that a sample can be a group of subjects or participants from which data is collected.

For logistical reasons, such as resources and time only three high performing independent schools in the Gauteng province formed the sample and each was selected purposively (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:150). Purposive sampling is a technique used to identify or select participants who are knowledgeable about the phenomenon or experienced in the field (Cresswell & Plano Clark, 2011:62). In addition to knowledge and experience, Bernard (2002:77) note the importance of availability, willingness to participate and the ability to communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive and reflective manner. I used the National Senior Certificate (NSC) results to select the top performing independent schools in Gauteng. I chose the top performing independent schools closest to me in terms of convenience. Convenience sampling is also known as availability sampling and is a specific type of non-probability sampling method that relies on data collection from population members who are conveniently available to participate in a study. The participants are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012:151). The school principals were targeted because they are the key instructional leaders of other instructional leaders at the schools.

3.7 Description of the Schools and Biography of the Participants

3.7.1 Venus Independent School

The birth of this school is very different when compared to other schools. It was during the 1980s when public schools were experiencing difficulty in granting leave to Muslim learners and educators for Friday prayers. South Africa was still under the apartheid regime. Indian public schools were governed by the Department of Indian Education during that time. Schools were never allowed to give leave to Muslim learners and educators for Friday prayers. Many principals

were giving leave on their own accord, which was not allowed. Eventually the department learnt of the principals' actions and started monitoring the schools. In 1987 it was decided by some Muslim educators and community members to resolve the issue by opening a Muslim school. Discussions of forming a secular and Islamic syllabus school was agreed upon; where a dual syllabus would be taught.

In 1988 the school was formed renting two different premises to house the one hundred and sixty students. At that stage the school hosted learners from grade one to grade to grade eight. The first group matriculated in 1992. It was an honourable moment because all the matric learners passed by obtaining a "full house" of six distinctions. The community viewed this school as a high-performing independent school. The community saw a progressive, academic achieving school thus the demand became greater. The governing body started looking for sponsors in the community to build a school in order to accommodate all learners on the same premises. By 1997 the school was built on new premises to accommodate all its learners in one building. The school now belongs to the Johannesburg South District in Gauteng. Since then the school has been excelling with outstanding matric results as well as in sports and external competition.

A different phase was built on the premises to segregate the girls and boys in the high school .This was inaugurated in 2012. By 2015 the school has achieved greatly by opening a new library resource centre, astro-turf soccer ground, newly renovated tennis, netball and basketball courts. The school now hosts about one thousand learners. It has further development plans by introducing a grade R by the year 2019. The school is proud to announce its exceptional pass rate history and academic achievements in the National Senior Certificate. The school has been honoured by the Department of Basic Education annually for its exceptional matric results and the top-performing learners in the province. The school is also acknowledged as one of the top-performing schools in Gauteng.

The school has a new principal from January 2017, Mrs. Neptune who obtained a B.Sc. degree at WITS University in 1988. In 1989 she completed her H.DipED (Post Graduate) at WITS University. She joined the school as a level one Biology and General Science teacher in 1990. In 1992, she witnessed the first matriculants who obtained a 100% pass in Biology which continued until her departure at the end of 1994.

Mrs Neptune then joined a public high school in 1995 where she obtained her B.ED Honours (Educational Management) Cum Laude with Unisa and received the Masters Exhibition Award from Unisa to complete a Master Degree in Educational Management, but unfortunately did not complete it as in the same year she was promoted as Head of Department of Life Sciences.

In 1998 she was appointed as Deputy Principal at the same high school. In 2007 she was appointed as Acting Subject Facilitator for Life Sciences at the Johannesburg South District .In 2011 and 2015 she was appointed as Internal Moderator for Life Sciences for the province Gauteng. In 2016 she was appointed as Acting Principal at the same Public High School and subsequently offered a post as Principal of School A as of October 2016. However she declined the post at the public high school and accepted the post at School A.

3.7.2 Astro Independent School

In 1996 many of the retired teachers from public schools felt that they still wanted to give back knowledge to the community. Therefore in 1997 they discussed the opening of a new independent school. This school was aided financially by community members who became known as the 'Board of Governors.'

In 1998 the schools opened for under privileged learners from grade one to grade seven by renting a premises. The teachers opened with the motto of charging minimal fees for quality education. Teachers worked for a meagre salary .The school fees were so low that the parents' demands got increased. In 1999 the new premises was opened to accommodate the extra learners; therefore the school was situated at two different premises. In 2000 public demand became even greater because of the excellent learner achievements therefore, the school opened at another premises. During discussions with the board of directors at that time it was decided to have two primary schools who are the feeder schools to the one high school with a policy of not increasing the school fees unnecessarily. The first matriculants matriculated in 2003 with a 97% pass rate. From 2004 till present the school has achieved a 100% pass rate and is recognised as one of the best schools in Gauteng (Moodley, 2015:4). The secondary school is situated in the Johannesburg South District and is recognised as one of the top independent schools in Gauteng. The school receives accolades timeously from the district for its excellent results, dedicated and passionate teachers and for housing top-performing learners in the province.

In 2013 a pre-primary school was opened on another premises. To this day all four premises are being rented by the school from a religious organisation who is extremely lenient in terms with charging minimal rental and sharing expenses such as electricity, water, rates and taxes and maintenance. The school still charges minimal fees therefore cannot afford to purchase one premises for the entire school or pay its teachers exorbitant salaries. The entire school consist of approximately 1600 learners.

The principal, Mrs Mars first studied a Bachelor of Science then a PGCE and joined the school in year 2000. She started in the primary section teaching Natural Science. Thereafter, she took a transfer in the year 2003 to the high school teaching Biology. In 2003 she was appointed as HOD for Life Sciences. From 2010 she was appointed as the Deputy Chief Marker in Life Sciences in the Johannesburg South district. In 2014 she was appointed as Chief Examiner for setting Life Sciences examinations for National Senior Certificate in Gauteng. In 2015 she was appointed as Deputy Principal and eventually as Principal in 2016. She was also offered a principalship at Star Schools in 2015 which she declined.

3.7.3 Saturn Independent School

About twenty years ago the school was initiated by three businessmen who had a vision of serving the community by building a school. They belonged to the TUPS (Transvaal United Patidar Society). This association is about one hundred years old and is passionate, honest and motivated by the public. These three gentlemen are still part of the governing board, in fact the one is the director.

It started off as a small elementary school, then extended to a vernacular Gujarati school, and eventually, a secular school was decided upon in the year when the government was offering retirement and early retirement packages for teachers after democracy had set in. Well known, specialist, experienced teachers who accepted the packages were approached to govern the school. These educators were well networked and started small classes, with grades overlapping each other. Initially, the school started with grade one to six.

The community saw the excellent academic achievement so the demand became greater and the waiting list longer so the school started growing rapidly. Although they don't have much ground space but means are made to conduct a variety of sports. This also attracted parents to the school.

The school decided to extend to professional sports and that's where the principal joined the school as a professional sports coach. The school achieved a 100% matric pass rate since its inception and is recognised by the Johannesburg Central District as one of the top-performing, independent schools in the area.

The principal, Mr Jupiter graduated with a Diploma in Education (Senior Primary) specialising in Mathematics and Physical Education at the Transvaal College of Education .He later completed a Diploma in Sports Management .He taught at a public school for a year and a term, then joined School C in March 1999.

The principal taught Mathematics to grade four learners for a long while, then was promoted as HOD eleven years ago. In January 2017 he was further promoted as the principal of the primary and high school.

3.8 Data Analysis

The semi-structured interviews, the artefact inquiry conversations and the collage inquiry conversations were audio recorded. The recordings were then transcribed. The transcripts was analysed according to Giorgi, Fisher and Murray's (1975:83) phenomenological steps. Firstly each transcript was read to get an overall sense of the whole interview. Secondly, the transcripts were read to identify the transaction in the experience, with each transaction signifying a separate unit of meaning. This process was followed in order to find a deeper meaning in what the participants are saying. Thirdly, the redundancies in the units of meanings were eliminated and the remaining units was related to each other. Fourthly, the participant's language was transformed into the language of science and finally, the insights were synthesised into a description of the entire experience of instructional leadership practices.

3.9 Trustworthiness of the Study

The question of trustworthiness is crucial and pertinent to qualitative research because it verifies the quality standards observed in the study (Denzin 1998:89). According to Lincoln and Guba

(1985:129) strategies such as credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are the benchmarks of trustworthiness.

Krefting (1991:69) explains that credibility in a qualitative study is when accurate descriptions or interpretations of the human experiences are presented by participants. Triegaadt (2013:98) adds that credibility is when truth-value is obtained from the human experiences. In this study the participants described their own lived experiences. Credibility was ensured by digitally audio recording all interviews and conversations and thereafter transcribing them verbatim. Thereafter the transcripts were returned to the principals to verify and confirm that the transcripts are a true reflection of what was said.

Babbie and Mouton (2002:73) explain that transferability refers to the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts or to other participants. The aim of the phenomenology is not to ensure transferability. Rather, it is about understanding and making meaning of what it is like to experience the practice of the phenomenon (instructional leadership). While the aim of phenomenology is not transferability, other schools and school principals may resonate with some of the findings which they can apply

The measure of dependability is also be considered. Holloway and Wheeler (1996:81) mention that one of the ways in which a research study may be shown to be dependable is by implementing a process of auditing. In this study I documented in detail the process of the data generation (Appendix C: 110) and analysis. I also attached the instruments used to generate data in the appendix (Appendix C: 110).

Holloway and Wheeler (1996:82) point out that confirmability means that the findings are linked to their data sources. In this study, I ensured confirmability by submitting my work to a critical reader (Appendix L: 121) to ensure that the findings and conclusions are reflective of the data I generated.

3.10 Ethical Issues

Strydom (1998:24) stresses that a researcher has an ethical obligation to be competent, honest and skilled to undertake the research. In this research special precautions were taken to ensure ethical

behaviour when approaching participants, during data generation and in the writing of this research report. Strydom (1998:24) continues that a researcher must adhere to respect the participants by committing to the principles of autonomy, anonymity and non-maleficence. Strydom (1998:24) further explains that autonomy requires the researcher to be non-judgemental towards his/her participants. In any research, anonymity must be practiced so that the participants' identities are confidential. The last principle being non-maleficence includes that the researcher be kind, in terms of words and body language, towards the participants (Strydom 1998:24).

I observed all three principles that underpin ethics, namely autonomy, anonymity and non-maleficence (Strydom 1998:24). I ensured autonomy during the study while being in contact with the participants by not being biased or judgemental with any of the participants' opinions and views. (Strydom 1998:24). As an interpretivist, I gave the participants the prerogative of freedom of speech and the comfort of relating their experiences spontaneously (Chowdhury 2014:434). From the inception of the study I reassured the participants that anonymity will be guaranteed. Pseudonyms were used for all participants and schools' names (Strydom 1998:25). During the photograph inquiry and the collage inquiry caution was taken to cover all visible evidence. I practiced non-maleficence by taking precautions of not harming or using any unkind speech, gestures or body language on participants that would disturb their contribution to the study (Strydom 1998:25). Nor did I appear to manipulate the study or rush them with the interviews for my benefits.

Unlike public schools where permission needs to be granted by the Department of Education, private schools need to gain permission from the board of governors of the participating schools. The principal approached the board of governors on my behalf to secure an appointment. When I was granted an appointment I met with them and explained my study. Thereafter permission was given from the board of governors (Appendix A: 105).

Shaw (1999:63) states that when obtaining consent from the participants the researcher must be aware of the risks, purpose, procedures and benefits of the research. Formal letters were sent to the principals of the sampled schools personally, requesting permission to conduct the research (Appendix B: 107). A supporting letter from my university (UNISA) was attached to support access for the study (Appendix M: 122). A visit to the participant school was necessary before data generation. At this visit ethical issues such as anonymity and confidentiality were assured. A

consent form (Appendix B: 107) was given to each principal in order to gain permission for his/her participation in the study, which was signed mutually by both, the principal and myself.

3.11 Conclusion

In this chapter the research paradigm, design and methodology were discussed. The methods which were used in this study were explained fully. How the population and participants were chosen was also touched upon. I then provided a biography of the schools and its participants. The data collection processes and method of data analysis were also explained. Trustworthiness issues and ethical issues were also explained in this chapter. In the next chapter I deal with the presentation of the data, analysis of the data and discussion of the semi-structured interviews as well as the artefact and collage inquiry.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter explicated the research design and methodology employed in this study. The study is a phenomenological one that drew on the semi-structured interviews, collage inquiry and artefact inquiry. Three school principals, Mrs Neptune from Venus Independent School, Mrs Mars from Astro Independent School and Mr Jupiter from Saturn Independent School were selected as the participants.

The thrust of this chapter is to present, analyse and discuss the data generated through the semi-structured interviews, collage inquiry and artefact inquiry. I use the sub-research questions as an organizing framework in presenting this chapter. I remind the reader that my key research question is:

What are the lived instructional leadership practices of school principals in high-performing independent schools?

The following sub-research questions flesh-out and further focus my study:

- *What day-to-day instructional leadership practices do school principals of high-performing independent schools engage in?*
- *How are school principals supported in their day-to-day instructional leadership practices by relevant education stakeholders in high-performing independent schools?*
- *What obstacles do school principals encounter in the in their day-to-day instructional leadership endeavours in high-performing independent schools?*
- *How do school principals mediate/negotiate the obstacles they encounter in their day-to-day instructional leadership practices in high-performing independent schools?*

For each sub-research question I present the data under themes that emerged from a phenomenological analysis of all three methods of data generation. I thereafter present my synthesis and inference of the data for each theme. To conclude each theme, I present an analytical interpretation of the findings by drawing on literature and my chosen theoretical framework.

4.2 Day-to-day instructional leadership practices of the school principals

4.2.1 Regular emphasis of the vision and mission of the school

Leadership is about vision. Leaders need to focus on a vision and shared goals (Bush 2011:13). The school's mission and vision must comply with the school and department policies and is more effective when it is shared with the staff members (Woods & Roberts 2018:2). Hence, good instructional leaders anchor their practices to the school's vision and mission (Hallinger & Heck 1996:11). Weber (1996) identifies the school vision and mission as a key driver for instructional leaders. The school principals of all three schools drew repeatedly on the school's vision and mission to inform their instructional leadership practices. Mrs Neptune in the collage inquiry stated:

The vision and mission statement of my institution is first and foremost in any activity we undertake.

Similarly, Mrs Mars emphasised in the artefact inquiry the importance of a vision being shared by all. She indicated:

It's all well and good to have a vision by yourself as a leader, but unless your team shares that vision it is a pointless vision.

Mr Jupiter also reinforced the prominence of the school's vision in his daily practice. In the artefact inquiry he mentioned:

We want to provide good education, top quality education, an all-round realistic education. Our vision and mission is to make sure that we create opportunities, provide and prepare for every grade 12 child to study further and become independent.

The school principals employ the schools vision and mission as a in their leadership practices. The vision and mission becomes a way of life, underpinning their thought, word and deed. Drawing others into their vision is important in order to get their buy-in regarding what needs to be accomplished. Successful principals build a vision and mission to set clear directions for the school. This is the core responsibility of effective instructional leaders (Steyn 2014:349). Mrs Mars assertions are supported by Steyn (2014:349) who states that principals should clearly and regularly articulate and communicate the school's vision with staff members in order to achieve high performance expectations. Steyn (2014:355) also agrees with Mr Jupiter when he mentions that the school's vision must focus on every student and should prepare him/her for productive future lives.

4.2.2 Managing the maintenance of the school infrastructure

Hallinger's (2005:223) conceptualisation of instructional leadership focuses on various activities, one of them being a focus on the maintenance of infrastructure. According to Van der Merwe and Schenck (2014:4) an instructional leader must be able to manage various aspects of the school including the physical infrastructure. All three principals were responsible for the maintenance of their schools. They had to report issues regarding the maintenance of the infrastructure to their respective board members. Mrs Neptune mentioned in the semi-structured interview:

As a principal I have to monitor maintenance and report to the board. We fill in a requisition form then it goes to the bursar to get approved. For minor fixes we have two people on the premises who are responsible for daily repairs.

Mrs Mars did not say much on the issue of managing infrastructure, however she commented:

Smaller issues on maintenance are dealt with internally and funded from our petty cash. Big issues are always a challenge because we are renting the premises. The landlord is then involved to solve the problem but it my responsibility to report any major issues and the cause as well.

While Mr Jupiter shared his views by mentioning that he just oversees issues because he is fortunate to have a maintenance manager to assist. He explained:

In terms of infrastructure and maintenance we are blessed to have an estate manager who takes on responsibilities to maintain the property. A maintenance log-book is filled by me and thereafter the service provider and his team will sort the problem. Sometimes for certain maintenance we get three quotations, hand it to the bursar and they take care of it.

Each principal is aware of their responsibilities of maintaining or reporting issues regarding infrastructure. They, however, have their own way of solving maintenance issues. Bush (2013:12) explains in his study that very few instructional leaders fulfilled the responsibility of managing the physical facilities such as maintenance or improvement of infrastructure. From his study of principals in Gauteng, Bush (2013:12) found that only 11, 5% were interested in partaking in maintenance of the infrastructure. All three participants are active in maintaining the infrastructure of their schools. Maintenance of infrastructure is not one of more important practices for an instructional leader, but it portrays a sense of responsibility within the instructional leader (Kensler & Uline 2017:48).

4.2.3. Provisioning and deployment of human and physical resources

A key aspect of the curriculum and instructional leadership is adequate resourcing (Hallinger & Murphy 1985; Weber 1996). School leaders have to provide resource material and support to educators and learners (Jenkins & Pfeifer 2012:32). Drysdale and Gurr (2011:358) declare that instructional leaders must ensure that appropriate resources are deployed for the benefit of learning and learner achievement. All three principals commented in the semi-structured interview about their role in ensuring that learners receive appropriate physical resources and have the benefits of motivated and skilled human resources. Mrs Neptune commented very positively:

As far as human resources are concerned I make certain that, they are valued here. I ensure that the board of governors only appoint experienced, qualified, SACE registered teachers who are committed. Developmental workshops for teachers are fully subsidised. Physical resources like projectors and, smart board are installed in every classroom. Textbooks and workbooks are provided by the school for benefit of learners.

Mrs Mars had something completely different to share:

I value, motivate and inspire my teachers in every way I can to keep them happy and recognise them for their excellent achievements. Nevertheless these teachers support and give the best to our learners in every way, whether it be academically, socially or emotionally. As for physical resources I have indicated earlier, we don't even have enough desks or chalkboards. As for projectors and smart boards, it is almost non-existent in our school. But we try our best to supply textbooks and stationery to our learners. Workbooks however are purchased by the parents.

Mr Jupiter shared the benefits of human and physical resources in his school:

With regard to physical resources, we always try to upgrade to the best possible resources for the respective subjects. We have projectors and smart-boards in every classroom. We provide the latest textbooks, a variety of workbooks and stationery. We also cater for an extra set of textbooks for classroom use and we provide additional resources consistently. In terms of human resources, we have qualified teachers who always go an extra mile to help the learners whenever the need arises. But I must comment that our staff is trained so well ... when delivering lessons they give learners the best, possible opportunities.

In the artefact inquiry Mrs Mars added:

Our human resources, especially our seven teachers who received district awards are always acknowledged, in school by management, the parents and by the Johannesburg South district for their excellent motivation. They are passionate though they do not reap any financial benefit.

Mrs Neptune and Mr Jupiter are fortunate to have the latest technology, textbooks and workbooks made available by the school to aid staff with their daily teaching and learning respectively. Mrs Mars on the other hand experiences challenges in securing such resources in order for learners to learn. Bush (2013:12) in his study of instructional practices of Gauteng principals found that the majority of principals concentrate on human resource management. He estimates that almost 69 % of the principals concentrate on human resources management in some way. Naicker, Chikoko and

Mthiyane (2013:142) explain that instructional leaders focus on interventions to improve learner achievement by ensuring that educators have appropriate resources.

4.2.4 Monitoring teaching and learning

Hallinger (2009:46) observes that in effective schools the principal's gaze is on curriculum and instructional leadership. Weber's (1996) model of instructional leadership emphasizes observing and improving instruction. Less focus is given to managerial and administrative matters. Further, Bush (2013:7) brands the curriculum and teaching and learning as key instructional functions which school principals need to give attention to in order to reap school success.

Teaching, learning and managing the curriculum are some of the most important responsibilities of all three principals. In the semi-structured interview all three principals commented on this. Mrs Neptune shared:

As a principal I have to know the matter of the curriculum, I cannot know everything about a subject because it's a small portion of my pie. But the HODs need to know the curriculum thoroughly, but my HODs are not subject specialist. They teach it to learners to the best of their ability. I keep a close eye to see that learning and teaching is done at its best. We are working towards getting subject specialist.

Mrs Mars praised the HODs for teaching and learning by sharing the following:

We are empowering young human beings .We teach them the CAPS curriculum. I have a team of the most dedicated HODs who are subject specialist and they teach the best. We may have difficulty in obtaining resources but my teachers motivate the learners to learn to the best of their ability. We (the HODs and I) motivate the learners to be dedicated to learning.

Mr Jupiter commented:

We follow CAPS but I believe learning is not bound to the four walls or the CAPS curriculum. We go an extra mile to make teaching and learning fun. We really try hard to show learners that teachers are special and try their best to teach.

In the artefact inquiry Mrs Neptune continued:

We comply with CAPS curriculum and have to keep abreast with all department policies and implement it to our teaching and learning. We as a private school have to maintain high standards because parents pay high school fees therefore we have to implement effective teaching and learning. With regard to curriculum monitoring and the supervision of effective teaching and learning I depend on my SMT but I also monitor their supervision.

Mr Jupiter also commented in the artefact inquiry:

We ensure effective teaching and learning takes place by having a daily learner support programme. We also have a holiday programme. We have passionate teachers who monitors these programmes and interact with the parents especially the matrices.

Mr Jupiter continued in the collage activity:

We also encourage teaching and learning by teaching learners skills with fun activities like camps and excursions.

One of the most important duties of an instructional leader is monitoring teaching and learning. All three principals share the same vision and goals in this regard. All three schools follow the CAPS (Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement) syllabus. Given that a principal's leadership is a major driving force in the improvement of teaching and learning in the school, all three principals seem to be doing their bit in this regard (Steyn 2014:358). Bush (2013:8) declares that the main purpose of schooling is to promote teaching and learning. All three principals accomplish this either directly or indirectly by distributing instructional leadership tasks to the HODs. Thus they seem to be distributive instructional leaders.

4.2.5 Motivating exceptional learner achievement

A focus on instructional leadership is critical for the promotion of learner achievement (Bush 2011:52; Van der Merwe & Schenck 2014:4). Drysdale and Gurr (2011:357) concur that regular emphasis on learner support and development promotes high learner achievement. All three

principals shared their views in the semi-structured interview on learner achievement. Mrs Neptune indicated:

Although our school has achieved a 100% pass rate in matric for the past fifteen years. The board members are now focusing on a 100% bachelor pass. To achieve this I have to work very hard. We also offer extra classes to our matriculants. As you can see today is a holiday but the matrics are busy learning while our teachers are sacrificing to teach. I, as a principal make sure I am present for moral support, but my teachers put in a team effort.

Mrs Mars spoke about her learner achievement

Education is a triangle between the parent, learner and teacher. As a principal I make sure that teachers take responsibility to make parents aware of the progress of their child. My open-door policy welcomes parents to come discuss their child at any given time within limits. This involves the learner's academic, emotional or social performance. Parents are made aware in all parent's meetings that the school's goal is to achieve exceptional learner achievement. Our school offers extra classes on Saturdays to the matrics to promote learner achievement.

Mr Jupiter praised his learner's achievement by commenting:

In our circuit and district, Johannesburg Central we are ranked as number one and fifty –second in Gauteng for 2016. This is lots of hard work from my side. Part of our school curriculum includes intervention remedial classes from grade one to grade twelve within a two week cycle. I make sure that I always have teachers available for the intervention classes, sometimes I have to fill in. We work as a team to achieve this. Our school is a pure maths and science school, so this makes it more difficult to achieve but we offer extra classes after school hours especially in the FET phase.

Two of the three principals addressed the issue again in the artefact inquiry. Mrs Neptune shared:

Our achievement is a team effort from the primary to the high school. I cannot do it alone but I am always behind the teachers to encourage the learners to portray their best.

Mrs Mars took the opportunity to praise her learners in the artefact inquiry:

I took a photograph of a special wall which is dedicated to learners only. All the achievement certificates of past and present learners are framed on this wall to show acknowledgement. Simultaneously we display gratitude and recognition this way to motivate other learners and future matriculants. We display our trophies as well.

Furthermore in the collage inquiry Mrs Mars commented again:

Although this newspaper article shows our school as being the top school in Gauteng, it doesn't end there. I have to make sure that we keep our reputation there or else it will reflect on me as the principal. That is why as early as possible in the year I advise my teachers to start calling parents in to correspond with us teachers and we all work together for the learner to excel.

Mr Jupiter added from his point in the collage inquiry.

I believe in input and output .If we plant a seed, we have to water and maintain it daily to reap good fruit. Similarly if I encourage my staff to deliver their best daily then our school will reap the benefits of learner achievement. Therefore it is part of my daily tasks to communicate with my teachers to find out the progress of learners and help those that need intervention.

All three principals are active in ensuring that the learners achieve their best. The quality of learner achievement is not only restricted to the school but also in respect to the district as well as the Gauteng province. Literature confirms that the principal's leadership affects learner achievement directly and indirectly (Steyn 2014:347). In Steyn's (2014:357) study he points out that learner achievement can only be achieved with teamwork and shared decision-making. He adds that

learner achievement does not only lie with academic performance but also the with development of values and attitudes. While all three principals to emphasised academic achievement, only Mrs Mars spoke about character building as an achievement for learners.

4.2.6 Promoting staff development initiatives

Creation of a positive learning climate is key to good instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy 1987:187; Weber 1996:269). A sound learning climate should not only be created for learners but for teachers as well. A sure way to enhance learner performance is to promote teacher learning. The sub-themes below illustrate the various ways teacher learning was promoted.

4.2.6.1 Staff development through class visits

Grobler and Conley (2013:204) point out that instructional leadership, among other aspects, involves supervision of classrooms to promote staff development and monitor learner performance. Jenkins and Pfeifer (2012:32) concur that monitoring classroom activities is an essential part of instructional leadership.

Mrs Neptune shared her daily responsibilities in the semi-structured interview:

I encouraged my teachers and promise them that when they need help with anything I will help and guide them for a year. I am fairly new around so I didn't get the time to do classroom visits. Classroom visits are supervised by HODs and used for mentoring and development.

Mrs Mars shared her experiences:

We try to encourage our teachers as much as possible to develop professionally. I leave the development of staff to my HODs who are such subject specialists. I don't meddle in their affairs of how and when they intend to supervise their teachers. Class visits are not compulsory.

Mr Jupiter did not comment on class visits. Mrs Neptune agreed that class visits are imperative. Mrs Mars felt that it's not necessary at her school. Grobler and Conley (2013:204) in their study found that one of the major tasks of an instructional leader is to provide staff with growth and development through class visits. School principals must provide critical reflection, suggestions,

feedback, coaching and redesign of classroom tasks if necessary. Bush (2013:10) shares that class visits can be used as a valuable tool for teacher development. He adds that class visits should be regarded as routine practice for instructional leaders (Bush 2013:11). However, he found that some school principals lack the confidence to do this.

4.2.6.2. Staff development through induction

New teachers need effective induction from management in order to so that they feel like part of the school and know what roles and responsibilities their positions entail. The school principal needs to take the lead in teacher induction so that teachers become acclimatized to the school and are allowed to grow (Backor & Gordon 2015:18).

Mrs Neptune shared:

Induction is very important. I meet with new teachers and introduce them to basic things then introduce them to the HOD who then gives a full induction to the new teacher to fill the gaps with minor and major issues.

Mrs Mars in the semi structured interview commented:

I personally give new teachers a motivational talk, igniting passion and love for the learners which is the initial requirement in this profession, then I hand them over to the HODs. The HODs then gives a formal introduction to do what they know best about teaching and learning within the curriculum and academic achievement.

Mr Jupiter commented in the semi-structured interview:

I usually give a talk to new teachers, introduce them to the HODs and give them an orientation around the school. In the holidays I prepared an induction pack to give to new teachers so that they can go through it on their own and approach me if they unsure about anything.

Each of the three principals practiced induction by professionally socializing new teachers. They ensure that that new teachers get to grips with the school. Effective instructional leaders generally welcome newcomers igniting passion for teaching in them. Thereafter, they encourage them to be selfless and do everything that benefits the school (Steyn 2014:349). New teacher needs to be

socialized into the practice of effective teaching and learning Steyn (2014:350). These observations by Steyn (2014:350) seem to fit with Mrs Mars's leadership practice and to a lesser extent that of Mr Jupiter and Mrs Neptune.

4.2.6.3 Staff development through mentoring

Mentoring of teachers is an important aspect of staff development. It is through this process that teaching practices are improved. Mrs Neptune said in the semi-structured interview:

I am fairly new so I didn't get much of a chance to mentor my staff. But what I do for my staff every day is to advise them in any aspect when they are confused or when they need guidance. I promised them that I will guide teachers who are filling new post for a year.

Mrs Mars shared:

I develop and mentor my staff by guiding them and showing them other teaching strategies. I lead by example, modelling as we know it. I respect my teachers. I don't scream at them instead I compromise and reason out so that my HODs can carry out the same example to their sub-ordinates. I show them what to do and don't dictate what to do.

Mr Jupiter shared his views by mentioning:

I mentor and guide my teachers by job shadowing or modelling as we know it. When a teacher receives a new post I place the teacher in that position before his/her official appointment with a mentor. I believe that teachers learn quicker this way.

The three principals each use different methods and strategies to mentor their staff. Each method seems to prove successful as all three schools are recognised as high performing schools. The professionalism of staff grows when leaders mentor their staff by being examples to their teachers (Steyn 2014:358). Mentoring is not only performed by leaders but also by talented teachers. While all three principals mentioned that they mentor and guide their teachers, none mentioned that they use talented teachers as mentors to less experienced teachers. Good instructional leaders need to

identify staff needs in order to draw up effective mentorship programmes (Bush 2013:11). The three principals should engage in this type of needs analysis to effectively develop their staff.

4.2.6.4 Staff development through workshops and personal study

An instructional leader must evaluate and promote teacher growth (Van der Merwe & Schenck 2014:7). One way to do this is by encouraging teachers to attend workshops and engage in further studies.

Mrs Neptune confidently shared in the semi-structured interview:

I motivate my teachers to educate themselves in their field. The board members at our school timeously organises workshops through (AMS) Association of Muslim Schools. And what is good about this is that mostly they subsidise the cost for the benefit of the teachers. Therefore I tell them to take advantage of this.

Mrs Mars shared:

I motivate my teachers to study further to develop themselves. Our district Johannesburg South always invites us to workshops and I encourage my teachers to actively participate

Mr Jupiter had the following to share:

As a school we encourage our educators to attend different workshops so that they keep up with contemporary issues. Our district Johannesburg Central invites us for workshops although we are an independent school. Many workshops are also for the primary section. I encourage teachers to attend because it allows them to grow professionally and they will benefit SACE points.

Mrs Mars continued in the artefact inquiry:

I always remember myself as a level one teacher and the need to be motivated, appreciated and acknowledged for the dedication. So I always motivate and acknowledge my teachers and try to encourage them to develop further constantly. Sometimes I give them workshops that can benefit them.

All three principals encourage attendance at workshops for professional development. In Steyn's study (2014:358) he noted that teachers attended workshops conducted by the Department and private organisations. On the staff member's return he/she had the responsibility to arrange a similar workshop at the school to inform and train other staff members. The principals in Steyn's (2014:357) study believed that workshops should "ignite a fire in a teacher" Steyn (2014:357). Steyn (2014:359) also mentioned that instructional leaders should invite expert facilitators to conduct workshops with the staff. Participating in workshops helps teachers to improve classroom teaching (Bush 2013:11). Although all three principals promote workshop attendance by staff, they should also invite professionals to conduct staff development workshops. Only Mrs Neptune's school budgets for staff workshops by inviting external facilitators. The two other principals depend on workshops organised by the district.

4.3 Support for school principals by stakeholders in their instructional leadership endeavours

With regards to this research question I focus on the following stakeholders and their role in supporting the school principal in his/her instructional leadership endeavours: school support staff, parents, school governing body, community organisations, corporates and the department of education. While I acknowledge the role of the learners, teachers and the SMT as stakeholders, their role in assisting the school principal has been alluded to in the previous research question.

4.3.1 School Support Staff

School leaders draw on their support staff to play a role in school development (Heardman 2009:24). In this study all three principals had a limited understanding of support staff and only referred to the cleaning staff as support staff in the school. Two out of three principals commented on the important role played by the cleaning staff in the semi-structured interview. Mrs Neptune commented:

As you can see today is a holiday but the support staff is here to help out and we truly appreciate this because they care for us and they are an important part of our family.

Mrs Mars also commented:

What touched me most about the support staff is that they came to work on a Sunday afternoon. For me this is more valuable than anything. Small things like that are appreciated. I treat them no different from any other staff member because they too play an important role in developing the school.

Mrs Neptune and Mrs Mars have dedicated cleaning support staff members who sacrifice their personal time to assist the principal with school chores. Mr Jupiter on the other hand has not commented on any support staff member assisting him. Support staff such as school cleaners need to be given opportunities to participate in school health because they complement the teacher and school leadership by making sure that the school environment is hygienic (Emira 2011:163). Mrs Neptune and Mrs Mars both value the role played by the cleaning staff at the school.

4.3.2 Parents

Parents play an important role in assisting the principal in his/her instructional leadership endeavours. Parent-school interaction is one of the more important factors in school and learner success (Beycioglu 2016:1). Parental involvement plays an important role in a learner's social and academic progress as well their happiness (Berkowitz, Astor, Pineda, De Pedro & Weiss 2017:23). In independent schools parents are very involved and active in their children's education. All three principals commented in the semi-structured interview on how parents assist them in their journey of ensuring a sound instructional culture. Mrs Neptune explained:

Whenever we encounter major problem with learners we involve the parents. Here at our school we have a merit and demerit system. So learners are penalised with demerits. Parents are made aware of this by acknowledging the demerits and the reason thereof. Parents make means to meet us concerning their child's progression. We have a disciplinary committee who deals with issues and for major issues the board of governors are also involved. Our parents are very involved in their children's education.

Mrs Mars also shared:

Very often we have to call parents to solve an issue about a learner. We bring the child in. I sit with the parents first and make sure that we are on the same page. If the parent is in agreement then we that we know are getting closer to our goals. This we call support from our parents. We don't have a PTA representing the parent body so every parent is treated equally and represents themselves. As you are sitting here now here is a parent outside the office without an appointment wanting to see me. The parent doesn't have to go via the PTA and very often I get parents who walk into my office and are willing to sponsor something for the school. My motto is that when the parents work together and co-operate with the school, a battle is won and the child is a winner. Sometimes the parent does not like my approach but they surely like the outcome.

Mr Jupiter commented:

We have to move with the times and make parents happy. Sometimes they request past papers via USB. We as a school have to accommodate their needs if we want to move forward as a twenty-first century school. We have the parent association: parents that get elected provided they have a learner attending the school. They represent other parents. We have parents who are willing to sponsor our bursary scheme or contribute towards excursions for those learners who cannot afford it. These parents I call angels because they support the school whole-heartedly whether it be financially or physically helping us.

In the artefact inquiry all three principals also shared their views about the involvement of parents, Mrs Neptune stated:

Here at an independent school the parents are so highly educated, they are so involved with their children, they form chat groups on the phone. They are constantly comparing one child's book to another child's book and it is only fair that they see some form of uniformity. In this way the parents play an important role in the child's education. They support the school and this puts my mind at ease.

This also allows teachers to be alert all the time and have to be constantly up to date with the curriculum.

Mrs Mars shared:

By the parents coming in on a weekend and conveying lovely messages about the school to myself and the teachers was absolutely phenomenal. This proved that the learners and parents appreciate what we do immaterial of the limited resources we have. We in turn appreciate the parents for their loyalty and support. This reassures us that parents are happy and know that their child is at the right school.

Mr Jupiter commented:

Some parents come back and say thank you for making their child's day. At times we do have problems in terms of parental issues, but it doesn't get blown out of proportion. There are channels and ways that we deal with it like following protocol. I think this is what parents appreciate and how they support us.

In independent schools parents are active in their child's education. Parents are notified of their children's progress and behaviour by educators. Parents are encouraged to participate in their children's learning. Literature suggests that parents be given an insight into the school climate, school challenges and the school curriculum and be given the right to discuss learner issues with the teachers or principal (Bunting, Drew & Lasseigne 2013:639). The partnership between learner, parent and teacher impacts on learner achievement. Drawing parents into supervision of their children's work has the potential to assist in learner progression in positive ways (Kaplan, Toren & Seginer 2015:819). All three principals involve parents in their children's school work and behavioural issues.

4.3.3 Governing Board

Independent schools have a board of governors who are responsible for governance related issues of the school such as employing and promoting educators, managing the school finances, ethos, vision and mission of the school (Edward 2017:21). The governing board does not comprise parents but rather the financial investors of the institution. The board of governors also have to be informed about issues occurring in the school through the principal. The board of governors is

fully accountable for the core functions of independent schools (James & Sheppard 2014: 6). Each principal is aware of their duties and obligations towards the governing body. Mrs Neptune shared the following in the semi-structured interview:

The governing body plays a major role in the school and they are very structured and work completely different from the public school's School Governing Board (SGB). The governing board here is extremely clued up, they want the best for our school, very committed in every way like academic, financially and focus on the mission and vision of the school. They do their own research most of the time concerning certain matters like resources for teaching and learning for example, they install projectors in every classroom. They make room for development and are very meticulous with employing new teachers regarding experience and qualification, they employ and promote teachers wisely. Many people that visit our school are absolutely amazed with our infrastructure. I must tell you that all compliments go to our governing body. They are responsible for building this beautiful building and take full responsibility to maintain and renovate it for our convenience. We have to consult the board of governors for every decision taken. They have the sub-committees, which are very meticulous, functional and supportive.

Mrs Mars commented:

I am in the middle between the board members and the school with my crew. I have to ensure that all folds are smoothed and everyone is happy. I have to answer and report timeously to the governing board concerning the school curriculum, all the staff members and all other concerns in the school. Whatever our difficulties or obstacles we discuss them at these meetings and the board members are always willing to help to solve the problem and support the institution.

Mr Jupiter commented:

Every second Friday I have a meeting with the board members in the office whom I have to report on every raising issue or whatever takes place in school. At times I have to meet with the executive board when the need arises to discuss strategic

issues. Its natural we do encounter hurdles or problems but the members are more than willing to help me find solutions to the problems.

All three principals also commented in the artefact inquiry about the role of the board of governors.

Mrs Neptune said:

All policies for the school are drawn up by the board of governance in consultation with all the different stakeholders like the SMT, sometimes teachers, the disciplinary committee, etc. We have board members who are popular businessmen and they are very committed and dedicated. They have extraordinary ideas for the future. In this way the governing board supports us to govern the school more efficiently. They are always a step ahead in trying to bring the school to a higher level.

Mrs Mars said:

Although we don't have enough funds we do value the board members and appreciate them for their support. They do make numerous efforts to ensure the smooth running of the institution and encourage us to do our best.

Mr Jupiter said:

I need to report to the board regularly so at the weekly focus meetings with our advisory council. I report the issues that need attention and take decisions with the board thereafter. If there are issues to be ironed, we usually discuss a solution together. We are fortunate that we have experienced members as our board of governors.

All three principals demonstrate their accountability to the board by reporting the day-to-day issues occurring at the school. All three principals also agreed that when they approach a problem at school, the board members are always willing to assist to solve the problem. According to Edward (2017:23), board members take full responsibility to support the school by maintaining the infrastructure, employment of staff, provision of resources and financial matters of the school. Mrs Neptune mentioned that at her school the members of the governing board support her by taking full responsibility in terms of maintenance of the infrastructure, taking charge of financial

matters and provision of equipment. The other two principals did not mention how the board members support them specifically, instead they stated that when a problem occurs the board members support them by helping to resolve the problem.

4.3.4 Community organisations

Community organisations create opportunities for learners to get involved in co-curricular programmes or by allowing learners to learn life skills by granting access to schools to service their organisations. If the principal as an instructional leader allows learners to partake in such activities then it will benefit learners tremendously and give them direction for the future. All three principals encourage their learners to participate in activities arranged by community organisations. Mrs Neptune explained:

Our learners partake in lots of projects like serving the old age home with meals, food hampers for the poor, mass feeding programmes for the underprivileged Muslims during the fasting period and the school takes on the Qurbani project every year to serve the community. This is a great project to serve the Muslim community for Eid-ul-Adha. We always participate in sponsoring water for 'operation hydrate'.

Mrs Mars said:

Our learners are exposed to community projects like 'Adopt a Granny from the' Lenasia Old Age Home' for a day where learners take the initiative to spoil a senior citizen. They also assist special needs schools, sponsor and collect water for 'Operation Hydrate' and with feeding programmes during the fasting month.

Mr Jupiter said:

Our learners are always involved in assisting the community by participating with organisations such as the Lenasia Old Age Home, the 'Ahmed Kathrada Winter Drive', Operation Hydrate and collecting food items for the victims of the ' Knysna Fires'

Mrs Mars shared in the collage inquiry:

Community institutes invite our learners to experience fields or careers that our learners are interested in. For example, we joined a partnership with a special needs school in Lenasia known as 'JISWA School'. They invited our learners who are ambitious in promoting a career as therapists to job shadow the professionals. It was amazing.

Mr Jupiter said:

We invite community leaders from community organisations many times in our assemblies so that they can motivate and encourage our learners to lend out a helping hand to the community, for example here I have a picture of Professor Fatima Meer.

Community organisations help instructional leaders by providing beneficial skills to learners (Ice, Thapa & Cohen 2015:8). They assist the principals either directly or indirectly by providing instructional support through cultivating life skills in the learners via the activities they organise. Principals need to be more organised in how they partner with community organisations. Principals seeking to engage community organisations as partners should first identify the needs of the school prior to committing or implementing a community partnership programme with organisations (Strickland 2016:280).

4.3.5 Corporates

Some schools are involved with external providers such as, corporates where the principal takes the initiative of involving corporates to aid with teaching and learning. Corporate institutions have a choice of directing funds to the school or aiding the school otherwise (Mestry & Venter 2014: 176). Corporates may practice Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) by building infrastructure, sponsoring scholarships, assisting with teacher aids and resources or training teachers (Deshmukh 2017:141).

Mrs Neptune commented in the semi-structured interview:

We have lots of corporate companies that sponsor and help us in many ways. They help to manage the institution with extra funds and help parents who are unable to pay school fees. In this way the institute benefits.

Mrs Mars then shared:

“PwC, a leading global accounting firm contacts us annually for us to send our grade twelve learners for a campaign which allows for the exposure to their accounting career. We also get TIBA coming in to encourage our learners to complete a level one first aid course.

Mr Jupiter then said:

We are blessed to have some very senior professionals from corporate companies to assist our institution. We have corporate companies that assist us with bursary funds for underprivileged parents who are unable to afford excursions and school fees.

All three principals are involved with services rendered by external providers or corporates, although none of the schools are totally reliant on these companies for financial assistance. When corporates fund schools their academic and financial status improves (Mestry & Venter 2014:181). None of the three principals are actively involved in partnering with corporates to advance CSR. Being independent schools corporate funding can help the schools tremendously.

4.3.5 Department of Education

Although independent schools are audited by Umalusi they also are obligated to abide by the Department of Education rules and regulations. Umalusi is a body that assures quality in schools and is responsible for the accreditation of independent schools. District support for schools is based on the local department of education offices whose goal is to promote quality learning and teaching. They have moved from ‘inspection’ and ‘supervision’ to ‘support’ and ‘development’ so

that they may adequately assist schools (Mavuso 2013:3). Each principal commented on the involvement of the Education Department and its officials in the semi-structured interview.

Ms Neptune commented first:

If there is a conflict between the teacher and an HOD concerning a particular subject I can pick up the phone and call the subject facilitator to solve the dispute I also have all the contact details of all subject facilitators and district officials that I hand to my SMT. We follow the Department of Education strictly with the curriculum and all the policies. Therefore if we in doubt about anything we just contact the DBE officials.

Mrs Mars shared the following:

Even the director from the district visited this office to see what our school is doing right. I know all the subject facilitators by name so I contact them whenever we need them, especially for the matriculants and the management team. Usually our district Johannesburg South is always amazed and satisfied with our results. Many times they come in to advice on improving learner achievement. With our open door policy they are welcome anytime.

Mr Jupiter shared his view by mentioning:

District officials do come to our school to monitor our admin work and procedures for examinations. They also monitor and examine our teacher's files. We do get audited. We have a matric monitor, we have a provincial monitor and we even get officials to do head counts and check our registers. Some of the district officials are helpful and assist us with curricula and policies.

In the artefact inquiry Mrs Mars shared:

District facilitators come in, not to supervise us but rather they come in and want ideas how to support others. Many of the subject facilitators come in and they use our tasks, our assessments and so on for themselves.

All three principals are supported by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) for improving their standard of education and are amenable to changes that the district suggests. The principals rely on district official to guide them with the curriculum and policy issues when they are unsure. Mrs Mars and Mrs Neptune contact department officials whenever they need assistance or support. In many countries education officials guide, supervise, monitor and inspect the learning and teaching from school to school (Mavuso & Moyo 2015:16). While this is supposed to happen, Mr Jupiter mentioned that his school does not get enough guidance. Instead they download necessary information from the department's website concerning educational matters to view changes in the education system. Mrs Neptune and Mrs Mars admit that they do get guidance from subject advisors when needed.

4.4 The obstacles that school principals encounter in their instructional leadership and how they negotiate /mediate these obstacles.

School principals have an onerous task of establishing an environment that would lead to effective teaching and learning. Notwithstanding their endeavours to ensure a productive instructional environment they are often confronted with obstacles (Hallinger 2003:330; Mestry et al 2013:551). From the analysis of the data I generated the themes below. For each of the themes I first present the obstacle and then show how the principal negotiates/mediates it.

4.4.1 Changing the mindset of older teachers

Many older teachers find difficulty adapting to the new curriculum. They tend to be attached to their old ways of teaching and are not welcoming of new ideas. They are loathe to take risks and experiment with new ways of doing things. Some are also obstinate and refuse to co-operate with new demands. Many teachers, older teachers find difficulty re-orientating and adapting to new teaching strategies, a new curriculum and extra administrative responsibilities (Donohue & Bornman 2014:4). Mrs Neptune mentioned that in her school the older teachers are very fixed and don't welcome change for professional growth. Mrs Neptune mentioned in the semi-structured interview:

What I find difficult is changing the mind set of some educators who come from the old school. Somehow, I find it very difficult to change their view or mode of approaching challenges. The greatest obstacle is that some teachers that are so fixed in their thinking, in their ways and in their method that they reluctant to accept suggestions or grow.

Mrs Mars complained of teachers who are uncooperative and who get upset to carry out their duties. In the artefact inquiry, Mrs Mars commented.

One of the challenges of leadership is when I get a teacher who doesn't want to play the role and co-operate. I am up to face it, I tackle them. I had an issue yesterday with the teacher who was upset about a certain thing that had happened. Because of that he said that he is not willing to carry out his duties such as attending workshops. This is unacceptable, educators are still expected to carry out their duties immaterial of obstacles that occur alongside.

Mrs Neptune's solution to teachers not willing to embrace change was as follows:

Although I am fairly new I try to find solutions to this obstacle by involving the older teachers in projects and giving them responsibilities to take charge of certain portfolios so they can find solutions themselves by taking suggestions from other teachers and simultaneously they are acknowledging the new system.

Mrs Mar's coerces educators to honour their duties. Her solution to uncooperative educators is:

I overcome these kinds of obstacles by sitting and explaining to the respective teacher that we all are human. We tend to get frustrated and angry and feel that life is not fair. Kindness is a bigger gesture and a solution to all problems because somewhere in life we will get rewarded for it. We have to think with our brain and not our heart.

Teachers need to work in collaboration with others in order for teaching and learning to take place successfully. Mrs Neptune tries to change the mindset of older teachers by giving them responsibilities in the form of new portfolios. She believes that this will encourage older teachers to get to work and share ideas with other teachers. Mrs Mars is a bit more patient. She explains to

teachers the need to practice kindness to colleagues and learners. Mrs Mars admits that teachers do get frustrated at times, but they need to realize that they are a part of a chain that looks upon teaching and learning as their responsibility and they are obligated to fulfil this task. Some older teachers tend to feel insecure and threatened by younger teachers when it comes to new and innovative teaching strategies and the use of and information technology (Geeraets, Tynjala & Heikkinen, 2018:1). Geeraets et al. (2018) add that older teachers possess certain gifts such as practical information, classroom management and community building which they can share with younger teachers. Thus older teachers need to see themselves as valuable personnel. Mrs Neptune finds difficulty with the older teachers. However, she can utilize both old and young teachers and allow them to interchange their strengths by having professional development workshops. In this way intergenerate learning will take place preventing loss of vital knowledge (Geeraets et al, 2018:2).

4.4.2 Lack of teacher volunteerism

Many teachers are too occupied with curriculum and administrative matters and are therefore reluctant to sacrifice extra time for voluntary work. Sometimes teachers are too busy with their personal responsibilities and are afraid that they will not manage to cope if they increase their workload by volunteering for other duties. Mr Jupiter is very troubled by teachers who are not willing to volunteer in assisting the school. Mr Jupiter commented in the semi-structured interview:

The other obstacle is that teachers are reluctant to volunteer. Obviously I need teachers' assistance with my busy schedule, but some teachers don't want to do anything extra. I do understand that the work-load and teaching demands are great in terms of the curriculum. I think it is becoming so overwhelming for me and the educators in terms of the workloads that when I ask people to do extra things they are a bit reluctant.

Mr Jupiter mediates the obstacle by being positive and uses motivation as a tool to get teachers to act. He mentioned the following:

I always wonder why people don't volunteer but I think I need to understand the workload pressure and, the demands for effectiveness. They have too many

responsibilities. I think sometimes we forget that teachers are a part of families because we just expect too much. I keep motivating my teachers by mentioning to them that they are the strongest link from all the stakeholders. Perhaps this will encourage them to volunteer.

Mr Jupiter is troubled for not arriving at a long term, permanent solution to teacher volunteerism. Instead he tries to motivate teachers to take on extra responsibilities so that the school can be successful in terms of teaching and learning. As a principal Mr Jupiter needs teacher's assistance with certain tasks related to teaching and learning. Teaching satisfaction and passion tend to be higher with senior, experienced teachers who are more eager to volunteer than younger, inexperienced teachers (Leung 2016:337). Leung (2016:337) adds that female teachers who teach a variety of subjects are more confident in approaching challenges and volunteer more than male teachers. Leung's (2016:345) findings can help Mr Jupiter by him encouraging his staff to ignite more passion in their jobs and ask experienced teachers as well, female teachers to assist him.

4.4.3 Uncooperative parents

Education is a partnership between parent, teacher and learner. Parents are part of the learners' education and those who are uncooperative in schools make it difficult for their child to benefit from home-school relationships (Taylor 2015:68). If parents do not co-operate and do not get involved in their child's education then teaching and learning at the school suffers. Mrs Mars commented about some uncooperative parents as being obstacles to teaching and learning because they want to overpower the teachers. She shared:

One of my major obstacles are uncooperative parents. Teaching and learning involves the learner, teacher and parent. When our teacher contacts a parent for the betterment of the learner, whether it may be for academic or behavioural reasons, and the parent promises to come but never arrives proves that this parent is non-cooperative in disciplining the learner. Often it occurs that they don't agree with the teacher's views or approach. This then gives the children almost a sense of victory over their teachers.

Mrs Neptune commented that when learners disobey school rules the parents become difficult and insist on siding with their child. Some parents do not teach their children discipline nor train them

to be responsible for their actions when breaking school rules. Mrs Neptune said in the semi-structured interview:

At our school the parents are very involved. They know exactly what happens in the classroom before I can contact them because of social media groups. Often they come to school to criticize and compare teachers and they take their children's side. To deal with these issues becomes overwhelming and time consuming. They pay exorbitant school fees so they think that can dominate issues regarding their child.

In order to seek solutions to the problem of uncooperative parents, Mrs Mars continues to engage with parents:

After many struggles I finally get the parent to come to school. With non-cooperative parents I make sure when there's a problem I first discuss it with them in confidence without the learner's presence. I sit them down and explain to them the pros and cons of the issue and make them realise what is right and wrong and they themselves will try to agree with me. After arbitration when we come to an agreement then we call the learner in to explain the depth and consequences of the misconduct

Mrs Neptune has a strong and firm personality that stands for justice. She stated the following as her way to mediate the issue of uncooperative parents:

Fortunately we have a code of conduct in place and a merit and demerit system to sort our issues with uncooperative parents. Parents usually sign this code of conduct when the learner is admitted. We try our utmost to accommodate them wherever possible and we mediate or negotiate the unruly issues with justice. We make the parents understand that co-operative parents benefit the learner. We make sure to call the respective parents of the learners involved.

Mrs Neptune's school has a code of conduct which stands as a strong pillar against parents who side with their children who have misbehaved. Parents should understand that learners can behave unruly at times. Instead of siding with their children they should rather help the learner admit their

mistakes and take the responsibility to learn from it. Learners first need to learn discipline before they can succeed at learning the curriculum (Steyn 2014:354). Mrs Neptune has shown strong leadership skills by addressing the issues with the parents personally. Parents whose children are experiencing behavioural or academic issues sometimes need guidance or advice from the school (Donohue & Bornman 2014:6). The commitment from a school leader like the school principal calling parents to discuss a barrier brings positive energy to the school environment (Taylor 2015:69).

4.4.4 Being a female leader

Gender discrimination exists at different levels in many institutions. Mrs Neptune mentioned this as an issue that stands as an obstacle to her leadership. Mrs Neptune had encountered the same obstacle of being female in her past which she resolved and it gave her more confidence to overcome it presently. Mrs Neptune said in the semi- structured interview:

An obstacle that I have to endure in my leadership is being a female. Yes I handled the same obstacle in my past, as a facilitator, as a marker and as well as being a deputy. There are benefits to being female and there are also disadvantages .Here too, sometimes I feel I am not respected for being a female. The females in this school seem not to respect me because perhaps they feel that I am new and I took charge. They were accustomed to having a male leader for the past twenty- seven years. The males, on the other hand also have difficulty getting accustomed to accepting me as their first female principal in a Muslim environment.

Mrs Neptune is treated unfairly by her colleagues because of being a female. The males do not respect her because of her gender. The females feel that she is an outsider who came to take charge. Mrs Neptune is appointed as the first female principal after almost thirty years of the school's existence. Mrs Neptune negotiates the challenge of being female by engaging with her staff. She explained:

I started approaching the male teachers to assist me. They appear to be more open to suggestions, open to criticism and are more co-operative. I gave them authority to assist me with lots of tasks. As for the female teachers they need more nurturing, compassion and need more confidence in me. Well I think I am winning them by

being more supportive and by, assisting and guiding them in my leadership. As for being a female I think the male teachers are realising my worth because of my wittiness and guidance towards them. Now I see them accepting my leadership slowly and hope it will get better as time goes on.

Mrs Neptune has the courage and strength to overcome and fight sexism or gender discrimination that assumes that females are inferior. She approached the males for assistance and suggestions and being more tactful with the females to mediate her obstacles. Many women have the courage to overcome the gender stereotypes that assume that women cannot succeed as leaders (Shaked, Gross & Glanz 2017:3). Leadership differences between men and women are misguided norms within society. A female is sometimes judged as inferior in the work circles but many women rise above such labels and show that they are stronger (Msila 2013:463).

4.4.5 Work overload as principal

Instructional leaders need to approach all managerial responsibilities and challenges with constant determination and competence. When overworked and stressed they have to search for the best solutions to resolve the issue (Le Fevre & Robinson 2015:60). Mr Jupiter feels that being an instructional leader from elementary level to high school is extremely stressful. He also seemed stressed about his dual leadership responsibility of being a principal and fulfilling the role of a deputy principal. Mr Jupiter said in the semi-structured interview:

The greatest obstacle I'm challenged with is the reconfiguration of the school. Last year we had two principals, one in the high school and one in the primary school. Since I became principal I am the principal for both the primary and high school. Concentrating on five phases is very taxing. The obstacle I find most stressful is attending deputy principal meetings and the principal meetings for both the primary and high sections, because they discuss different things at different meetings. Sometimes that becomes a problem because many times I am out and some educators get offended or upset that they don't have easy access to discuss issues with me. Many times when they need help or mentoring then I am unavailable.

Mrs Mars, on the other hand, is experiencing frustration owing to parents and teachers troubling her at odd hours. Consulting with parents and teachers often after hours have resulted as an overload of work to Mrs Mars. She then shared the following in the semi-structured interview:

For me my biggest obstacle in my leadership is putting no boundaries to issue. Sometimes I dig too much, to the point where I actually feel that my personal resources are being affected. I have parents, and teachers calling me at night and the first thing they would say is “I’m sorry to bother you” and I would say “it is fine.” Then I will entertain the issue. Like I said to you earlier it comes with the territory.

Mr Jupiter related how he overcame his obstacle:

I try to convince myself that being a leader, principal or head master of the school is a short term thing. Principals have a short span of leadership presently. I cannot understand how principals of the past used to be principal for 15 to 20 years. As an independent school and if you want to run the school at that optimal levels or efficient levels then I think you need a super human. I do accept that I have to manage the elementary section, foundation phase, intermediate phase, senior phase and the FET. I have to monitor the HODs and do the deputy work and meetings .I suggested to the board members that it will be wise to employ a deputy principal who can assist me.

Mrs Mars explained what she sees as a solution:

I am actually afraid that I might burn out if I continue like this. It is still early days. It is my second year as principal and I don’t want to burn out because then I won’t be effective. As time progresses I say ‘no’ now and again. I will have to learn where to draw my line, but my heart just wants to give and help everyone in the institution. I still practice my open door policy, but nowadays I work within limits.

Mr Jupiter feels that he needs extra support in order to lead five different phases. The governing board at Mr Jupiter’s school wants the school to function at high levels and Mr Jupiter feels that this is impossible with one instructional leader for the entire school. Mrs Mars feels overwhelmed

when parents and teachers intrude on her during her personal time. She is searching for solutions to better the management of her workload by working within limits. At times she now refuses to entertain any school matters after school hours. Oplatka (2017:566) suggest that to lighten the burden on school principals, the number of middle managers needs to increase. This is often not possible given the financial constraints that my schools are facing.

4.4.6 Bullying among learners

Mrs Neptune is trying to minimise bullying issues at school because she is aware that it can have long lasting effects on children. Acts of bullying have severe long-lasting consequences for the victim and the perpetrator and can affect their school performance (Denny, Peterson, Stuart, Utter, Bullen & Fleming 2014:252). Mrs Neptune commented on bullying issues among learners. In the collage inquiry Mrs Neptune shared

The bullying in school is one of the major issues or challenge that we are faced with. It has been a major issue even before I came to this school. Presently we also experience cyber bullying. So in today's world one doesn't have to be in the presence to bully someone anymore. This is a major issue and it is disastrous; the damage that it does to learners is unbelievable. The bullying is a real challenge for me; the aspect that I elaborated on is the bullying because it is something that I can't really get into. I personally have no direct control over it when it occurs because my teachers have to report it and mention the extent to which it damages the child.

Mrs Neptune admits that bullying is a major issue which exist at every school. Since her inception at the school she is trying to minimize it. Mrs Neptune shares how she deals with bullying:

With the bullying issue, I really try my best to keep it under control but teachers have to be vigilant to recognize and report it. If the need arises then demerits are issued or the parents are called in. When approached with bullying issues we follow the code of conduct. It also depends on the extent of bullying, but bullying is bullying; whether it is small or big. If you don't deal with it wisely it grows bigger and can lead into something more serious. I usually call learners that are involved

to get the gist of the scenario. I have one of the teachers as the coordinator of the disciplinary committee who helps to sort out bullying issues.

Mrs Neptune admits that they do encounter issues concerning bullying. She and her colleague, the coordinator from the disciplinary committee follow school protocol strictly concerning bullying issues. Mrs Neptune, as an instructional leader has an obligation to keep learners safe and happy for the smooth functioning of the school. Therefore it is imperative for Mrs Neptune's school to have a bullying policy so that issues can be dealt with effectively and adequately (Hall 2017:55). Fortunately for Mrs Neptune her school does deal with issues of bullying. Further, she has the assistance of a teacher to help sort out matters related to bullying. Hlophe, Morojele, Motsa (2017:389) agree that teachers have to be vigilant and skilled to recognize bullying issues and to deal with them accordingly.

4.4.7 Safety and security of learners

Mr Jupiter shows great concern for learner's safety at all times. He admits that in today's time parents need to be reassured about their child's safety in or out of the school premises. Parents need to feel confident that their children belong to a school where teaching and learning are taking place in a safe and secure environment (Hlophe, Morojele & Motsa 2017:3). Mr Jupiter ensures that when taking learners for day trips or camp trips parents are informed about the venue and the times of departure and arrival. Mr Jupiter commented in the collage inquiry:

The greatest challenge we have with learners is to keep them safe at all times, whether within the school premises or outside. The challenges become more taxing in today's times when we want to take the children on an excursion. We are responsible for their safety, for the transport and to reassure the parents that the venue is safe for the respective group and make sure to give departure and arrival times. We as educators have to be extra vigilant when taking learners for camp trips and overnight excursions because we are responsible for their safety and wellbeing.

Mr Jupiter enlists the help of other educators in order to overcome this obstacle. Mr Jupiter shared his solution in the collage inquiry:

I usually approach the HODs who help to sort many issues especially concerning the learner issues such as safety in and out of the school environment and for organising circulars informing parents of any necessary information. For any trip or outings the form teacher is responsible for his/her own class. The staff works as a team for any excursion handling, discipline and bullying issues. We are open for suggestions from all the teachers and our joint goal is the best for our school.

Mr Jupiter gets assistance from the SMT and educators in ensuring learner safety. He sees safety as a team effort. Safety measures for learners must be in place at all times, whether it be in the classroom, playground or on outings (Vicario & Sallan 2017:104). Mr Jupiter ensures that safety measures are adhered to at all times especially during overnight or excursions.

4.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present, analyse and discuss the data generated from the three methods of data generation. This Chapter has accomplished that by presenting the findings and a discussion thereof by using the sub-research questions as a framework. In the next chapter I conclude the study by presenting the summary of the study, conclusions around the sub-research questions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the presentation, analysis and discussion of the data. I used my research questions as the organizing framework for the presentation of the data. For each research question I presented my findings which was drawn from an inductive analysis of the data using the phenomenological framework for analysis developed by Giorgio, Fisher and Murray (1975:84).

The purpose of this chapter is to present a summary of the core issues of each chapter of the study. I thereafter present the conclusions of the study. For each of the research questions I present the claims I make based on the findings of the study. The limitations and recommendations of the study are also explained. Avenues for further research has been discussed.

5.2 Summary of the study

Chapter one explained the orientation of the study. The focus of the study was on the instructional leadership practices of three principals from three high-performing independent schools in Gauteng. In this study high-performing schools are schools that achieve excellent learner achievement at matric level. The NSC results were used as an indicator of high performance and schools that regularly attain a pass rate of 90% and above were deemed high-performing schools. The purpose of this study was to find out how high-performing schools' principals implement their day-to-day instructional leadership practices in order to achieve excellent learner outcomes. In South Africa there is very limited research on instructional leadership practices in high performing schools. Further, there is limited research with regard to instructional leadership at independent schools.

The following key research question informed this study:

What are the lived instructional leadership practices of school principals in high-performing independent schools?

The following sub-questions were explored:

- *What day-to-day instructional leadership practices do school principals of high-performing independent schools engage in?*
- *How are school principals supported in their instructional leadership practices by relevant education stakeholders in high-performing independent schools?*
- *What obstacles do school principals encounter in their instructional leadership endeavours in high-performing independent schools?*
- *How do school principals mediate/negotiate the obstacles they encounter in their instructional leadership practices in high-performing independent schools?*

I also orientated the reader to the overall research design and methodology of the study. This was an interpretive qualitative study that drew on phenomenology as methodology. I generated data using interviews, collage inquiry and artefact inquiry. Three independent schools were deliberately selected and their school principals were the participants. I also presented a discussion of the key terms used in the study namely: leadership, management, instructional leadership, independent schools, distributed leadership and high-performing schools.

Chapter two focused on the theoretical framework of this study and a review of the related literature. The theoretical models that were discussed in this study are Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model which included three major focus areas namely, the mission and vision of the schools; managing the curriculum and instruction; and creating a positive learning climate and the Weber (1996) model which in addition to the three focus areas of the Hallinger and Murphy (1985) includes observing and improving instruction and assessing the instructional programme. This study drew on the Weber model since it incorporates the Hallinger and Murphy model. This study also drew on distributed leadership theory in order to explain the data generated in it. With regards to the review of related literature, the terms leadership, management and instructional leadership were explained. I also presented a South African perspective on leadership and schooling. In terms of the empirical studies that have been done on instructional leadership, I have presented literature

related to the national context and the international context. I also summarise some of the leadership tasks associated with instructional leadership.

Chapter three presented the research design and methodology. The different kinds of paradigms were explained. In this research an interpretivist paradigm is applied because the study embraced the subjective views of the participants and the belief that knowledge is socially constructed. The research approach was then discussed which was a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach was used in this study because the participants shared their experiences through words rather than numbers. The methodology employed in the study was a phenomenology because I wanted to know from the participants their experiences (what it is like) as instructional leaders in high-performing independent schools. Three research methods were used, the first being semi-structured interviews. I also used artefact inquiry where the participants were required to select five photographs depicting his/her instructional leadership practice and the participant was asked to discuss each photograph. Lastly, I used collage inquiry where the participants pasted pictures on an A3 sheet to make up a collage which they were asked to explain. The study consisted of three participating schools and three school principals were the participants. The generated data was analysed using Giorgi, Fisher and Murray's (1975:85) phenomenological analysis framework.

Chapter four focused on the presentation, analysis and discussion of the data. The findings were presented thematically per research sub-question. The first sub-question of the study is: What day-to-day instructional leadership practices do school principals of high-performing independent schools engage in? The findings of the first sub-question were:

- The school principals regularly emphasise the vision and mission of the school
- There is regular maintenance of the school infrastructure which is managed by school principals
- The school principals play an active role in the provisioning and deployment of human and physical resources
- Monitoring of teaching and learning is a priority for the school principals
- The school principals make it their duty to motivate excellent learner performance
- Staff development initiatives are promoted by the school principals

The second sub-question was: How are school principals supported in their instructional leadership practices by relevant education stakeholders in high-performing independent schools? The findings were as follows:

- The school support staff assist some of the school principals in their instructional leadership endeavours.
- Parents are actively involved in all three schools with their children's education. Parental support is drawn on to improve the learners' discipline or academic performance.
- The school's respective governing board supports the principal by managing the financials, setting the ethos, maintaining the infrastructure and employing and promoting educators.
- Community organisations support the principals by giving learners opportunities to get involved in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Corporate organisations support all three principals by inviting learners to participate in activities related to learner's career choices.
- The DBE supports the principals with curriculum implementation. .

The findings for sub-research questions three and four were combined since they dealt with obstacles the instructional leaders encountered and how they mediate these obstacles. The findings were as follows:

- Some of the principals had to deal with uncooperative teachers and older teachers who are reluctant to change their mindset.
- Some teachers are reluctant to volunteer for extra work with regard to teaching and learning.
- Some principals experience uncooperative parents when it comes to learner discipline and addressing issues of learner progress.
- One of the principals are experiencing gender discrimination because she is female. She mediated this obstacle by giving responsibilities to the males to assist her.
- Work overload is a major obstacle shared by two principals. They mediate this by better managing their time and seeking to appoint additional management staff.
- Bullying among learners is an obstacle for one of the principals. Fortunately she has a colleague to assist her with solving this problem.

- Learner safety and security is a constant challenge at schools. This is mediated by drawing on SMT members and other educators to assist.

5.3 Conclusions

5.3.1 Day-to-day instructional leadership practices of school principals

From this research question we learn that the mission and vision of the school must be the compass that guides the school. It must be shared by every stakeholder in the school. As instructional leaders, school principals must regularly ensure that both human and physical resources need to be maintained and managed well so that they can contribute to enhancing the performance of the school. The key to effective learner performance is to ensure that there is ongoing professional development of teachers through induction programmes, mentoring, staff development programmes and workshops. Furthermore, good instructional leaders monitor teaching and learning on an ongoing basis. Good school principal practice distributed leadership in order to draw in other school management team members to assist with instructional leadership tasks.

5.3.2 Support for school principals by stakeholders in their instructional leadership endeavours

Ensuring excellent school performance cannot be the sole responsibility of the school principal. The school principal needs the support of the various stakeholders in ensuring learner success. Learner success is a team effort. Parents should be actively involved in their children's education. They must support the principal and the school in their teaching and learning endeavours. Similarly, the school board of governors need to ensure that both human and physical resources are available for the school to function well. The school principal needs to have these resources in order to ensure that teaching and learning progresses well at the school. Community organisations and corporates need to assist the school principal in exposing learners to different co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. As part of their corporate social responsibility programmes, corporate organisations should sponsor resources for teaching and learning and have career awareness programmes for learners.

5.3.3 The obstacles that school principals encounter in their instructional leadership and how they negotiate / mediate these obstacles

School principals need to deal with obstacles to their instructional leadership when they arise so has to ensure that they do not impact on learner performance. Issues such as teachers not embracing change, work overload of school principals, uncooperative parents, and gender discrimination can severely stifle school progress. If these issues are not addressed they can affect other areas that are working well at the school. Processes need to be put in place to deal with such issues timeously.

5.4 Limitation of Study

The following limitations were identified in the study:

- Only three school principals were the participants of the study. If a larger number of school principals were selected for the study, I would have been able to get a better picture of instructional leadership in independent schools.
- The study was limited to high-performing, independent schools in a small area of the Gauteng province. A larger scale study involving other provinces would have revealed richer instructional leadership experiences of school principals.
- Co-incidently all three principals selected for the study were new in their post. None of the three principals had much experience in their post as instructional leaders. At the time of data generation two of the principals were fairly new with only three to six months experience while the third was appointed for approximately sixteen months. If I selected more experienced principals I may have arrived at some richer findings.

5.5 Recommendations of the study

5.5.1 Recommendations regarding to day-to-day instructional leadership practices of school principals

- All schools need to have a mission and vision that drives teaching and learning. School principals must ensure that this vision and mission is shared with all stakeholders so that

the stakeholders can participate in the achievement of the school's vision and mission. All practices of the school should revolve around this vision and mission.

- School principals as instructional leaders must monitor the teaching and learning regularly. Even if they distribute leadership to the SMT members they must ensure that they monitor the work of the SMT in terms of what they are doing to promote effective teaching and learning.

5.5.2 Recommendations regarding support for school principals by stakeholders in their leadership endeavours

- Parents are the most important role players when it comes to learners. In order to ensure active parental involvement in the education of children, school principals need to draw on parents as partners in the education process. Regular meetings should be held with parents in order to make them aware of how they can help their children in the teaching and learning process.
- School principals must encourage partnerships with community organisations and corporate organisations. Community organisations can assist school principals with co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Corporates can assist schools with sponsorships and career guidance advice to learners.

5.5.3 Recommendations regarding obstacles that school principals encounter in their instructional leadership and how they negotiate/ mediate these obstacles

- The school principal as instructional leader must encourage team building among staff so there can be intergenerational change and learning amongst the staff. In this way the staff can learn and develop from each other. Older staff can learn from younger staff and vice-versa. This will motivate teachers to work together and volunteer together. Team building will also be a solution to uncooperative teachers.
- School principals are often overburdened by work demands. Being instructional leaders is quite demanding. They should engage in better time management. If funds are available

they should convince their board of governors to increase the size of the SMT. Principals will then be able to delegate some of their workload to the newly employed SMT members.

5.6. Avenues for further research

One further research option can be a comparative study involving instructional leadership practices at high, and average performing independent schools. The researcher can generate data from instructional leaders of perhaps three high-performing schools and three average schools. A comparative analysis of these two contexts may reveal the practices that prevail in these schools.

A second avenue for further research can be the instructional leadership practices of principals in both public and independent schools. This will allow for a comparison in these two contexts.

A possible third research option can be a research study that involves the instructional leadership practices of the School Management Team members in independent schools. It will be interesting to learn more about the instructional leadership practices of the SMT members and how distribution of instructional leadership tasks takes place in independent schools.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION FROM THE SCHOOL

Request for permission to conduct research at _____ School.

Date: _____.

Title: A phenomenological study of the instructional leadership practices of school principals in three high performing independent schools in Gauteng.

University: University of South Africa.

Supervisor: Dr I. Naicker

Supervisor's Contact Details: (Cell)

Supervisor's E-mail Address:

To whom it may concern

I am Zerina Kathrada, a Master's degree of Education student, specialising in Education Management at the University of South Africa. My research is guided under my supervisor, Dr I. Naicker who is a lecturer at the University of South Africa. I am inviting you to participate in a study entitled "A phenomenological study of leadership practices of school principals in three high-performing independent schools in Gauteng."

The aim of the study is to explore school principals' instructional leadership practices in high-performing schools. Your school has been selected as a part of my sample for study.

The research will involve the principal, to be interviewed face to face by me. There will be three interviews. The first interview will be a semi-structured interview. The second interview will be an artefact inquiry and the third interview will be a collage enquiry. Each interview will last for a duration of approximately forty five minutes. All interviews will be audio-recorded with your consent. Your participation will be on a voluntary basis and you will have the prerogative to withdraw at any stage without any penalty against you. All interviews are based on a guarantee of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality.

The benefits of this study are that it will provide a reflexive space for you as a principal to reflect on your instructional leadership practices. I do not see any potential risks for you or your school by participating in the study.

On the completion of the research, a feedback will be given to the institution in the form of a hard copy of the dissertation. I humbly request you to grant me permission to utilise your institution as a research site. I look forward in your decision in writing.

Yours Sincerely

Zerina Kathrada

Contact Details: (011) 852 6858/ 084 678 6680

E-mail: kathradazerina@gmail.com

Z.KATHRADA

Acknowledgement

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my permission to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the three interviews that I will participate in.

I have received a signed copy of the informed permission agreement.

School 's Name (please print) _____

Permission granted by Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) _____

Researcher's signature Date

APPENDIX B: CONSENT LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE PRINCIPALS

Name of Researcher: Zerina Kathrada

Address of researcher: P .O .Box 330
Lenasia
1820

Title: A phenomenological study of the instructional leadership practices of school principals in three high-performing independent schools in Gauteng.

Name of University: University of South Africa (UNISA).

Purpose of Study: To improve educational management so that learners can achieve better results.

Date: _____.

Name of school:

Address of school:

Dear Principal

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I, Zerina Kathrada, am conducting as part of my research as a master's student entitled as above at the University of South Africa. Permission for the study has been given by your institution and the Ethics Committee of the College of Education, UNISA. I have purposefully identified you as a possible participant because of your valuable experience and expertise related to my research topic.

I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you should agree to take part. The importance of instructional leadership practices in education is substantial and well documented. This study is phenomenological study of instructional leadership of principals from three high-performing schools in Gauteng. In this interview I would like to have your views and opinions on this topic. This information can be used to improve instructional leadership practices in other schools as well allow principals to reflect on their own instructional leadership practices.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. It will involve three meetings. The first being an interview of approximately 45 minutes to an hour, the second discussion on artefacts (approximately 30-45 minutes) and the third on collage construction discussion (approximately 15-30 minutes) in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location at a time convenient to you. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Furthermore, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences.

With your kind permission, all meetings will be audio-recorded to facilitate collection of accurate information and later transcribed for analysis. Shortly after the transcription has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or to clarify any points. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any publication resulting from this study and any identifying information will be omitted from the report. However, with your permission, anonymous quotations may be used. Data collected during this study will be retained on a password protected computer for 12 months in my locked office. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 084 6786680/011 8526858 or by e-mail at kathradazerina@gmail.com.

I look forward to speaking with you very much and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project. If you accept my invitation to participate, I will request you to sign the consent form which follows hereafter.

Yours sincerely

ZERINA KATHRADA

Acknowledgement

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the three interviews that I will participate in.

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please- print) _____

Participant Signature _____ Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print) _____

Researcher's signature Date

APPENDIX C: RESEARCH PROTOCOL

Title: A phenomenological study of the instructional leadership practices of school principals in three high-performing independent schools in Gauteng.

1. I contacted the principals telephonically to set an appointment to discuss the demands of the interview.
2. Introduced myself with a friendly smile, thanked the principal for allowing me to explain the research study.
3. Gave a brief overview of the research study to the principals and asked for the contact details of the board of governors to sought permission to conduct the interview.
4. I contacted the board of governors and explained the importance of the study. I also explained the demands of the study and that a permission letter will be produced with the approval of my supervisor and the ethic review committee.
5. The permission letter was given to the members of the board where they approved and it was signed by both, the board members and the researcher.
6. Thereafter a consent letter was given to the principals to agree to participate in the research study by participating in all three interviews and agree for all interviews to be recorded.
7. The consent letter was signed by both, by the principal and researcher. The principals were given the privilege to decide the date and time of the interviews.
8. I met the principals for the semi-structured interview first which was recorded and transcribed verbatim. It lasted for approximately an hour.
9. After the first interview I discussed the demands and needs of the artefact inquiry. The principals assured that they will contact me and give me the five photographs that they chose.
10. After receiving the photographs I developed them making sure that it was ready for artefact inquiry.
11. The participants answered all questions and commented and spoke about the photographs freely.
12. At the end of the artefact inquiry the collage inquiry was discussed .I gave the principals some magazines and they agreed to get some of their own. They chose their pictures and phrases which I set on an A3 art sheet and laminated it.
13. Lastly we met for the collage inquiry where the participant discussed the pictures and phrases. All interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim.
14. The participants were thanked for their participation and were asked to feel free to contact me if they wanted to add any other information regarding any of the interviews.

APPENDIX D: DATA GENERATION SCHEDULE

Title: A phenomenological study of the instructional leadership practices of school principals in three high-performing independent schools in Gauteng.

Meeting 1: Semi-Structured Interviews

Interview Schedule (School Principals)

1.1 Biography of Principal

Tell me something about you as principal (how long have you been principal.

What schools have you taught at; what previous posts did you occupy, what's your qualifications; age; etc)

1.2 Context of the School

Tell us something about the context of your school in terms of:

- funding,
- the community regarding your school services
- socio-economic background of the learners
- human and physical resources
- the school infrastructure
- the school climate and ethos
- The vision and mission of your school

1.3 Leadership and Management of People

1.3.1 Tell us about your general approach to leading and managing the school.

1.3.2 What do you do to develop staff? (e.g. professional development, induction, mentoring, classroom visits or any other way)

1.4 Leadership of Teaching and Learning

1.4.1 Tell us what you do in order to ensure high quality teaching at your school

1.4.2 What do you do to ensure effective learning takes place at your school?

1.5 Resources

- 1.5.1 How would you describe the resourcing of your school? (physical and human resources)
- 1.5.2 How do you ensure efficient resource usage at your school?

1.6 School and Community

- 1.6.1 Tell us how you engage your Parents Body/ Governing Body/Council in ensuring the delivery of quality education at your school?
- 1.6.2 How do you utilise DoBE Officials (SEMs, subject advisors etc) to realise the vision and mission of your school?
- 1.6.3 How do you engage with the wider community (including businesses or corporate companies) in realising the goals of your school?
- 1.6.4 How do you involve teaching and learning with community organisations?

1.7 Board of Governors

- 1.7.1 Explain the involvement of your board of governors in terms of teaching and learning.
- 1.7.2 What are your obligations and responsibilities towards the board members as a principal?

1.8 Obstacles to Instructional Leadership

- 1.8.1 What are some of the obstacles you encounter in your leadership of teaching and learning?
- 1.8.2 How do you work through/overcome/deal with the obstacles you encounter to your leadership of teaching and learning?

1.9 General

- 1.9.1 What more could you be doing to improve your school?

Meeting 2: Artefacts Inquiry (Photographs)

2.1 Request to school principal

The principals were requested to bring along 5 photographs that show or has relevance as to how he/she leads teaching and learning in their school. They may not have direct relevance. As long as it triggers or prompts them to think about how they lead and manage teaching and learning in your school. The principal was requested to discuss each photograph in the context of the following questions. The conversation was recorded and lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

2.2 Questions

2.2.1 Please go through each photograph with me and tell me what each photograph depicts about your leadership skills concerning teaching and learning at your school.

2.2.2 Looking at each photograph would you say that other stakeholders assist you with your leadership skills and assist you reaching your goals regarding teaching and learning?

2.2.3. If you have to rank the five photographs in terms of importance of your leadership in teaching and learning, how would you rank them and why did you rank them in this order?

Meeting 3: Collage Construction Inquiry

3.1 Request to school principal

I gave magazines to the principal to choose images/pictures and words and they chose some of their own. The images/pictures and words were cut and pasted on a large white art sheet that represented the principal's leadership in teaching and learning in the school. The conversation was audio recorded and lasted 15 to 30 minutes. The principal was requested to speak about how each picture, image and phrase depicts his/her leadership in teaching and learning. The following questions served as a guideline.

3.2 Questions

3.2.1 Explain what the words and pictures in the collage mean or represent in terms of your leadership of teaching and learning at your school.

3.2.2 Do any of the words or pictures speak to some of the obstacles you experience in terms of your leadership in teaching and learning?

3.2.3 Are there any pictures that involves other stakeholders that helps you to lead towards your goal of teaching and learning?

APPENDIX E – COLLAGE OF MRS NEPTUNE OF VENUS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL



APPENDIX F –ARTEFACTS OF MRS NEPTUNE OF VENUS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL



APPENDIX H –ARTEFACTS OF MRS MARS OF ASTRO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL



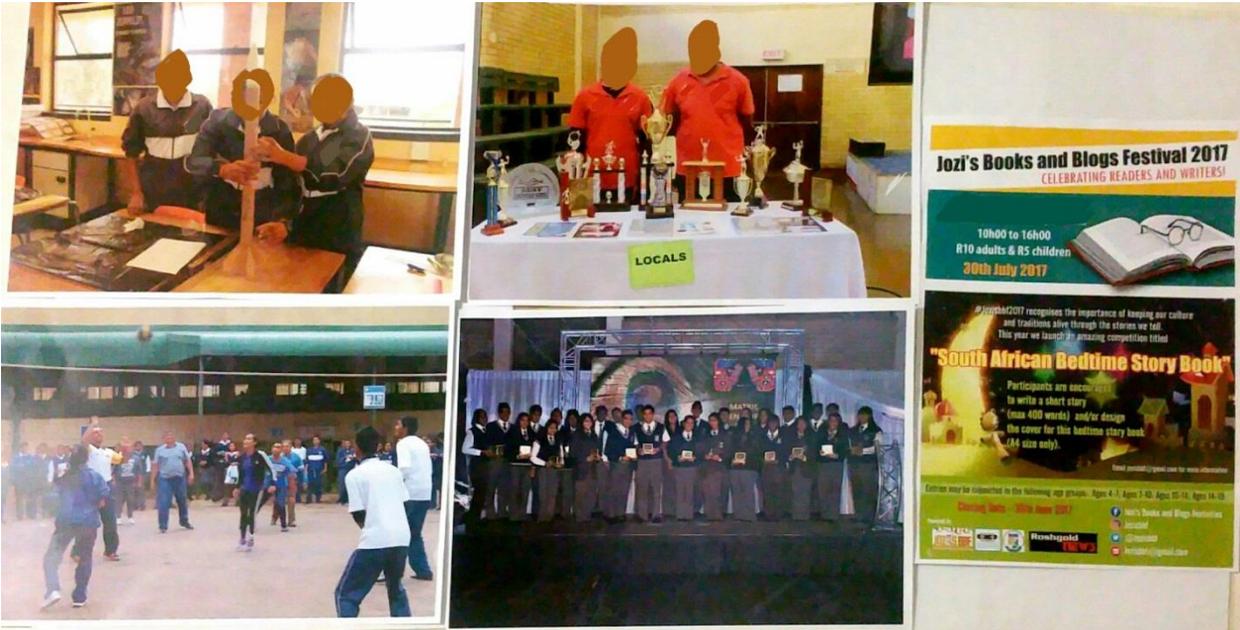
A wolf pack: the first 3 are the old or sick, they give the pace to the entire pack. If it was the other way round, they would be left behind, losing contact with the pack. In case of an ambush they would be sacrificed. Then come 5 strong ones, the front line. In the center are the rest of the pack members, then the 5 strongest following. Last is alone, the alpha. He controls everything from the rear. In that position he can see everything, decide the direction. He sees all of the pack. The pack moves according to the elders pace and help each other, watch each other.



APPENDIX I –COLLAGE OF MR JUPITER OF SATURN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL



APPENDIX J –ARTEFACTS OF MR JUPITER OF SATURN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL



APPENDIX K – TURNITIN REPORT

Turnitin Originality Report

Full draft-masters dissertation-Zerina Kathrada by Z KATHRADA
From Complete dissertation/thesis for examination (M&D Students 2018)

- Processed on 02-Aug-2018 18:03 SAST
- ID: 987075401
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<http://prabash78.wordpress.com/2012/03/14/interpretivism-and-postivism-ontological-and-epistemological-perspectives/>

3

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<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0192636515587353>

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6

< 1% match (publications)

[Mncube, V. "Chronicling educator practices and experiences in the context of democratic schooling and quality education in South Africa", International Journal of Educational Development, 201011](#)

7

APPENDIX L- LANGUAGE EDITOR'S REPORT

HMM TUITION (PTY) LTD

P.O.BOX 781

LENASIA

1820

18 SEPTEMBER 2018

LANGUAGE REPORT FOR MASTERS DISSERTATION FOR ZERINA KATHRADA (UNISA STUDENT - 32813147)

This serves to confirm that the above dissertation has been edited by myself.

The following have been considered in the editing process:

syntax, the use of appropriate diction, concord errors, spelling, correct use of homophones, correction of punctuation errors, omission of repetition, stylistic errors and overall appropriate use of English grammar. The references have also been edited according to the Harvard referencing system, as required.

The dissertation reads well overall and adheres to the requirements for a Masters dissertation in Education.

Yours faithfully

Hwabibi Meer Monier

MA (English Education) –WITS University

CELL NO: +2783 265 3354

EMAIL ADDRESS: monierhawa1@gmail.com

APPENDIX M: RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

16 November 2016

Ref : **2016/11/16/32813147/14/MC**

Student : Mrs Z Kathrada

Student Number : 32813147

Dear Mrs Kathrada,

Decision: Approved

Researcher: Mrs Z Kathrada
Tel: +2711 852 6858
Email: kathradazerina@gmail.com

Supervisor: Dr I Naicker
University of Kwa-Zulu Natal
Department of Educational Management
Tel: +2782 377 5253
Email: Naickeri27@ukzn.ac.za

Proposal: A phenomenological study of leadership practices of school principals in three high performing independent schools in Gauteng.

Qualification: M Ed in Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Final approval is granted for the duration of the research.

The application was reviewed in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics by the College of Education Research Ethics Review Committee on 16 November 2016.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher/s will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.*
- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to the College of Education Ethics Review Committee. An amended application could be requested if there are substantial changes from the existing proposal, especially if those changes affect any of the study-related risks for the research participants.*



3) *The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study.*

Note:

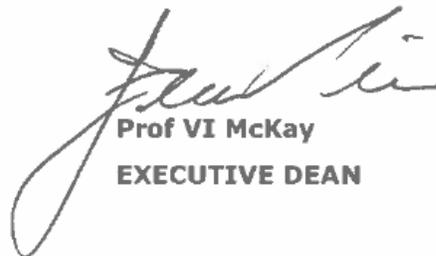
The reference number 2016/11/16/32813147/14/MC should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants, as well as with the College of Education RERC.

Kind regards,



Dr M Claassens

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Prof VI McKay
EXECUTIVE DEAN

