

**THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER IN
IMPROVING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER IN IMPROVING SCHOOL PERFORMANCE is my own effort. All the sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by a complete reference list.



Lodrick Phuza Mathobela

November 2023

Date

DEDICATION

The study is dedicated to my late mother and father, Esfeniah Mahubenyana Mokoena and George Maswekeni Mathobela, who worked hard to ensure that I pass through the primary and secondary school education. In 1973, you stepped up your authority and straightened me up when I bunked school. That master stroke set me up for the student that I became after that intervention. Though not having been through the doors of a classroom, you wanted your son to be educated like all the children in the village. Yours was a fight well fought. I love you papa le mma.

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ABSTRACT

The dawn of democracy in South Africa saw the introduction of far-reaching changes in the South African Education system. Education provision became more regulated, participative and democratized. The South African Constitution promised quality education to its citizens. In order to realise this mandate, vast resources in the form of infrastructure and teaching and learning support materials were invested in the education sector to correct the imbalances of the past. Despite policy development and the massive investment in education, schools continue to struggle to provide quality teaching and learning to students. This has been highlighted by the poor performance of South African learners in cross national and regional benchmark tests. The poor performance was placed at the failure of school leadership to manage the core business of the school. South African Schools Act has charged principals with accountability for the performance of learners in their schools. Principals are required to provide professional leadership and management of the school towards the achievement of its goals. Instructional leadership has been cited as a form of leadership lacking among principals. Principals who want to turn around the performance of their schools need to function as instructional leaders. This study was aimed at investigating the role of the principal as an instructional leader in improving school performance in the Lehukwe Circuit of Bohlabela District in Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga Province. Seven principals of both primary and secondary schools were purposefully sampled for the study. A qualitative approach was adopted using an interpretive perspective. Semi-structured interview was used as a data gathering tool. The collected data was analysed, coded and categorised using the open coding system. The study revealed that principals differ in their understanding of the application of instructional leadership. The awareness of the key role of managing teaching and learning seems to have received very little attention in the recruitment and appointment of principals. The difference in the understanding and application of instructional leadership is a reason for some schools performing poorly while others perform according to expectations.

Keywords: Instructional leadership; Principal's role; School Leadership; School Improvement

ACRONYMS

ACESLM	Advanced Certificate in Education specialising in School Leadership and Management
ANA	Annual National Assessment
ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
ASIDI	Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Delivery Initiatives
BEd Hons	Bachelor of Education Honours
CAPS	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements
COLTS	Culture of Learning and Teaching Campaign
CRDP	Comprehensive Reconstruction and Development Programme
DMT	District Management Team
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DoE	Department of Education
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
HoD	Head of Department
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
JPTD	Junior Primary Teachers' Diploma
LTSM	Learning Teaching Support Materials
MSTA	Maths Science Technology Academy
MTT	Ministerial Task Team
NDP	National Development Plan
NECT	National Education Collaboration Trust
NEEDU	National Education and Evaluation Development Unit
NEPA	National Education Policy Act
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPC	National Planning Committee
NPPPR	The National Policy Pertaining to Promotion and Progression Requirements
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSNP	National School Nutrition Programme
PED	Provincial Education Department
PGP	Personal Growth Plan

PIMRS	Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale
PIRLS	Progress in Reading and Literacy Study
PSSAP	Policy on Standards for South African Principals
PTD	Primary Teachers' Diploma
Quids-Up	Quality Improvement and Development Strategy
RCL	Representative Council of Learners
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADTU	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SAQMEC	Southern and East Africa Quality Monitoring and Evaluation Consortium
SASA	South African Schools Act
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic Time-bound
SMT	School Management Teams
SONA	State of the Nation Address
STD	Secondary Teachers' Diploma
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats
TIMSS	Trends in Mathematics and Science Studies.
TUT	Tshwane University of Technology
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNISA	University of South Africa
UP	University of Pretoria
USA	United States of America
WSE	Whole School Evaluation

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Governments throughout the world aspire to provide their citizens with quality education. In South Africa, this desire found expression in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996. The Constitution in section 29 states that, “Everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education. Everyone has the right to further education, which the state through reasonable measure must make progressively available and accessible” (Republic of South Africa, 1996). The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) extends this through its aim of the providing education of progressively high-quality education for all learners. To achieve this ideal, the state passed enabling legislation, made resources available, trained the work force, and developed the leadership.

The South African Schools Act (SASA), through the National Norms and Standards for School Funding enabled the Department of Education (DoE) to develop minimum and uniform standards of funding for schools. Resources have been allocated to schools, teacher provision has improved, and the teacher-pupil ratio improved at 1:40. It was through the Education Labour Relations Council Resolution no 4 of 1995 (ELRC) that stakeholders proposed a teacher-pupil ratio of 1:40. In a written reply to a Democratic Alliance parliamentary question on the teacher pupil ratio, the Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshega indicated that the average national teacher-pupil ratio is 1:30. The aftermath of apartheid left the Department of Education with the huge task of transforming the education system to cater for the educational needs of all citizens of the country. The Department of Education has stated that its purpose of transforming the education system was to bring about sustainable school improvement and profound change in the culture and practice of schools Department of Basic Education (DBE).

Many schools have been shown to be struggling to meet this expectation even though the Department has introduced many intervention programmes to improve the quality of classroom instruction and enhance learner performance (PIRLS, 2021). In 2001,

the Dinaledi project, which targeted Mathematics and Science learners, was introduced. The Quality Improvement Development Strategy (QIDS-UP) followed this in 2006. The QIDS-UP programme was aimed at underperforming school in disadvantaged communities with the purpose of improving the enrolment rate in Mathematics and Science and improving pass rates in these subjects by supporting schools with libraries, laboratories and teaching materials. The Culture of Learning and Teaching Campaign (COLTS) was launched in 2009 to rally all stakeholders in education towards restoring the culture of teaching and teaching in schools (Lethoko, Heystek & Maree, 2001). For leadership development, the Department introduced the Advanced Certificate in Education specialising in School Management and Leadership (ACESML) in 2006.

Leadership is important to bring about this transformation. Kruger, Prinsloo, Van Deventer and Van der Merwe (2003:8) stated that the principal is “a central role player in ensuring the success of the learning and teaching outcomes of a school”. The role of leadership in the transformation of schools was observed by Barth (1990) when he stated that the principal is the key to a good school as the quality of the educational programme depends on the school principal. Barth observed that the principal is the most important factor in determining school climate and is the reason for teachers growing or being stifled on the job (Barth, 1990:64).

To improve the quality of teaching and speed up the transformation of the education system, the Department of Education located teacher training in universities and increased the duration of teacher training to four years. In 2006, the Department of Education introduced an Advanced Certificate in Education specialising in School Leadership and Management (ACESLM) to capacitate principals to lead schools effectively. In 2015, the Department of Education through the PSSAP developed standards to provide clarity on the role to be played by principals and set out what is required of the principals (2015:5).

The standards require that principals, working with all stakeholders in education, effectively manage, support and promote the best instruction, the purpose of which is to enable learners to attain the highest level of achievement for their own good, the good of their community and the good of the country as a whole. With good enabling legislation, well-trained teachers, better developed leadership and adequate

infrastructure, the provision of quality education to enhance learner outcomes will be hugely improved. Therefore, this study investigates the role of the school principal as an instructional leader in improving school performance.

1.2 THE RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The 1994 new dispensation in South Africa brought an urgent need for the provision of quality education for all. Legislation demanded that school leadership improve the attainment of learner outcomes and transform the schools in accordance with the transformation agenda of the country. Principals are required to account for the performance of learners in their schools; however, many appear to be overwhelmed by the demands made on them. Investigating the role of principal as an instructional leader on the improvement of school performance the researcher wanted to examine existing leadership practices in schools. The study intended to identify areas that challenge principals in their instructional leadership role. Through this study, it was established whether the intervention strategies implemented by the Department of Education have brought about an improvement in how principals influence the core function of the school. The qualitative approach allowed for an intimate sharing of information between the researcher and the participants. The findings of the study have potential to encourage other researchers to investigate instructional leadership as a way of improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The post-apartheid dispensation in South Africa developed a legal framework and policies to transform education provision and ensure the provision of quality education for all. Norms and standards for equitable distribution of resources to address the imbalances of the past were introduced (SASA 84 of 1996). Consequently, schools were better resourced, teacher-pupil ratio was improved and the resource base of the schools was increased (ELRC no 4 of 1995). There was also a focus on teacher training, locating this in universities and increasing the duration of training to four years. This improved the supply of qualified teachers with the expectation of improving performance.

Despite these positive changes, the education system in general and schools in particular, continued to produce poor learning outcomes National Planning Committee (2011:269). In 2002, the Education Convention on Delivering Quality Education for All

declared that the public has a legitimate expectation of quality in education, and that achieving quality is an on-going task for which all have to share responsibility (Status report on Equal Education for All, 2002: 54-63). In a conference held in Dakar by The World Education Forum (2002:8), countries, including South Africa, committed to “improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognised and measurable outcomes are achieved by all”. Many schools have been shown to be struggling to meet this expectation even though the Department has introduced many intervention programmes to improve the quality of classroom instruction and enhance learner performance (PIRLS, 2021). In 2001, the Dinaledi project, which targeted Mathematics and Science learners, was introduced. The Quality Improvement Development Strategy (QIDS-UP) followed this in 2006. The QIDS-UP programme was aimed at underperforming school in disadvantaged communities with the purpose of improving the enrolment rate in Mathematics and Science and improving pass rates in these subjects by supporting schools with libraries, laboratories and teaching materials. The Culture of Learning and Teaching Campaign (COLTS) was launched in 2009 to rally all stakeholders in education towards restoring the culture of teaching and teaching in schools (Lethoko, Heystek & Maree, 2001). For leadership development, the Department introduced the Advanced Certificate in Education specialising in School Management and Leadership (ACESML) in 2006. These were responses after the recognition that the education system was failing to provide quality education. The National Senior Certificate statistical report indicated that from 2010 to 2017 a little over 30% of matric learners obtained a pass that enabled them to enrol at a university. In addition, South African learners perform far behind their counterparts in regional benchmark and cross-national assessments such as the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium on Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ), The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Progress in International Reading and Literacy (PIRLS).

All intervention programmes have yielded very little in terms of school improvement, leaving the society asking many questions. According to Christie, Butler, and Potterton (2007:37), “the issue of quality is the most pressing concern in South Africa’s education policy framework. The evidence is overwhelming that teaching and learning within the system is in crisis.” The legitimate claim to quality education appears to be

far from being realised and the nation has reason to show impatience. In their research conducted in Mpumalanga Province, Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (2004:1) concluded that the number of changes introduced in the education system in South Africa have rendered principals ineffective in their management of schools. They asserted that principals lacked basic management skills. In support of Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren's observation, Mathibe (2007:523) stated that principals were not trained to lead and manage schools. In 2016, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) developed the Policy on Standards for South African Principals (RSA, 2015). The policy was aimed at focusing the attention of principals on the role of instructional leaders of schools. This intervention was directed at improving school leadership and management. As Knapp, Copland, Plecki and Portin, (2005:11) observed, "creating an agenda for equity and excellence in student achievement is important in the current education landscape". Schools need leaders who can deliver on the promise of instructional expertise and high-quality learning for all children. The current argument in South Africa is that schools continue to underperform despite many intervention programmes initiated by the Department. Therefore, through this study, I intended to investigate the role of the principal as instructional leader in improving school performance.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question flowing from the problem statement is: *What is the role of the principal as an instructional leader in improving the school performance?*

The following sub questions are used to answer the main research question.

1. How do principals understand their role as instructional leaders in the school?
2. What are the instructional leadership practices implemented by principals in their schools?
3. What challenges do principals encounter in their practice of instructional leadership?
4. What is the role of the principal's instructional leadership in improving learner performance?

1.5 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to explore the role that principals, as instructional leaders, play in improving the performance of their schools.

Objectives relating to this aim are the following:

- To investigate the principals' understanding of their instructional leadership role.
- To establish how principals practise instructional leadership role in their schools.
- To determine if principals have challenges in practising instructional leadership and establish those challenges.
- To determine the influence of the principals' instructional leadership in improving the performance of schools.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

The review of literature is important for a number of reasons. Creswell gave the following reasons behind a review of related literature: It shares with the reader the results of other studies closely related to the particular study that is being undertaken; it relates the investigation to wider studies that have been undertaken on the research topic; it fills in the gaps and extends prior studies; it provides a framework within which the importance of the study is established; and it serves as a benchmark for comparing the result of the study with the findings of other studies (1998:99).

The problem under study is the role of the principal as an instructional leader in improving school performance. To investigate the topic fully, it was important to study relevant literature to understand instructional leadership, how it is practised and what changes it brings in improving school performance. Many authors posit different instructional leadership frameworks and how they can be put into practice to improve school performance. These frameworks assist in explaining this form of leadership and how principals, as instructional leaders, implement it to improve teaching and learning.

Different definitions of instructional leadership have emerged since the advent of the effective school movement of the 1980s. Hoy and Miskel (2008) observed that the focus on the role of the principal has shifted towards teaching and learning, which they called the technical core schools. The authors define the technical core as the process

of educational leaders focusing on teaching and learning and assert that instructional leadership is leadership that transforms teaching and learning and maximises student learning. It is important to mention the core business of the school as it provides the reason for its existence. Principals have to excel in performing the core function of the school. Southworth (2002:79) describes instructional leadership as, “school leadership that is focused on teaching and learning, professional learning of teachers, and student growth”. For successful teaching and learning, teachers have to be professionally developed to do their job effectively. Students can only grow when their minds are developed by teachers who have expertise, and they demonstrate new capacities. Expertise can only be gained through development and experience. From these descriptions, principals are required to bring positive changes to the instructional offerings of the school. Van de Grift and Houtveen (1999:373) define instructional leadership as “the principal’s ability to initiate and sustain educational improvements by creating an educative climate that enhances the effectiveness of teachers”. An educative school climate precludes disorder and poor discipline. Therefore, an instructional leader must be aware that effective teaching and learning cannot thrive in disorder and despair.

The instructional leader keeps the moral of educators high for the institution to succeed. Goldring, Porter, Murphy, Elliot, & Cravens (2009:1) and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2016:458) agree that instructional leadership comprises of those sets of practices that involve planning, evaluation, coordination and improvement of teaching and learning. Due to poor preparation, most principals fail in developing plans and implementing them. Principals, as instructional, leaders must have the capacity to develop the school curriculum plan that enables teachers to function effectively and students to learn optimally. The instructional leader develops systems that will enable the school to track that all aspects of the curriculum are implemented in a manner that will produce desired outcomes. Schools exist to provide effective teaching and learning for improved student performance. The instructional leader makes teaching and learning the central focus of all school’s activities.

Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008) put forward an instructional leadership model with five leadership dimensions: leading through promoting and participating in teacher learning and development, establishing goals and expectations, planning,

coordination and evaluating teaching and learning, strategic resourcing, and ensuring an orderly and supportive environment. They further posit that the more educational leaders focus on the key business of teaching and learning, the more impact they have on student academic success. In this framework, the principal is required to lead teacher learning and development which is important as effective principals are made by effective teachers and effective teachers are made by principals. Principals with a well-developed teaching staff are ensured that learner performance will always be good. Well-developed teachers have a reciprocal effect on the principal, leading to increased effectiveness.

Principals are expected to establish goals and expectations. According to Leithwood, Seashore-Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2008), an instructional leader provides direction by setting goals which people find personally compelling, challenging, but achievable. In other words, principals have to develop smart goals. By setting ambitious goals and targets, the principal sets the tone for high achievement, transforming the attitude of students and teachers, causing them to be ambitious and to shun mediocrity. Instructional leaders must develop people by providing intellectual stimulation, individual support and exemplars of best practice. To support this statement, Barth (1990:64) stated that, "The principal is the key to a good school". It is a fact that instructional leaders require resources to perform their function effectively. But equally, principals should have the ability to use resources strategically. Resources must enable principals to gain the maximum benefit from minimal investment. To accomplish this, principals must be shrewd in recruitment. An environment where there is order and support is indispensable for effective teaching and learning because no meaningful teaching and learning can take place in chaos. Both teachers and learners must feel accepted, looked after and empathised with. Therefore, the principal needs to create an environment that inspires teachers to teach and learners to learn. Barth (1990:64) further accords the responsibility of developing teachers to the principal when he stated, "the principal is the most important reason why teachers grow or are stifled on the job".

Hallinger and Murphy (1985:217) proposed an instructional leadership model that educational scholars have accepted as the most favoured model of instructional leadership. Hallinger and Murphy's instructional leadership model is made up of three dimensions: defining the school mission, managing the instructional program, and

promoting a positive school learning climate. The authors further delineated the specific tasks or practices that principals, functioning as instructional leaders, perform to improve performance in their schools. An in-depth study of the dimensions and their related practices is important in this regard.

- *Defining the school's mission:* The principal frames school goals and communicates them to the school stakeholders in formal and informal ways.
- *Managing the instructional programme:* The principal works with teachers in matters that are specifically related to curriculum and instruction. Instructional leaders supervise and evaluate instruction by ensuring that goals are translated into classroom practice. They coordinate curriculum by aligning curricular goals with content taught and the achievement test. Instructional leaders use data to diagnose student problems and weakness, and to inform changes that must be effected in teaching and learning.
- *Promoting a positive school learning climate:* Principals as instructional leaders must influence teachers and students' attitude by creating a reward structure that reinforces academic achievement and productive effort. Instructional leaders protect instructional time by developing policies that limit interruption. Instructional leaders promote professional teacher development by organising in-service training for teachers. Principals as instructional leaders, maintain a high visibility through interaction with both teachers and learners by doing a walk-about around the school. Instructional leaders provide incentives for teachers by developing a work structure reward for those who put an extra effort in their work. This can also be achieved by the development of a school recognition policy known by all the stakeholders of the school. Principals must create a school learning climate in which students put a premium on academic achievement by frequently rewarding and recognising student academic achievement and progress. By publicly acknowledging the good effort of a student, giving them a token of appreciation reinforces the desire to achieve at the highest level. This enhances a positive climate for learning (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

In the instructional leadership framework, '*Leading, Learning and Leadership Support*', Knapp *et al.* (2005) indicated that instructional leaders pursue the following dimensions. They create a focus on learning by persistently and publicly focusing their

attention and that of others on teaching and learning. Instructional leaders build a professional learning community by nurturing work cultures that value and support the development of teachers. They engage the external environment that matters for learning by building strong relationships with the external environment that can strengthen the school. By acting strategically and sharing leadership, the instructional leader derives maximum benefit for the school by mobilising different resources and people for student learning. In creating coherence, instructional leaders create synergy between learners, teachers and system learning for common goals. These practices can be implemented, are practical and relevant in situations that principals are called upon to improve and transform teaching and learning.

The review of literature has provided a brief inexhaustible outline of the dimensions and practices that instructional leaders could use to change, improve, and influence instructions for enhanced learner performance. It is evident that the responsibility of transforming a school into an effective school where learners achieve academically lies with the principal. An in-depth literature review (see Chapter 2) provides information to offer a foundation for this research which seeks to address the research question. *What is the role of the principal's instructional leadership in improving school performance?*

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is the specific procedures or techniques that guide the research project. The specific parts of methodology are briefly outlined below and described in detail in Chapter 3.

1.7.1 Research Paradigm

According to Basit (2010:14), a research paradigm is “a perspective that helps in the organising views, thoughts, and practices into a whole that inform the research design”. The Oxford South African Pocket Dictionary (2006) describes a paradigm as a model underlying the theories and practice of a scientific subject. Researchers make a choice between paradigms, depending on the type of research being conducted. For example, a positivist paradigm argues for the use of a rigid structural framework to discover reality and the interpretivist paradigm, argues for a less rigid structural framework. In this study, an interpretivist worldview is considered appropriate as participants portrayed more than a single reality.

1.7.2 Research Design

The Oxford South African Pocket Dictionary (2006:236) defines a design as a plan or drawing produced to show the working of something before it is produced. A research design will have to show how the research is going to be undertaken before it is actually executed. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006:117), a research design is a plan for selecting the subjects, the research site, and data collection procedures to answer the research question. Creswell (2014:31) considers the research design to be an approach or plan that spans the steps from broad assumptions to the detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. From the above definitions, it follows that a research design details the research process from inception to completion. For this study, a case study is chosen. A case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system that is based on extensive data collection. Creswell (2007:37) explains that researchers in qualitative studies collect data in the field at the site where the participants experience the problem under study. Researchers are close to the participants that provide the information, talking to participants directly, and seeing their behaviours and facial expressions. The fact that the problem under study is a socially constructed human problem makes the choice of this design relevant.

1.7.3 Population and Sampling

MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:129) define a population as “a group of elements or cases, whether individual objects or events that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of research”. In this study, the population is all schools in the Lehukwe Circuit of Bohlabela District, Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga, South Africa. A sample was taken from the schools in the circuit.

Cohen, Lawrence and Morrison (2000:92) define a sample as “a subgroup or subset of the population from which data is gathered in such a way that the knowledge gained will be representative of the total population”. It is important to sample because it is not possible to do research in all schools. A purposive sampling was chosen as, according to Maree (2007:79), qualitative researchers choose those individuals that “yield the most information about the topic under investigation”. McMillan and Schumacher further assert that the researcher uses his judgement of the population to decide about subjects that can provide the best information for the purpose of

research. The researcher deliberately avoids those individuals that do not have the information that he is looking for. Cohen *et al.* (2000:103) indicate that researchers handpick cases for the sample that they judge to be information-rich and typical for the study. Therefore, a purposive sampling method is adopted in this study.

The sample in this study is seven principals, (four primary school and three secondary school principals) of schools in the Lehukwe Circuit who completed the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) School Leadership and Management training and have been in their schools for not less than five years.

1.7.4 Data Collection and Instrumentation

I used an in-depth interview to collect data from the participants. Structured questions were asked to ensure that all the participants were asked the same questions and in the same sequence. An audio tape was used to record the interview. Notes were taken during the interview. Care was taken that note-taking did not disturb the interview or distract the participants.

Interview was chosen as a data collection strategy because it provided an opportunity to the researcher to be close to the participants. This was important to allow for the volunteering of information by the participants. An interview also allowed for the modification and reformulation of the questions and the process as the study evolved. An interview schedule was developed for the semi-structured interviewing to ensure that participants were asked the same questions with the option of prompting for broader and deeper knowledge.

1.6.5 Data Analysis

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:367), qualitative data research is in the “form of field notes, audio taped data and visual images”. The data must be transcribed and turned into a format that permits analysis; for example, audiotaped data must be transcribed into typed data for visual review. Summaries are completed and written in full. Interview notes are summarised briefly to allow for expansion that must follow immediately after the interview (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:370). In fact, what has been heard and observed is now put in written form.

An inductive process of analysing, summarising and interpreting data is followed. The data formed segments that were used to develop codes or categories. The codes are

names that provide meaning to data, example school culture. After codes are developed, the codes are organised within categories. The categories that formed a relationship were grouped together to form a pattern. The patterns formed were not taken at face value. A deductive approach was followed, moving back and forth between the codes and categories to confirm the pattern. This was done by looking at negative evidence and alternative explanation. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:378) state that “pattern seeking starts with the researcher’s informed hunches about the relationship in the data”. The purpose of categorising data is to seek patterns. The patterns that emerge are rigorously tested to check their consistency. If the patterns stand this rigorous test and provide answers to the research question, they become explanations. This is true if alternative patterns do not emerge and offer a plausible explanation to the central question (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:380). Qualitative research has a characteristic of narrative presentation of evidence gathered. The presentation is in the form of quoting applicable verbatim excerpts from interviews and the questionnaire with open-ended questions, to illustrate findings.

1.8 METHODOLOGICAL NORMS

Trustworthiness, according to Guba (1981), is the degree to which a study complies with the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility: is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba 1985). The following techniques are employed to ensure the credibility of the data that is gathered or provided by participants:

Adoption of research methods successfully used in other qualitative studies. These ensure that the data collected address the research question as accurately as possible. In this enquiry, methods used are well established in qualitative research, namely, in-depth interview and document review.

Triangulation: is the use of multi methods in data gathering. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), using of different methods compensate for their individual limitations and exploit their respective benefits. In this enquiry, the researcher uses document review and in-depth face-to-face interviews. The use of these data gathering methods is meant to accentuate their advantages and minimise their weaknesses.

Member checks: allow participants to read the transcript of the dialogues in which they have participated to check if their words match what they actually intended to say or what they actually meant with what they said.

Iterative questioning: involves the researcher asking questions previously asked to determine if the participant will give the same answers. If the answers differ, suspicion of untruthfulness is established. The researcher deliberately uses probes to return to the question previously asked to check if the participant will give the same response.

Withdrawal from the study gives participants the chance to withdraw from the study without penalties. This guarantees that the participants taking part do so voluntarily and that information is willingly provided.

1.9 RESEARCH ETHICS

Research ethics are beliefs and behaviours that researchers consider to be acceptable from a moral perspective. Researchers have to weigh the damage that research methods might cause to the physical or emotional wellbeing of the participants.

Full disclosure: This involves the disclosure of the purpose of research to the participant, which enables the participant to decide if she/he wants to participate and assists in establishing the credibility of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:118)

Voluntary Participation: The researcher should be honest and open with the participants by disclosing fully the purpose of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:1). In this study, there was no need for secrecy or deception as all related to the study is disclosed.

Voluntary Participation: Participants were informed that participation in the research is voluntary, and no one was forced or coerced into participating. However, participants were informed of the benefits of participating (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:118).

Informed Consent: Participants were provided with an explanation for the research, an opportunity to terminate their participation in the research at any time without penalty, and a full disclosure of the risks associated with the study. (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:118).

No harm or risk to participants: Participants are cushioned from discomfort, harm or injury due to their participation in the study. However, participants were told of the

minimal risk inherent in participating in the research. (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:119).

Privacy: During the study, researchers have access to participants' sensitive and personal information. Cohen *et al.* (2010:61) assert that the greater the sensitivity of participants' information, the safer guards are needed to protect the privacy of research participants. Privacy of participants is protected by keeping their characteristic behaviours, and other information and responses restricted to the researcher. Anonymity means participant responses cannot be linked to the participants by the researcher or any other person (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:121).

Confidentiality: According to Cohen *et al.* (2000:61) confidentiality means that researchers should not disclose participant information to anyone. Though the researcher knows the participants, the participants' information was not known publicly. Confidentiality means no one has access to the data or the names of the participants except the researcher. Confidentiality was ensured by ensuring that data cannot be linked to the participants by name.

1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The following concepts are central to this study on instructional leadership:

ACE SLM: Advanced Certificate in Education, School Leadership and Management. This is a programme designed to upscale and improve the qualification of school principals and those aspiring to be in leadership.

School Principal: A principal is the most senior teacher appointed in a school with the responsibility to provide professional leadership and management functions. The functions and roles of the principal are outlined in the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 which lists six primary functions that principals perform. The functions include general administration, personnel management, class teaching, extra-curricular activities, interaction with stakeholders and communication. Many functions have been added to the list by the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS).

The University of KwaZulu-Natal, in partnership with PricewaterCoopers (PwC) and Performance Solution Africa (PSA) developed and conducted a six-month fast track management programme to address "the management challenges faced by South

African principals” (PMDP, 2013:12). This programme, called the Principals Management Development Programme, targeted school principals and their SMTs to improve school performance by the development of critical management competencies on a fast-track basis through training, coaching and mentoring. (PMDP, 2013:10) The programme focused on the following key performance areas of the principal: Direction and Planning; Curriculum management; People Management; school Governance; Resource Acquisition and management; and financial management.

Instructional Leadership: It is the principal’s leadership responsibility that focuses on effective teaching and learning. An instructional leader is focused on instructional offerings in the school.

School performance: The ability of the school to provide teaching and learning that ensures that all learners succeed. It is the attainment of the academic objectives and assessment standards as determined by the Department. Performance is described as the ability of the school to achieve student outcomes, as stated in the national curriculum statement. According to the 2010 State of the Nation Address (SONA), secondary schools must pass 70% of their matric learners, while 50% of grade 9 learners must achieve an adequate level by 2014. These have since become the benchmark performance that schools in the country must pursue.

COLTS. It is an acronym that stands for Culture of Learning and Teaching Service. This is a campaign that was conceived, agreed upon, and implemented as a way of reducing the negative impact of social upheavals on education, mostly in black schools. According to Lethoko, Heystek and Maree (2001), the purpose behind the COLTS programme was to rally all stakeholders towards the resuscitation of teaching and learning in schools. The COLTS’ programme was implemented in 2009 and schools are still required to establish COLTS committees to foster a climate conducive to teaching and learning.

IQMS. An acronym stands for Integrated Quality Management System. It is a system implemented in 2003 to improve the quality of the education system through developmental appraisal.

QidsUP: Quality Improvement and Development Strategy is a programme started in 2006 aimed at improving the teaching and learning of science in previously

disadvantaged schools by providing libraries, laboratories and teaching materials. Many schools, especially schools in townships and rural areas, were performing poorly in Science and Mathematics and this programme aimed at supporting them.

PSSAP: Policy on the Standards for South African Principals was introduced in 2016, to provide a standard against which the appointment of school principals must be made. Going into the future, principals must demonstrate the capacities entrenched in the policy to be appointed as manager of schools. The policy followed up on the ACE programme that is used to train aspiring principals in South African schools.

1.11 CHAPTER OUTLINE

Chapter 1: Introduction, Background and Orientation to the study - a brief background and orientation to the study was given. This chapter orientated readers on the rationale for the choice of the topic of the study, the research questions, aims and objectives. In addition, it gave a brief overview of the literature and research methodology. The chapter clarified the concepts used in the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review - the relevant literature is reviewed with the purpose of delimiting the study and getting a better understanding of the concept of school leadership. The review of literature provides the researcher with an opportunity to appreciate the extent of work already undertaken by other researcher and authors in the research topic. Through the literature review, the role of the principal as an instructional leader in improving school performance is scrutinised. The literature review helps in indicating the different roles that the principal plays to fulfil the instructional leadership role.

Chapter 3: Research methodology and Design - details the methodology and research design that was followed in the gathering of data. It encompasses the sampling technique, data collection strategy, and data analysis and interpretations, and data presentation.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Presentation of Research findings - presents the analysis and interpretation of data collected through data collection.

Chapter 5: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations - a discussion of the summary of findings unfolding from the study is done. This includes the presentation of conclusions and recommendations for policy, practice, and further research.

1.12 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the introduction, background and orientation to the study. The reader is taken through developments in the provision of education in the country, the expectations created, the efforts made by the state to improve access to quality education, and the challenges that still stand on the way to quality education. The role of the principal as the central figure in the school to provide quality education to learners was highlighted. This chapter also briefly outlined the methodology that is followed in the gathering of data, indicating how research data was gathered, analysed, interpreted, and reported.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews literature related to school instructional leadership. The focus is on how principals lead instruction for academic success for their learners. The principal's role in leading instruction has come under intense scrutiny due to poor learner performance. The school reform and accountability movement has added pressure for the performance of learners to be at the centre of the principal's core responsibility. The purpose was to understand school leadership and how principals function as instructional leaders, focusing primarily on the core duties of the principal. The challenges that principals face as instructional leaders also came under scrutiny to provide reasons why some principals succeed while others fail. The literature on instructional leadership spans many years of research by researchers and scholars from across the world.

2.2 LEADERSHIP AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.

Many leadership theories have emerged since leadership became the subject of study. The theories have tried to define what leadership is and how it is applied in different situations. The diversity of the definition of leadership prompted Stogdill (1974:259) to remark that, "there are as many definitions of leadership as there are people who tried to define it". None of the definitions have been dismissed outright as being irrelevant as researchers' perspective on the subject of interest takes precedent and that leadership is contingent upon different contexts.

2.2.1 The Path-Goal Theory of Leadership

The path-goal theory is attributed to research done by Evans (1970) and further worked by House (1971). The model is premised on the notion that the leader is someone who can influence the satisfaction, motivation and performance of the followers. The leader accomplishes this by providing subordinates with rewards, making the achievement of the rewards contingent on the accomplishment of specific goals, and helping subordinates understand what they have to do to obtain the rewards (Arnold & Feldman, 1986:130). To have influence on the three aspects of the

subordinates mentioned above, the theory identifies leadership styles that can be used, namely:

- *Directive leadership* where the leader specifies the expectations gives directions regard what to do and how to do it and set up roles and procedures in an unambiguous way.
- *Supportive leadership* where a leadership pays attention to the wellbeing of the subordinates and treat them as equals.
- *Participative leadership* where a leader consults the subordinates, canvasses their ideas and values their inputs in decision making. Achievement-oriented leadership emphasises excellence in performance, sets challenging goals, seeks improvement in performance, expects higher performance from subordinates, and is confident that subordinates can achieve to high standards (House, 1971).

The path goal theory identifies characteristics of the subordinate that will make them regard the leader's actions as acceptable and satisfying. Ivancevich and Matteson (1999:420) called these situational or contingency variables that are linked to the subordinate. Subordinates who perceive they are capable in terms of the tasks at hand will not need directive leadership style, while those with a low perception of their ability may require a directive style of leadership. Subordinates who feel to be in control of their work situation are satisfied with a participative leadership style. The same holds for subordinates who are highly motivated and driven by a need; they too will thrive in a participative and supportive leadership style. As already stated, leadership is more about influencing subordinates towards the achievement of a common objective. Increasing their motivation, meeting their needs, giving them incentives and supporting them towards the achievement of the incentives contribute greatly to their performance. The effectiveness of a leader is judged on the ability in bringing the best performance out of the subordinates.

2.2.2 Transformational Theory of Leadership

Many scholars and researchers in the field of educational leadership have, in recent decades, paid attention to the transformational theory of leadership. This has been spurred by the need for organisations to transform amid the changes that swept through in the 20th century. Burns (1978) is credited with the development of the

transformational leadership theory. According to Burns, transformational leadership theory is viewed as a relationship structure between the leaders and the follower. In this relationship structure, the leader and the follower have a mutual influence on each other. According to Burns (1978:20) transformational leaders are able to spur followers to perform at a level higher than would normally be possible. In other words, transformational leaders encourage followers to achieve at a higher level, surpassing their own expectations. This has been reiterated by Bass (1985:20) when observing that transformational leaders stimulate followers to perform beyond their level of expectation. In his contribution to transformational leadership, Bass (1985) identified idealised influence, inspirational motivation, institutional stimulation, and individual consideration as four elements that leaders have to use to bring about organisational success, with Tichy and Devan (1986: viii) positing that transformational leadership is about change, innovation and entrepreneurship.

With schools in South Africa undergoing constant change, the need for and suitability of transformational leadership cannot be overemphasised. Hallinger and Leithwood (1994) criticised transformational leadership for the lack of explicit focus on curriculum and instruction. Arguably, transformational leadership on its own will not be able to bring about academic improvement in a school but can provide the impetus for change towards better performance. While transformational leadership has its own critics, it still holds sizeable relevance for organisations that want to be transformed, to develop new visions and to be learning organisations.

These leadership theories, and many others not mentioned here, provide institutional leaders with reasons for adopting a certain leadership approach. This is important because organisational contexts are dynamic and varied, thus requiring versatility from those in leadership positions. This has been observed by Hallinger (2003:345-346) as he stated, "The path of leadership that is suitable for a certain stage of the journey may well become a limiting factor or even a counter-productive force as the school develops". For schools experiencing periods of instability and transition, transformational leadership is most suitable to deal with the period of transition. Bass (1985) posits that transformational leadership is important in motivating followers to raise their awareness about the importance of institutional goals and transcending their own self-interest in the interest of the goals of the organisation. Hallinger (1992) describes a transformational leader as one focused on problem finding, problem

solving and collaboration with stakeholders with the goal of improving organisational performance.

In their study of the principal and school performance, Marks and Printy (2003) concluded that strong transformational leadership is essential for supporting the commitment of teachers. In the aftermath of the legacy of apartheid, many schools have experienced disorder and a breakdown of the culture of teaching and learning. Teachers became militant and deleterious, relegating the education of the learners to the back seat. Strong transformational leadership is required to refocus the commitment and attention of teachers to the institutional goals. Principals have a role to build a culture and a sense of common purpose among the teachers to be able to turn around their schools.

The changes in education created a lot of expectations on teachers that resulted in low morale. Principals are faced with excessive demands to transform schools into centres of excellence through a clear focus on the instructional core. Therefore, principals as instructional leaders must use knowledge of the different leadership theories to bring about the expected changes. The path-goal theory of leadership comes in handy when principals change the commitment, satisfaction, and performance of subordinate through giving incentives. An instructional leader is required to create a vision and become a change agent. Transformational leadership theory will be helpful to an instructional leader who wants to transform a school into one focused on the instructional core.

2.2.3 Instructional Leadership

Attempts to define instructional leadership have focused on the function, learners, the teachers the school and practices rather than on qualities of the principal. This is because instructional leadership does not have a wide scope of application than the general leadership. It cannot be applied in commerce, industry and military, for instance. The correct context of instructional leadership is within a school where, according to Stein and Nelson (2003), the teacher, the learner and the content meet.

Murphy, Elliot, Goldring, and Porter (2006) define an instructional leader as a learner-centred leader. This means the principal, functioning as an instructional leader, is mostly preoccupied with what is taking place in the classroom where the learners

interact with the teacher and the content. In his description of an instructional leader, Cuban (1988) posits that it should be someone who is hip-deep in instruction. This means an instructional leader should be immersed in curriculum, instruction and assessment. Being hip deep would mean someone who is totally focused on and very aware of his responsibilities pertaining to the core function of teaching and learning in the classroom.

In their description of instructional leadership, Knapp *et al.* (2009) focused on the practices of planning, evaluations and coordination. According to the authors, a principal, working as an instructional leader, pays attention to these activities. However, without proper planning, coordination and evaluation, the focus on the learner will be lost. Robinson *et al.* (2008) listed five practices through which instructional leaders affect student performance: establishing goals and expectations; resourcing strategically, planning, coordinating, and evaluating instruction and the curriculum; promoting and participating in teacher learning and development and ensuring an orderly and supportive learning environment.

According to Hallinger and Murphy (1985), instructional leadership is primarily about defining the school mission, managing the school's instructional programme and promoting a favourable school learning climate. Each of these performance areas has been reduced to actionable practices. For the performance area of defining the school mission, two practices, namely defining the school goals and communicating the school goals, are proposed. The practices require principals to have goals and targets. These have to be articulated to all who will be required to try for their accomplishment.

In Hallinger and Murphy (1987), attention is focused on developing the school mission and goals, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating curriculum, instruction and assessment, promoting a climate for learning, and creating a supportive work environment, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress. Weber (1996) proposed a model of instructional leadership composed of four performance areas: defining the school's mission, managing the curriculum and instruction, evaluating instruction, observing and improving instruction, and assessing the instructional programme, promoting a positive learning climate.

Hallinger's model (2009) improved on the models of Hallinger and Murphy (1985), Murphy (1990), and Weber (1996). In Hallinger's model of instructional leadership, three dimensions with ten instructional practices were proposed: defining the school mission, managing the instructional programme, and promoting a positive school learning climate. In defining the school mission, the principal functioning as an instructional leader is expected to frame the school goals, as well as communicating the schools' goals. In other words, the principal has to have a vision of where to take the school and to ensure that there is a buy-in from the other stakeholders. In managing the instructional programme, Hallinger proposes that principals supervise and evaluate instruction, coordinate the curriculum, monitor student progress, protect teaching time, and maintain high visibility. Promoting a positive school climate entails the practices of protecting teaching time, promoting professional development, maintaining visibility, providing incentives to teachers and offering incentives for learning.

Leithwood *et al.* (2004) identified three sets of activities that instructional leaders have to enact to improve student performance. Instructional leaders must set direction, develop people and redesign the organisation to that which can support the performance of administrators, teachers and students. Shannon and Bylsma (2007) highlighted nine areas of performances that principals have to focus on to turn their schools into high performing schools: clear and shared focus, high standards of expectations for all students, effective school leadership, high levels of collaboration and communication, alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment, frequent monitoring of instruction, focused professional development, supportive learning environment and a high level of family and community involvement. After a study and synthesis of different instructional leadership models, Alig-Mielcarek (2003) developed an instructional leadership construct with three key performance areas: defining and communicating shared goals, monitoring and providing feedback on teaching and learning, and promoting school-wide professional development.

The different models and definitions of instructional leadership agree on the key performance areas of instructional leadership. Similarly, there is also agreement on the practices in which instructional leaders engage. Murphy and Hallinger's instructional leadership model (1985), Weber's Instructional leadership model (1996), and Murphy's (1990) instructional leadership model agree on defining the school

mission, managing the curriculum, and promoting a positive school climate. Therefore, principals functioning as instructional leaders, set direction by developing the vision and mission of the school. Instructional leaders craft school-wide goals and exert effort in ensuring that these are widely known by all the stakeholders. In managing teaching and learning, instructional leaders demonstrate greater involvement in curriculum matters. They bring about an alignment in the assessment, goals and curriculum of the school, thus creating a climate of where everybody feels they can achieve to their potential. They show profound knowledge and understanding of subjects taught in the school, conduct class visits and give support to teachers and learners.

Stein and Nelson (2003) put forward a construct of leadership called the leadership content knowledge. According to the authors, an instructional leader must know the subjects and how they are learned by students. This is a further acknowledgement of the assertion by Southworth (2002) that instructional leadership requires a person with high level of knowledge and understanding of curriculum, pedagogy, and the way students learn. Barth (1990) also stated the importance of the principal's deep knowledge of the curriculum when he said, "the quality of the educational program depends on the principal".

The PMDP program administered by UKZN in the Bohlabela District also focused on amongst other core areas, curriculum management that indicates that an instructional leader has to have pedagogical content knowledge. This is knowledge about how the subject is taught rather than knowledge about the content of the subject. Instructional leaders recruit teachers based on the needs of the school, protecting teaching time jealously, and allocating subject according to capacity, delegating responsibility and accountability in a fair manner. Principals, centred on learning, provide incentives to teachers and learners, motivating them to achieve beyond their expectation. They identify promising talent, mentor and develop novice teachers, and create opportunities for dialogue on innovative methods of instruction. Instructional leaders recognise and work with the community, benefiting from the social capital provided by the community. They communicate frequently with the parents and the community to create a bridge between the home and the school. According to Murphy et al., instructional leaders strategically identify and procure materials and resources for their schools and cleverly deploy the available limited resources in order to meet the curricular objectives of their schools (2006:20)

From the literature reviewed, an inference is made that the principals who function as instructional leaders engage in a wide scope of practices associated with leading teaching and learning. Hill (2002:2) stated that principals are required to have a strong theoretical foundation of current knowledge about teaching and learning, practical knowledge of the beliefs and understanding of the staff in the school and applied knowledge of how to bring about change in those beliefs and understandings.

2.3 THE SCHOOL AS AN ORGANISATION

The school brings together learners, teachers, parents, the community and other interested parties. These parties or stakeholders stand in a relationship to one another to form an organisation. According to Smit *et al.* (1997:219), the organisational structure is “the basic framework of formal relationships among responsibilities, tasks, and people in an organization”. Theron (2002:78) posits that an organisation is a formal structure in which people stand in certain relationship to one another with actions that are directed towards the achievement of certain common objectives. A formal structure is a structure that is formed according to certain procedures and laws.

Arnold and Feldman (1986:5) pointed out that an organisation has three common characteristics: being composed of individuals and groups, orientation towards the achievement of certain goals and employment of specialisation and coordination in order to achieve its goals. The relationship structure and common goals appear to be the pillars of an organisation. Relationship in an organisation defines responsibilities and demarcated area of operation. The structure of relationship prevents role diffusion and avoids duplication. As Arnold and Feldman (1985:5) stated, “Without such a coordinated structure we would not have an organisation working towards common goals. Instead, we would have various individuals each performing their individual role in an uncoordinated and potentially chaotic manner.” Role diffusion and duplication easily precipitate disorder and lack of accountability.

Smit *et al.* (1997:217) posit that the organisational structure does not only provide a framework for people to relate to, but it also provides a framework on how organisational goals are achieved. Organisations are established to achieve certain goals. The main goal for the existence of the organisation is called the existential goal. Without the achievement of this goal, the existence of the organisation is threatened. Botha (2011:25-27) states that a school is an “organisation in which people are

grouped together in an orderly, hierarchical authoritative structure in pursuit of the common goal of teaching and learning". In South Africa, the school is established in accordance with the South African schools act 84 of 1996 and all public schools are structured to incorporate stakeholders such as the School Governing Body (SGB), the School Management Team (SMT), and the Representative Council of Learners (RCL) in secondary schools. The SGB is responsible for governance of the school, the SMT for the management of the school, and the RCL is the only legitimate and recognised representative body for learner affairs. This arrangement removes the burden for managing all the affairs of the school from the principal and these responsibilities are shared among the structures in the school. This is important because it frees the principal to focus on teaching and learning.

Marks and Printy (2003:393) observed that principals who share leadership responsibilities with others would be less subject to burnout than principal heroes who try the challenge and complexity of leadership alone. The nature of the organisation makes the school complex deriving from its multiple constituencies. It is the disregard of the nature of the school as an organisation that often precipitates disorder and chaos that have become the characteristics of underperforming schools. Thus, the complexity associated with a school as an organisation, demands leadership and management which must be provided by the principal.

2.3.1 School Governance

The organisation of a school into a functional structure is dictated by a legislative framework. Section 15 of the South African Schools Act confers legal status to a public school, making it a juristic person. Section 16(2) requires the school to have an SGB made up of parents, teachers support staff and learners (in secondary schools). This is very important in complying with the democratisation agenda of the country. People must be involved in decision-making, especially if the decision affects them. The fact that the education of learners is a matter of societal interest mitigates for the inclusiveness of the SGB. Section 16(1) confers the function of governing the school to the SGB which stands in a position of trust towards the school. According to section 16(3), the SGB is to confine themselves to the governance of the school and leave the management and administrative function to the principal and the staff. Without proper separation of the roles, SGBs can become a hindrance in the effective management

and leadership of the school. Section 20 of the Act lists the functions that the SGB must perform, which among others are:

- To promote the best interest of the school and to ensure its development through the provision of quality education for all learners in the school,
- To support the principal, educators and other staff of the school in performance of their professional duties,
- To purchase textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school, and
- To recommend the appointment of educators to the Head of the Department (HoD). subject to the Employment of Educators Act No. 76 of 1998 (EEA) (RSA, 1996)

The delimitation of the SGB's role helps to avoid conflict of roles, which has the potential of destabilising the school.

The South African Schools Act in section 16A provides the school principal with the legal authority to represent the Head of Department in the SGB. In addition, the professional management of the school must be undertaken by a school principal under the authority of the Head of the Department.

The legal functions allocated to the role of the school principal have far-reaching implications for his/her leadership of the school. They also have a bearing on the requirement for accountability, as will be seen in subsequent sections. According to SASA, the principal is responsible for the professional management of the school and must perform duties such as: implementation of all the educational programmes and curriculum activities; management of all educators and the support staff; management of the use of all learning support materials and other equipment; management of learner attendance; provide the Head of the Department with data when requested to do so; inform the SGB of policy and the law; submit an annual report to the Head of the Department on the academic performance of the school in relation to the minimum outcomes and standards and procedures for assessment, and ensure an effective use of the available resources (RSA, 1996).

2.3.2 School Administration Management and Leadership

Every organisation needs both management and leadership to achieve its objectives, respond to the changes in its internal and external environment and be sustainable.

While leadership and management differ, organisations cannot survive without either. In the school's organisational structure, there is no provision for the existence of a manager and a leader as separate entities. Therefore, the bureaucratic nature of the school as an organisation dictates that both management and leadership responsibilities be vested in one entity, the principal. Van der Westhuizen (2002:89-90) views the bureaucratic structure of a school as "an attempt to formalize roles and patterns of relationships that will accommodate organisational goals and individual needs".

It has to be pointed out that the boundary between management and leadership is blurred and non-static. However, it is important to make a distinction between the two functions. Clarke (2007:1-5) pointed to the fact that different responses are required from one asked to manage the school and one required to lead the school. According to Kotter (2001), management is about planning, organising, coordinating, budgeting and mentoring people with high potential in the organisation. In Bennis and Nanus's (1985) assertion that managers do things right, it can be inferred that managers follow strict procedures and systems to achieve organisational goals. Management is about developing working ways and keeping them running while leadership is about providing the direction and vision. Both leadership and management come with responsibilities that the incumbent must exercise to accomplish the organisation's objectives.

Mestry (2017:253) states that principals are encountering new demands, more complex decisions and additional responsibilities than ever before. These require innovation and versatility, and the ability to handle different tasks simultaneously. The principal's day is filled with diverse administrative and management responsibilities such as procuring resources, managing learner discipline, resolving problems with parents, and dealing with unexpected crises from learners and teachers. The National Policy on Whole School Evaluation (RSA, 2011:12) states that, "the executive authority for the professional management of the school is vested in the school principal supported by the school governing body (SGB)". As a manager of the school, the principal is required to also focus on the administrative functions. As Clarke (2007) pointed out, the principal's management role is to create systems for operational efficiency, organising staff and making sure that everyone knows what is expected of

them, and delegating management duties to ensure that policies and management responsibilities are carried out.

In their review of empirical research spanning the years 1980-1990, Hallinger and Heck (1996:5) found that “strong administrative leadership was among those factors within the school that makes a difference in student learning”. The author indicated that the manager creates an expectation of predictability and good order. The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 allocated the professional management of the school to the principal. According to the EEA, the principal is responsible for:

- General administrative management of personnel by providing professional leadership to the school.
- Engaging in teaching duties according to the post level.
- Recruitment and advocacy of extra and co-curricular activities.
- To serve the SGB and render all necessary assistance to the SGB in their performance of their functions in terms of SASA.
- Communication with the members of the staff, the SBG and the stakeholders in maintaining the efficient and smooth running of the school (RSA, 1998).

The administrative and management roles of the principal are enabled by the bureaucratic structure of the school as an organisation. Arnold and Feldman (1996:241) describe the organisational structure as “a formal arrangement of operations and activities within an organisation to describe the lines of responsibilities and authority within the organisation”. Theron, cited in Botha (2011:25) indicated that the school as organisation is a formal structure in which people stand in authority to one another within the organisation, where people’s actions are directed towards certain common objectives.

Ivancevich and Matteson (1999) define leadership as the exercise of influencing subordinates to achieve organisationally relevant goals. Van Deventer and Kruger (2003:63-70) see a leader as someone with charisma, flair and ability to inspire others. The leader finds a way forward and provides a clear direction. The leader rallies followers and provides direction, purpose and the reason to pursue a new cause. Leadership is about forecasting tomorrow and having the courage and conviction to venture into the unknown. The leader inspires followers to believe in the ideals of the dreams and provides the stimulus for the pursuance of the dream. The principal

spends time on building teamwork and encouraging collaboration. According to Wells (1996), leadership is the process of influencing others to achieve organisationally relevant goals. Therefore, the leader uses influence, authority, persuasion and power in other to achieve the organisational goals. In the case of the school principal, the authority is derived from SASA section 16(3) and 16A which states that the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal under the authority of the Head of the Department (RSA, 1996).

It is clear that a good principal has to be strong both as a manager and as a leader of the school. All the responsibilities that the principal execute in a typical day require both management and leadership skills, fused together or separately.

2.3.3 Demands for Accountability

The fulfilment of the core function of the school has recently come under intense scrutiny. This has been prompted by the school reform movement widely spoken about and attributed to education reform in the western world. In South Africa, the dawn of democracy in 1994 prompted an interest and active participation of different stakeholders in education. These came with wide variety of ideals, objectives and demands, further complicating the school as an organisation Principals have to account to these stakeholders for the performance of their schools. This has been emphasised by the section 58B letter that the Department serves to school principals if the performance is below 70% (RSA 1996). Through this letter, principals of underperforming schools are held accountable for the poor performance and are required to provide reasons for the underperformance. Elmore (2004: 90) had this to say, "Performance based accountability is a system that holds teachers, learners, schools, district responsible for academic performance".

Annually, the multiplicity of constituencies associated with the school want to know how far the school has managed to achieve its key objective. Section 16A of the South African Schools Act requires the principal to give an annual account of the use of the resources to accomplish school goals. Stakeholders have studied the performance of South African students with keen interest in a number of national and cross-national benchmark tests. The Annual National Assessment (ANA), the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium on Monitoring Education Quality (SACMEQ), The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMMS), and the Progress in

International Reading and Literacy (PIRLS) study have all placed special emphasis on the achievement of educational outcomes by the school and given further impetus to account for the achievement of educational objectives.

Peariso (2011:21) reported on the movement to hold states, districts and schools in the United States of America (USA) accountable for the academic achievement of students from the 1990s, which has led to the fostering of academic standards and research based instructional practices. An all-important legislation in the USA, The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, stressed the importance of the educational standards. In South Africa, the minimum standards to be achieved are set in the NPPPR, NDP, and the Department's Action Plan to 2014: Towards the realisation of schooling 2025.

The observation made by Taylor (1911) that workmen accomplish more if given clear cut standards, illustrated the importance of standards as a driving force for performance. The South African Schools Act 84 of 1994 only mentions that schools should maintain standards. In South Africa, Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025 became the vision of the Department of Education (DBE, 2014). In this document, minimum standards to be achieved by educational institution and schools in particular were published which was considered an improvement to the paucity of standards in the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996. This further enhances the need for organisational accountability.

2.3.4 Academic Standards

The 2016 PIRLS report found that about 78% of South African Grade 4 learners were unable to reach the lowest international benchmark in reading. The report indicated that by the end of the fourth grade, South African learners lagged behind their peers by six years. The 2021 PIRLS report paints a dismal picture of 83% of Grade 4 learners who cannot read for meaning. Attaining the international benchmark for these learners became a standard for the South African education system to achieve. The Department has a national agenda in education, as articulated by the NPC (2011). Every year, Circuits and Districts set academic standards of performance that every school should aim to achieve. These standards and targets are aimed at advancing the objective of the Department, as articulated in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements, NPPPR, and the NPC (2011:35) The targets include but are not limited to, ensuring that 80% of schools and learners achieve 50% and above in

literacy, Mathematics and Science. The National Policy Pertaining to Promotion and Progression Requirements (NPPPR) (DBE, 2011b) outlines the academic standards to be achieved by each phase of the South African schooling system. The following are the standards and pass requirements to be complied with by each phase of the schooling system in accordance with the policy:

In Grades 1- 3 a learner must offer two official languages, one at Home Language with the other at First Additional Language, Mathematics, and Life Skills.

For promotion in Grades 1-3 a learner must obtain

- *An adequate achievement (level 4 or 50%-59%) in Home Language*
- *A moderate achievement (level 3 or 40%-49%) in the First Additional Language and*
- *A moderate achievement (level 3 or 40%-49%) in Mathematics.*

In Grades 4-6, the learner must offer two official languages, one at Home language and the other at First Additional Language, Mathematics, natural Science and Technology, Life skills and Social Sciences.

For promotion in Grades 4-6 a learner must obtain

- a. *An adequate achievement (level 4 or 50%-59%) in Home Language*
- b. *A moderate achievement (level 3 or 40%-49%) in the First Additional Language*
- c. *A moderate achievement (level 3 or 40%-49%) in Mathematics*
- d. *A moderate achievement (level 3 or 40%-49%) in any two of the remaining subjects.*

In Grades 7-9, a learner must offer nine subjects made up of two official languages, one at Home Language and the other at First Additional Language, Mathematics, Natural Sciences, Life orientation, Social Sciences, Creative Arts, Economics and management Sciences, and Technology.

For promotion in Grades 7-9 a learner must obtain

- a. *An adequate achievement (level 4 or 50%-59%) in Home Language*
- b. *A moderate achievement (level 3 or 40%-49%) in the First Additional Language*
- c. *A moderate achievement (level 3 or 40%-49%) in Mathematics and three other subjects, and*

d. An elementary achievement (level 2 or 30%-39%) in two other subjects.

In Grades 10-12, a learner must offer seven subjects two of which must be official languages, one at Home Language with the second at first additional language, Mathematics or Mathematical Literacy, Life Orientation, and three elective subjects.

For promotion in Grades 10-12 a learner must obtain

a. An adequate achievement (level 3 or 40%-49%) in three subjects, one of which must be an official language at Home Language.

b. An elementary achievement (level 2 or 30%-39%) in three other subjects (DBE, 2011b).

These are the minimum standards of achievement for schools. The satisfaction of the requirements for promotion and the achievement of the pass requirements is a priority of the school principal. When the majority of learners attain these standards, the school is considered to be a well performing and effective school. Failure to satisfy these requirements has a negative effect on teacher morale and the school may lose trust among its stakeholders. During goal setting, the principal, who is an instructional leader of the school, focuses on the achievement of these targets as they are mandated by the Protocol on Assessment (DBE, 2005), The National Policy Pertaining to Promotion and Progression Requirements, and the South African Schools Act.

Additionally, the NDP further lists nine performance objectives that must be attained by all schools by 2030. Principals will be aware of these performance targets and will infuse them in their annual target setting. The NDP states that by 2030 80% of schools and learners must achieve 50% and above in Literacy, Mathematics and Science.

2.3.5 Principals' Instructional Practices

This section focuses on instructional practices expected of a principal who functions as an instructional leader.

2.3.5.1 Setting direction

This function and its practices received wide acceptance from scholars such as Hallinger and Murphy 1987, Murphy *et al.*, 2006 and Weber 1996, as a required practice for a principal who focus on improving learner performance through instructional leadership. The researcher purposefully makes an inference that this will

be the first task that all principals, seasoned or newly appointed, will train their focus on. For without direction, without the mission and clear vision, without objectives and targets, the school will fail dismally to achieve anything that will significantly increase student learning. In defining the mission and goals, Drucker (1988) states that the manager of the organisation makes a formal declaration of what the organisation is trying to achieve in the medium to long term.

At school, it is the function of the principal as an instructional leader, to develop the mission and goals of the school, and communicate these to the stakeholders. Hill and Jones (1998:49) explain that goals, especially challenging goals, provide the manager with an incentive to look for ways to improve the operations of the organisation. Locke and Latham (1990) postulated that goal setting is an effective way to increase the motivation of members of the staff because goals increase effort, commitment and persistence to achieve. Goals incite innovation and the development of new strategies to attain them.

Taylor (1911) pointed out the importance of goal setting in this way: The average workman will work with the greatest satisfaction to himself and to his employer, when he is given a definitive task which he has to accomplish in a given time, and which constitutes a proper day's work for good workman. This furnishes the workman with clear-cut standard by which he can throughout the day, measure his own progress and the accomplishment of which affords him the greatest satisfaction (Taylor,1911:120)

The observation by Taylor underlines the importance of setting specific, measurable, attainable and time-bound goals to motivate the follower and increase satisfaction. Principals that have just been appointed have the advantage that the organisation will be expectant of them to bring along a different way of doing things. That can be used effectively to promote one's vision. But for principals who have been there for a while, the impetus to create a new direction would have been provided by the changing environment of the school and demands from external stakeholders. Direction setting, vision building, and target setting provide the instructional leader with a benchmark against which to judge their own performance and impact in the school.

2.3.5.2 Curriculum management

The concept of curriculum has much definition depending on the scope and context of its use. The Glossary of Education Reform (2015) defines the knowledge and skills that students are expected to learn, which includes the learning standards, the units of lessons teachers teach, the assignments and projects given to learners, the books, materials, videos, presentations and readers used in the course and the assessment and methods used to evaluate student learning.

Principals, who function as instructional leaders, are required to plan, organise and to coordinate these features of the curriculum so that student learning can take place. In planning and organising, principals must align the curriculum to the standards that the national education system wants to attain. Alignment means that the curriculum, instruction and assessment are brought together to dovetail with the standards that have been set by the Department and are to be achieved by schools (NPC, 2011). This is to prevent curriculum delivery at school being contrary to the standard of the district and the Provincial Education Department. English and Steffy (2001:88) enthused that “an aligned system increases equity and excellence when learning standards and targets are known, sufficient opportunities are provided to learn the targets and standards, instruction is focused on the targets, assessment match the content and learning standards, and assessment formats are familiar”.

To this end, the Department (DBE, 2012) issued an updated National Curriculum Statement Gr R-12 whose aim is to provide a clearer specification of what is to be taught and learnt on a term-to-term basis. The provision of the Annual Teaching Plan (ATP), the NPPPR-Grr-12 and the National Protocol on Assessment was to strengthen this alignment and ensure effective curriculum delivery. A further view of instructional leadership in curriculum management is expressed by Stein and Nelson (2003:424) that principals who profess to be instructional leaders “must have some degree of understanding of the various subject areas under their purview. As demand increases for improved teaching and learning, administrators must be able to know strong instruction when they see it, to encourage it when they do not and to set the conditions for continuous academic learning among the professional staff”. This argument unavoidably places the principal at the centre of managing instruction in the school.

2.3.5.3 Time management

The ability to manage time effectively is one of the attributes of good management. Almost all aspects of school require proper planning, implementation, evaluation, supervision, review and control. These require the ability to manage time. Christie *et al.* (2011) discovered that schools that perform well use time effectively and they create additional time. This is further confirmed by the assertion made by Murphy *et al.* (2006:13) when they indicated that instructional time is the “cauldron in which student achievement materializes”. Each subject has topics that have to be adequately taught and assessed within the stipulated time. This is articulated by the annual teaching plan (ATP) for each subject. Effective teaching and learning must take place within this notional time. Instructional leaders must ensure that the available time is used effectively.

Drucker (1988) asserts that the supply of time is totally inelastic, that time is totally irreplaceable, and everything requires time. Every activity in the school takes place within a particular time frame. In accordance with NEPA 27 of 1996, the school day has been allocated time and subjects in the school have been allocated specific notional time in which specific content has to be taught. The notional time is non-negotiable. Therefore, a principal who functions as an instructional leader has the responsibility of ensuring that time is utilised effectively to accomplish the goals of each curriculum policy and assessment statement. The effective management of time influences many school chores that the principal engages in. Glickman (2002:1) intimated that school leaders are bombarded with many student demands, parents’ concerns, teacher concerns and district and nation demand for paperwork that leave them despairing on improving classroom teaching. DiPaola and Hoy (2013) have observed that principals spend 15%-20% of their time on instructional leadership while the balance of the time is spent on activities that do not have a bearing on the learner and effective delivery of the curriculum. Therefore, time management is a very important activity for a principal who functions as an instructional leader.

Instructional practices required of a principal include curriculum planning, assessment and alignment, lesson observation; teacher development requires proper planning and time management. The clinical lesson observation proposed by Glickman (2002) is a typical example of instructional practice that requires time. The model has five steps

that must follow each other sequentially: Pre-conferencing with the teacher to outline the reasons for the observation; observation of the teacher in class with the principal observing the teacher teaching; post conferencing; analysing and interpreting the observation and determining the post conference approach; post conferencing with the teacher to discuss the analysis results and developing a plan for instructional improvement; and critiquing of the four steps to determine if procedures and the format followed were satisfactory or needed adjustment (Glickman, 2002). This model uses similar steps to those followed in the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) when doing lesson observation. Failure of the principal to balance these chores, means that leading instructional improvement becomes constrained. Principals who function as instructional leaders must have a sound knowledge of how to manage time as the successful accomplishment of the varied tasks is time dependent. Schools are given the same amount of time. The difference between schools which are improving and those that are not, is in the management of and the use of time and resources. These features of the curriculum require both the management and leadership capacities of the principal.

2.3.5.4 Promoting a school climate of high expectations.

The changing focus of institutional leadership can be perceived in the climate that permeates throughout the institutions. Both internal and external stakeholders of the organisation will be quick to point to the new way of doing things. Hallinger (2003:345-346) stated that to turn around a school needs instructional leadership that can provide an urgent stimulus to convert a climate of low expectation into one of high expectation and success. Freiberg and Stein (1999) describe school climate as the heart and soul of the school and the essence of the school that draws teachers and students to love the school and to want to be part of it.

Changes in the school climate are initiated by the principal who has a particular vision and targets to attain. Principals are invariably driven by the accountability placed on them for school improvement and student success. The principal uses different leadership approaches to influence the creation of a new school climate. Hoy and Hoy (2003:2) assert that an instructional leader creates a climate that is oriented to learning and communicates a clear vision that is focused on achieving excellence. Barth (1990:64) posits that the principal is a potent factor in determining school climate and

that school culture is the most outstanding characteristic that identifies a good school from the ordinary. Hoy, Tarter and Bliss (1990) stated that healthy schools that promote high academic standards, appropriate leadership and collegiality, provide a climate more conducive to student success and achievement. The principal provides a new momentum that energises the school. This energy must be palpable within the confines of the school. People outside of the school must be able to feel the difference. The manner in which teachers and learners conduct themselves in the school and the urgency with which tasks are executed, is the product of the influence of an instructional leader who inspires a climate of high expectation (Murphy *et al.*, 2006).

2.3.5.5 Professional development and incentives

Hallinger and Murphy (1985:223) stated that principals can influence student and teacher attitude through the creation of a reward structure that reinforces academic achievement and productive effort, creating clear and explicit standards that encapsulate the school's expectation from both teachers and students, through the effective use of school time and selected staff development opportunities.

Barth (1990) has stipulated that the principal is the reason for teachers growing or being stifled on the job. Provision of development opportunities to subordinates enable them to know what is expected of them in the performance of their tasks. Development, among other things, provides clarity in terms of expectations and the task structure. The Path-Goal Theory of leadership postulated that leaders must provide incentives and show the subordinates the way towards the achievement of those rewards (Arnold & Feldman, 1986). This is further confirmed by Maslow's theory of human motivation when stating that humans have a need for self-esteem and self-actualisation.

2.3.5.6 Resource provision

Education as an enterprise requires inputs to produce the desired outputs. These are in the form of staff, infrastructure, materials and finances, collectively called resources. The availability of resources or lack thereof has a telling effect on learner attainment. In South Africa, this has been brought sharply into focus by the disparities between poorly resourced rural schools, schools in the townships and the more resourced urban schools and private schools. This has been highlighted in the paper by Reddy *et al.*, (2012:8) who, through a longitudinal study, found that more white learners enrolled in Grade 8 in 2011 went on to write matric four years later than their black

counterparts. The performance of learners in well-resourced school, especially former 'whites only' schools, far outclass those of learners in poorly resourced 'blacks only' schools. This has been confirmed by the NPC (2011:26) which stated, "Despite many positive changes since 1994, the legacy of low-quality education in historically disadvantaged parts of the school system still persists". Nxumalo (1995) pointed out that the school funding model of the former apartheid dispensation, which deliberately underfunded black education while providing sufficient resources for the white education, resulted in black learners underperforming, while their white counterpart excelled. The Department is responsible for providing the basic resources that are only adequate to host and enable the education of learners to take place on an equitable basis. Staffing, learning support material and financial resources are allocated to schools in accordance with the post provisioning norms, the Norms and standards for School Funding (SASA 84 of 1996), the Accelerated Schools Delivery Initiative (DBSA 2011), and the regulations relating to the minimum uniform Norms and Standards for Public Schools Infrastructure (2013).

The importance of resources for educational success has been succinctly captured in the high court case of *Section 27 v Limpopo Department of Education*. In the judgement against the Limpopo Department of Education, Judge Kollapen (2012:13-14) stated, "Accordingly, I conclude this matter that the provision of learner support material in the form of textbooks, as may be prescribed, is an essential component of the right to basic education and its provision is inextricably linked to the fulfilment of this right".

Despite the Departmental budget allocation, some schools still find it difficult to perform according to the minimum standard. Only a few schools are able to perform despite being located in rural areas and with very minimal resources (Christie *et al.*, 2007). More often, these are not enough to enhance student performance. It is against this background that principals, functioning as learning-centred leaders, are required to source, organise, coordinate and utilise additional resources to enhance teaching and learning in their schools. Murphy *et al.* (2006) stated that learning-centred leaders are adept at garnering and employing resources in the service of meeting school goals. This means that the resource acquisition should focus on the improvement of teaching and learning.

Teachers are the most important human resource needed for turning around performance. It is the primary function of the principal to recruit teachers for the school. Murphy *et al.* (2006) indicated that in the recruitment of teachers, learning-centred leaders recruit teachers who are suitable to advantage the learners. The learning-centred leaders show skill and innovation in attracting funds and materials from the larger community. In other words, instructional leaders see the community as a resource and tap into this resource to the advantage of their schools. Schools, focused on learner performance, use different study guides, models, video tapes, audiotapes, computer applications and a host of other media to mediate learning which has been sourced by the principal.

2.3.5.7 Community and parental involvement

Involving stakeholders is the cornerstone of the democratic principles of the constitution of the country. Shannon and Bylsma (2007:120) wrote that the education of students is a shared responsibility of teachers, school staff, families and the community, as well as students themselves. The African maxim, “It takes a community to raise a child” holds true in education. The National Education and Evaluation Development Unit (NEEDU, 2015), through the report on Schools that Work 11, pointed out that schools do not exist in isolation. They reside in the community and must create relationships with them. Shannon and Bylsma (2017:119) further stated that, “family involvement is more than a school program. It is a way of thinking and doing things that recognise the central role that families play in their children’s education and the power of working together”. The PIRLS report (2016) also found that learners whose parents show interest in reading, perform better than those whose parents do not show interest at all. Schools bring together diverse groups and individuals, including youth development organisations, health and human service agencies, parents and other community leaders, to expand opportunities for learners and to create support that enable youth and children to learn and succeed.

As can be inferred from the statements above, schools can leverage unlimited resources and support from each of the stakeholders to create better chances for learners to succeed. The Schools That Work Report 11 by NEEDU (2015) indicates that schools create opportunities to meet stakeholders on their own turf, and this has many advantages that, according to Henderson and Mapp (2002:24), include higher

grade performance averages, enrolment in more challenging classes, better attendance, improved behaviour and better social skills. Therefore, parental involvement in the education of the learner has a positive influence on how learners view education and promote their performance.

2.3.5.8 Constraints to instructional leadership

Berlin, Kavanagh and Jansen warned that principals who want to make improvement in performance must avoid the trap of daily duties taking away their attention from their focus on curriculum. Principals are faced with what Edmond (1979:32) calls “the disparate elements of schooling that be brought together to help students learn”. These disparate elements are the varied administrative and management chores that must also be pursued to ensure the smooth functioning of the school. This clearly demonstrates the enormity of the task of the principal in balancing the administrative role and being the leader of curriculum. DiPaola and Hoy (2013) have observed that principals spend 15%-20% of their time on instructional leadership while the balance of the time is spent on activities that do not have a bearing on the learner and effective delivery of the curriculum. If the principal fails to balance these chores, their ability to lead instructional improvement is constrained. Without a deliberate allocation of ample time on curricular matters, time become a constraint to the effectiveness of the principal.

Lambert (2002) contends that the days of the lone instructional leader are over. Principals can no longer serve as the only instructional leaders for the entire school without the substantial participation of other educators. In order to avoid burnout, effective delegation of responsibilities relieves the principal of the burden of carrying the school alone. However, Mathibe (2007) suggests that South African principals are not adequately trained and lack the skills for school management and leadership. This was also discovered by the Ministerial Task Team (2016:136) established by the Minister of Basic Education where they observed that principals are not selected on the basis of competency, suitability, management and leadership skill, and experiential and professional abilities. Principals are promoted on the basis of the influence they wield in the union or through the purchase of posts as reported by the Ministerial Committee on Jobs for Cash (2016). Lack of adequate training for the leadership of schools coupled with inexperience can become barriers to effective instructional

leadership. A poorly skilled principal cannot be expected to flourish in leading instruction for improved learner and school achievement.

Some of the barriers to instructional leadership emanate from out-of-school factors. The service protests and associated burning of schools, theft and vandalism pose a great threat to the successful implementation of turn-around strategies for schools. These are precipitated by the socio-economic conditions over which the principal has very little control. Burnt-out classrooms and the administration block rob the school of the meagre resources that are so vital to improve teaching and learning. The stealing of school equipment meant to facilitate teaching and learning sets the school backwards. Van Niekerk (2011:75) commented that the reconstruction process and changes taking place in the country, coupled with the difficult socio-economic conditions that have affected schools in many areas, pose a real challenge to principals who want to function as instructional leaders.

Schools constantly experience changes in their learner enrolment which affect their post provisioning. Van Niekerk (2011:75) observed that “for the South African principal, good leadership is a daunting task given the constant demand of policy, the introduction and continuous revision of the curriculum, the persistent redeployment of teachers, the lack of facilities and the accountability related to school management approach”. Van der Westhuizen, Masoga, and Van Vuuren (2004:1) observed that, “the wide-ranging changes in the education system have rendered many serving principals ineffective in the management of schools. Many of these principals lack the basic training prior to their entry into the headship”. The influence of teacher unions in decision making has left the principals powerless in taking major decisions in their schools.

The Ministerial Task Team (2016) on Jobs for Cash has pointed to the undue power that the unions wield in the management of schools. The MTT discovered that control in two thirds of Provincial Education department has been captured by the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU). This is also evident in the redeployment of teachers where the union would encourage teachers to resist moving to new schools to which they are redeployed. Principals would be left with teachers who are in excess and do not meet the curricular needs of the school. This leads to conflict in the school between the affected teachers and the school management team.

Lack of parental and community involvement in the education of learners is a major impediment to the efforts of the school to improve performance. Absenteeism of parents due to work commitments robs the principal of a major partner in education. Often learners with absent parents tend to be poorly disciplined and create distractions in schools. These are learners who do not have regular school attendance, thus compromising the effective use of time-on-task. With parents as role models being absent, these learners look up to the wrong people in the community as their role models. Poor discipline has a negative effect on school climate and morale. Shannon and Bylsma (2007:123) made an assertion that the participation of adults in schools and communities in school programmes enable them to serve as role models and mentors for the children. This benefits the school as, according to Dipoala and Tschannen-Moran, the school builds bridges with the community and buffers the teachers from external distraction. With the active engagement of parents and the community in school planned activities, very few learners would look outside for role models. Discipline will as a consequence improve. The Programme on International Assessment (OECD, 2015:3) found that there is a relationship between the performances of students with school climate. The study found that a lot of learning time is lost in schools and classrooms with disciplinary problems as teacher try to create an orderly environment before instruction can begin. In addition, shortage of resources such as classrooms, teachers, textbooks, and funds are major impediment in the functionality of schools.

Schools are affected and disrupted by service delivery protest. The Parliamentary Monitoring Group's minutes of 24 May 2016 indicated that Vuwane in the Vhembe district of Limpopo experienced destructive protests against the incorporation of the Vuwane into a new municipality. According to the minutes of the Parliamentary Committee, 30 schools in Vuwani were either vandalised or burnt affecting 52 000 primary and secondary learners. School furniture and textbooks were set alight. Learners and teachers were threatened during the protest and schooling could not take place (DBE, 2015)

Chothia (2020) of South Africa News.com, reported similar acts of vandalism and burning of schools in Gauteng province of South Africa during 2020. During the period, 67 schools were either vandalised or burnt down. The act of vandalism of schools robbed the school of the limited resources that instructional leaders struggle to

procure. Not only are resources destroyed, the school climate and ambient environment that host good teaching and learning, is significantly disturbed.

2.4 THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK.

The performance of management and leadership functioning by the principal occurs in a regulated legal framework, ensuring that the core duties are executed in a structured way.

2.4.1 South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996.

The Constitution is the supreme law of the land and all policies developed at the school level should follow the Constitution. In the enactment of the leadership and management role, principals need to be aware of the prescripts of the Constitution. The South African Constitution in section 29, guarantees everyone the right to basic education, including adult basic education, and to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible (RSA:1996).

In their efforts to increase student output, principals should always be vigilant of not contravening these constitutional rights. The selection of learners according to performance, though guaranteeing high academic achievement, may exclude some learners from the educational opportunity to which they are entitled. This will violate the principle of inclusivity, as espoused by the Constitution. Some schools would, in their desperation with learner discipline, apply corporal punishment in violation of the constitution of the country. This may result in serious litigation against the school, the principal and the Department.

2.4.2 The South African Schools Act, Act 84 of 1996.

The South African Schools Act is an important legislation used in the organisation of basic education in South Africa. It governs all aspects of education provisioning in the country. Principals obtain their mandate of operation from the Act. The Act also provides limits to what schools can do. Section 10 of SASA prohibits the use of corporal punishment as a corrective measure for poor discipline in schools. Christie *et al* (2007:91) pointed to the continued use of corporal punishment by the schools that were identified as schools that work in the report. Principals continue to use corporal punishment or allow other teachers to use it in their schools in violation of this act.

2.4.3 The Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 Of 1998.

The role of the principal in leading and managing the school is in accordance with the Employment of Educators Act. The act defines the role and duties of the principal and other educators. This ensures that there is clarity of roles and prevents role diffusion and chaos in the operation of the school. The personnel administration measures contained in the EEA list eight core functions that the principal has to perform to fulfil his or her role of leadership and management.

2.4.4 The Policy on the Standard for South African Principalship of 2015 (Gazette No 39827)

This policy outlines the standards that govern the position of principals in South Africa. The policy is made up of four elements: understanding the core purpose of principalship, subscribing to the educational ethics and social values, processing the skills and knowledge area of principalship and having the necessary personal and professional qualities. The elements together explain the role of the principal in a school. The Policy on the South African Standard for Principalship prescribes eight key areas of performance for the principal together with suggested actions that are not exhaustive. Principals are also given five main kinds of leadership that they have to use while leading teaching and learning in the school: strategic leadership, executive leadership, instructional leadership, cultural leadership and organisational leadership.

2.4.5 The National Policy Pertaining to the Promotion and Progression Grade R-12 of 2011

The NPPPR, as it is commonly referred to, gives guidance on how to process the promotion and progression of learners in the basic education phases of schooling. Knowledge of these promotion and progression requirements ensures that principals do not find their school promoting learners that deserve to pass and retaining learners that should be passed. In addition to this policy, principals as instructional leaders should be acquainted with the different circulars that give directives and guidance in matters of summative evaluation of learners. Principals are encouraged to familiarise themselves with this policy as it gives guidance on how to process the promotion of learners in the school. Spillane and Seashore-Louis (2002) contend that for school leadership to be able to perform essential school improvement functions such as monitoring instructions and teacher development, school leaders should understand

the knowledge that is necessary for teachers to teach. Leaders should know the pedagogy, the content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, curricular knowledge and the knowledge of what learners should learn. According to Stein and Nelson (2003), a principal should at least have the pedagogical content knowledge. Knowledge of the subject pedagogic is the knowledge about the content to be covered, best instructional approaches or methods to deliver the content, and how the subject is assessed and evaluated. Knowledge of the minimum and the pass requirement will also form a part of the pedagogical content knowledge. This will enable the principal to pitch the academic goals high enough to allow all learners to be able to achieve the minimum standards.

2.4.6 The National Policy on Whole School Evaluation, July 2001

The Whole School Evaluation (WSE) policy is very useful for the school principal in that it sets out the areas that have to be improved in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The aim of the policy is to improve the overall quality of education in South Africa. It is aimed at facilitating improvement of school performance through approaches characterised by partnership, collaboration and guidance (DoE, 2001:1). WSE is regarded the cornerstone of the quality assurance system in the school. Whole school evaluation implies the need for schools to continue looking for ways to improve (DoE, 2001:3). Principals cannot start with improvement efforts without first subjecting the school to evaluation. The Whole School Evaluation policy provides nine critical areas of the school that principals will target for improvement. These are the areas that make the school to function as an effective organization. Together with the school's own SWOT analysis, WSE provide the school with data that makes it possible to develop the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Getting the identified areas to work effectively will lead to the improvement of the school's aspects which have an impact on learner achievement.

2.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, two leadership theories namely, the path-goal theory of leadership, the transformational theory of leadership, were outlined with the purpose of providing a source of reference for any instructional leader who wants to transform a school and motivate the staff to focus on learner performance. The chapter also made an in-depth

review of Instructional leadership, the school as an organisation, the role of governance and administration, the key performance areas of the principal, the factors that impede the principals in their instructional practice and the legal framework under which a school operates.

The next chapter provides the research design and research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the procedures for generating data to answer the research question. The research design, a roadmap for the process of generating data is explained. Qualitative research generates its data from human subjects and their context. The step-by-step process of data generation, data processing and eventual reporting forms part of this chapter. Measures to protect and safeguard the integrity of the subject and their institutions are explained.

3.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the research methods and research design adopted in an attempt to answer the research question is presented. A detailed explanation of the research design, research methods, sampling techniques, the selection of participants, data collection procedures, data processing and the ethical consideration is provided. The main research question that the study intended answering is: *What is the role of the principal as an instructional leader in improving the performance of the school?*

3.2.1 Research Paradigm

As indicated in Chapter 1, according to Basit (2010:14), a research paradigm is “a model or perspective that helps in the organising views, thoughts, and practices into a whole that inform the research design”. In this study, an interpretivist paradigm was adopted. The interpretivist paradigm is premise on the relativist ontology which assumes that reality is constructed through meanings and understandings developed through social interactions and experiences. It also has a subjective epistemology which assumes that one cannot separate oneself from what one knows. This means that one is part of reality as reality is part of one. The interpretivist paradigm is deemed most appropriate for its advantages, one being that it relies heavily on naturalistic methods. The naturalistic methods like interviews ensure that there is adequate dialog between the researchers and participants. Carson *et al.* (2001) point to the fact that interpretivists use a more flexible and personal research structure which is more receptive in capturing meanings of human interaction to make sense of what is perceived as reality. In the interpretivist paradigm, knowledge is socially constructed

and perceived which means that it is the social context that constructs what reality is. The other feature of interpretivism, as pointed by Carson et al. (2001), is that the researcher and the participant are interdependent and mutually interactive. This means the researcher gets very close to the participants to be able to get the meaning that the participants attach to form reality. The researcher and the participants influence each other during the research which means that researcher cannot afford to remain detached from the participants as in a positivist paradigm. Flexibility is important because of the unpredictability of human emotions and motives. The context might also dictate that the researcher be flexible. Hudson and Ozanne (1988) further indicate the fact that reality is multiple and complex, making it difficult to develop a fixed design. The authors further argue that an interpretivist has to understand the motives, the meanings, the reasons, and other subjective experiences of the participants, which are time and context bound. Therefore, reality in an interpretivist perspective is context and time bound.

3.2.2 Research Design

Research design refers to the plan or structure followed to arrive at the answers to the questions posed in the research question. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:20) define a research design as a plan that describes the conditions and procedures for collecting and analysing data. This covers areas such as when, where, and from whom the data will be gathered. In other words, the research design addresses the context of the study. The design answers questions on how information will be gathered from the participants. A research design is the road map that guides the researcher on the routes to take to arrive at the satisfaction of the research question. As a map, it helped me not to deviate on the way or to be distracted by issues that were never meant to be given any attention. It thus ensured that I remained focused.

For this study, a case study research design was chosen. Cohen *et al.* (2000:181) describe a case study as a study of a specific instance, which represent a bounded system with unique examples of real people in real situations. Investigating the role of the principal's instructional leadership task in improving school performance presented a case that needed to be studied in-depth to understand the complexity and dynamism of interactions between humans, events and the context in which the principal, the school, learner performance and other factors occur.

The choice of a case study was motivated by the relevancy to the study, but also by the many advantages that it holds. Hitchcock and Hughes advanced the following as some of the advantages derived from case study:

- Case studies are concerned with the vivid and rich description of events relevant to the case.
- It focuses on individual actors or groups of actors and seeks to understand their perception of events.
- Case studies are bounded, have boundaries that facilitate for their definition.
- Case studies have a temporal characteristic, which help to define their nature. In a case study, the researcher is involved in the case (1995:317-319).

3.2.3 Population and Sampling

Kothari (2004:153) describes a population as the total items about which information is desired. In this study, the population comprised the 26 school principals in the Lehukwe Circuit of Bohlabela District, Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga Province. Secondary schools in the Lehukwe Circuit have been underperforming in the National Senior Certificate examinations for the past five years. The principals have been in the leadership position in the schools for more than five years. Some started as Deputy Principals and Heads of Department in the same school before being promoted to the position of Principal. Information on the practices of principals as they lead in the school was sought from these participants.

A sample is a small group or subset of a population from whom data is obtained in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007:114) advise researchers to consider four key factors when deciding on the sample.

- The size of the sample
- The representativeness of the sample
- The accessibility of the sample and
- The sampling strategy.

Purposive sampling, which is a form of sampling whose strength lies in selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study (Patton, 2015:264) was used to determine the sample. Patton (2015) further asserts that information-rich cases are those

participants from whom more insights and knowledge about the research question can be gained. Cohen *et al.* (2007:114) indicate that researchers handpick participants based on their possession of information sought by the researcher, thus the sampling is deliberate and selective. The subjects in this study were purposefully selected because they hold the information that is of interest to the study.

In this study, seven principals of schools in the Lehukwe Circuit in Bohlabela District were purposefully sampled. As they have been in their schools for more than five years, it was thought that these principals hold the information on instructional leadership that was needed to answer the research question. Kothari (2004:56) cautions that the sample size should neither be excessively too large nor too small but must be optimum to satisfy the criteria of efficiency, representativeness, reliability and flexibility. All the sampled schools were easily accessible and within travelling distance of the researcher.

Secondary schools in the Lehukwe Circuit have been underperforming, with only one school lately showing signs of turning around its performance. Four principals were chosen from the primary schools and three from the secondary schools. Each secondary school was chosen with its feeder primary school. The rationale behind the inclusion of primary school leadership is that the quality of the primary school learners has a bearing on the quality of performance of learners in the secondary school. A small sample has been chosen because of the cost in terms of time, accessibility and the design of the study. Furthermore, the purpose of the study is not to generalise the findings to a wider population.

3.2.4 Data Collection

Data collection addresses the procedures, methods, and instruments used to collect the data for the research. Collection of data for this study involved in-depth interviews.

3.2.4.1 Interviews

An in-depth interview was used as a method of data collection for this study. Cohen *et al.* (2000:270) regard an interview as a sharing of views between two or more people on a topic of common interest. A semi-structured interview was conducted with each of the participants to develop and understand their perceptions of the role of the principal as an instructional leader in improving school performance.

Semi-structured questions which McMillan and Schumacher (2010:206) describe as questions that are open ended but specific in intent were created. The semi-structured questions allow for individual responses but also for follow-up questions or probes for further understanding. The advantage of using a semi-structured interview guide is that it prevents the interview from veering off course, but still allowing more information to be given without restraint. The semi-structured interview guide ensures that participants are asked the same questions without constraining the response, and the interviewer can reframe the question so as to elicit more information when the need arises.

During data collection, a voice recorder was used. McMillan and Schumacher pointed out that audio tape recording ensure completeness of the verbal interview and provide material for reliability checks. However, Cohen *et al.* (2000:281) caution that the audiotape is selective as it filters important contextual factors, neglecting the visual and non-verbal aspects of the interview. This is compensated for by the word-for-word recording of the interview, capturing the expression, emotions and gestures of the participants. Care was also taken to ensure that the instrument does not become a distraction in the data gathering process by intimidating the participants. An explanation was given to the participants so that they understood that a voice recorder was necessary to capture the verbatim account of their lived experiences.

3.2.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis is one of the procedures and processes in qualitative research design. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) describe data analysis as a systematic process of coding, categorising and interpreting data to provide explanation of a single case. The inductive approach was used to analyse the data. This entails analysing single data and gradually going to groups and categories until a pattern with a plausible explanation is found. It is a case of moving from the micro to the macro, from the concrete to the more abstract. Qualitative research is inductive, moving from the data and ending with the categories and patterns.

3.2.5.1 Data transcription

Data transcription involves transitioning the spoken words into text. The notes taken during interview and the audio taped voice recordings were changed into a format that lends itself to visual analysis. Poland (1995) defines verbatim transcription as a word-

for-word reproduction of verbal data, where the written words are an exact replication of the audio recorded words. Mishler (1996) pointed to the danger of assuming that the spoken word parallels the written one. Mishler (1996) further pointed out that participants neither speak in paragraphs nor signal punctuation during their speech. This made it important to share the transcription with the interviewee to make sure that the meaning was accurately rendered in the transcribed account of the words. The participants were approached to confirm the correctness of the transcription. In order not to miss meaning of the participants' words, an iterative approach to data analysis was adopted.

3.2.5.2 Data coding

McMillan and Schumacher (2000:370) assert that data coding starts with identifying small pieces of data that stand alone. This forms part of organising the data into manageable units. The codes that bear some commonalities formed the categories to avoid creating too many codes that would end up confusing the researcher.

3.2.5.3 Forming of categories.

During this step, codes that relate to a common theme were grouped. These codes then formed the category. Different codes formed different categories and each category was given a label that explains the codes. These labels formed parts that have a bearing on the research problem or research topic.

3.2.5.4 Pattern seeking

Emergence of a pattern from the categories was identified and links between categories were established. The patterns formed were checked to see if they offered indisputable and justifiable explanation to the research question.

3.2.5.5 Data presentation and reporting

Reporting was done in written form and is presented in Chapter 4.

3.3 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE STUDY

Trustworthiness refers to the credibility of the study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) describe trustworthiness as the truth value of the study. Silverman (2004:283) states that trustworthiness is important to keep in mind when doing research because in it resides the objectivity and credibility of the study. Objectivity of the study is the measure of the

success in generating findings based on the analysis of the data without being influenced by personal feelings, bias, error and prejudices. Two aspects of trustworthiness were considered, namely reliability and validity.

3.3.1 Reliability

McMillan and Wergin (2002:10) describe reliability as the degree of error that exists when obtaining a measure of a variable. They argue that every instrument of data collection has its own error, and this must be minimised. A study becomes reliable when the element of error has been reduced to the level that its impact becomes insignificant. In order to ensure reliability in this study, codes were assigned to data and recoded to test if the initial coding holds. I also did member checking. Allowing the interviewees to read the report to confirm if the statements are as they said them or have the same meaning with what they meant. My position was emic, becoming part of the data generating instrument. My bias and personal preferences were not allowed to influence the findings of the study. Verbatim recordings of the participants were included in the text to illustrate important findings.

3.3.2 Validity

I was interested in the truthfulness of the findings of the research. The importance of validity as a measure of the trustworthiness of the study has been aptly captured by Cohen *et al.* (2000:104) when they asserted that a piece of research that is devoid of validity is worthless. Creswell and Creswell (2018:199-201) describe validity as a strategy of determining whether the research findings are accurate from the standpoint of the researcher, the participants and readers of the research report. To enhance validity of the study, Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommend eight strategies to enhance validity. For this study, I chose four strategies: clarifying the bias that I bring to the study, member checking, thick description and peer debriefing.

I am a school principal who holds certain views about school management. It was important that my personal views did not contaminate the findings of the study. In member checking, participants were requested to read the final report or descriptions to confirm that it was an accurate description of the lived experiences of the participants. I provided a detailed setting, by explaining how the participants describe events, what emphasis they made on their statement, and what their body language is towards certain questions. The use of a peer to review the findings of the study is a

technique that ensures that the findings of the study remain true not only to the researcher, but to other people as well.

3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research ethics are a mechanism built into the research practice to protect the people and institution from which information or data is gathered. Ethical clearance was requested and granted by the university (see Appendix A: 2020/04/08/06462677/10/AM). Considering that schools are juristic persons, and principal have private lives, it is important to build in safety measures to preserve their integrity. The people volunteering the information must be protected in terms of their safety and their identity. Ethical considerations bind the researcher to honour his or her obligations to the participants.

3.4.1 Permission to conduct Research

Permission to conduct the research was sought from the district, circuit and principals and those that were involved in supplying the information. Permission was requested from and granted by the District (see Appendices B and C). Permission was also sought from and granted by the circuit manager (see Appendices D and E). Permission for entry into the research site and the cooperation of the participants was included in the request.

3.4.2 Voluntary Participation and Informed Consent

The participants who get involved in the research should do so voluntarily without being coerced but should be fully informed of the research and its aims (see Appendix F). This was made clear at the onset that participants are under no obligation to participate if they do not feel comfortable. Cohen *et al.* (2000:51) stated that the principle of consent arises from the participants' right to freedom and self-determination.

Informed consent is achieved when participants know what they are getting themselves into, and that they can withdraw their participation in the study at any time without prejudice. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:118) stated that consent is usually obtained by asking subjects to sign a form that indicates that they have understood why they participate in the study and consented to participate. A consent form was

given to the participants to sign prior to their participation in the study (see Appendix G).

3.4.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality

The obligation to protect the anonymity of research participants and to keep research data must be fulfilled at all costs (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). All reasonable measures were taken to protect the participants from easy identification through any means associated with their participation in the study. In this research, the participants were school principals. Because a face-to-face interview was used, there is no way they can be anonymous to the researcher. The research report should not give away the identity of the principal or the school from which the data were obtained. In order to not disclose the identity of participants, McMillan and Schumacher (2010:339) recommend that the setting and the participants should not be identifiable in print. They recommend that code names be allocated to people and places to be visited or interviewed. They also recommend that the participants be afforded the opportunity to review the report before it is finalised. This is to ensure that the participants agree with and validate the final research. It ensures that the participants can be assured that any information provided has been correctly captured and represented, and their identity is protected.

3.4.4 Privacy

According to Cohen *et al.* (2000:61) privacy is looked at from these three angles: the sensitivity of the information being given; the setting being observed and the dissemination of information. Cohen *et al.* (date 2000) caution that, if the information is more sensitive and personal, and the setting is more private, more safeguards should be built-in to protect the privacy of the participants. Participants and their schools should not be easily inferred in the study and their personal and private experiences and attributes should not give away their identities. Participants should feel guaranteed that none of their personal information or attributes is harmed by their participation in the research. Safeguards have been built in to ensure that any person not connected with the study will infer the identity of the school from the data. The privacy of participants was protected by using pseudonyms instead of the name of the school or the name of the participant.

3.5 SUMMARY

This chapter described the research design that was followed to collect data to answer the research question satisfactorily. The data generating procedures were explained. The process and steps followed in transforming the data into information upon which explanation of the research question can be made were also dealt with. The steps followed in ensuring the trustworthiness of the findings of the study was also dealt with. Ethical considerations that govern qualitative research were also dealt with to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of participants. The next chapter presents the analysis of data analysis and the findings supported by verbatim quotes.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, DISCUSSION AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter described the methods adopted in data collection. Data was collected through in-depth interviews conducted at the natural site of the participants. The collected data was exposed to an open coding approach, which was employed to organise the data into codes and categories, and into themes and sub-themes.

In this chapter the sites visited are briefly described to give a rich background; the participants and their personal and professional traits are also discussed. The themes, together with the associated sub-themes that emerged from the interviews are tabulated and discussed. Factors which enhance the principals' instructional leadership in improving school performance; and those that constrain the instructional leadership of the principal are explained in a focused manner.

The analysed data explained in this chapter was gathered through in-depth interviews with seven principals in the Bohlabela District, Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga. Bohlabela District is found in Bushbuckridge Municipality, which has been declared a Comprehensive Reconstruction and Development Programme municipality. This municipality is plagued by massive unemployment and high levels of poverty. The local communities sustain themselves through subsistence farming during summer and street vending of fruit and vegetables. The municipality forms the western border of the Kruger National Park.

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE SITES

Principals of seven schools, comprising four primary schools and three secondary schools, were interviewed. The schools differ greatly in their location, characteristics, enrolment, infrastructure and post establishment. Variations were also noted in the way they are managed. The schools are all located in a rural setting which means that there is very little variation in their quintile allocation. All schools are in quintile 1 to protect the identity and privacy of the schools and the participants, fictitious names were used which have no bearing whatsoever on the schools or sites.

4.2.1 AyAy Secondary School

The school was built in 1974 and was the only high school in the community. It was initially built by the community with block bricks. In 2011, the school received a massive upgrade when it was rebuilt from scratch into a modern school equipped with all the facilities. Like most schools in the District, it was also named after one of the members of the tribal clan. It is situated seven kilometres away from the tar road and is accessible by a gravel road. It is on the northern outskirts of the community bordering on nearby fields and bushes. It is attractive with well-built parking bays for cars, air conditioning in the admin block, a well-built modern kitchen, laboratory, a library, a computer centre and a dining hall. There are lush trees that provide shade in the school. The school has four feeder primary schools that supply it with learners. Currently the school has 444 learners and 20 teachers. There are four departmental heads and one deputy principal. Water is obtained from a borehole and sometimes from the municipal supply. Electricity is supplied by Eskom. There are adequate ablution facilities for both learners and teachers.

The school is located in a rural area inhabited by people with low socio-economic status. Unemployment is high and the only visible economic activity is subsistence farming.

The school has struggled with learner performance over the recent years, culminating into it obtaining the last position in the circuit in the matric class of 2019, 2020 and 2021.

4.2.2 BiBi Primary School

BiBi Primary School is one of the oldest schools in the village having been established in 1968. As a departure from the norm, this school is one of those not named after the members of the tribal clan. It is named after the village in which it is situated. It is situated next to a tarred road that passes through the village and located close to the offices of the tribal authority and enjoys maximum security due to this. BiBi primary school has an enrolment of 547 learners and 16 teachers, six males and 10 females. The educators range from twenty to sixty years. All teachers have diplomas and degrees. Most of the teachers teach subjects they are qualified to teach.

The school has 21 classrooms, five of which were built by the community in 1968. The school offers the three languages spoken in the village which are Sepedi, isiZulu and Xitsonga.

Water is supplied through a borehole. The school has 16 enviroloo toilets. There is no admin block. Two classrooms are used as admin offices. There is a structure built by the school to serve as a kitchen for the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). The school has neither a library nor a laboratory. There is connectivity in the school ensuring unlimited internet access. There is a computer lab and a Maths lab with four smart boards. The computer laboratory was donated by Samsung. The maths laboratory was procured by the principal through a donation from the Motsepe Foundation. The school offers computer classes taught by SGB employed teachers. The community does not have access due to the threat of vandalism.

The school is secured by palisade fencing. There is a guard house at the entrance. Lush trees provide shade during summer and lend beauty to the school environment.

4.2.3 CeCe Primary School

The school was established around 1982 and named after one of the members of the tribal clan members. It is situated a few meters from a tarred road that dissects the community. It has a guard house, a perimeter fence and receives its water supply from the municipal pipeline. The school has electricity, and it is wired. There are 15 classrooms housing Grades 1-7. Three classrooms, built by the community, house Grade R. The school has an enrolment of 681. There are 18 teachers, six male and twelve females with three female grade R teachers. The school has one deputy, two heads of department, which make up an SMT of four members. The courtyard is well planted with green plants and trees that provide shade; there are paved walkways, a small office for the principal and two classes used as personnel room and an admin office. The establishment of the school was as a result of learners walking a long distance from their homes to schools that were situated far away from homes. Bohlabela District is located within a CRDP municipality. The poverty level is very high with high unemployment among the youth and adult population. There is very little or no economic activity of significance. The community relies heavily on subsistence agriculture, which takes place during the summer rainfall season. It also has a high

percentage of absenteeism among the young parent and fathers in particular with the latter trying to fend for their families in cities across the country.

4.2.4 DoDo Primary School

DoDo Primary School was established in 1988 and started operating in 1989. Like most schools in the District, it was named after the traditional councillor (induna). It is situated in the far east of the Bohlabela District in a very rural community bordering on the Kruger National Park in the east. DoDo Primary School is accessible via a tarred road that passes through the village. On its eastern side, DoDo Primary School is flanked by huge tracks of communal fields. Most of the people in the village are subsistent farmers who rely on agriculture. The fields are only cultivated during the summer months. There is a high level of unemployment among the adult and youth community. There are enough trees within the schoolyard that provide shade and serve as windbreaks. The school has 16 classrooms, an administration block, a kitchen and 20 Enviroloo toilets. There are also 24 water-borne toilets that need renovation. Water is supplied through two boreholes that are working properly. The school is surrounded by diamond mesh fencing. The community is not growing because its young adults are migrating to towns and places that are affluent. Crime and vandalism is the major challenge. The school has a guardhouse at the entrance. A board with the name of the school and its vision is erected at the main entrance gate.

“There are 60% adults and 40% youth. The adult teachers are trying very hard to learn. There are now Mathematics teachers here due to my recruitment strategy. This has also improved the performance of learners in maths” said Martha, the principal.

4.2.5 EliEli Primary School

This is one of the oldest schools in the community which dates back to 50s. At one stage, the school housed two schools in one, one for Sepedi speaking learners and the other for Xitsonga speaking learners. The two schools were separated in 80s and this school was relocated to a new site in the village. It is also named after a member of the tribal clan. Currently the school offers two home languages, Sepedi and isiZulu. It is a higher primary school offering Grade 5-7. The school has one old block of four classrooms which was renovated in 2007. An additional clay brick block was built in and this has four classrooms. There is no admin block. Teachers and the principal use

classrooms as a staff room and the principal's office. The school has a kitchen for the NSNP. There are 20 pit toilets. Water is supplied to the school through a borehole sunk in the school grounds. The school has a palisade fence and a guard house. The school is situated a few metres from the provincial road that passes through the district connecting Limpopo and Mpumalanga. The school's vision, mission and ethos are prominently displayed at the entrance gate.

4.2.6 FuFu Secondary School

The school was established in 1985 as a complete school with 16 classrooms and an admin block. The school was established as a response to tribal clashes perpetuated by the Bantustan arrangement of the pre-1994. During that time, the Sepedi speaking section of the community had to attend their own school while the Tsonga speaking learners had to be in their own school. Sadly, the admin block was gutted by fire during a service protest late 2019. It has 21 teachers, with four members of the appointed SMT. Two members of the SMT were co-opted. The school has an enrolment of 648 learners. It has no proper fencing, with part of the school surrounded by an old wire mesh fencing while the other is a palisade fence. It has 15 learner toilets and 5 staff toilets. The staff toilets are water-borne while the learner toilets are enviroloo toilets. Water is supplied through a borehole sunk in the school premises. During winter, especially after long periods of drought, the borehole runs dry and then the municipality sends water trucks. The school is accessible via a recently tarred road which passes within a few metres from the school. Like many schools in the municipality, it is situated in a rural village with a high poverty index and high unemployment. Most of the households are without a bread winner. Grandparents are the only support structure for the learners, resulting in learners being poorly supported in their education. There are many child-headed families due to the fact that the young parents have migrated to the urban areas for employment.

4.2.7 GiGi Secondary School

The school was established in 1985. It has an enrolment of 935 learners and 33 teachers. The school was recently refurbished into a modern school with all the facilities. It has an admin block fitted with air-conditioning, a well-built kitchen, a hall, a library, a laboratory and a computer centre. It is fenced with a palisade and has a guardhouse. Water is supplied through a borehole. On the school gate, a message of

welcome written in different international languages is displayed. The principal said, *“We have a welcoming message in different languages to show that we want our learners to compete internationally.”* The school received a cohort of international students from different countries in 2019.

4.3 DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS

In this section, a description of each of the participants is given. As previously indicated, pseudonyms are used to protect the principals' identity.

4.3.1 Mr Phala of AyAy Secondary School

Mr Phala trained as a teacher at the local college of education and obtained a Senior Primary Teachers' Diploma in 1989. He started teaching at the same school thereafter. He holds an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE), an honours degree and a Master's Degree. He was promoted to the post of deputy principal in 2011 and became the principal of the school in 2012. He is the 5th principal of the school since its inception. He has a full complement of the SMT, two HoD's and one deputy principal. The school has an enrolment of 444 learners offering Grades 8-12. He manages a staff of 20 educators ranging in age between 24 and 59. Teachers commute from different directions, some commuting as far as 20km from the village. Mr Phala was removed from his school in 2017 due to the school's poor performance in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations of 2016. He was appointed to a local combined school for the period 2017 to 2018. He was not happy with his removal, arguing that the Department uses what he referred to as *“the devil strategy of removing the principal when teachers failed the learners”*. The principal lives in the same village where the school is located and is well acquainted with the local community.

4.3.2 Mr Ngwenya of BiBi Primary School

Mr Ngwenya qualified from the local college of education in 1993 with a Senior Primary Teachers' Diploma (SPTD). He started working in the same school as a teacher in 1994. The participant obtained a project management qualification with Damelin in 2007, a Bachelor of Art with the University of South Africa, and ACE in Maths and Science in 2010 from Tshwane University of Technology.

In 2008 Mr Ngwenya was appointed as departmental head and in 2016, he was appointed as principal in the same school.

The principal is currently teaching English Grade 7 and technology Grade 7. The principal is part of the community and plays a very important role in the tribal authority. This gives him access to a lot of resources and social capital that enables his school to be protected from some of the vandalism rampant in the area.

4.3.3 Mr Tau of CeCe Primary School

Mr Tau holds a number of teaching qualifications. He studied and qualified with a Primary Teachers' Diploma (PTD) at the local teacher college in 1988. In 1992, he enrolled with the University of South Africa (UNISA) for a Bachelor of Arts Degree, which he eventually obtained in 1998. He qualified with a Bachelor of Education Honours Degree at UNISA in 2014. He also studied with Regenesys Business School for a Post Graduate Diploma. He started as CS1 teachers in one school, moved to the school where he completed his secondary education, and taught Agricultural Science and History. He was appointed principal of the feeder primary school in 2000. He has more than 30 years' teaching experience of which 10 of those are in the principalship position. He is the second principal of the school since its inception. He is currently teaching Grade 7, something which increases his duties and affects his instructional leadership function. Mr Tau said that he has a love for teaching and enjoys being of help to the community. He has initiated a number of projects in his school to improve the grounds and the image of the school. Among his initiatives, he proudly shows a wall that he built on the roadside of the school. He indicated that he built the wall to ensure that the noise from passing vehicles did not become a distraction to the learners. Mr Tau of CeCe primary mentioned that they have regular meetings as a staff. However, there is no mention of the performance of the individual classes.

4.3.4 Ms Martha of DoDo Primary School

In 1993, Ms Martha enrolled at a teacher training college in Gauteng and qualified in 1995 with a Junior Primary Teachers' Diploma (JPTD). The principal studied for a Higher Diploma in Education with SECT. She obtained a Bachelor of Education Honours Degree with Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) and Post Graduate Certificate in Education with Regenesys Business School. She also holds a qualification as an assessor, moderator, mentor and coach. She was employed at a school in another circuit. In 2006, she was appointed as a departmental head at DoDo Primary School. The participant started volunteering at the district to facilitate CPTD

and facilitated SGB training. She was co-opted to be trained as a trainer for principals while still a departmental head. In 2011, she was redeployed to another school in the circuit. In 2015, she was appointed as principal at DoDo Primary School. She has been in the post of principal for seven years. She is the second principal of the school since its inception and the first female principal of the school.

There are four members of the SMT, only one appointed HoD and three co-opted. The SMT co-option was based on the seniority of the members as they knew the environment better than the principal, who was newly appointed. The principal also considered their skills and qualifications. The principal is also from a different village and currently lives 40 kilometres away from the school. Ms Martha was very confident and enthusiastic about her job as a principal. She spoke excitedly about what she thought she could achieve.

4.3.5 Mr Lengau of Eli Eli Primary School

Mr Lengau qualified as an educator with a Bachelor of Arts and a Higher Education Diploma from the University of the North. He started working in a secondary school teaching English. He was requested to act as a principal in another secondary school but returned to his former school just after a year. In 2012, he was promoted to the post of the principal of the current primary school. He is currently teaching English in Grade 7.

4.3.6 Mr Ndou of FuFu Secondary School

The principal qualified as a teacher with a Secondary Teachers' Diploma (STD) in 1993. He started working in 1994 in the same school. In 2001, the participant obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of South Africa. He furthered his studies with Regenesys Business School and obtained a postgraduate certificate in education in 2015. He was appointed the Head of Department in 1996, a deputy in 2006, acting principal in 2018, and a principal in 2019. He is the third principal of the school since its establishment. He indicated that he is facing challenges with his colleagues who do not support his ascension to the position of principal. They undermine his authority and remain indifferent to efforts to improve the school. Mr Ndou said, *"I even feel like resigning, I don't enjoy it at all. No one is prepared to assist the learners even when we are all aware that the school is underperforming."*

4.3.7 Mr Sebata of GiGi Secondary School

The participant qualified with a Bachelor of Arts degree and Higher Education Diploma from the University of the North. He went on to obtain a BEd. Hons with the University of Pretoria (UP), and Master's degree with the same university. Mr Sebata is a relentless principal who managed to persuade the Department to renew his school when it was not next on the list. He built partnerships with international organisations which saw his school being allocated international students from Sweden.

Mr Sebata started teaching in 1994 at a different school. He has occupied a deputy principal post in his former school. In 2010, he contested and won the principalship position of GiGi Secondary School. This was against the wishes of the staff and the majority union as according to Mr Sebata, *“they wanted to give the post to a comrade”*. The staff ganged against him and made him feel unwelcome at the school. The long-serving teachers in the school hoped that the principalship post would be occupied by them and they would push one another on the promotional ladder. They exercised great influence, and they went about mobilising the community against Mr Sebata. As he put it, *“I remained stubborn and focused on my core responsibility and eventually won them to my side. It was not easy.”*

He managed to change the school's performance profile from a low performing school to one of the best performers in his circuit.

4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings are presented according to themes which are further divided into sub-themes. The themes emerged from the collected data. The themes were not organised in any particular order that symbolises any importance or significance, but as topics that arose out of the data coding.

- Setting direction
- Management of the curriculum and instruction
- Barriers to instructional leadership
- Staff recruitment and development
- Creating a climate of high expectation
- Principals understanding of instructional leadership
- Stakeholder involvement

- Principal as a resource provider

Table 4.1 provides an outline of the themes and the associated sub-themes.

Table 4.1: Themes and sub-themes

	Theme		Sub-themes
4.4.1	Setting Direction	4.4.1.1	Availability of school vision and mission
		4.4.1.2	Process of goal setting
		4.4.1.3	Types of goals set
		4.4.1.4	Stakeholder involvement in goal setting
		4.4.1.5	Communicating the school goals
		4.4.1.6	Implementation of goals
4.4.2	Curriculum Management	4.4.2.1	Management tools
		4.4.2.2	Curriculum management practices
		4.4.2.3	Management personnel
		4.4.2.4	Monitoring improvements in Learner performance
4.4.3	Staff development	4.4.3.1	Recruitment processes
		4.4.3.2	Improvement of Teacher qualification
		4.4.3.3	Teacher development
4.4.4	Creating a climate of high expectation	4.4.4.1	Setting ambitious targets
		4.4.4.2	Providing awards and incentives
4.4.5	Principals' views of instructional leadership	4.4.5.1	Principals' understanding of instructional leadership
		4.4.5.2	Principals' practices of instructional leadership
4.4.6	Barriers to instructional leadership	4.4.6.1	Teachers' attitude
		4.4.6.2	Inadequate infrastructure
		4.4.6.3	Teacher shortages
		4.4.6.4	Union interference
		4.4.6.5	Lack of departmental support
4.4.7	Stakeholder involvement	4.4.7.1	Type of stakeholders
		4.4.7.2	Programmes of stakeholder involvement
		4.4.7.3	Importance of stakeholder involvement

	Theme		Sub-themes
		4.4.7.4	Areas of involvement
4.4.8	Principal as a resource provider	4.4.8.1	Types of resource
		4.4.8.2	Resource procurement processes
		4.4.8.3	Effective use of resources.

4.4.1 Setting Direction

Setting direction is one of the critical functions of the leader of any organisation, whether small or large. A school as an organisation requires a leader who is able to determine the direction that it takes. This arises from the fact that the school is made up of different elements, which left alone, may wander off course and make it impossible for the school to achieve its educational objective. To put this point succinctly, the definition provided by the Oxford South African Pocket Dictionary states that direction is “a course along which someone or something moves, or a course which leads to a destination” (2002:248). In order for the school to reach its vision, it has to follow a particular path. This path does not just emerge; it is deliberately carved by a leader who has a vision to attain, a destination to reach. The vision of the school, which is the destination, engenders the setting of the direction. Direction setting requires consensus and buy-in from those that will travel the route. It is therefore important for the school principal to consult and communicate, to implement, assess and review, throughout the process. Following hereunder are the critical element the principal considers in the function of direction setting.

4.4.1.1 Availability of a school vision and mission

All the schools sampled have vision and mission statements in place. In some schools, the vision is prominently displayed at the entrance to the school while in some the vision can be seen in their documents. The motto of some of the schools is also displayed at the entrance gate of the school. The participants did not develop the vision of their schools because they found it already developed by their predecessors. A vision statement is an inspirational statement made by an organisation that articulates what they would like to achieve. A vision should be achievable in a period of five years. It is indisputable that principals have a duty to articulate and drive the vision of the

school. The principal is the reason behind the assimilation of the vision by the members of the staff and the community.

What emerged from the interviews is that some of the participants could not articulate the vision of their schools. Mr Tau of CeCe Primary School said, *“We pronounce the vision and compare with the performance of the learners. We repeat the vision with the parents. With learners it is rare that we discuss the vision”*. In one of the schools, the vision was not even in the principal’s office. Mr Sebata of GiGi Secondary school indicated, *“When I came into the school there was no vision and mission statement. I developed the vision, engaging the staff and the parents. We informed the learners of what the school stand for and stand to achieve. As I speak, our vision and mission statement are well displayed at the entrance gate.”* The fact that most principals did not develop the vision has already been mentioned. None the less, principals are expected to acquaint themselves with the vision of the school as per their role as the vision carriers of the school. All participants have been in their position as principals for more than five years. In one school, the vision is written on the report cards of the learners and is shared with parents and learners at assembly and during parents’ meetings.

4.4.1.2 Process of goal setting.

Principals in the study demonstrated commitment and passion for the achievement of their learners. They influence the setting of goals for their schools. The practice of goal setting was captured in the following responses that represented the viewpoints and actions of the respondents, in relation to this task. They all targeted the quantitative improvement of results in their classes. The target serves as an area of focus for their efforts for the year. The principals expressed how they develop their targets in this manner: Mr Phala, the principal of AyAy Secondary School worded it in this way. *“2020 is the doubling year. We agreed that we have to double the results we achieved in 2019”*. This was further reiterated by Mr Sebata, the principal of GiGi Secondary School who captured it this way. *“We declared this year 2020 our year of dominance. We want to dominate the circuit. We want to be the best school in the circuit. We want to obtain 100% at Matric. Our learners should feature in the top ten in the circuit.”* Ms Martha, the principal of DoDo Primary School, captured their goal setting in this way, *“We want to improve on Mathematics and Science. Our target is 80% average. In*

terms of performance, we aim to achieve 100% for all learners across all subjects”. Mr Tau the principal of EliEli Primary School added to this by indicating that, *“We first sit with the SGB to identify the challenges we face as an institution. We make comparisons with past performances to enable us to see our weaknesses.”* The involvement of stakeholders in the development of school goals is one important function of the principal.

A salient point in the views expressed by most of the principals is the absence of a SWOT analysis as a basis for the development of their goals. According to Hallinger and Murphy (1985), instructional leaders collaborate with the staff and the parents to identify areas of weakness and develop performance targets to address the weaknesses. According to the WSE policy, principals have to do a SWOT analysis and develop goals and targets in accordance with the identified weaknesses of the school. The absence of a SWOT analysis has the implication that many areas of the school that require development would be left unattended for some time. It is not clear if this was as a result of the inadequacy of the interview questions or that the principals were not socialised into the process of SWOT analysis as a precondition for goal development.

4.4.1.3 Types of goals set

The Policy on Whole School Evaluation (WSE) recommends nine areas of development. The rationale behind the nine areas is that they encompass all the facets that ensure that the school functions effectively. If these areas are adequately attended to, the school is able to provide quality teaching and learning that guarantees every learner a chance to succeed. Every school is required to annually reflect on these areas and assess how effectively they have performed. The development of objectives for a school should be preceded by a SWOT analysis that focuses on the school’s performance on the nine areas with goal setting aligning with what is needed in these nine areas.

In the study, the evidence garnered indicated that goals for most of the schools focused on the number of learners passing at the end of the year. Secondary schools concentrated on the improvement in the pass rate of the Grade 12 class. They also targeted the number of learners passing key subjects such as Mathematics, Physical Science, Geography and Agricultural Sciences. Secondary school principals indicated

that these were the subjects that dragged their schools' performance down. The focus on Mathematics and Physical Sciences can be ascribed to the objectives of the Department in the National Development Plan: Schooling 2019 vision 2030.

Primary schools focused on the passes in each phase and the increase in the number of learners passing Mathematics, English and Natural Sciences. Principals reported an increase in the pass rate of these subjects in the primary school. Most primary school principals expressed the intention to improve performance in all the phases at their schools. This is in response to the Annual National Assessments (ANAs) which has shown that learners struggle with Mathematics and English First Additional language. The SACMEQ study has also highlighted the poor performance of learners in South Africa as compared to their counterparts in Southern Africa. However, in the secondary school, much focus seems to be directed to Grade 12 as this grade is seen as a benchmark that reflects the functionality of the school, and matric or the NSC, is seen as a proxy for the functioning of the South African education system. Other grades do not appear to be receiving much attention. The implication is that in the secondary schools, Grade 12 matters more.

The following quotes from the interviews attest to this finding. *"Our major goal is to dominate the circuit. We have a 10-year plan from 2020-2030. We want to obtain 100% pass in matric."* Mr Phala, the principal of AyAy Secondary School indicated, *"Our goal is to improve the results to at least 80% for Grade 8 and 100% for Grade 12."* Primary schools also pay much attention to the performance in subjects and grades. The other areas that constitute a functional school did not receive attention. This is the weakness of not conducting a school self-evaluation in accordance with the WSE. If a swot analysis had been done, many areas could have been identified as weaknesses, and thereafter, goals and targets could have been developed to address those weaknesses.

4.4.1.4 Stakeholder involvement in goal setting.

According to Hallinger and Murphy (1985) instructional leaders collaborate with the staff and the parents to identify areas of weakness and develop performance targets to address the weaknesses. Henderson and Berla (1994:160) state that, "The most accurate predictor of student's achievement in school is not income or social status, but the extent to which that student's family is able to become involved in their

children's education at school and in the community". When developing school goals, principals indicated that they engage the teachers and the SGB. The democratic dispensation of South Africa requires that stakeholders be involved in issues that require their participation. From the evidence heard, principals sit with their SMTs and agree on a set of statements that become their school goals. This is crucial as the senior management team (SMT) is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the improvement programmes. The SGB members are informed when the process of goal setting has been concluded.

The following quotes attest to the level of stakeholder participation in goal development. *"We had a meeting where we analysed the previous year's performance. We realised that we are fluctuating between position one and two in the circuit. As a staff we agreed that this year we should be at the top of the circuit. Then we went to the SGB and told them members of the staff want to be top of the circuit."* Mr Lengau, the principal of EliEli Primary School, described the processes like this, *"We sit with the SGB to identify the challenges we faced as an institution. We make comparison with past performances to enable us to see our weaknesses. We start engaging with the SMT down to the teachers."* The processes articulated by participants in the quoted statements cut across all the principals of the schools sampled. The difference lies in the starting point of the process.

Some participants start with the teachers while others start with the SGB. Those that start the process with the SGB argue that the presence of the teacher component in the SGB makes it redundant to still go to the teachers. As Ms Martha, the principal of DoDo Primary School argues, *"I normally start with the staff and take it to the SGB with lots of motivation. After the SGB, we take it to parents wherein we share the goals so that they are approved in a parents' meeting."* Those that start with the teachers indicate that they give the Department an opportunity to identify areas where they lack and allow them to develop goals to address the challenges. What is glaringly absent is the evidence of the process as it is unfolded in the school. They, just like the teacher, are informed for endorsement. How principals go about this process will be diverse and contingent on the context of the school. The specific areas of engagement are not evident in the principals' responses. As far as teachers are concerned, principals

indicate that they go to the teachers when they have already come up with the goals for the teachers to endorse or to add.

Secondary school principals did not demonstrate how they involve the RCL in the development of their goals. It does not appear that learners are taken as a major stakeholder in their own education. For parents and the community, their involvement in goal development is limited to being informed of the goals at the parents' meeting. There is no basis for the development of a particular goal as they are developed without being informed by the historical trends or data.

4.4.1.5 Communicating the school goals

Arnold and Feldman (1996:154) argued that the ability to communicate effectively is critical to a manager's success, and all-important management functions depend upon effective communication between the managers and subordinates. Ivancevich and Matteson (1999) emphasised the argument when they stated that communication is the glue that holds the institution together. Stakeholders in the school need to be informed to feel part of the implementation process. The Policy on Standards for South African Principals (RSA, 2015:13) requires the principal to work with everyone in the community to ensure that the vision and mission of the school is translated into agreed goals and operational plans, designed to promote and sustain on-going school improvement. In the development of goals, principals indicated that they consulted with their HoDs and the SGB. The members of the staff are given time to check on the goals and agree that they will be the goals of the school for the year. After the goals were agreed upon, these goals are communicated to the stakeholders such as parents, the local councillor, and the induna of the traditional authority.

Mr Phala, the principal of school AyAy Secondary School had this to say, "*The goals are communicated to parents through parents' meetings, through the learners and telephonically. We send notices to parents and we have their contact numbers. Parents know what is happening in the school because we provide them with a programme.*" Mr Lengau of EliEli Primary school expressed his communicative strategy as, "*We read the goals at assembly. We paste and display the goals in classrooms and provide hand-outs with the goals written. Parents are informed of the goals during parents' meetings.*" What emerged from the voices of the participants, goal development was a province of the principal and the SMT. It was not informed by

the identification of weaknesses in the school as a condition stipulated by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), and the Whole School Evaluation (WSE). The participation of parents is limited to being informed of the outcome of the SMT planning. The minute books of the SMT and the SGB do not have any evidence of that the goals were ever discussed.

4.4.1.6 Implementation of the school goals

Goals must be broken down into objectives that are implemented in each class and lesson. There should be a link between the objectives and the practices of the school. Goals should inform practice. With all the principals prioritising the increase of performance, it is evident that all pursuits will be directed towards this goal. The quote by Ms Martha, principal of DoDo Primary School, attests to this. *“I am happy that the school has seen improved performance of the learners.”* By implication the schools are implementing the goals of improving learner performance and are seeing improvement. This is also corroborated by Mr Ngwenya, principal of CeCe Primary School, when he said, *“There has been great improvement in Maths and Science. It means our strategy is working well. In the past we used to struggle in these subjects. Now we are OK. We are a feeder school to a Maths Science Technology Academy (MSTA). Their pass rate has been good because we give them well prepared learners.”* Improvement comes because of the action that they took. The principal requires the support of all stakeholders to facilitate the implementation of the goals. Mr Sebata indicated the following. *“I encourage my learners to strive for 90%. I tell them to strive to be in the top 10 performers in the circuit. With the parents, I talk to them about 100% achievements. I developed a document for parents to sign as a commitment to the 100% performance.”* Constantly reminding teachers, learners and the parents about the goals ensure that they remain within the focus of the school. The principal communicates this on a daily and consistent basis as part his/her function

In the interviews conducted, none of the participants indicated how their goals are translated into action. There was no evidence of the evaluation or review of the goals. Newby *et al.* (2006:234) state that evaluation is the process of gathering information about the worth or quality of something as a way of making decisions designed to increase its worth or quality. It is therefore expected that principals constantly evaluate their targets and objectives, review them to ascertain if they are still valid, and adjust

them according to the changing dynamics of the school. The review of the targets and objectives occur during implementation, without which shortfall in the targets are easy to identify.

Shannon and Bylsma (2007:29) provide a useful suggestion for the use of action research cycle steps which assist with implementation of goals. The steps are: using data to set school goals and students' objectives, identifying activities and changes made to accomplish the goals and objectives, implementing the steps, and evaluating the results of the actions that have been implemented to determine the next step. The Policy on Standard for South African Principals (DBE, 2015) requires principals to provide strategic leadership. This function demands that principals develop an action plan to implement the objectives. This means establishing clear goals and keeping those goals at the forefront of the school's attention.

What emerged from the interviews regarding this theme is that schools have vision and mission statements. The visions and missions were developed long before the principals could be appointed to their respective schools. Principals engage in setting direction for their schools and developing goals for the year and using a variety of approaches that depend on their context. It emerged from the study that some principals review the performance data from the previous year during their goal setting. It can, therefore, be concluded that they do a SWOT analysis. However, principals did not support this activity with evidence that shows the rigour and attention to detail. This resulted in the goals being generic rather than Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART). According to Hill and Jones (1998:49), a goal is a state that an institution desires to attain and it specifies with precision what must be done if the institution is to attain its mission. It is in the level of engagement during goal development that principals did not give sufficient evidence of the rigour and intensity of focus. While they communicate the objectives to teachers, learners and parents, the nature of communication is limited to parents' meetings and staff meetings. Goals and targets should be at the forefront of the principal's dashboard and should be prominently communicated to stakeholders. According to Hill and Jones (1998), well-constructed and precise goals can be used as a yardstick against which the institution can judge its performance.

What also emerged from the study is that principals do not break down the goals into manageable objectives that can inform activities in the classroom and practice within the school. The link between the goals and the practice in the school is weak. The vision does not dictate the practices in the school and within the classroom. Data gathered does not provide evidence that there is no constant evaluation of the implementation of the goals. The interviews could not establish whether principals engage in the process of reflection and review of their targets. It would be a valuable recommendation for school principals to ensure that the goals they set are broken down into SMART objectives and an action plan is developed for their implementation. This is the strategic leadership function of the principal.

4.4.2 Curriculum management

Curriculum refers to the list of subjects chosen to be taught by a school. However, what stands out is that it is the pivot upon which the school rotates. It is for this reason that Stein and Nelson, (2003) describe it as the technical core function of the school. Che (2007) describe curriculum as an interactive process developed among learners, teachers, materials and the environment that reflect the political values and the organisation. This is further expanded by the Glossary of Education Reform (2015) which define curriculum as the knowledge and skills expected to be learnt by students which is inclusive of the standards to be met; the units and lessons taught; the assignments and projects students complete; the books, materials, videos, presentations, and readings in the course; and the tests, assessment used to evaluate students. As the most important aspect of a school, curriculum must be planned for and managed correctly and effectively to guarantee positive outcomes. It is how the curriculum is implemented that leads to a change in the learner's skills, knowledge, values and attitude. In simple language it is the curriculum that leads to learning. The South African School Act 84 places the responsibility of managing the curriculum on the principal. Mr Ngwenya of BiBi Primary School elaborated, *"At the beginning of each year, we check on the available teachers the school has. We allocate them subjects according to their area of specialisation. Then we draw up the school time table. We analyse the timetable to ensure that no teacher is carrying more subjects than others. After this, we ensure that every subject has its notional time. Then we allocate class teachers for the different classes"*. This was reiterated by Mr Tau of CeCe Primary School when he said, *"We have started by allocating teachers various subjects*

according to their specialisation and experience. After this, we draw a timetable, ensuring that each subject is allocated time according to the notional time. Then we allocate each teacher a class. In the Foundation Phase, teachers remain in their classes while in the Senior Phase, they rotate. The teachers are provided with the copy of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement and all the required textbooks.” Mr Ndou of FuFu Secondary School pointed out, “The first thing is to make sure that we have the school time table and allocation. Then we organise the required textbooks and the guides the teacher requires for the subjects in the school. The Department is no longer giving schools an unlimited budget on textbooks, so we ensure that those that we buy we take good care of them. I always get involved in the requisition of textbooks. It is in fact top-up on top of those we already have. We also factor in the extra mural activity timetable to ensure that extra-mural activities do not interfere with the teaching time.”

This was echoed by Mr Sebata of GiGi Secondary School who put it in this way, *“The SMT does the allocation of subjects and duties. I always make sure that those teaching Grade 12 are the most experienced and hardworking. To manage the curriculum effectively, you need a timetable. We ensure that the timetable is compliant with the notional time. When I arrived, the school was offering many subjects including Religion Studies. I had to remove certain subjects to streamline the curriculum. I introduced Accounting and Business Studies. I went around to secure textbooks for the subjects because there was none in the school. When an opportunity arrived to make textbook requisition, we prioritised these subjects”*. The PSSAP (2015:5) reiterates this by listing leading and management of the curriculum as one of the seven critical functions of the principal. This section considers what activities principals engage in when managing the curriculum, what tools are being used to manage curriculum, who assists them in managing curriculum, and how management of the curriculum leads to improved learner performance. As curriculum entails a broad range of aspects and practices, principals shed light on those with they are familiar with and in which they enact in their daily management routines.

4.4.2.1 Curriculum management plans

Cark (2007:203-204) describes good teaching and good learning as the bottom line for every school. The quality of the interaction in the classroom between the learner

and the teacher depends on effective curriculum planning. Any leader that wants good teaching and good learning to be a priority should ensure that good teaching and good learning are on the lips of their staff all the time. The NEEDU report on Schools that Work 11 (2016:1127-133), report that high performing schools influence performance by jealously guarding allocated time, mitigating factors that lead to loss of teaching time, creating more learning opportunities for students, tracking learner performance, giving support to struggling learners, and providing differentiated support to ensure that learners are exposed to more content coverage. The SMT monitor the completion of the curriculum by using extra time. These practices by high performing schools have been put to the test and have proven to be effective. Instructional leaders who engage in these practices are sure to influence performance as these activities focus on the instructional core. All participants indicated the desire to improve teaching and learning at their schools through the improvement of their results. Ms Matha of DoDo Primary School outlined the curriculum plans of her school in this way, *“We first sit as the SMT and discuss on how we should manage curriculum. We agree on who will do what. For instance, the HoD first checks on the availability of LTSM and ensures that all teachers have what they require to teach. These will include ATPs, Assessment Policy, CAPS, and all related materials. We agree on when teachers’ files will be checked. Normally I do assist in checking the teachers’ portfolios as the work becomes too much for the HoD. This is done every quarter. Every week we check the learners’ books to gather evidence of work given. We draw up a schedule of lesson observation. This will show when is one going to be observed and by whom. Then we draw our monthly assessment time table.”*

Mr Ndou of FuFu Secondary School said, *“I have two Departmental Heads whose responsibility is to monitor teachers. They check on curriculum coverage, ensure that teachers attend their periods in time and monitor the assessment of learners. They moderate scripts and draw up monthly reports. The departmental heads also oversee the distribution of LTSM to their respective teachers and ensure that there is enough material to be used by the teacher.”* For good teaching and good learning to take place, there must be plans that indicate the purpose and desire to improve. Curriculum plans clearly showing the alignment of curriculum, assessment and learner performance must be in place. As teaching and learning are prioritised, curriculum plans must bear testimony to teaching and learning being the central focus of the school. The major

area of focus of the school and the principal is engagement in the classroom. City *et al.* (2009) call this the “instructional core”. The authors argue that other factors must positively influence the instructional core for student performance to improve.

None of the participants were able to provide an annual school improvement plan (SIP). There were no SMART targets and how the targets were to be met. According to the report by NEEDU (2016), schools must develop an annual school improvement plan informed by self-evaluation in terms of the policy on whole school evaluation (WSE). Section 58B of SASA also requires schools (underperforming school) to develop improvement plans to turn around the performance of the school.

4.4.2.2 Curriculum management tools

Participants indicated that they have tools that they use to manage and monitor curriculum implementation in their respective schools. The following tools were mentioned in the participants’ narrative and are discussed hereunder.

a. Attendance register

Participants indicated that they use the attendance registers to track if all learners are in class to be taught, annual teaching plans to guide the teachers in terms of content to be covered, lesson observation checklists to be used during class observation, and a monthly reporting instrument to report to the circuit. Ms Martha of DoDo Primary School indicated, *“We mark the registers in class before break. After break we just check to ensure that there is no learner who has left the school. Sometimes, some learners will leave after eating, so when we check, we can easily see who is not there. The nutrition register also helps to track learner attendance”*

b. Period registers

Secondary school principals indicated that they make use of period registers to ensure that teachers and learners attend all periods scheduled for the day. The following quote by Mr Sebata of GiGi Secondary School clearly captures the use of registers as management tools. *“We are very strict with late-coming. We monitor teaching and learning from early in the morning. The period register is kept by the learner who records the time at which the teacher arrived and when he left the class. The period registers are collected every Friday and the management checks for any gaps in*

attendance.” Ensuring that every teacher attends his class and every learner is in class is the core duty of the principal. This ensures that teaching time is protected.

c. Annual teaching plans and learners’ portfolio

Participants indicated that they use the Annual Teaching Plans, also known as the ATP, to track the amount of work covered in the class, to track learner performance and monitor content coverage by teacher. Some participants indicate that they use a tracking tool to find out the amount of scope that has been covered. The ATP enables principals to detect if teaching is according to the pace and if relevant content is covered in the prescribed period. Ms Martha of DoDo Primary School said that by controlling the learners’ portfolios, she is able to track the work covered in that class. She said, *“By the first week of the month, we check the scope coverage using the ATP, learners’ books and the assessment plan. In the Foundation Phase, we have a booklet where the record of work done is reflected.”* In the case of Mr Ngwenya of BiBi Primary School pointed out, *“I only check the content coverage at the end of the term. At the end of the month, the Heads of department tracks the curriculum and gives guidance to teachers where gaps are identified.”*

d. Relief timetable

Much time is lost during staff absence due to sick leave and special leave for urgent private matters. The time allocated for teaching is 27.5 hours per week and this is not enough to teach all the content that learners have to learn. If any minute of this time is lost, learners will lag behind and fail to cover all the content that is prescribed for the term. Teachers will have to do extra hours. Goldring *et al.* (2009:13) stated that academic learning time is the cauldron in which student achievement materialises, and learning-centred leaders work tirelessly with staff to ensure that this precious resource is maximised. The authors further stated that learning-centred leaders undertake an array of activities that protect valuable instructional time from interruptions, including developing, implementing and monitoring procedures to reduce student tardiness and absenteeism, ensuring that teachers are punctual. The consequence of failure to cover the requisite content is the poor performance of learners in benchmark test as has been shown by PIRLS, TIMMS and SAQMEC. Principals have a responsibility to protect teaching time and ensure maximum time on task.

The evidence from the study indicated that some of the participants have a way of protecting teaching time while others do not have. Mr Tau of CeCe primary school said, *“In my school, we use class teaching where a teacher is allocated a particular class. Almost all the teachers have their classes and there is no one on stand-by. When someone is absent, it is always the principal that attend to the class whose teacher is absent. This does not help the learners as I don’t teach them but just keep them busy with their work. It is difficult in the foundation phase. So we encourage regular attendance among the teachers.”* Mr Sebata of GiGi Secondary School indicated, *“I have a relief timetable to substitute someone who is not available on a particular day.”* The timetables, the ATP, and the registers are all being used to ensure that time is not lost on non-curriculum issues.

e. Lesson observation tool

Observing teachers in class is one of the routines principals have to do frequently. Lesson observation provides the principal and the SMT with the opportunity to see how teachers teach and to provide targeted support to teachers. City *et al.* (2009:24) indicated in the first principle of the instructional core framework that an increase in student learning occurs because of improvement in the level of the content, the teacher’s knowledge and skill, and student engagement. They stipulated that to increase student learning on scale, there must be an increase in the knowledge and skill that the teacher brings in the classroom, an increase in the level and complexity of the content that students are asked to learn and a change in the level of student engagement in the instructional process. Principals who do not conduct lesson observation will not be able to effect improvement in student learning or teacher development. This is a tool supplied to schools for use by peers, departmental heads, deputy principals and the principals. While all participants indicated that they observe their teachers, only a few could provide evidence of their use of the lesson observation tool. Mr Ndou of Fufu Secondary School said. *“The Heads of Department conduct class visits and check on the performance of the learners.”* What emerged from the interviews is that principals have delegated this function to their HoDs and their deputies, leaving them unaware of the practice of teachers in class. This points to lack of focus on the instructional core by some of the principals. Mr Tau of CeCe Primary School complained, *“I do not have time to observe teachers when they are in class because I will be in class at the same time. As long as a principal has teaching duties,*

it is not possible to be effective in guiding teachers. I need time to observe them, give them feedback on the observation, and make a follow up to check if the recommendations are being implemented.”

f. Curriculum tracker

Principals in the circuit were enrolled for the leadership and management course offered by the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN). The National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) was also operational in the district until being evicted by a teacher's union SADTU in 2017. NECT and the programme of UKZN specifically focused on capacitating school management in managing the curriculum. One of the tools provided to school principals is the curriculum tracker. It is widely accepted in the Bholabela District that schools use the tracker to track topic coverage. This enables principals to monitor curriculum delivery in their schools. Ivancevich and Matteson (1999) posited that managers, who are serious about leading learning in their organisation, monitor learning and, in so doing, make learning everyone's responsibility. The curriculum tracker helps to gather evidence regarding curriculum coverage, indicating the gaps that managers have to attend to, and areas where teachers need assistance. Ivancevich and Matteson (1999) further indicated that leaders establish routines for receiving undistorted feedback (p, 460). These practices are important in curriculum management. The tracker becomes the instrument that formalises the routine to receive information about curriculum coverage. Ms Martha of DoDo Primary School had this to say, *“We use the tracker to check if the teachers are covering the topics in the ATP. If there are gaps, we assist the teacher to cover the gaps.”* The principals of BiBi Primary School, Mr Tau said, *“Our tracker is organised into cycles. We track the curriculum every month. The teachers also report every month. The tracker indicates the topics that the teacher covered in that particular cycle.”* The tracker provides a reason for the principal or departmental head to engage the teacher in terms of content coverage. The principal can see immediately where the shortfall is in terms of the scope that learners and the teacher should have covered. The feedback meeting capacitates the teacher and helps to explain the context under which the teacher operated. Suggestions and remedial action are taken to correct the situation.

g. Monthly reporting tools

The study found that participants report the way they manage curriculum to the circuit manager. They use a monthly curriculum reporting tool. The tool is compiled after the principals, deputies and HoDs have done their monitoring. From the narrative of the participants, it emerged that principals who do not have deputies, monitor the work of the HoDs while those with deputies; monitor the work of the deputy. Mr Tau of CeCe Primary School pointed out, *“I do not have a deputy principal. So, I monitor the work of the HoDs. The HoDs prepare their own monthly reports and submit them to me. I prefer that we discuss their reports before I can compile the school monthly report. After discussing with the HoDs, I prepare a monthly report which is submitted to the circuit.”* Mr Ngwenya of BiBi Primary School indicated, *“The circuit manager requires principals to provide a monthly report. This includes curriculum coverage and the number of assessment tasks given. Through it, she is able to see if we are completing the topics in the ATP. The HoDs always ensure that they have the data for the completion of the monthly report. It also assists us as a school to identify the gaps and to develop intervention programmes.”* The monthly curriculum report is used to update the circuit in terms of curriculum coverage in the school.

4.4.2.3 Curriculum management practices

Practice refers to the activities that are executed almost daily in the management of the curriculum. These are the routines that principals do not miss in their daily schedules. The literature reviewed has elaborated on the practices of instructional leaders that influence school improvement and enhance learner performance. City *et al.* (2009:33) put it quite eloquently in the sixth principle, *“We learn to do the work by doing the work, not by telling others to do the work, not having done the work at some time in the past, and not by hiring experts who can act as proxies for our knowledge about how to do the work”*. This principle is a call for principals to be fully engaged in the practice of curriculum management. This does not take away the duty of the principal to delegate some of the function to others; but requires principals who function as instructional leaders to be at the forefront of practising what influences learning and teaching. Mr Sebata of GiGi Secondary School elaborated, *“In the morning I make sure that all learners are in class and all periods are attended. The class representatives collect period registers and ensure that teachers sign them on arrival in class. Although the work of the HoDs is to control learners’ books, I do*

randomly pick up books from different classes and control them. This is to enable me to see what is going on in class. At the end of every week, I check on the amount of work given. We have a tool for this that shows us the topic covered and the amount of classwork or homework given. This enables us to see if we are not lagging behind in content coverage. I also have my own schedule of class observation. Teachers know when they are to be visited by the principal. I always ensure that after every class visitation, I sit with the educator to give feedback. Most teachers find this very helpful, especially the novice teachers.” Mr Ndou of FuFu Secondary School indicated, *“We have a policy that all classwork and homework should be extracted from the previous question papers. This is to enable the learners to get used to the standard used in the matric question paper. I make sure that I do not miss to check the Grade 12 learner portfolios every Friday. I always insist on seeing every learner’s book in the key subjects. I check whether the quality of exercises matches the standard in the final Grade 12 paper. Checking on the learners’ books, I am able to quickly establish if we are meeting the targets set at the beginning of the year for that class. I also make adequate time available to moderate the learners’ scripts after every test. I do this to familiarise myself with the actual work of the learner.”* Hallinger (2003:332) indicated that instructional leaders are principals that are ‘hip deep’ in instruction, use their expertise, are goal oriented, and are unafraid to work with teachers to bring improvements in student performance.

Ms Martha of DoDo Primary School mentioned, *“I encourage my teachers to sit together and plan together. I often sit with them to discuss the lesson plan of the next day. The teachers allow me to make inputs without reservation. It is during these meetings that I try to influence them to increase the quality of assessment”*.

In Murphy’s (1990) instructional leadership framework, instructional leaders visit classrooms, evaluating the quality of assessment tasks and providing specific suggestions and feedback to teachers on teaching and learning. The preceding discussion of management tools form part of the management practices that the schools follow in their daily routine.

4.4.2.4 Management personnel

The study revealed that principals largely rely on their HoDs and deputies to manage the curriculum. They have delegated the responsibility of curriculum management to

their deputies and HoDs. This does not cause any alarm as principals complained that their inclusion in the calculation of the post establishment creates a burden for them. To this end, Mr Tau of CeCe Primary School complained that, *“When the Department determines the staff establishment of the school; the principal is included as a teacher. If the principal is in the classroom most of the time, he may not be in a position to monitor the teachers. The principal must be one of those who frequently visit the classroom to listen to teachers while teaching.”* To this, Hallinger (2003:343) cautioned, *“One of the major impediments of leadership is trying to carry the burden alone.”* This is a stark reminder that principals have to involve others in managing the school. Lambert (2002:37) also stressed this fact, indicating that the days of a heroic principal who acts as a solitary instructional leader for the entire school, are gone. Kruger *et al.* (2003:118) indicated that the work of the principal is to get teaching and learning at school done through the efforts of others, and that no principal can exercise leadership without delegating most of his responsibilities. Achieving this through the effort of others is an attribute of good leadership. The guides on School Management Teams (DoE 200:2) refer to and define the role of the SMT as, *“To assist the principal with his or her management tasks and to share management tasks more widely in the school.”* The literature reviewed above vindicates principals who use other people to perform duties that would otherwise be performed by the principals themselves. However, it must be remembered that achieving results through the efforts of other is the responsibility of good management. The following quotes by participants emphasise the point made. Ms Martha of DoDo Primary School said, *“There is one HoD in the school. We have appointed two senior teachers to assist as SMT members. They also assist the HoD in checking the learners’ books. We did this appointment because the work was just too much for one HoD. The HoD checks on the work of the teachers in class. They go to class for lesson observation. We have a reporting tool that they complete at the end of the month. This, he submits to me so that I can complete a monthly report for the circuit.”* Mr Phala of AyAy Secondary School reiterated the delegation of curriculum duties to others in this way, *“The deputy is the chief curriculum manager. He monitors the work of the HoD’s and report to me. I only come in when there are problems that he cannot deal with.”*

The quotes above support the idea that principals cannot carry the burden alone. Other responsibilities have to be delegated to other personnel for the effective functioning of the school.

4.4.2.5 Monitoring improvement in learner performance

According to the policy on WSE (2002:5) the principal has to conduct an annual evaluation of the school on nine key performance areas. Learner achievement is identified as a key performance area that the school principal has to report on. The Mpumalanga Education Department developed a SIP template that schools complete annually and among the areas of improvement is learner achievement. This adds strength to the importance attached to this area of schooling. Most participants reported an increase in performance since their tenure. It is only in two secondary schools where performance has not shown any significant improvement in the period of tenure of the principal. Secondary schools, with the exception of GIGI Secondary School, whose performance has been on the rise since the principal's tenure, have experienced lack of consistency in their overall performance. The scenario is different in primary schools where there has been a steady improvement in performance. Of particular note is the improvement in the performance in subjects such as Mathematics English and Science. Participants ascribe this to the recruitment of qualified Maths and Science teachers. As Ms Martha of DoDo Primary School put forward, *"We recruit maths and science teachers because these are the subjects that we have a challenge with."* Mr Sebata stated his intervention as, *"I recruit teachers based on the needs of the school."*

Teacher qualification and development also plays a role in the improvement of learner performance. That principals who encourage their teachers to enrol with institutions of higher learning to improve their qualifications, has a lot to do with the improvement of the learner performance. Ms Martha indicated, *"When my teacher is not doing well in the subject he or she is allocated, I arrange for an experienced teacher from another school to assist the teacher. Fortunately, we have a good working relationship with the surrounding schools. So, it does not become a problem to get their assistance."* Mr Sebata echoed the same sentiment indicating, *"I outsource when I discover that my teacher is struggling in a certain section. I request that the subject teacher remain with the teacher who has come to assist so that he or she can learn the ways and tactics."*

I don't want my teacher to rely on the outsourced teacher. I want my teacher to be masters in their subjects." Mr Ndou of FuFu Secondary School also held the same view of outsourcing and asking for assistance to help his teachers. This is encouraging collaboration, networking and team teaching among the staff of different schools. Learners benefit from the shared expertise and the teachers learn from each other. As learners are exposed to a variety of approaches, teachers share expertise, information and tactics. Learners become beneficiaries of good teaching practices and performance is boosted.

4.4.3 Staff Development

The efficiency of any organisation largely depends on the quality of its workforce. Staff members of a school are largely made up of teachers, administrators, and general assistance. They are all employed to enhance the effective delivery of teaching and learning. All staff members require development in order to gain the requisite skills and to be efficient. According to Murphy *et al.* (2006:17) instructional leaders create robust systems for staff development ensuring that staff members gain the expertise and experiences required to grow their professional skills. Murphy *et al.* (2006) stressed that the development of staff should derive from data about student learning and be targeted towards student performance. For the purpose of this study, attention is paid to the teacher component of the staff. This section looks at how principals recruit teachers, what development programmes they expose teachers to and the incentives that principals provide to create motivation for better performance.

4.4.3.1 Recruitment processes

Institutional effectiveness is dependent upon the capacities and competencies of the workforce. A good workforce will be more effective and efficient than a bad one. Murphy *et al.* (2006) posit that learner-centred principals see teachers as a keystone of quality education. They devote considerable effort to guarantee that the school is populated with excellent teachers, teachers whose values and instructional frameworks are consistent with the mission and culture of the school. They allocate teachers according to educational criteria, especially student needs rather than on less appropriate foundation such as staff seniority and school politics (Murphy *et al.*, 2006:11-12). Principals indicated that they always consider the curricular needs of the school when recruiting new teachers. They follow the guidelines laid down by the

Department which involve advertising, sifting, shortlisting, interview and appointment. Mr Tau, the principal of CeCe Primary School put it in this way, *“...it must be the minimum requirements at entry level. Best teachers are prepared with good qualifications. The teacher who shows to be more competitive is employed”*. This point is reiterated by Mr Ngwenya the principal of BiBi Primary School who said, *“Teachers that we recruit must meet the requirements of the school. We don’t just appoint a teacher because he/she is qualified”*.

The characteristic of good leaders is that they develop good teachers. It is required of school leaders to invest in the development of their teachers to be able to achieve organisational goals. Responses to the question of how principals develop teachers indicate greater use of and reliance on the programme of integrated quality management system (IQMS), the workshops conducted by the Department and the skills development programmes offered by the district. The quote from the principal of Mr Tau of CeCe Primary School attests to this. *“We encourage teachers to go to teacher development organised by the Department in the form of workshops. We encourage teachers to take skills development organised by the employer. Also, IQMS is another tool we are using for teacher development.”* The principal of GiGi Secondary School put his teacher development initiative in this way, *“When I hire a teacher, I conduct induction. When I hire a teacher and allocate him or her to Grade 12, I request experienced teachers from other schools to assist the teachers. I do take the teacher to some performing school to stay for some hours with experienced teachers.”* The response of Martha, the principal of DoDo Primary School concurred with the above response. *“We encourage teachers to apply for skills development, to study further majoring in the subjects they teach. We invite curriculum advisors to the school to assist in the gaps identified. If we identify a good teacher in our neighbouring school, we invite the teachers to develop our teachers. Sometimes teachers swap schools.”* The principal of FuFu Secondary School confirmed this when he indicated that, *“The IQMS programme is assisting in the development of teachers. During class visits by heads of department, challenges are identified and addressed during departmental meetings. The district also conducts workshop which assist with the development of teachers.”*

Southworth (2009:79) posit that instructional leadership is strongly concerned with teaching and learning, including the professional learning of teachers. This means that principals must ensure that their teachers develop professionally by learning or increasing the level of their knowledge. Teachers can learn from each other through peer observation and sharing of knowledge or receive learning from other institutions like universities. This is affirmed by the principal of CeCe Primary School when he said, *“When I arrived in the school there were very few teachers with senior degrees. As I am speaking, most are now holding senior degrees.”* The principal has been instrumental in ensuring that teachers upgrade their qualifications to be effective with curriculum, instruction and pedagogy. This is keeping with the expectation placed on the principal to mentor, develop and up-skill his/her personnel.

One of the functions of the principal is staff recruitment. Schools are provided with post establishment that principals, working together with the school governing body (SGB), must profile in terms of the needs of the school. Section 16A (b)(i-ii) of SASA requires the principal to use the resources of the school to enable the school to achieve the minimum academic performance. How principals recruit staff in the school has a huge bearing on the academic performance of the school. Murphy *et al.* (2006:11-12), contend that leaders in schools where all youngsters reach ambitious learning targets see teachers as the keystone to quality education. Therefore, they devote considerable time and undertake much careful planning to guarantee that the school is staffed with excellent teachers whose values and instructional frameworks are consistent with the mission and cultures of the school.

According to Whitaker (2013), good teachers make good principals and good principals make good teachers. Barth confirmed the indisputable association of a good school and good instructional leaders when he stated that, *“The principal is a key to a good school as he/she affects the quality of the educational program and school climate. The principal is the most important reason why teachers grow or are stifled on the job. Show me a good school, I will show you a good principal.”* (1990:64). A good principal recruits good teachers and good teachers make a good school. This point was put succinctly by the principal of GiGi Secondary School when he said, *“When there are vacancies in the school, I am usually guided by the academic record of the teacher. If I need a maths teacher, I do not hire an agricultural science teacher. I am not influenced by where the teacher comes from, as long as he is relevantly*

qualified for the job.” The principal of school DoDo Primary School reiterated this point when she said, *“Before recruitment we normally sit down with the HoD and check the resources that we have with personnel and identify the area where we need educators...the recruitment is based on the school needs in terms of curriculum.”* The quotes provide evidence that principals consider the needs of the school when they recruit teachers.

4.4.3.2 Improvement of teacher qualifications

The key to student success is providing an effective teacher in every classroom and an effective principal in every school. Teacher effectiveness matters. The principal is central in recruiting and supporting teachers and leading school improvement. These were the observations made by initially by Waters *et al.* (2003) and Rivkin *et al.* (2005) and later by Murphy *et al.* (2006). Teacher qualification plays an important role in the improvement of performance in the classroom. Good principals attract good teachers. In Southworth (2002:79), the observation made is that instructional leadership is strongly concerned with teaching and learning, but also pays attention to professional growth of teachers. This recognises the importance of qualified and properly skilled competent teachers. Some of the principals found the staff in the school and had to develop them. Qualified teachers can interpret the curriculum well and are capacitated with a wide variety of approaches that will enable them to unpack the curriculum in a simpler and understandable manner.

According to Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999), people are organisations. The improvement in the quality of the people that make up the organisation leads to organisational improvement. The school as an organisation has a reason to invest in the professional development of its teachers.

Principal who has faced the challenge of under-qualified teachers reported that they tried to develop their teachers. The principal of AyAy Secondary School pointed this out when he said, *“I am happy to say that even if we still have teachers who only have the initial qualification, there are teachers who are pursuing their studies to higher levels.”* Most of responses referring to teacher qualification highlighted the prevalence of under-qualified educators who do not upgrade their qualifications.

4.4.3.3 Teacher development

Not all teachers come fit for the purpose they are employed for. Spaul (2013:25-29) observed that mathematics teachers in Grade six have a deficit of both content and the pedagogical knowledge to teach maths, with some performing more poorly than Grade six learners. A point is made that the teachers who lack the elementary understanding of the subject they teach can actually harm the learning trajectory of students in the long term. This is true, particularly in the era with a huge influx of new recruits from the cohort of teachers sponsored by the government through various bursary schemes. All novice educators require development to enable them to perform according to expectation and to build the capacity and self-confidence. Seasoned teachers also require development due to the ever-changing approaches and technological advancement in education. The need for teacher development has been made more urgent by the poor performance of schools, particularly in the key subjects such as mathematics, science and technology, and languages. This has been highlighted in the cross-national tests where South African learners have been found to be lagging behind (NPC: 2011; PIRLS: 2016; Spaul, 2013). The Talis Survey (OECD, 2009) indicated that institutions perform because of the capacity of their employees. Therefore, principals as instructional leaders are required to recruit, develop and mentor teachers to ensure that they can perform at their maximum capacities. Spaul (2013:24) contends that the quality of the country's teachers is very closely linked to the output of the education system. Similarly, the report on Teachers Matter (OECD, 2005:2) concluded that attributes that relate to teacher quality are the most influential in student achievement. To ensure quality in the teaching profession, the Department has developed measures to ensure that teachers are continuously developed to measure up to the changing dynamic of the education. ELRC Resolution 1 of 2003 introduced the Integrated Quality Management System for South African educators. The IQMS system has performance standard no 5 that compels teachers to engage in professional development in the field of work, career and participation in professional bodies. These are divided into employer-initiated activities; union-initiated activities, school-initiated activities, and self-initiated activities. Teachers earn Continuous Professional Teacher Development points for participating in professional development activities. Points can be earned from attending cluster workshops, school-based workshop, professional bodies meeting, and self-initiated study. The

value of teacher development has been commented upon by many scholars. The summative evaluation of teachers is used to inform some of the professional development programmes that teachers attend, particularly as it is mandatory for all teachers to undergo annual evaluation.

The purpose of IQMS is to identify specific need of educators, schools and districts offices for support and development, provide support for growth, and evaluate the performance of educators. With IQMS, the areas of strength and weakness are determined, and programmes of individual teacher development are drawn. Desimone, *et al.* (2002) posit that schools do not have a coherent, coordinated approach to professional development that is effective in building consistency among their teachers. The authors stated that effective professional development must focus on content and how students learn, provide in-depth learning opportunities, be linked to high performing school and district standards, provide opportunities for teachers to engage in leadership roles, be of an extended duration than short bursts, and collective participation of teachers from the same school, grade or department.

NEEDU, in concurrence with the characteristics of high-quality professional development, emphasises the importance of school-based professional development, asserting that it provides development for teachers by teachers (NEEDU, 2015). Professional development has also been highlighted as a priority by the National Planning Commission (NPC, 2011).

The principal of CeCe Primary School, Mr Tau said, *“In the school we encourage all teachers to work hard and become masters of their subjects. We encourage that teachers accompany each other to class in order to observe each other using a standard lesson observation tool. This has found acceptance as teachers are more comfortable when observed by their peers. After the observation, we expect them to provide a report. This started off slowly but has now found wide acceptance. We encourage personal study in relevant subject areas. As I already indicated, most teachers are now holding senior qualifications, and some have been appointed as HoDs in the school and in other schools”*. From the views of this participant, the school uses peer-on-peer development.

Mr Phala of AyAy Secondary School cited the qualifications of the teachers as a problem in his school. He said, *“There are teachers who are still holding the original*

qualification. The teachers do not meet the curriculum requirement of the school. They do not develop themselves and find themselves irrelevant with the changes that have been brought about by the changing curriculum. Our teacher developmental programme includes observing teachers and giving them feedback. We have the school development team that appraise teachers. We also suggest to teachers to enrol with institutions of higher learning. We use workshop, information sharing and team teaching to develop the teachers.

Mr Lengau, the principal of EliEli Primary School said, *“The IQMS programme which assists with the development of educators. When we recruit a new teacher, we make the teacher to go through the stages of development. If you follow the programme of IQMS and consider those standards, it will assist the teacher to realise the strength and the weaknesses. That will help to improve the school. During our staff meetings, we assist teachers to write formal reports when they return from their meeting. Some tend to keep quiet when they return from attending meetings. We have subject committees where teachers work together sharing subject knowledge. It assists the novice teachers to adjust to the expected standard or level.”*

The principals of FuFu Secondary School echoed the same views indicating, *“When the HoDs identify a problem, we make use of teachers from neighbouring schools to develop the teachers. The workshops that are provided by the Department are assisting in developing the teachers. We have a motivational programme during which we invite motivational speakers to lift the morale of the staff.”* Ms Martha, the principal of DoDo Primary School indicated, *“I often take my teachers to the neighbouring schools to be mentored by the experienced teachers. Sometimes I invite these experienced teachers to come to our school to assist my teachers. I encourage my teachers to further their studies with the institutions of higher learning”.* The development can be done in-school or outsourced. The Talis Survey (OECD, 2009:59,117) indicates that in many countries, 30% of teachers make regular use of professional networks, maintained by teachers themselves, and that the positive impact of these kinds of networks on teaching and learning is particularly strong, which relates to development of teachers by teachers.

The views expressed by the participants attest to what they do to develop the professional capacities of their teachers. It has to be pointed out that most participants

did not respond adequately to this question and where they responded, there was very little mentioned about professional teacher development. What is very clear is that schools do not have an informed, coherent and coordinated professional development programme, despite their teachers and learners struggling with performance.

4.4.4 Creating of a Climate of High Expectations

Creating an atmosphere of high expectations is the attribute of a good leader. Followers need to know that there are always better targets to be achieved if they put in more effort. Bush and Glover (2009) posited that the core purpose of the principalship is to provide leadership and management in all aspects of the school to enable the creation and support of conditions enabling quality teaching and learning to take place and which fosters the highest possible standard of learner achievement. Shannon and Bylsma (2007:33) stated that, "Increasing student learning requires that students as well as their teachers believe in their ability to learn to high academic standards". The development of goals, benchmarking of performance against previous performances, and providing incentives for going beyond the norm, can elevate expectation and speed up performance. How principals build a climate of high expectation can become the catalyst for a healthy and performing school. This section looks at what principals do to create a culture of performance for all learners in their schools.

4.4.4.1 *Setting ambitious targets*

There are not major differences between goals and targets. They are what a person aims for, differing only in the degree. Target or goal setting is the starting point of creating a climate of high expectations. Kusek and Rist (2004:90) describe targets or goals as specific, quantifiable objectives that indicate the number, the location and the timing of that which an organisation wants to achieve by a given time. The targets or goals that have been agreed upon and set can provide a stimulus for high achievement. Locke and Lathan (1990) stated that goal setting is an effective way of increasing motivation and performance, triggering an increased focus and commitment on task performance and development of innovative strategies to attain the goals. People have a natural tendency of wanting to reach for greater heights. It is the function of principals as instructional leaders, to influence the setting of ambitious targets for the school. Creating a climate of high expectation goes beyond the goals

themselves. It involves an array of activities that ensure academic time is used maximally for the promotion of teaching and learning. Murphy *et al.* (2006:13) posit that instructional time is the cauldron in which student achievement materialises. Principals that function as instructional leaders protect instructional time from interruptions, protect teachers from distractions, assign time slots to academic subjects where the least disturbances can occur, develop, promote, and monitor procedures that reduce student tardiness and absenteeism, and ensures that teachers are punctual.

The views of participants in creating high expectations were limited to the pass percentage targets. In the views of the participant, the targets they set or those that are set by the district, is enough to aim for. Some of the participants indicated a desire to be the number one school in their circuit. As Mr Tau the principal of CeCe Primary School hinted, *“We are targeting 100% pass in the Foundation Phase and 80% in the Senior Phase.”* The same ambition was echoed by Mr Ngwenya, the principal of BiBi Primary School whose targets were 100% in mathematics and Home Language and English First Additional Language. Improving performance in mathematics and Science appears to be a constant target for the principal of all schools. Participants also mentioned the activities that they engage in in order to achieve these expectations. Mr Sebata of GiGi Secondary School put it clearly when he stated, *“At the beginning of the year, I have a meeting with all the teachers, we agree on the targets and expectations for the year. I always tell them to aim high, to work to be the best in the circuit and in the District. Then we approach the learners and tell them of what they have to achieve. The Induna is informed of our expectation. Whenever he has his lekgotla, he informs the community. Sometimes I do attend his lekgotla and used the occasion to inform them. And they appreciate”* Through the creation of extra time, awarding of certificates, parading top 10 achievers at assembly, awarding the best teacher of the month, and annual prize giving ceremonies, the principals set the tone for a climate of high academic expectation.

4.4.4.2 Providing awards and incentives

Most principals acknowledge outstanding performance by teachers and learners in a wide variety of ways. They award trophies and certificates for outstanding performance. Some give teachers personalised tokens of appreciation. Learners

receive certificate, snacks, and dictionaries depending on the period. At the end of the year, they are given prizes and certificates. These encourage both teachers and learners to aim high and work for outstanding academic performance. Hoy *et al.* (1990) observed that healthy schools that promote high academic standards, appropriate leadership and collegiality create a climate more conducive to student success and achievement. Motivating teachers and learners for high academic achievement is one of the functions of the principal as an instructional leader. Motivating teachers and learners through the award system does reinforce the importance of performing at higher levels. It develops a positive self-image of the individual, knowing that his or her efforts are being recognised, and it encourages the teacher to continue striving for the best. A school where performance is valued, develops a climate of high academic press. Murphy and Murphy (1985:223) had this to say, "Principals can influence students and teachers' attitude through the creation of a reward structure that reinforces academic achievement and productive effort; through clear explicit standards embodying what the school expects from students; through the careful use of school time; and through the selection and implementation of high-quality staff development".

The following quotes illustrate the importance that principals attach to motivation. Mr Tau, the principal of CeCe Primary School had this to say. *"In our school it is dependent on the individual educator. Incentives are given to Grade 7 at the end of the year. We organise a farewell function and award prizes to those who performed best. To encourage them to read we buy them snack or sweets and give them at assembly."* He went on to explain how teachers motivate learners and how teachers themselves are motivated in their school and said, *"I have indicated earlier on that when we do farewell function for Grade 7, we do recognize the hard work teachers did. We issue them with certificates so that when they attend interviews elsewhere, they need to prove what they are doing for our school. Some teachers who work hard have become heads of department due to the hard work they did in the school.* The principal of school DoDo Primary School indicated that in their school, *"All my learners by the end of the term we give them certificate to motivate them. At the end of the year, we give them trophies. Best learners are given school bags and materials for the next year. We give them pencil cases; some receive T-shirts for free depending on the donations we normally get."*

4.4.5 Principals' Views of Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is a new concept of leadership that has recently emerged in South African schools. The passing of the Policy on Standards for South African Principals was a strategic measure implemented by the Department to ensure that principals are acquainted with the leadership form expected of them. Among the five leadership roles expected of the principal is instructional leadership. This is leadership that is focused on the technical core function of the school: Teaching and Learning. This section explores how principals understand the concept of instructional leadership, what practices they engage in that accentuate instructional leadership, how principals use instructional leadership to improve learner performance, and what barriers they encounter that hinder their instructional leadership practice.

4.4.5.1 Principals' understanding of instructional leadership

According to reviewed literature, instructional leadership involves practices that pay greater focus on the interaction between the teacher, the learner and the content. It is leadership that is concerned with how teachers are teaching, how learners are learning and how the content is being interpreted, assimilated and made sense of. Questions posed by the researcher were meant to uncover if principals do understand their role and how they practise instructional leadership in their schools. The literature reviewed is indicative of many principals lacking capacity and knowledge of school management practices.

Van der Westhuizen and Van Vuuren (2004) observed that many principals are overwhelmed by rapid changes in the education sphere and are rendered ineffective in managing their schools due to lack of training and skills in management. This is also confirmed by the assertion made by Kitavi and Van der Westhuizen (1997:252) observing the appointment of principals in Kenya based on teaching capacity, who cautioned that possessing good teaching skills is not a proxy for capable education manager. This holds true for the appointment of principals in South African schools. Bush and Oduro (2006:362) noted that throughout Africa, there is no formal requirement for principals to be trained as managers before and after appointment into the position.

To capacitate principals on the leadership and management role, the Department initiated the ACE programme for education managers. The aim of the ACE programme was to develop a cadre of trained educational leaders who can fuse critical understanding, knowledge, skills, and values to school leadership and management within a democratic dispensation. The following responses demonstrated the extent of principals' knowledge of and application of instructional leadership practices. Mr Phala, the principal of AyAy Secondary School, responded in this way, *"To give direction, to motivate, to create an atmosphere that is conducive to everyone in the school. By ensuring that the culture and climate is healthy. To be on top of the current affairs. To stamp authority."* The principal of DoDo Primary School articulated her understanding of the role of instructional leader as, *"To give direction in all the areas that the need to be developed holistically. The principal has to have knowledge of all the learning areas, to give instruction that will lead to school progress, to ensure that the curriculum is being managed, to give instruction that will lead to school progress, and to make sure that all resources that teachers need are made available in time. To give guidance and support to the staff."* The principal of EliEli Primary School explained his understanding of the role of instructional leadership in this manner *"In my understanding, for the curriculum to be properly executed, the principal has to be at the centre to ensure that teachers carry out instruction according to the prescribed workload in the school to ensure that learners receive activities that will bring about development. As an instructional leader, I have to be strategic and motivate the teachers to realise their critical role towards the development of the child."* The principal of FuFu Secondary School indicated the following, *"To manage instructions which are issued to teachers. The principal is the chief strategist who leads the school towards the direction that has been set"* The principal of GiGi Secondary School was most focused on duty allocation especially in the Grade 12 class. He echoed his understanding of the role of instructional leadership like this, *"In Grade 12, I put people who are result oriented. I delegate the allocation of subjects to the HoD, but I have a role in the allocation of Grade 12 teachers. If you miss it in the allocation as a principal, then you have a challenge."* There is very little doubt that most principals struggle with performing instructional leadership roles. As observed by Kruger (2003), many principals lack the knowledge and an understanding of their instructional leadership function, thus focusing very little on curriculum management and teacher and learner support in the classroom.

4.4.5.2 Principals' practices of instructional leadership

To be effective in influencing teaching and learning in the school, principals have to be aware of those practices that have an impact on teaching and learning. City *et al* (2009:30) in the fourth principle, task predicts performance, suggested that the managers who want to improve performance, must look on top of the student's desk rather than the teacher in front of the class. This is a call for instructional leadership to determine if learners are really learning in their class. Without this awareness, principals will be severely challenged. The temptation to be overwhelmed by administrative chores that do not impact the instructional core cannot be avoided. Goldring *et al.* (2009) list the practice of instructional leadership as those practices that involve planning, evaluation, coordination and improvement of teaching and learning with principals defining and communicating the school goals. Mr Sebata of GiGi Secondary School was very articulate on the role of goal definition when he said, "*I make sure that we set very clear goals at the beginning of the year. Parents and the community are informed of what the school wants to achieve by the end of the year.*"

Principals visit the classroom to ensure that instructions are aligned with school goals, they work with students on academic tasks and provide feedback, they set high but achievable standards for students and provide public praise for achievement, they monitor the progress of students frequently and protect instructional time. Mr Tau of CeCe Primary School revealed that, "*We monitor class attendance to ensure that we do not lose time for teaching. With the period register, we ensure that all classes are attended in time and there is no class bunking by learners.*" Hallinger and Murphy (2009:223) and Hallinger (2000), in the Principals Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), list framing of school goals and communicating school goals, supervising and evaluating instructions, coordinating the curriculum, monitoring student progress, protecting instructional time, maintaining visibility, providing incentives to teachers and learners, promoting professional development and providing incentives for learning, as practices of principals who function as instructional leaders.

Responses of participants in the study provided evidence that they are practising instructional leadership, albeit at different levels and in various forms. Mr Phala of AyAy Secondary School revealed that, "*We plan how we are going to teach the*

learners to succeed. We have short term, medium term and long-term plans. We plan the allocation of subject to teacher, class allocation, class observation and staff development activities. We do the school improvement plan that the Department requires every year. In the SIP, we indicate our action plan that addresses what, who, when and how.” Principals perform duties that are instructionally focused and in agreement with the postulations of the literature review. What is lacking is the rigour with which they engage in instructional practices. Principals in the study, while engaged in instructional leadership functions, do not have an awareness of instructional leadership. Their understanding of the concept of instructional leadership is shallow. As a result of this narrow view of instructional leadership, principals went about doing what they do without understanding that it is instructional leadership, and with the express purpose of influencing school performance. For these principals, what they do are the routines that all principals must be seen to be doing. This is further confirmed by the lack of documentary evidence of the plans that are reflective of instructional practices.

4.4.5.3 Implementation of instructional leadership

Principals, as instructional leaders, are expected to be at the forefront in fostering an environment of effective teaching and learning. They are to be seen to be implementing instructional practices for all students to have an opportunity to succeed.

According to Robinson (2007:21), principals who are closer to the core business of teaching and learning are more likely to make a difference to student learning. Student outcomes are likely to be greater where the principal has oversight and is involved in curriculum planning and coordination, as well as in teacher learning professional development. Mr Ngwenya, the principal of BiBI Primary School indicated that, *“We develop a programme and give it to every teacher. There is a school-based moderation programme and the Quality Management System. We have established a committee for QMS. During recruitment of staff, we check the requirements of the school before employing a teacher. We don’t just employ a teacher based on the fact that he or she is qualified.* Mr Tau, the principal of CeCe Primary School said, *“The HoDs are monitoring the work of the teachers, the deputy monitors the work of the HoDs while I monitor the work of the deputy principal.”* Monitoring of the work, according to Murphy *et al.* (2006) and Robinson (2007), is an instructional practice

employed by principals. Mr Sebata of GiGi Secondary School pointed out the following practices. *“We have developed a programme of learner engagement. This is made up of extra classes. We start with the Grade 12 class in the first week after the reopening of the schools in January. Grade 12 learners start with morning studies and afternoon classes. Learners also report for studies on Saturdays. I monitor these classes and the community is also asked to help in monitoring the studies. Morning studies are suspended in May as winter sets in. During the month of May, we start with a study camp to prepare the learners for the half-yearly examination. I encourage all Grade 12 teachers to complete the syllabus by the end of May. In August and September, we have a study camp to engage the learners in intensive revision and prepare them for the final examination.”*

While the interviewed participants spoke of monitoring, evaluating, supervision, giving feedback, evidence could not be provided upon for the claims made. Very little information emerged to attest to the enactment of instructional leadership practices. Neither were principals able to show the schedules that confirmed that the routines are instructional in nature.

4.4.5.4 Principals’ use of instructional leadership to enhances learner performance

The research question was not answered in a manner that gleaned the purposeful use of instructional leadership practices to improve learner performance. This is attributed to the weak nature of the principals’ understanding of instructional leadership. Mr Ngwenya said, *“We have focused on recruiting Maths and Science teachers to improve on the performance of learners in these subjects. We have not been performing well in these subjects but now we are starting to see improvement. When we employed a teacher on an SGB funded post, the teacher was allocated mathematics and science. This was done to try to improve learner performance in these subjects. Unfortunately, the post had to be discontinued as the results of the Department’s directive that schools should not employ foreign teachers without citizenship.”* Ms Martha indicated that, *“After assuming duty in the school, learner performance was low. I realised that it was due to teachers teaching subjects that they did not specialise in. I started recruiting teachers according to the curricular needs of the school. Learners have started performing well in the challenging subjects of Maths and Science. The languages are also doing well as a result of that intervention. I have*

also started a study group where members of the community assist the learners in the afternoons. Most of the learners who are in the study group are showing great progress in the performance. Mr Ndou of Fufu Secondary School stated that, *“We created extra time to ensure that teachers cover the content in time for adequate revision. When learners are pushed very hard and taken through revision, their performance shows an improvement. The extra lessons are surely helping us a lot. They force the learners to engage with the content while at school, because at home they don’t seem to have the time to study on their own.”* The quotes of the participants above reinforce the view expressed by Murphy *et al.* (2006) when stating that allocation of teachers should be based on educational criteria and student needs, and that academic time is the cauldron in which student achievement takes place. The practice of hiring teachers according to the curricular needs of the school, increasing contact time through extra classes, targeting subjects that struggle during the hiring of teacher are instructional practices that promote learner performance.

4.4.4.3 Challenges to teacher and learner motivation.

The other theme that emerged from the interview responses is that principals are confronted with challenges when it comes to giving incentives to their teachers and learners. Most participants cited the lack of finances that constrict their ability to honour the performance of their teachers and learners. In fact, they decry the meagre level at which their awards are being made. Perhaps this is why all principals rely on the farewell function for their Grade 7 as a form of motivation. Nothing of significance is given during the year. The principal of AyAy Secondary School indicated that the environment from where the learners hail is not motivating. He said, *“People who are role models are not pro education. Learners are looking up to people who get rich quick without working or those using wrong means.”* The same response was reiterated by the principal of FuFu Secondary School who said, *“Learners believe that it is easier to get rich without education. Learners look up to criminals who got rich without working as their role models”*. The principal of DoDo Primary School indicated that incentives can be the reason behind divisions in the school if not properly handled. She pointed out that, *“Teachers do not understand that there are people who are working harder than others. When you give an award to one teacher, they ask why they don’t also get it because they are teachers in the same school. Teachers do not appreciate that there are always those that go the extra mile and deserve the best”*.

In other words, teachers feel that they deserve the same incentives even if they did not work hard enough to earn them. The principal of AyAy Secondary School complained about teachers who are not self-motivated. He said the challenge with teachers is *stagnation*. In his own words, “*The old teachers, each time you speak to them they say re gotse (we are old). We cannot perform anymore.*” The principals of CeCe Primary School and GiGi Secondary School cited the lack of money, indicating that by January their coffers are empty.

From the interview responses, it is evident that principals try their best to motivate both the staff and their learners. It is also not surprising that teachers become demotivated, and this rubs off on their students. Wells and Ashton (1986) stated that teachers enter the profession with high expectations and a high sense of efficacy. The experience in the work situation does not live up to the expectation and diminishes the expectation they have of themselves and their students. Teachers feel that they are not being compensated adequately for their efforts and are being undermined by workers in other professions. They experience a sense of uncertainty which deprives them of the opportunity to see others at work. Teachers feel alienated which precipitates an attitude of quiet conformity and unreflective acceptance of the status quo, uncertainty, a sense of powerlessness because they are not part of the decision-making process that affects their work, alienated and a sense of eroding efficacy. Ashton and Wells (1986) attribute these to the democratisation of the professional work force, which they label as a great problem. The authors recommend that the collective work effort be used to address this challenge. Hoy and Woolfolk (1993) posit that school structure and health play an important role in the motivation of teachers and enhancing their efficacy. They suggest that teachers and administrator roles should be highly differentiated and clearly defined. Teachers and administrators should be committed to common goals, develop warm and caring relationship which engenders the sharing of resources and evaluation systems to be fair for teachers to believe in them. The authors contend that teacher efficacy and performance efficacy is supported when teachers are clear about their roles and the means to achieve them. Motivation takes a simple form as in giving certificate to a more complex form of taking them on a trip. The constraints presented by lack of financial resources, poor motivation of teachers, lack of departmental incentives, low pay, lack of positive role models in the communities serve as challenges to their ability to motivate their teachers and

learners. There appears to be a total disregard of all methods of incentives that do not involve financial outlay. Actions such as displaying outstanding works by learners, acknowledging teachers at assembly or during parents' gatherings, acknowledging learners during morning assembly can be used to great effect. Giving positive messages to demotivated teachers will go a long way to increase their motivation. These measures will boost the morale of teachers and, as observed by Andrews and Soder (1985), teachers with high morale put more effort into their work and their students. The OECD (2016) posits that struggling students benefit from teachers who show interest in every student's learning, help students when they need it, work with students until they understand the content, and give students the opportunity to express themselves. Student motivation is thus dependent on the motivation of the teacher.

4.4.6 Barriers to Instructional Leadership

The role of the principal in a school is that of manager and leader. Leadership and management have their different demands on the principal which requires him/her to balance between the two. Far more often, the principal is inundated with administrative chores that compromise his/her focus on instructional leadership. The OECD (2016:456) recognised this when stating, "because of its complexity, the work of the school principal is increasingly recognised as responsibilities that should be more broadly shared. Distributed leadership reflects the fact that leadership is not only exerted by the principal, that others within the organisation act as leaders" This section looks at the barriers that hinder the principals' ability to function as an instructional leader.

4.4.6.1 Teachers' attitude

All the principals articulated challenges that they have faced in the past and those that still persist. They attribute lack of progress to some of the challenges that continue to plague their schools. Some of the challenges emanate from the schools, some from the community, and some from the teachers themselves, while some are caused by the unions. The following emerged from the voices of some of the principals: The principal of AyAy Secondary School had this to say, "*At school we have teachers, who are sick, teachers who suffer from depression. We have a teacher with epilepsy. Teachers will show some tantrums. Sometimes a teacher will make a lot of noise*

claiming to have a mental problem. There are teachers who drag their feet because they are old. They openly say (re gotse) we are old. These teachers resist any change you try to bring. You can't allocate them a different subject." Mullins (1983:113-114) stated, "Managers and their culture are inseparable from each other. Managers consistently influence and affect the perceptions and attitudes of their subordinate. Managers have to control and manipulate the attitude, values and knowledge of their subordinates." Principals have the responsibility to shape the culture of their schools. School culture involves the rituals, the values and the attitude displayed by those associated with the school. This becomes apparent in all the activities that members of the school engage in. In order to motivate teachers, Mullins (1983:275) suggests that the school goals and individual goals be compatible. Performance will depend on the extent to which individuals are provided with an opportunity to satisfy their own goals by contributing to the goals of the organisation. The author further indicates that it is important for management to have a highly developed sense of people perceptions, and understanding of their feelings, needs and expectations. As principals set the goals of the school, they must be aware of the attitudes in their school and endeavour to include these within their goal setting. It is people who are managed, that achieve the school goals. A genuine concern for people and their welfare can go a long way in encouraging them to perform well.

4.4.6.2 Inadequate infrastructure

Principals held the view that their schools are not properly resourced to enable them to achieve high academic outcomes. They experienced resources as a challenge in varied ways. The resources referred to range from infrastructure, materials, adequate finances and human resources. These appear to be the major challenges that principals face. They need the financial resources to do a long list of chores in the school like hiring additional teachers, purchasing teaching aids, printing hand-outs for learners, organising extra lessons, organising farewell functions and purchasing certificates to motivate teachers and learners. Through their views on the challenges, they experienced from the varied list of resource shortages, the findings led to an understanding of the effect of the challenges on the provision of instructional leadership. The following quote from the principal of AyAy Secondary School captured the challenge re financial resources, "*For this year 2020, we were allocated very limited funds. We were given 15%. It is difficult to run an institution such as this one.*

(His school is a newly built multimillion rand school with a lot of infrastructure). The principal of CeCe Primary School cited the inclusion of the principal in the staff provisioning as a teacher. He indicated that the principal should not be counted as a teacher because he has management duties. In his own words he said, *“When the Department determines the staff provisioning of the school, the principal is also counted as teacher. If the principal is in the classroom most of the time, he may not be able to monitor the teachers. The principal must be one of those who frequently visit the class to listen to the teacher while teaching. If an educator could be employed to teach the subjects taught by the principal so that the principal could focus on management”*. The principal of CeCe Primary School went on to mention that *“we only had 40 learner desks supplied by the Department in the past five years. There are no ablution facilities. We use Enviroloo toilets for 681 learners and 20 teachers. The school does not have adequate ablution facilities”*.

Shortage of finances emerged prominently during the interviews. Principals report the need for adequate funding to perform the many tasks in the school. They indicated that they employ additional teachers, the so-called SGB posts, to address staff shortages. Without adequate funding, this cannot be done, and their school remains understaffed. They also pointed to underfunding as a reason for the failure to give incentives to their teachers and learners. In contrast, Hanushek, Rivkin and Taylor (1996:154) found that school resources have no significant impact on the achievement of students. The argument they put forward is that there is no objective method of adjudicating what resources are adequate for student achievement. Card and Krueger (1996) concluded that strong evidence could not be found to provide justification for a conclusion that school resources significantly influence student achievement.

4.4.6.3 Teacher shortages

Among the listed practices of an effective instructional leader is providing resources for effective teaching and learning and teachers are an important resource for the school as they are responsible for learning. The availability of properly qualified teachers becomes an invaluable resource to turn around the performance of a school. Section 16A (1) (b) (ii) of SASA requires the principal to manage the resources to achieve the minimum outcomes of the school. This task becomes difficult if the principal is not endowed with the requisite staffing for teaching and learning. The

shortage of teachers can be a major obstacle in efforts to exercise instructional leadership because teachers are the mediators of curriculum in the classroom. The Circular on Redeployment and Redistribution of teacher is meant to ensure equitable distribution of human resources. Effective curriculum implementation and management is highly dependent upon the availability of a well-qualified, specialist and motivated staff. Many principals lamented the shortage of teachers as can be learnt from the quote by principal of BiBi Primary School, *“When the Department determines the staff provisioning, the principal is counted as a teacher...If an educator could be employed to teach the subjects taught by the principal so that he could focus on management”*. Some of the principals had to mitigate the shortage of teachers by using school funds to employ extra teachers. The principal of CeCe Primary School echoed this as he said, *“The shortage of teachers is a challenge. The ratio that the Department is using I feel is not correct. Teachers have a high workload. At one stage I had to request the SGB to provide for the employment of an extra educator remunerated from the norms and standards funds. In our case, you find that the ratio is 1:38 or 1:37. The Department allocates teachers to schools according to the number of learners enrolled in a particular year. It is incumbent upon the principal to shape the subject offerings in accordance with the number of teachers at the disposal of the school.*

Some schools, particularly secondary schools, register a wide range of subjects that require many specialised teachers. This creates shortages as some subjects do not have teachers allocated to them. The problem is exacerbated by the schools offering more than one Home Language. This is typical in schools that cater for mixed language communities. In the Lehukwe Circuit, schools have learners who are doing Xitsonga, isiZulu and Sepedi as Home Languages. Mr Ngwenya, the principal of BiBi said, *“When the Department allocates teachers, this factor is not taken into consideration. In our school, we cater for three home languages. This is not taken into consideration when allocating posts. As schools allocate teachers for each language, a shortage for educators in other subjects is created.”* According to the EEA, the head of the education department must determine the post establishment of a school in the province in question taking into consideration a number of factors determining the post provisioning need of the school and some of the learners.

The following factors to be taken into consideration are: The maximum ideal class size applicable to a specific learning area of phase, the period load of educators, the need to promote a learning area, the size of the school, the number of grades, more than one language medium of instruction, disabilities of learners, access to the curriculum, poverty, level of funding, and ad-hoc factors. The Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) Resolution 5 of 1998 on the rationalisation and redeployment of teachers was aimed at addressing the shortage of teachers in one school while there was an excess of teachers in another. The primary aim of the rationalisation and redeployment is to achieve equity in the provisioning of educator posts between institutions within a province. Principals are not keen on accepting teachers redeployed from other school as Mr Ndou of FuFu Secondary School lamented, *“When they redeploy a teacher to your school, you just know that that teacher is lazy, troublesome or is too old. No school is prepared to give away their best teacher.”* Mr Lengau of EliEli primary school indicated, *“I have a problem with the circuit task team on redeployment. It does not look like they take the curricular needs of the school into consideration when they redeploy teachers. I received a teacher with subjects that did not match the needs of the school. I was told that any teacher can teach in a primary school. This does not help the school at all.”* It is worth noting as some of the schools may be affected by one or more of the factors that the head of the provincial education department considers when determining the post establishment of the school.

Shortages of teachers in some schools also occur as a result of internal management practices which are within the control of the principal and the management team. The introduction of many subject streams, especially in secondary schools, without consideration of the available staff compliment, is one of the causes of staff shortages. The consideration principals make in the allocation of subjects and equitable distribution of the work load in accordance with EEA 76 of 1998 has a bearing on the staffing of the school.

4.4.6.4 Union interference

Stakeholders in education are required to assist schools in fulfilling their educational objectives and achieve the minimum standards of achievement. The democratic dispensation in South Africa mandates schools to work with stakeholders to avoid conflict and disturbances to teaching and learning. The mission of the Mpumalanga

Provincial Department of Education is to work with stakeholders to promote quality teaching and learning through good governance, capable management, and proficient leadership. Contextualising this to schools, principals are called upon to engage stakeholders so that the goal of providing quality teaching and learning may be achieved. Stakeholders, on their part, bear the burden of assisting schools in achieving quality teaching and learning. Unions are also stakeholders and partners in the education service. They equally carry the responsibility for ensuring that schools are effective and functional. The Ministerial Task Team report on Jobs for Cash (2016) led by Professor Volmink, commissioned by DBE (22 May 2016), painted a sombre picture of educational management in six of the nine provinces of the country. The findings indicated that unions have an undue influence on the appointment processes. It also noted the level of fear among educators for the unions. If the union has power to influence the appointment of senior management staff and wield so much power in a District, it can be inferred that principals at a school level will not be able to stand up to the ways of the union. Participants' responses implied that unions are not assisting in their endeavour to turn around their schools. The following comments by two principals confirm this point. Mr Lengau, the principal of EliEli Primary School had this to say, *"The existence of our union solely to make oversight on the teachers made me to realise that one cannot continue as an instructional leader. Sometimes you have to plead with people to make them do what is expected of them. If they don't hear it from the site steward of the union, they simply ignore your instruction."* In his view, teachers would simply ignore the instructions of the principal because the union will stand by them. The principal of school FuFu Secondary School voiced his exasperation with the union, which supports the views of EliEli in this way, *"The union, SADTU, deliberately frustrates the instructions of the principal. SADTU encourages teachers to undermine the authority of the principal, telling the staff that everybody is equal. They create a sense that the school can function without the principal."* Mr Ngwenya of BiBi primary school pointed out, *"SADTU wants to run the schools. The branch secretary came to our school and told the staff members not to allow the implementation of a departmental programme aimed at supporting the management of schools. The chairperson of the branch went to the extent of telling comrades in a mass meeting that they will fix me for allowing the programme to run in the school."*

The principal of GiGi Secondary School has already been quoted as implying that the union wants to have comrades appointed in promotional post even when they do not qualify. Hoy and Feldman (1987:34) cautioned that outside forces are destructive to a school and make it vulnerable. Teachers and administrators are bombarded by unreasonable outside demands and the school is buffeted by the whims of the public. Dipaola and Tshannen-Morgan (2005) advised that principals should buffer the school against the influences of the community at large, building bridges by effectively communicating the school goals and mission. Therefore, principals are expected to engage with their communities to build mutual understanding and support. Instructional leaders are aware of the importance of not being distracted from their focus and would try everything to ensure that time is not spent on side issues other than teaching and learning. While it is expected of principals functioning as instructional leaders, to cushion the school from external distractions, it must be conceded that unions can be a frustration to principals. It appears that unions do not understand the role and position of the principal in terms of Section 16A (1) (b) I and ii of SASA. This section requires principals to use the allocated resources of the school to help the school to achieve quality teaching and learning. If unions dictate who is to be employed without taking into consideration the operational needs of the school, then they can be a stumbling block in the implementing of instructional leadership. This requires principals, in consultation with the educator staff and SGB, to profile all the educator posts in his/her school in consideration of the curricular needs of the school. It cannot be expected that this function be dictated by the unions, who do not carry the accountability of curriculum delivery. It is not clear from the research how principals rectify this situation.

4.4.6.5 Lack of Departmental support

Participants pointed to the fact that the Department does not support them whenever they encounter challenges with their teachers. These are challenges that range from lack of cooperation by teachers, blatant refusal to carry instructions and interference by the teacher unions. Without support from the District and the circuit manager, principals feel abandoned. The Ministerial Task team on Jobs for Cash (2016) found that people would approach the union to unseat a principal from his/her position. This is done so that the union member may be appointed in the post. Mr Phala the principal of AyAy Secondary School indicated that his problem, labelled the “Devil strategy’

refers to, *“When things go wrong, the Department removes the principal from the school”* Mr Lengau of EIEI Primary School reiterated this fact when he said that, *“The union SADTU would encourage teachers refuse to carry out instructions. They know that there is nothing you can do to them. The circuit would not do anything to them.”* Mr Sebata the principal of GiGi Secondary School indicated that he had a problem with the recruitment of a Maths educator. The union wanted him to recruit from among the comrades who would not have satisfied the curricular needs of the school. He found himself isolated, with very little support from the Department. He put his struggles in these words: *“At one stage I found myself alone on one side. My teachers went to the District and the District listened to them. They wanted me to employ someone who did not specialise in Mathematics, yet the school was struggling with Mathematics. I told them if there is someone amongst you who has Mathematics, bring him or her. They said that according to their school’s policy, they must recruit from within. I refused and was very much isolated. Eventually I got my way”*.

According to the Policy on Whole School Evaluation, the executive authority for the professional management of the school is vested in the principal with the support of the SGB (DBE, 2002:12). The SASA (1996) Section 20(a) urges the SGB to give support to the principal, teachers, and staff in the performance of their professional duties. This section obligates the SGB not only to support the principal in the management of the school, but to stand on his/her side to ensure the stability.

This section illuminated a variety of challenges that the principal has to navigate to ensure that the school remains focused on its core function of delivering quality teaching and learning. It is evident that principals do not feel supported by their immediate stakeholders. They experience resistance from educators who challenge their authority. They have very little support from parents and the communities that they serve. The shortage of resources and infrastructure came out succinctly. That principals attempt to mitigate the challenges they face. The Circuit and the District should be readily available to assist the principals in resolving issues that are immediate and can be resolved with financial implication, to release principals to manage the school and its core function.

4.4.7 Stakeholder Involvement

The South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 dictates the participation of different sectors in the education provision service. Through the democratisation of schools and the accountability movement, schools have been compelled to involve different stakeholders in their functioning. This stems from the fact that people have become aware of their stake in the education of their children and the critical contribution expected of them. The case of *Komape and Other v the Department of Basic Education and the Limpopo Department of Education* starkly demonstrated the vested interest various stakeholders have in education. The need to hold school leadership to account for the performance of the school has also heightened the desire to participate in the affairs of the schools. Consequently, principals have become aware that they cannot succeed in leading the school as an organisation without the involvement of different stakeholders. The extent to which stakeholders get involved and the quality of involvement can influence the success and stability of the school. In this section, the participants outline the stakeholders they work with, how they involve the stakeholders, and how this contributes to the success of the school or hinders the schools' progress thereof.

4.4.7.1 Type of stakeholders

The Department (DoE, 2000:19) defines stakeholders as all the role players in an organisation such as a school. These are individuals, groups and entities that have a vested interest in the school and its activities and are intimately affected by the success and failure of the school. The school's stakeholders can be divided into the internal stakeholder, comprising teachers, learners, Learner Representative Councils (LRCs), administrators, support staff, SGBs, Departmental officials, parents and teacher unions. The external stakeholders comprise civic structures, churches, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), other Departments, traditional leaders, and the business sector. The benefits of involving the stakeholders in the school are varied and many. The interests of all stakeholders converge on assisting the school to provide effective quality teaching and learning for student success.

The views of Mr Sebata, the principal of GiGi Secondary School summed up most views when stating that, "*We meet parents to outline the plans of the school. I use these meetings to tell the parents of the Dos and the Don'ts of the school. During the*

time when we did not perform well, a doctor adopted the school and gave support that propelled the school to 70% matric pass. Mr Ndou of FuFu Secondary School had a different view of stakeholders as he stated, "We tried to involve the village people in the school. They show very little interest. All they say is that they do not get any material benefit from engaging with the school. Those that try would want you to give them something, either the food parcels of the learners or money. They even claim that schools have a lot of money, and they deserve to be compensated. This makes it difficult for me as the principal." Ms Martha of DoDo Primary school intimated, "We always involve the local induna when we encounter problems especially of theft and vandalism. There are also ordinary citizens in the village that volunteer to assist our children in their studies during the afternoons. This is making a very important contribution in our effort to engage the stakeholder". Mr Ngwenya of BiBi pointed out that, "We have a challenge of learners without birth certificate. These are children of illegal foreigners. Fortunately, we are having a good relationship with home affairs and SASSA. They assist a lot in the registration of those learners who qualify to be registered.

4.4.7.2 Importance of stakeholder involvement

The democratisation of schooling in South Africa after 1994 made it a requirement for schools to work with and work for the community. It is stipulated in the Policy for Standards of South African School Principals (DBE, 2015:19) that principals working within the SMT and the SGB should build relationships and partnership within and between the internal and external school community for their mutual benefit. Coleman (2010) argues that the community provides social capital that helps the school to educate its learners. In an effort to make the school accessible to the community, principals are required to engage the community in a variety of ways. A school where the community is involved gains protection against vandalism and crime. Where there is a working relationship between the school and the community, the school is buttressed against social unrest such as service protest. The school is protected from external distraction and the climate for teaching and learning is enhanced. The community assumes ownership of the school, remains well informed of developments in the school, and is socialised into the norms and practices within the school. This is what is referred to as social capital by Coleman (2010). It is this sense of community

ownership that assists the school to leverage a school climate hospitable to human learning.

Leithwood *et al.* (2004) noted that principals should ensure that there is acceptance of the community that they form part of the school. This will ensure that there are stronger bonds between the school and the community. The school should also take it upon itself to invest in developing the capacities of the members of the community. These are important in motivating teachers and the students to learn. The widely shared sense of community is an antidote to an unstable, sometimes threatening and often insecure world inhabited by a significant portion of families and children served by challenged schools.

In his efforts to involve the community in the school, the principal of AyAy Secondary School indicated: *"We have various committees which involve stakeholders. We also involve the traditional council and political structures."* The principal of CeCe Primary School argued that the parents of the school represent the community. For him engaging the parents is equal to engaging the community as these are the same persons. He worded his actions as, *"we encourage parents to view the work of learners. We discuss the learner performance with the parents. We expect the community to assist the school to avoid vandalisms. We have seen very little of the community when we make review of the learner performance per quarter."* The respondents did not mention programmes of activities in which they outline how they involve parents in their schools. Their efforts were limited to consultations with the parents through meetings and book viewing sessions.

The partnership among the stakeholders in education is crucial for the smooth functioning of the school. Principals expressed desperation with the lack of support from the stakeholders that they regard as partners in education. The following quotes capture the frustration of principals with stakeholder involvement, a frustration that causes ineffective instructional leadership. The principal of EliEli Primary School said, *"...the other problem is the SGB which was not cooperating. The members of the SGB refused to vacate their office when their term of office has expired. They make running the school difficult. The members of the community have a wrong view of their service in the SGB; they expect to be paid for serving in the SGB."* The lack of support from the SGB was reiterated by the principal of FuFu Secondary School when he said, "As

a principal, I experienced challenges from the SGB right down to teachers. The school keeps on losing good teachers because the SGB insists on the formal recruitment process.” Asked to explain further, the principal said he would recruit a good teacher but would be frustrated in his attempt by the SGB coming up with a different person less suited to the needs of the school. In terms of section 20 of the South African Schools Act, the SGB has to support the principal to fulfil his roles. Lack of support from the SGB is a major setback to efforts to improve school performance.

4.4.7.3 Programme of stakeholder involvement

In their research on high performing schools, Murphy *et al.* (2006:29) reported that effective leaders are attuned to and are experts at linking the school to parents and others in the extended family. They engage the families and other community members in the service of the school goals, learning agenda and student performance with an agenda to inform, to promote, to learn and to link. The authors cited the following programmes that may provide an opportunity for the school to engage the parents and the extended community: encourage and help parents learn about the instructional and curricular programme at school, assist parents in working more productively with children at home and assist parents with extending their own parenting skills (Murphy *et al.*, 2006:29).

Participants did not indicate how they involve the stakeholders in the affairs of their schools. *“I always talk to the Induna and make them aware of the programme of the school,”* explained Mr Sebata of GIGI Secondary School. *“When I introduce the camp for Grade 12 class, the traditional authority is informed and participates in securing the place for us. They always do some rounds during the evening classes and their visibility helps with security. The parents and the local community are made aware of what the school intends to do right after the receipt of the matric class.”* Ms Martha articulated that, *“In the villages served by the school, during the winter months there are initiation schools. These schools target our children. Unfortunately, the initiation events take place at the time when the children are writing their mid-year exams. I have to engage with the tribal authority and make them aware of the exam programme and ask them to postpone the start of the initiation schools until the learners finish writing. I have not had a problem with them since then.”*

Apart from the parents' meetings, there is no evidence of efforts being made by the schools to engage the different stakeholders in some meaningful way. Shannon and Bylsma (2017) posited that schools carry the responsibility to initiate the partnership with its stakeholders. This fact was also emphasised by Epstein (2001) when indicating that parental involvement at school and home is a consequence of specific programmes of the school and teacher practices that encourage and guide parental involvement. This means that the instructional leader of the school must find ways of ensuring that the parents, community and all other stakeholders are afforded an opportunity to engage in well-coordinated programmes that assist the school in provide an environment conducive to learning. The programmes must be aligned to the objectives of the school; otherwise, stakeholder involvement may turn into a distraction to the key focus of the school.

4.4.7.4 Areas of stakeholder involvement

There are a variety of ways through which the school can bring stakeholders closer. Some of the stakeholders seize the opportunity to avail themselves to assist in the schools. This has been sharply indicated by Mr Ngwenya principal of CeCe Primary School, who said, *"The school enjoys a healthy relationship with the tribal authority. The chief (kgoši) is very much involved in the fundraising programmes of the school. We secured the Samsung computer lab through his (kgoši) initiatives."* Mr Sebata principal of GiGi Secondary School also indicated areas where he gets the stakeholders involved and said, *"After receiving the results of the school, I go to the tribal authority (Mošate) and inform the chief about the performance of the school. This I do so that the tribal authority can support the activities and programmes of the school."* Ms Martha, the principal of DoDo Primary School indicated, *"We involve parents in supporting the afternoon study groups of our learners. These study groups are managed by members of the community. They report back to the school about the progress and the challenges they encounter"*. The quotes from the participants are indicative of the extent to which principals attempt to involve the stakeholders in supporting teaching and learning in their schools.

Shannon and Bylsma (2017:120) proposed areas in which the school can establish partnerships with the parents and the community. The authors encourage school to establish two-way communication channels with the community in order for the school

and the community to readily inform each other pertaining to educational issues affecting the child. Schools can develop programmes of training parenting skills among the parents of their learners. This holds a lot of weight due to the fact that the modern parent is young and overwhelmed by behavioural problems of their children. Making parents welcome in the school will encourage them to render voluntary service to the school and help create meaningful ownership of the school. Parents must be encouraged to take part in decisions that affect their children. The school must be made available as a resource centre to strengthen cooperation, collaboration between the school, parents and the community

The salient points emerging from the participants indicate the importance of the community in education provision. Participants indicated both the positives and negatives that are associated with stakeholder involvement in the life of the school. While some have built a good working environment with the stakeholders to the benefit of the school, some reported that the stakeholders have become a barrier to the efforts of the school to provide quality teaching and learning. It is however acknowledged that the principal must do a balancing act between the two extremes. He/she must develop programmes that ensure that the involvement of stakeholders does not stand in the way of effective teaching and learning. The school benefits when parents and the community take part in planned school activities, celebrations and social gatherings. Parents, who are helping to encourage learners to arrive early for school, assist with the afternoon lessons, assist with manning the study camps, are making an invaluable contribution to the development of a positive school climate. The opposite holds true for school where communities work against the school. The school feels like an orphan, abandoned and left to fend for itself. If communities steal from the school, witness vandalism and do not act, use school property without permission, the message sent to learners is negative which could result in a negative school culture that hinders learner performance.

4.4.8 The Principal as a Resource Provider

One of the practices of instructional leadership is to provide resources that support teachers and learners to achieve the academic objectives of the school. According to section 16A(2)9(a) of SASA, the principal in undertaking his professional management of a public school, must undertake duties which include the management of the use of

the teaching and learning support materials and other equipment. The Policy on Whole School Evaluation (DBE, 2002:5) requires principals to conduct the whole school evaluation annually following the key nine areas of development. Among the key performance areas is curriculum provision and resources. This gives weight to the fact that the principal has to provide resources and be able to evaluate its provision and effective use. Andrews and Soder (1987) indicated that effective principals are required to be resource providers, directing stakeholders in achieving the school's vision and goals, and working as a broker of resources and materials, information and opportunities that advantage the school.

Goldring *et al.* (2009:20) confirm the role of the principal as a resource provider when stating that, "...learning centred leaders are adept at garnering and employing resources in the service of meeting the school goals." In the age of rapid technological advances, principals and schools make choices from a wide spectrum of materials and media. Resources are important as they serve as a medium through which the learning content is conveyed from the transmitter to the receiver. The choices made are contingent on affordability, suitability, utility and durability. Information which has become widely and rapidly available is regarded as a resource because certain instructional tasks can only be achieved when the required information is available.

By the nature of his position, the principal receives a lot of information on behalf of the school. Teachers, learners, parents and the community look up to the principals, not only for material supply, but for critical information that will empower them to actualise the objectives of the school. This means that the resourcefulness of the principal does not only lie in his/her ability to procure resources for the school, but to be rich in the information that may be of assistance to the teachers in their delivery of effective teaching and learning. This section explains what the principal does as a resource provider, the resources the school procures, and how the resources are used to enhance the performance of the school.

4.4.8.1 Types of resources

The Department is responsible for providing resources that schools need to provide teaching and learning. The resources are categorised into infrastructure, materials resources, human resources and financial resources. The Department (DBE, 2014:137) states that access to a full set of learning materials for every learner can be

regarded as a non-negotiable. It further states that learning materials are interventions that can make a difference in the short to medium term. Infrastructure is provided to schools through the Accelerated Schools Infrastructure Development Initiative (ASIDI). Through this plan, the Department ensures that schools that have a dire need of infrastructure are prioritised. Human resources are provided through the post provisioning norms in terms of SASA 84 of 1996. Through this, schools are annually provided with human resources in accordance with their learner enrolment. Financial resources are provided through the Norms and Standards for Funding, where schools receive their annual allocation of financial resources. This allocation also takes the enrolment of the school into consideration. Material resources, in the form of Learning Teaching Support Materials (LTSM) are supplied by the provincial education department while workbooks are provided by Department.

Principals play a major role in ensuring that the school is well provisioned with these resources by supplying the Department with accurate data that projects the enrolment of the school for the next academic year. Without these resources, the functionality of the school is compromised, and teaching and learning is negatively affected. The Department (DBE, 2011) has made a commitment to provide the basic teaching and learning materials for schools to perform their functions. Action Plan to 2014; Towards the realisation of schooling 2025, expresses this commitment succinctly in objective 19 which is to, “ensure that every learner has access to the minimum set of textbooks and workbooks required according to national policy” Objective 20 further extends the importance of resources in education by indicating that the Department will, “increase access among learners to a wide range of media, including computers, which enrich their education” (DBE, 2014:124-129). Principals who function as instructional leaders are expected to determine the availability of teaching and learning resources in their schools. Section 21 of the SASA allows the principal, through the SGB, to acquire resources that are needed in their schools. The Department has listed a variety of resources to support curriculum and assessment for teachers and learners. These range from policy documents to assist with curriculum interpretation, management and implementation to resources that directly impact the classroom situation. These resources are among others include the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement, National Protocol Pertaining to the Promotion and Progression of learner

in Gr R-12, Annual Teaching Plan, digital content, study guides, previous question papers, and assessment exemplars.

The question asked to determine resourcing in schools was fairly answered by the participants with a variety of responses being given. The following responses capture how the principals engage as instructional leaders in providing resource to promote learning and teaching. The responses indicate that most principals rely on the LTSM provided by the Department as the only resource. The principal of GiGi Secondary School captures it this way, *“Unfortunately resources will be a problem in all schools. As the SGB, we plan to make money available. Teachers are requested to recommend the best study guide that we buy for them. Each teacher has a textbook and a study guide. We make copies for learners”*. The principal of AyAy Secondary School had the following to say, *“I buy study guides and dictionaries for the teachers. Working in an environment of limited resources, I also buy some science kits and teaching aids to support my teachers. Mr Sebata stated that, “We have installed a Wi-Fi facility in the school. Teachers and the students can use the Wi-Fi to access materials from the internet. We don’t even struggle with textbooks as we just access the digital textbook online. It is very helpful because the Department no longer buys textbooks for schools. Whenever they provide money for purchase of textbook, they say we must just top-up”*. Mr Ndou of FuFu secondary said, *“We buy data for use by learners”*.

4.4.8.2 Resource procurement process

While the Department supplies the basic resources for the education of learners, principals are required to be resourceful in procuring resources and availing them to teachers and learners. This function is derived from section 20 of the SASA where principals are tasked with guiding the SGB and the management duty. As the administrator in the school, the principal’s responsibility is to ensure that the objectives of the Department are realised in the school. To this extent, the principal has to ensure the actualisation of the Department’s objective 19 which commits to ensure that every learner has access to the minimum of textbooks and workbooks required according to national policy. Newby *et al.* (2006:143) gave different alternatives to be used in resource procurement: Using what is already on hand, creating own materials, altering and adapting what already exists. Mr Tau of CeCe Primary School said, *“We create our own teaching aids. Because we are dealing with young children in the primary*

school, they need to see, touch and feel things. That is why we have charts on the walls that show different kinds of fruits with the names written on each picture". Considering the wide range of application and needs of educational resources, no school can have all the resources it requires. Collaborating with other schools in the use of available resources can be a solution to the shortages that schools encounter. What is on hand in one school can be what the other school has a shortage in. Principals have to identify what they have, what they need, what is available in the nearby school and how they can assist their neighbours. To this Mr Ngwenya indicated that, *"We make available the use of the computer lab to schools in our circuit. Even schools from our neighbouring circuit have brought their teachers to this school to see how we use the smart board."* In this digital age, there are many resources freely available online that can be put to use by schools to enhance teaching and learning. Digital messaging applications like WhatsApp, Facebook, Vodacom e-learning, videos, computers, smart boards, and traditional resources that have been in use pre the digital age. Some of these are already in the hands of the learners and their potential is awaiting exploitation

The study revealed that principals are involved in the procurement of teaching and learning support materials in their schools. What comes out poignantly is that there is nothing that relates the materials with the objectives that the school has set for the years. Procurement appears to be done on an unplanned *ad hoc* basis. Evidence could not be found in the participants' responses of the existence of a structured way of building up the resource base of the school in a continuous and cumulative way. Materials are sourced when there is an outcry for it or when there is an immediate need for its use. However, acknowledgement must be made of the lengths that some principals go to ensure that their schools are moderately resourced.

Mr Lengau, principal of EliEli Primary School explained, *"I had to source some books from the District because our learners did not have books to read. Through my intervention, the school was given desks and teachers' tables which were being removed from the District. These have come to assist the school because we did not have adequate seating accommodation for our staff."*

Mr Ngwenya of BiBi Primary School said, *"I saw the need for the computer lab in the school. I approached the Tribal Chief who was a board member of the Samsung group."*

I managed to get a sponsorship of a fully equipped computer science laboratory. This is helping the learners greatly as they learn to use a computer at a young age. There are smart boards that assist teachers during their lesson delivery of lessons”.

Mr Sebata stated, *“I encourage my learners to use the Vodacom e-learning class. It is free and accessible as most learners have smart phones. There is also a WhatsApp group for the Grade 12 class. It is working well as the learners communicate with the teachers in the comfort of their homes.”*

Mr Ndou, principal of FuFu Secondary School said, *“We also purchased the Mindset video lessons for maths and physics. There is also a video that we obtained from the circuit featuring a lecture from the UKZN. It focuses on Physics paper 1 and teachers are saying it is good.”* From participants quotes, an inference can be made that resources that are readily accessible are being used to support teaching and learning.

4.4.8.3 Effective use of resources

Resource procurement must be aimed at assisting the school to meet its obligation of providing quality teaching and learning for enhanced learner performance. It must be guided by what can serve the school best. Resource procurement must be preceded by intensive interaction between the teachers in a phase who are teaching the same subjects, teachers in a department led by HoD's and the principal. Where there is a committee dedicated to this function, the principal is expected to play an active role because it is his function as an instructional leader.

Murphy *et al.* (2006:21) posit that learning-centred leaders assiduously link resource deployment and use to the mission and goals of the school. The involvement of the principal is to ensure that the following are achieved: useful resources are procured that will have an impact on effective teaching and learning, resources are fit for purpose, and that the resources are relevant for the intended. Mr Ngwenya of BiBi Primary School stated, *“When we approached Samsung to provide us with a computer centre, we wanted to strengthen our maths and science department. We employed an extra teacher to assist in ensuring that our learners are able to use the computers to search for information that assist in their studies. These resources assisted us a lot as we are a feeder school for an MSTA secondary school that specialises in Math,*

Science, and Technology subjects only. The secondary school has not complained about the learners from our school.”

Mr Sebata, the principal of GiGi Secondary School summed it up when he said, *“Unfortunately resources will be a problem in many schools. We request teachers to recommend a textbook and study guide for their subject. We buy these to ensure that each teacher has a study guide and a textbook at their disposal. We buy those that are recommended by the teachers because they know how they will use them.”* From the above quote it can be inferred that the resources procured are relevant and being put to good use.

This theme brought to the fore the issue of resources in the school. Rural schools need lots of basic resources to function and these are not there. School do not have sufficient furniture, textbooks, educators and many other essential resources. Even classrooms are in short supply. It is noteworthy that principals have shown resourcefulness in addressing some of the challenges encountered with resource supply. Principals have purchased materials with the limited budget at their disposal, made requests for donations from the corporate sector, and even encouraged their teachers to make copies for learners where there are no textbooks. The employment of SGB-paid educators is the principals’ initiative to ensure that there is always a teacher to mitigate teaching in the classroom. Participants provide leadership even in the face of these challenges which would otherwise hamper their ability to perform their instructional duties.

4.5 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the participants and their sites were introduced and described. The description focused on their peculiar characteristics which distinguished them from other participants and sites. The data were collected through in-depth interviews with seven principals of Lehukwe Circuit in Bohlabela District in Bushbuckridge, Mpumalanga. Although the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the availability of some of the participants sampled for the study, the data gathered were adequate for the study. Participants provided varied views on how they manage their schools and influence student achievement. In the next chapter the findings and recommendations are presented.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the analysed data gathered through the interviews conducted with seven principals in the Lehukwe Circuit of Bohlabela District. In Chapter Five, an overview of the study is given, the key findings of the previous chapter are discussed and summarised, and conclusions drawn. Chapter five also provides recommendations based on the findings of the study, the limitations of the study and areas for further research are also suggested.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The study focused on the role of the instructional leadership of the principal in improving school performance. The main research question that the study wanted to provide answers to is: *What is the role of the principal as an instructional leader in improving the performance of the school?* A qualitative approach was adopted because the findings of the study were not meant for generalisation, but to understand the participants in their particular context which varies from school to school. Questions that were developed were aimed at providing plausible answers to this question and an interpretive approach was adopted, to interpret the lived experiences of the participants in their natural settings.

5.3 KEY FINDINGS

Studies on educational leadership (Murphy, 2009; Murphy *et al* 2006, Hallinger, 2008; Ponte, Nusche & Davids, 2008; Lunenburg & Lunenburg 2013) have focused attention on the capacity of the school principal to lead teaching and learning in the schools. Instructional leadership has been identified as a key leadership framework that can lead to school improvement. The studies agree that a principal who is focused on school improvement must be a learner-centred leader. In addition, the Policy on Standards for South African Principals requires principals to exercise different leadership roles to ensure the functionality of the school. Instructional leadership in the school is one of the key leadership functions the principal is expected to fulfil. The principal who is focused on school improvement must engage in practices that

prioritise teaching and learning as the key function of the school. SASA, WSE and NPPPP prescribe the performance standards to be achieved and principals must ensure that their instructional leadership practices enable the school to meet the performance targets stipulate by the policies.

The study revealed that though principals lead and manage their schools, their understanding of instructional leadership is a very low. Principals are not aware of what acting as an instructional leader entails. This leads to their instructional leadership practices not being obvious in their daily routines. The principals have not been well oriented in terms of roles and responsibilities expected of an instructional leader. The fact that the role of instructional leadership has been documented in SASA, PSSP and other documents should have guaranteed a clearer conceptualisation of instructional leadership. Since teaching and learning is not the centre of the principals' efforts, some of the principals struggle to influence positive school performance. Their schools struggle to meet the performance targets and goals as stipulate in the legal framework and policy directives of the Department.

Instructional leadership was adopted as a theoretical framework that underpinned the study. The principals exercise different leadership styles based on the situations that they encounter on a typical school day. The choice of instructional leadership as a theoretical framework is premised on the fact that not all leadership can lead to effective teaching and learning. According to Murphy (1990), Weber (1996) and Hallinger (2008), instructional leadership is leadership that involves the action of framing the school goals, promoting quality instruction, allocating and protecting instructional time, monitoring student progress, securing outside resources in support of the school, promoting professional development, and forging links between the home and the school.

In South Africa, instructional leadership originated in the democratic dispensation and the need to create a national education system that provides quality education for all learners. The desire is expressed in the South African Constitution which states that quality education is provided to all. SASA, EEA, PSSP, policies and programmes of the Provincial Education Department (PED) have variously emphasised the importance of a school leader who focuses on the learner as the centre of all school activities.

The study revealed that principals make use of the tools that the Department provided for curriculum management albeit at a nominal rate. This is concerning because of all the duties the principal does, learning and teaching is a priority. Familiarisation with the different policies, acts and directives is very low and need to be improved if principals are to play a significant role in leading school improvement.

The key findings of the study are discussed in the following sub-sections.

5.3.1 Key Findings on Goal Setting

The participants have shown that they are aware of their instructional role as principals in goal setting. As leadership is about setting direction, all participants developed goals for their schools for the year, which is an important dimension of instructional leadership. They invariably set the direction for their schools developing goals that were within their ability to accomplish. What emerged from the study is that there was very limited intensity in the process of goal setting. Very little could be found to indicate that goal setting was preceded by a thorough SWOT analysis.

The school is composed of a variety of aspects; however, the type of goals set only addressed one aspect: learner performance. It must be noted that learner performance is a consequence of several school variables that are brought together to address the school's existential objective. Most of the areas of development were not catered for in the setting of school goals. This, however, does not mean that principals must set goals for all the nine areas.

While participants indicated that they involve stakeholders in the process of goal setting, no definite plans and activities were available to attest to this. It could therefore be concluded that stakeholders were only informed of the goals rather than being involved in goal setting.

On how they implemented the goals, only two participants indicated that the goals remain the focus of attention for the year. It must be indicated that this was mostly in the secondary schools where more effort is spent on reaching the performance goals set. Their activities were indicative of their desire to accomplish the objective of increasing performance, mostly at the Grade 12 level.

5.3.2 Key Findings on Curriculum Management

The study found that principals have management plans to address curriculum. This is in accordance to the expected function and role as curriculum managers. Principals' management include noting use of time, managing staff attendance and late coming, monitoring class registers relating to learner attendance, monitoring the period register to control class attendance and bunking of classes. Some participants were very clear of their role in class observation to support teachers. Some participants decried the fact that as a principal, he does not have enough time to observe teachers because he has teaching duties.

Principals do not execute the curriculum management alone. They delegate duties to their HoDs and deputy principals who report to them. This is a good attribute of leadership, as Hallinger and Heck (1996) concluded while studying the effect of the leadership on student achievement, that while direct effects are small, leadership achieve results through the efforts of others. They have reporting systems made up of a curriculum tracker, a lesson observation tool, and the monthly reporting tool that they use to report to the circuit. The Annual Teaching Plan forms one of the most important tools that principals use to manage the curriculum

In terms of the actual curriculum management practices, the study found that principals observe teachers in class, ensure that instructional time is not lost and also ensure that the topics to be covered are dealt with through tracking the Annual Teaching Plans.

On tracking learner performance, the study found that participants rely on the end of the term performance schedule to detect how their learners are performing. Only one secondary school principal indicated that the monthly tests are able to indicate how learners are performing. This is a shortfall as City *et al.* (2009:30) pointed out in the fourth principle which states that, "tasks predict performance". To improve learner performance, principals have to focus attention on the interaction in the classroom, particularly the quality of what learners are asked to do. The participants provided evidence of weakness in the rigour with which the tasks are monitored. Therefore, learner performance cannot be positively influenced without attending to the quality of the tasks they do.

5.3.2 Key Findings on Staff Development

The study found that participants rely on the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) as the only tool for staff development. Even though the processes of the IQMS, which entail observation of teachers in class, identification of areas that need development, constitution of the school development team (SDT), identification of teachers' developmental needs, and drawing of the school development plan appear to be ignored. Some participants managed to acquire the assistance of experienced teachers from other schools to mentor and develop their own teachers. According to the data gathered, the extent of staff development is very weak considering that organisations succeed because of a capable work force. The schools did not have coherent programmes that indicate how staff development initiatives are undertaken.

5.3.4 Key Findings on Creating a Climate of High Expectation.

The study found that participants created a climate of expectation among the school community. The mere process of setting ambitious goals for the school is an endeavour to establish the tone of the school. The principals engage parents at the beginning of the year to make them aware of what the school expects from their children. For those schools who engage in extra classes, study camps and holiday classes, they create an atmosphere of high work rate and of success. Giving teachers and learners awards and incentives entrenches the notion that hard work is recognised and rewarded.

5.4.5 Key Findings on the Principal's Understanding of Instructional Leadership

The study revealed that to some extent, participants do function as instructional leaders. There is an overwhelming understanding that the key role of the principal is to manage teaching and learning. What stood out in the research is that principals are not familiar with the concept of instructional leadership. One participant displayed a complete lack of conception of instructional leadership, confusing it with giving instructions from the top. Despite this lack of conception of instructional leadership, the participant still performed activities that are instructional in nature. This can be an indicator of the participant not being aware of/or knowledgeable about instructional leadership. The development of instruments that are used in curriculum management is also a duty of a principal who operates as an instructional leader.

Participants gave evidence of their engagement in practices that are consistent with the practices expected of instructional leadership. They allocate subjects according to the qualifications of the teachers and the needs of learners; they monitor teaching and learning through a variety of tools at their disposal; monitoring lessons through lesson observation, employing extra educators to mitigate for the shortage of educators are all agreeable to instructional leadership; they report on curriculum coverage. All this is an indicator of the focus participants have on the core business of the school which means that there are clear plans that reflect the routines that the principal follows in practising instructional leadership.

5.4.6 Key Findings on Barriers to Instructional Leadership

The study revealed that participants faced many challenges that hinder them in being effective instructional leaders. The indifference and negative attitude of teachers appears as a barrier mentioned to be in the way of instructional leadership. Teachers who deliberately undermine the principal, those that refuse to take on new subjects. Teachers refuse to engage learners in extra classes. Teachers claim to be sickly or old to frustrate the effort of instructional leadership

The fact that principals have to be allocated teaching duties while they have to monitor learning and teaching is a hurdle in their implementation of instructional leadership. The argument that they cannot monitor teachers while they, themselves are teaching, cannot be ignored. However, with proper planning, principals should be able to monitor their colleagues without being over-burdened. Delegation of duties reduces the weight of the burden that principals have to carry and frees them to attend to monitoring teaching and learning.

Lack of resources in the form of classrooms and furniture was mentioned as a barrier experienced by principals. Some of the participants indicated that they do not have sufficient classrooms to accommodate the learners. The Department has not supplied them with school furniture for a long time. Principals indicated that they do have adequate supplies of textbooks, with some relying on making photocopies for the learners. Without adequate classroom, furniture, and the requisite LTSM, the schools are challenged in delivering effective teaching and learning.

The shortage of teachers has been cited as one of the impediments to effective instructional leadership. Participants indicated that the post provisioning norms

through which the Department supplies educators to schools, includes the principal as a teacher, ignoring the principal's management and leadership functions. Consequently, principals hire extra teachers on SGB-funded posts. This greatly weakens the financial capacity of the schools. The shortage of teachers is caused, in part, by the fact that the schools cater for more than one language offered at the level of mother tongue. Secondary schools also cater for more subject streams that stretch the post provisioning of the school.

The hostility of the teacher unions to some of the principals has been mentioned as a barrier to effective instructional leadership. Participants complain that the unions influence its members to work antagonistically with the principals, resulting in ineffective management of the curriculum. Participants hinted at the fact that the unions would encourage their members to disregard the instructions of the principal. Participants decry the fact that the union wants to dictate the hiring process in the school without paying any attention to the curricular needs of the school.

The Department through the Circuit Manager and the District officials are seen as unsupportive to principals. Participants expressed grave concern that the Department does not come to the assistance of principals whenever principals experiences challenges with the unions. The perception is that the Department sides with the unions instead of supporting the principals. This, consequently, erodes the authority that principals wield in the management of their school and members of staff.

5.4.7 Key Findings on Stakeholder Involvement

The study revealed that there is certain involvement of stakeholders in some of the activities of the school. Participants indicated that they meet parents and the community during parents' meetings to report on learner progress and the extra measures the schools are taking to improve performance. Some of the participants indicated that they have a working relationship with the local tribal authority or induna. Those schools that have leaned on their external stakeholders have garnered resources that they would not have procured on their own. This vindicates the need to involve stakeholders in the affairs of the school. While participants indicated that they involve teachers, learners, parents and structure in the community, there were no programmes to back this up. Additionally, in some schools, the extent of the involvement is weak, which does not advantage the school. Schools that experience

vandalism and theft of school furniture have a very good reason to enlist the community for help. There is wide list of areas where principals can elicit the participation of its external stakeholders for the benefit of the school.

5.4.8 Key Findings on the Principal as a Resource Provider

Resource provision to schools is the responsibility of the Department. Principals are required to ensure that they place orders for LTSM, provide information for decision making on infrastructural development, maintain and control the effective use of those resources. However, this does not prevent principals from being innovative and resourceful in garnering useful resources for their schools.

What emerged from the study is that principals attempt to provide teachers with the resource needed for teaching and learning. They provide their teachers with ATPs, study guides, electronic devices and photocopies to facilitate teaching and learning. With the annual allocation of funds from Department, principals are expected to use the greater portion of the allocation for curriculum purposes. This includes the procurement of teaching and learning aids for the school. Participants indicated that they consult their HoDs and teachers to inform the procurement process. What stands out very poignantly is that participants do not have an IT development programme. This is surprising given the fact that they are rural schools which are deprived of IT. There is no resource acquisition strategy to inform how resources will be prioritised and procured in their schools. Some schools which have IT connectivity do not have a resource utilisation plan in place that would ensure that the resources do not lie idle instead of assisting with the improvement of learner performance.

5.4.9 Key Findings in terms of the Main Research Question

The main research question is: *What is the role of the principal as an instructional leader in improving the performance of the school?* The study revealed that principals do not fully operate as instructional leaders. Evidence that they lead instruction in their various schools as a priority has been minimal. The lack of curriculum planning is evident and is the main reason behind the lack of visible progress in learner performance. Even when principals have to be at the forefront like in lesson observation, principals delegated this to their departmental heads and deputies. The evidence on how principals engage in this important activity was very weak. Learner performance is not adequately tracked because of lack of assessment plans. How

performance is prioritised, tracked and evaluated is glaringly absent in the repertoire of activities that principals engage in. Without a clear commitment to effective curriculum management, focusing intently on the teacher, the content and the learner it is not possible for principals to influence performance in a meaningful way.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, recommendations are offered for the principals, the Circuit, the District and for further research

5.5.1 Recommendations for the Principals

- It is recommended that school principals acquaint themselves with the following curriculum management processes: Choosing subjects for their school to avoid spreading the subject streams beyond the capacity of the school's human resource: allocating teachers according to specialisation and proven capacity to maximise learner performance, observation of teachers in class to ensure productive engagement between the teacher, the learner, and the content.
- Principals must perform an annual SWOT analysis and develop a school improvement plan (SIP) based on findings of the SWOT analysis. The objectives and target set must address the weaknesses identified in the SWOT analysis, and these must be SMART.
- Principals have the responsibility to recruit suitable well-qualified teachers, induct and mentor them, and expose them to focused developmental programmes.
- Principals must develop plans and programmes to ensure maximum stakeholder participation. This will reduce tensions that distract schools from their core function and will enable the school to gain protection by the community.
- Principals must take advantage of advancing technology in order to augment the resources available at their school. Resources such as e-Textbooks, e-Lessons, video lessons, WhatsApp, Vodacom e-Class and Facebook can be of invaluable use. These can be deployed to alleviate the textbook shortages and relieve teacher workload.

5.5.2 Recommendations for the Circuit

- Circuit Managers must monitor curriculum implementation, management and evaluation on a regular basis to entrench instructional practices in the schools.
- Circuit Managers must develop a comprehensive and rigorous curriculum management tool through which principals report their curriculum management practices. This tool must cover all the practices that impact effective teaching, learning and assessment.
- In the circuit meetings, there must be deliberate efforts to familiarise principals with all the relevant educational policies that pertain to their role and function as managers and leaders of their schools. Policies and Act such as SASA, EEA, and the Policy on Standards for the South African Principals should receive adequate attention.
- Circuit managers must assist principals in time management so that enough time may be devoted to observing teaching and learning, monitoring assessment, tracking learner performance, and developing teachers.

5.5.3 Recommendations for the District

Teacher development is important in capacitating teachers and school managers to deal with the ever-increasing changes in education. The development and training of school leadership is critical for principals who carry the responsibility to train and develop their teachers. Mathibe (2007:523) has observed that South African principals are not adequately skilled and lack training for school management and leadership. As noted by Jones *et al.* (1989:5), “leadership programmes for school principals can metaphorically be described as the oxygen which ensures that principals survive as educated and trained professionals, in order to improve their instructional practice in their schools.” It is therefore important for the District to invest efforts into the training of principals.

- The District should intensify the training of principals, paying special focus to instructional leadership and curriculum management.
- The District should ensure that human, physical and material resources are equitable distributed to all schools. The rationalisation and redeployment process should be an on-going process that is undertaken every year and expeditiously executed. This will alleviate staff shortages in the schools. Where

resources remain unused, the District should ensure that the resources are redeployed to schools where there is a need.

- District Management Teams (DMT) should buffer schools and the principal from intimidation by the unions for principals to retain their authority.
- District should ensure that there is strict monitoring of the Integrated Quality Management System and that developmental programmes are drawn. Each school must submit their teacher development plans and a strict monitoring system put in place to ensure adherence.

5.5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The speed at which changes occurs in education as a discipline necessitate research to be current and relevant. The findings from the study were never meant to be generalised to all the schools in the Circuit and District. However, the study highlighted the following topics which appeared to be of concern to participants and deserve further research:

- The instructional leadership practices of the principal
- The effective implementation of the Policy on Standards for South African Principals
- Staff recruitment, mentoring and development
- Stakeholder involvement in schools

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study investigated the role of the principal's instructional leadership in improving school performance. The sampled schools in the Lehukwe Circuit of Bohlabela District were too few to generalise the findings to all schools in the Circuit or District. Using the qualitative approach, the purpose was not to generalise the findings of the study but to develop context-based summaries.

The study was conducted during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many participants were hesitant to take part in the study. Those that eventually participated were reluctant to provide documentary proof to validate their claim. In addition, participants were sceptical about taking part in the study. There was a perception of being "caught out" or exposed about their perceived lack of knowledge on the topic under investigation

One participant refused to participate in the study, which led to seven participants being interviewed instead of the intended eight.

The interview questions were not probing enough, and the participants were not keen to give the researcher a second chance due to the covid-19 restrictions.

5.7 CONCLUSION

The study revealed that principals still need in-depth and on-going training in school leadership. While they are able to keep the school functioning, the roles they perform are more managerial - keeping systems running – than innovatively leading teaching and learning. In fulfilling the role of ensuring that the education of learners is promoted in a proper manner and in accordance with approved policies (EEA 76 of 1998), principals are required to be well acquainted with the latest policies of the Department. The WSE policy requires principals to develop a whole school plan based on the SWOT analysis. This was glaringly absent in the plans that principals have for their schools. The implication is that objectives were just formulated without consideration of the weaknesses of the school. This has been found to be a weakness in the quest to lead the schools. It has also emerged through the study that the concept of instructional leadership, the roles and responsibilities of an instructional leader have not been fully understood. This is despite instructional leadership having been mooted in the early phase of the democratised education department. The Policy on Standards for South African Principals lists Instructional Leadership as one of the leadership roles that principals have to fulfil. The study revealed that principals are unaware of the policy and very ignorant of instructional leadership. This could have facilitated a coherent curriculum management plan that addresses the key function of the school: teaching, learning and assessment for student achievement. The requirement to involve stakeholders in the leadership and management of the school (SASA 84 of 1996) has not been exploited to the fullest. Principals lacked clear and coherent programmes and strategies to foster strong relationship with their external stakeholders, failing to gain the advantage the stakeholders would provide in terms of school safety.

With rigorous investment in training on school leadership and management, constant mentoring, monitoring and evaluation, and supporting principals that remain challenged, great improvements in learner performance can still be achieved.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical Clearance Certificate



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2020/04/08

Ref: **2020/04/08/06462677/10/AM**

Name: Mr LP Mathobela

Student No.: 06462677

Dear Mr LP Mathobela

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2020/04/08 to 2023/04/08

Researcher(s): Name: Mr LP Mathobela
E-mail address: 06462677@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 0835492873

Supervisor(s): Name: Dr MR Mabusela
E-mail address: mabusmp@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 429 4474

Title of research:

The role of the principal as an instructional leader in improving school performance

Qualification: MEd Education Management

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2020/04/08 to 2023/04/08.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2020/04/08 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.

2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2023/04/08**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2020/04/08/06462677/10/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



Prof PM Sebate
ACTING EXECUTIVE DEAN
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

Appendix B: District Permission Letter

Enq: Mathobela Lodrick Phuza

P.O.Box 574

Cell no: 0835492873

Hazyview

Email: mathobz@gmail.com

1242

17.06.2020

The District Director

Mpumalanga Department of Education: Bohlabela District

Private Bag x 11341

Mbombela

1200

Madam

Request for permission to conduct a research in Bohlabela District

I, Mathobela Lodrick Phuza, a masters' degree student of the University of South Africa, hereby make a request for permission to conduct research in seven schools in the Lehukwe Circuit of Bohlabela District. My target is seven school principals, three secondary school principals and four feeder-primary school principals. My research topic is: The role of the principal's instructional leadership in improving school performance. My research question is: What is the role of the principal's instructional leadership in improving school performance? The research aims to be achieved are the following:

To investigate the principals' understanding of their instructional leadership role

To determine how principals practice instructional leadership role in their schools.

To determine if principals have challenges in practicing instructional leadership and what those challenges are.

To investigate how the principals' instructional leadership improves the performance of schools

For the purpose of this research, a two-hour interview will be conducted with the principal of the four schools at a time less obtrusive to their normal duties, preferably in the afternoon. The principals will be requested to make available end of the year performance schedules for the past five years for document analysis. Ethical

considerations have been carefully considered and anonymity of participants or their schools will be ensured by using letters, characters or pseudonyms instead of names. Participation will be voluntary and the participants can withdraw at any time of the research without any harm.

I will appreciate it very much if my request can be granted

Yours sincerely

L.P.Mathobela

Appendix C: District Approval Letter



Ithamanga Building, Government Boulevard, Riverside Park, Mpumalanga Province
Private Bag 211341, Mbombela, 1200.
Tel: 013 786 6552/6116, Toll Free Line: 0800 208 116

Uliko e Thif, indaba Umnyango an Funtso

Departement van Onderwys

Nkizavulo ya Lwondzo

MR L.P. Mathobela

PO BOX 574
Hazyview
1240
083 548 2873
matobz@gmail.com

Dear Sir

APPROVAL OF REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Kindly be informed of the approval of your request to conduct research in our four schools under Lohukwe Circuit in Bohlabela District. The Research to be based on the "what is the role of the principals instructional leadership in improving school performance?"

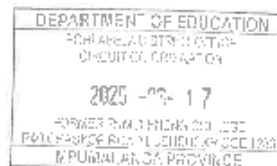
Furthermore, please be informed that the Mpumalanga Department of Education will require access to your research findings and recommendations. You are advised to communicate with your chosen schools and ensure that no inconvenience is experienced at any given time. Teaching and learning must not be negatively affected as a result of this Research.

Your professionalism in this regard will be highly appreciated. Good luck on your research; your interest on matters of the District is applauded.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ms L.N. Goba".

MS L.N. GOBA
DISTRICT DIRECTOR: BOHLABELA

17/06/2020
DATE



Annexure D: Circuit Permission Letter

Enq: Mathobela Lodrick Phuza

P.O.Box 574

Cell no: 0835492873

Hazyview

Email: mathobz@gmail.com

1242

10.06.2020

The Circuit Manager

Mpumalanga Department of Education: Bohlabela District

Lehukwe Circuit

P.O Box 1031

Mkhuhlu

1240

Madam

Request for permission to conduct a research in Lehukwe Circuit

I, Mathobela Lodrick Phuza, a masters' degree student at the University of South Africa, hereby make a request for permission to conduct research in seven school in Lehukwe Circuit of Bohlabela District. My target is seven school, three secondary schools and four feeder primary schools. My research topic is: The role of the principal's instructional leadership in improving school performance. My research topic is: What is the role of the principal's instructional leadership in improving school performance? The research aims to be achieved are the following

To investigate the principals' understanding of their instructional leadership role

To determine how principals practice instructional leadership role in their schools.

To determine if principals have challenges in practicing instructional leadership and what those challenges are.

To investigate how the principals' instructional leadership improves the performance of schools

For the purpose of this research, a two-hour interview will be conducted with the principals of the four schools at a time less obtrusive to their normal duties, preferably in the afternoon. The principals will be requested to make available end of the year

performance schedules for the past five years for document analysis. Ethical considerations have been carefully considered and anonymity of participants or their schools will be ensured by using letters, characters or pseudonyms instead of names. Participation will be voluntary and the participants can withdraw at any time of the research without any harm.

I will appreciate it very much if my request can be granted

Yours sincerely

L.P.Mathobela

Appendix E: Circuit Approval Letter



education
MPUMALANGA PROVINCE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Mathungo Building, Government Buildings, Riverside Park, Mpumalanga Province
Private Bag 11341, Mkhambela 1200.
Tel: 013 709 5520115, Toll Free Line: 0800 200 118

Liko le lamfundo: Umnyango we Funda

Departament van Onderwys

Indawo ka Dyalo

ENQ: NYAKANE B
TEL: 01370979001 0827049132

TO: MR L.P MATHOBELA
FROM: THE CIRCUIT MANAGER
LEHUKWE CIRCUIT OFFICE
DATE: 18TH JUNE 2020

SUBJECT: CONFIRMATION FOR APPROVAL TO CONDUCT EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH.

1. The above matter refers;
2. This is to indicate that Mr L.P Mathobela followed the proper channel of requesting authorization to conduct an educational research in eight schools under Lehukwe Circuit. The authorization is already given by the District Director.
3. Based on the above given information, the circuit hereby confirms the authorization of Mr L.P Mathobela to conduct his research in eight schools under Lehukwe Circuit.
4. Please find an attached copy of the approval letter from the district office.
5. Looking forward to your best work in your research.



NYAKANE B
CIRCUIT MANAGER

18/06/2020
DATE



Appendix F: Participants Permission Letter

Enq: Mathobela Lodrick Phuza

P.O.Box 574

Cell no:0835492873

Hazyview

Email: mathobz@gmail.com

1242

17.06.2020

The Principal

Sir/ Madam

Request for permission to conduct a research in your school

I, Mathobela Lodrick Phuza, a masters' degree student at the University of South Africa, hereby make a request for permission to conduct research in your school. My target is the principal of the school. My research topic is: The role of the principal's instructional leadership in improving school performance. My research question is: What is the role of the principal's instructional leadership in improving school performance? The research aims to be achieved are the following

To investigate the principals' understanding of their instructional leadership role

To determine how principals practice instructional leadership role in their schools.

To determine if principals have challenges in practicing instructional leadership and what those challenges are.

To investigate how the principals' instructional leadership improves the performance of schools.

For the purpose of this research, a two-hour interview will be conducted with the principal of the school at a time less obtrusive to normal duties, preferably in the afternoon. Anonymity and privacy will be ensured by using letters, characters or pseudonyms instead of the name of the school or of the principal. This will be done to ensure that the data supplied cannot be linked to the school or the principal. Participation will be voluntary and as a participant, you can withdraw at any time of the research without any harm.

I will appreciate it very much if my request can be granted

Yours sincerely

L.P. Mathobela

Appendix G: Consent Form

I, _____, have read the consent form and understood its content. Questions I had with the study have been clarified. My signature says that I am participating in the study voluntarily and willingly.

_____	_____	_____
Participant's Name (Printed)	Participant's Signature	Date

_____	_____	_____
Name of person conducting informed consent		

_____	_____
Signature of person conducting informed consent	Date

Appendix H: Interview Schedule

Interview with the Principal of: _____

Date of Interview: _____ Time
from: _____

In-depth Interview with semi-structured open-ended questions

Approximate Duration 2 hours

Biographical Questions:

1. When was the school started?
2. What is the current enrolment of the school?
3. How many teachers does the school have?
4. When did you become the principal of the school?
5. What is the achievement profile of the school over the past five years?
6. What would you say are the major challenges the school faced in the past five years?

Leadership and management questions:

A. Setting direction:

1. Does your school have a vision?
2. What is the vision or mission of your school?
3. How is the vision communicated to the school community?
4. What are the goals of the school for the year?
5. What processes were followed in developing the school goals?
6. How are the goals communicated to learners, parents and the community?

B. Managing curriculum:

1. What is your understanding of the role of the principal as an instructional leader?
2. What are the curriculum plans of the school?
3. What resources are made available for teachers to teach and learners to learn effectively?
4. How is learning and teaching monitored in the school?

C. Developing the staff:

1. What strategies are used during the recruitment of staff in the school?
2. What developmental programmes do you have and how are they linked to school improvement?

D. Providing incentives to learners and teachers.

1. How do you motivate the learners to aim for higher academic outcomes?
2. How do you encourage your teachers to strive for excellence?
3. What are the challenges to learner and teacher motivation?

E. Developing a school culture enabling to learning and teaching:

1. In what ways do parents and the community get involved in the school without disturbing the school program?
2. How do you encourage cooperation and collaboration among the teachers, learners, and the community?

F. The role of the principal in school achievement:

1. What activities have you initiated to enhance the performance of the school?

G. Constraints to instructional leadership

- 1 What challenges did you come across that prevented you from exercising your role as an instructional leader?
- 2 How do you overcome the challenges that you encounter in your leadership?

Appendix I: Proof of Editing

EDITING SERVICES

To whom it may concern

This letter serves to confirm that editing and proofreading was done for:

LODRICK PHUZA MATHOBELA

Master's Degree

in

Educational Leadership and Management

College of Education

University of South Africa

**THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL AS AN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER IN IMPROVING
SCHOOL PERFORMANCE**



Cilla Dowse
26 June 2023

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