

**Thriving instructional leadership practices and functions in challenging
contexts: Lessons from two Nigerian principals**

by

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DECLARATION

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the Eternal, Invisible, the only wise God, the humbler creator, my beginning and my ending, who has illuminated my path in the journey into the world of intellectualism and resourceful contribution to humanity.

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In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. My foremost acknowledgement goes to the God of the Word, who by the Word made the world. Considering the fact that this construct of words, linked together to become sentences and then paragraphs and then an entire dissertation, this project is described as the output of the Word. I make bold to say that God did this and I give unto His holy name all the glory for making this a reality.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to account for instructional leadership practices and functions of principals that succeed in challenging contexts and to know how these principals demonstrated these behaviours and functions so that the contextual realities could not limit nor hinder them from achieving high academic performance in their schools.

Literature on instructional leadership practices and functions in challenging contexts is limited. Moreover, how instructional leadership practices and functions can suppress contextual realities has not been sufficiently explored. Hence, this study engaged in qualitative research situated in the interpretivist paradigm to build a case around two successful Nigerian principals serving in challenging contexts. These two principals were purposively selected alongside eight teachers from the two schools where the principals served. Documents such as school prospectuses, minute books, time books, staff rosters and other vital documents were purposively selected to uncover the instructional leadership behaviours and functions of principals who succeed in challenging contexts. Data from the study participants were obtained through semi-structured individual interviews and focus group interviews. Thematic abstraction was used to analyse and give meaning to the data.

Emerging from this study is that principals who are able to achieve high learner academic achievement in challenging contexts demonstrate instructional leadership behaviours and functions which are guided by thinking leadership, building synergy and exerting discipline. Thus, applying the insights emergent from this study, principals serving in challenging contexts can overcome their contextual realities and thereby achieve high learner academic performance in their schools.

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CHAPTER 1 : INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The role of context in leadership in teaching and learning in schools has become a major concern in recent times. Research on school effectiveness and school improvement has shown that context plays an important role in the overall performance of the school (Hallinger, 2003). This study aims to account for the success of instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions in challenging contexts and how contextual realities influence these behaviours and practices. This chapter will describe the background to the study, including the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and significance of the study. Terms used in the study will be clarified. The chapter will conclude with an outline of the structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background to the study

The issue of leadership in schools to achieve a high standard of learner academic performance that is consistent with educational aims and objectives has been a matter of concern. Furthermore, leadership in schools in a context bedeviled with certain deprivations in order to achieve a high standard of learner performance remains an intriguing area of research. Principals are expected to function primarily as instructional leaders who engage in the day-to-day life of the school ensuring that teaching and learning is achieved for learners (Lyons, 2010). This includes academic and administrative leadership. Therefore, they carry out numerous activities which tend to reduce their overall effectiveness, particularly in terms of learner academic achievement (Bottery, 2004). In the Nigerian context, in addition to teaching, the functions of principals are categorised into management and governance. The management functions require that principals maintain proper order and discipline in the school, register the learners, classify them to the courses prescribed and report their progress. They need to ensure that the attendance of learners on every school day is recorded in the attendance register in accordance with the instructions contained therein. The governance function requires that they receive and account for school fees and such funds as may be made available to them for the running of the school and prepare the budget for consideration by the Board of Governors (Federal Ministry of Education, 2004). The functions stated above are just a few of the myriad

of activities that are expected of school principals. It is imperative to state, however, that the context in which these tasks are performed may tend to limit the efforts of principals in leading teaching and learning, thus undermining the achievement of high academic results for the school.

Looking beyond what principals are supposed to do and what they are doing, Leithwood and Day (2007a) elucidate that the different contexts in which school principals perform their functions also impact on their overall leadership effectiveness and, consequently, their output. A recent research study conducted by Harma and Adefisayo (2013) revealed the disparity of contexts in Nigerian schools. They concluded that there is no uniform schooling context but that schools operate across a wide range of contexts related to the geographical and economical distribution of the state.

The schooling context in Nigeria appears to share certain characteristics with the South African schooling context as explained by Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015). These scholars state that the South African education landscape is a discomfiting amalgam of first and third world institutions. They further assert that at the apical part of the schooling context spectrum there are peak performing schools which can compare with the best in the first world countries in terms of resources and learner performance. However, at the other end of the spectrum there are schools that are dysfunctional with little or no resources to enforce optimal academic performance because of the absence of the ethos of teaching and learning. Amongst the latter schools, nevertheless, there are schools that are sustainable and irrepressible, performing at levels comparable to peak performing schools in terms of learner pass rates (Chikoko et al., 2015).

In the same vein, Nigeria has some schools that are operating in contexts with multiple deprivations but a few of these schools are still able to perform optimally against all odds. According to Maringe, Masinire and Nkambule (2015) multiple deprivation is regarded as the culmination of the effect of socio-economic backwardness (poverty indicators) bedevilling the quality of people's livelihood within a context. Noble, Barnes, Wright and Roberts (2010) describe multiple deprivations from four perspectives: income and material, employment, education and living environment. Some of these negative circumstances and situations describe some educational contexts where learners learn in the Nigerian context.

Abdulkareem and Fasasi (2012), in describing the challenging context that exists in some Nigerian schools, affirmed that economic issues and poverty mindset heads the list of negative circumstances in these contexts. The characteristics associated with the economic state and poverty mindset include: inadequate school space, buildings, furniture, equipment, materials; inadequate funding; and, inadequate personnel (teaching, technical, supportive and administrative). The authors point out that poor attitudes of learners and parents to education and learners anti-social behaviours, amongst other behaviours, tend to mitigate the leadership input of the resident principal (Abdulkareem & Fasasi, 2012). In congruence with this aforementioned features of deprivation, Hall (2007), Harris and Jones (2010), Jacobson, Day, Leithwood, Johnson, Ylimaki and Giles (2005) and Ylimaki, Jacobson and Drysdale (2007) argue that poverty wrecked schools are more likely to record higher rate of poor learner academic achievement. There is, therefore, no doubt that leaders who succeed in poverty wrecked contexts are different from others. It is arguable that principals who succeed in challenging contexts possess personal attributes of being resilient, tough minded and determined while discharging their responsibilities in order to be able to achieve desired outcomes for learners. Hence, there is need to investigate the instructional behaviours and practices of such leaders.

Many principals fail in achieving good results in the challenging situations where they are leaders (Chikoko et al., 2015), but some principals demonstrate effective leadership in spite of their difficult contexts and are their schools meet international benchmarks and compete fairly with other well-resourced schools in more convenient and less challenging contexts(Harris and Jones, 2010). The above scholars have provided findings indicating that some instructional leaders have been able to thrive in the challenging contexts of South Africa, Canada and United Kingdom, but such research has not yet occurred within similar Nigerian contexts. Available literature reveals that studies conducted in Nigeria have focused on the difficulties and possible ways of managing schools in challenging contexts. However, little is known about the instructional leadership behaviours, functions and practices of the few schools that have thrived despite the limitations around them, to being able to perform on centre stage, showcasing outstanding learner academic performance (Abdulkareem & Fasasi, 2012; Aderinoye, Ojokheta & Olojede, 2007; Harma & Adefisoye, 2013; Olujuwon & Perumal, 2014). Thus, the focus of this study is to examine how differently these principals are able to respond (perform their leadership functions) and thrive within the challenging contexts that left other schools dysfunctional.

The context within which leadership occurs appears to influence leadership behaviours in a manner in which such behaviours determine the success or failure of the leader. Dede (2006) asserts that context shapes the individuals that inhabit them through rewarding or inhibiting the various types of behaviours they put forth. He further claims that the individuals within a context can influence the settings of the context by changing its characteristics (realities) in a way that alters the behaviours that the context reinforces or suppresses. In line with the forgoing, one can conclude that the probable influence generated by a context is dependent on the behaviours of the individuals existing in it. Thus, contextual realities may be inhibited or strengthened by attitudinal inputs of people within the context. With respect to organisations and leadership, contextual realities may impact or reinforce the behavioural (attitudinal) input of leaders and managers in a context. Zaccaro (2007) asserts that the behaviours practiced within the confines of job functions determine their overall output and not necessarily the prevailing circumstances within the context. This implies that job roles and responsibilities as well as personality traits and attributes may be constituents of leadership practices. Therefore, the practices and consequent performance of school principals in any context, appears to be influenced by, amongst other things, the behaviours of the principals. It is notable that there are certain behaviours that account for organisational success while others account for failure (Einarsen, Aasland & Skogstad, 2007). Behaviours accounting for success include honesty, integrity, resilience, listening, empathy, delegation, empowerment, awareness, persuasion, vision, trust, modelling and many others (Page & Wong, 2000; Russell & Stone, 2002).

Zacarro (2007) refers to successful and thriving leadership as 'leadership of means' in which the leader influences others by establishing a direction for collective effort by managing, shaping, and developing the collective activities in line with the goal. Thus, Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris and Hopkins (2006) affirm that irrespective of the context, effective leadership enforces improvement while effective management reinforces stability. They go on to say that both stability and improvement are most likely to be achieved in schools with well-established processes and capacities. The absence or inadequacies of these processes and capacities may forcibly stifle the possibility of stability and improvement in schools located in challenging contexts.

Oplatka (2004) described principalship in developing countries as a product of multiple approaches but with certain common features such as limited autonomy, autocratic leadership style, summative evaluation, low degree of change initiation and lack of instructional

leadership functions. Arising from a study conducted in two Nigerian schools, Adebisi (2015) notes that leadership in some Nigerian schools is a blend of autocracy, partial or absence of leadership independence, poorly practiced instructional leadership amongst other factors. Leithwood et al. (2006) note that a good, effective and successful school principal exerts leadership through setting direction, developing people, redesigning the organisation and managing the instructional programme, that is, teaching and learning. The construct of successful leadership by Leithwood et al. (2006) conveys an overview of the functionalities that productive leaders need to access in order to achieve set goals.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Drawing from the literature, studies abound on the functions and practices of some instructional leaders who have been able to thrive in various challenging context, but it is not yet established what constitutes the specific behaviours of thriving principals in challenging contexts, particularly in Nigeria. Moreover, how the context influences the behaviours and functions of principals who are successful in a seemingly difficult context remains an elusive and gray area that has not been sufficiently and conclusively scrutinised as represented in the available literature. This observed gap has necessitated that this study focuses on exploring the instructional leadership behaviours and functions of principals who succeed in challenging contexts as well as understand how their contexts influenced their behaviours for success.

1.4 Researcher's background

Arising from my reflections on the experience gathered in my principal leadership before moving into educational consultancy in Nigeria, and from my reading of the literature on successful instructional leadership in challenging contexts, my interest has gravitated towards understanding what principals who succeed in challenging contexts do. In my years of service as a principal and manager of a group of schools in Nigeria, I observed some schools outperforming the school I led in competitions. Some of these schools were dealing with immense challenges including inadequate or lack of infrastructure, truancy and student violence. This interested me because my school shared similar circumstances. One school in particular had a major turnaround in academic performance and physical development while still operating in a seemingly difficult context. This turnaround astonished every other principal within the community because of the rapidity of the rise of this school out of abject poverty and difficulty.

When I moved into consultancy, I became part of a team that trained both staff and students in some of these schools. During the training in a particular school, I observed behaviours such as leadership by example, servant leadership, listening, visibility and persuasion (Russell & Stone, 2002). However, I knew that getting to the root of what accounts for this success goes beyond a one-day training event, requiring thorough investigation. Thus, I embarked on this scientific investigation to provide answers to the questions that have been engendered by my experience and the literature.

1.5 Purpose of the study

This study aims to investigate the instructional leadership functions and practices of thriving principals in challenging contexts in Nigeria. This study intends to explore the instructional leadership functions and practices of thriving principals in challenging contexts in two Nigerian secondary schools. The study focuses on understanding the constituents of instructional leadership functions and practices of principals who succeed in challenging contexts and how these principals exert their leadership such that it penetrates and influences the school system thus leading to high academic performance by students. The purpose of the study is further explained by means of the following objectives which present a clear understanding of what the study intends to achieve.

1.6 Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To examine what constitutes the instructional leadership functions and practices of successful principals in challenging contexts.
2. To describe how the challenging context influenced the functions and practices of the principals?

In order to unpack the objectives of this study and thereby illuminate the constituent behaviours and practices of instructional leaders succeeding in challenging contexts, certain key questions have been raised.

1.7 Research questions

The objectives of this study comprise the following research questions:

1. What constitutes the instructional leadership functions and practices of principals who succeed in challenging contexts?

2. How has the challenging context influenced the functions and practices of the principals?

1.8 Significance of the study

The researcher anticipates that this study will broaden the knowledge and understanding of what constitutes the type of instructional leadership behaviours, functions and practices of principals that succeed in challenging contexts. Moreover, it is expected that the study will extend the concept of instructional leadership in the contextual reality of multiple deprivations and learners' achievement. This study is aimed at improving the practices of principals in similar contexts to this study in order to improve learner academic performance.

1.9 Clarification of terms

Thriving: The word 'thriving' is used interchangeably with the word 'successful' throughout this study. This is because principals that thrive are regarded as being successful, but their success requires that they overcome certain difficulties that could have impeded their performance (Evans, 2010; Umphrey & Taylor, 2011).

Instructional leadership: Instructional leadership is a style of leadership that requires that school principals have a commitment to ensuring academic goals are projected and achieved, while ensuring that the school climate facilitates learning and that the time allotted for teaching and learning is judiciously utilised. These principals demonstrate some other behaviours that consistently allow for learner improved academic achievement (Hallinger, 2003; Su, 2013). This will be further described in the body of the dissertation.

Practice: The definition of the term 'practice' in the fields of psychology and sociology is contentious *and* appears to be impossible to conclude (Chaiklin, 2011). This study is focused only on accounting for what constitutes leadership practices and does not intend to join in any way in the debate on the conceptualisation of the term 'practice'. Hence, the term 'practice' will be considered in terms of its etymology. According to the Online Etymology Dictionary (2016) the word 'practice' is derived from the Medieval Latin root 'praxis' which refers to 'to do' or 'to act'. In line with this, Cavanagh (2013) argues that practices are activities carried out by a person which may be occasional or become habitual.

Behaviour: Behaviour according to Roger (2007; 2015) is the range of actions and mannerisms undertaken by individuals. According to the authors, behavior is the response of an individual to various stimuli or inputs, whether internal or external, conscious or subconscious, overt or covert and voluntary or involuntary. This definition implies that there is no significant difference between behaviours and practices. Thus, these terms as they appear in the study will mean the same thing.

Functions: The roles and responsibilities associated with the position or office a person occupies (Lunenburg, 2010).

1.10 Outline of the thesis

This dissertation is structured in six chapters, outlined as follows:

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter that presents an overview of the dissertation. This includes background to the study, purpose of the study, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study and summary of the research methodology.

Chapter 2 reviews relevant local and international literature regarding conceptualisations of leadership and management. In particular, this chapter engages with literature on successful school leadership in challenging contexts and critically assesses leadership theories and styles that have been regarded as successful in leading schools. This is undertaken in order to identify a pattern of leadership behaviours, practices and functions that may explain why some leaders succeed while others fail.

Chapter 3 discusses the theoretical framework for the study, focusing on the trends in instructional leadership using Hallinger's model of instructional leadership as the lens through which to view the study. Context-responsive theory is also used as a means of understanding the findings from the study. Hallinger's model of instructional leadership and the context-responsive theory will be used as a framework to give meaning to the research findings.

Chapter 4 describes the step by step approach involved in conducting the research. This chapter presents the research paradigm, research design, methodology, selection of participants, data generation methods, data analysis, trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and research ethics.

Chapter 5 presents and discusses the findings and analyses.

Chapter 6 presents the conclusion and recommendations. This chapter provides an account of how the research questions are answered in relation to the significance of the study. A proposed model of context-bound instructional leadership is presented.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has set the stage for the entire study. The chapter presents the background to the study and then declares the problem under study. The researcher's background was briefly discussed to establish the rationale for the study. The purpose and objectives of the study was presented respectively. Moreover, the research questions were presented as well as significance of the study. The terms used in this study were clarified and the outline of the entire dissertation was presented.

CHAPTER 2 : REVIEW OF LITERATURE ON PRINCIPALS' SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS AND PRACTICES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter described the background to the study. This chapter presents a review of local and international literature related to successful leadership behaviours and practices in challenging contexts. The literature review endeavours to clarify and conceptualise leadership and management as they relate to the objectives of this study. The review describes the pluralistic functions of school leaders and discusses successful school leadership and leadership typologies. This culminates in a discussion on the concept of challenging and multiple deprivation contexts and the influence of individual behaviour on context and contextual realities. In addition to the above, the literature review presents empirical evidence of successful school leadership in challenging contexts. Finally, the researcher identifies the gap in the literature which this study is addressing.

2.2 Conceptualising leadership

Leadership is arguably one of the most studied and contested phenomena (Amanchukwu, Stanley & Ololube, 2015; Northouse, 2015; Smith & Bell, 2014). In this review of scholarly literature on the conceptualisation of leadership, I argue that leadership behaviours and practices are necessary for success in challenging contexts.

Cuban (1988) notes that there are more than 350 definitions of leadership. In spite of the multiplicity of definitions, yet there is no clarity on the distinguishing characteristics that separate leaders from followers (Yukl, 2002; Siraj-Blatchford, & Manni 2007, p. 11). However, Bush (2007) states that although there seems to be no agreement on a single or common definition for leadership, each definition in itself is sensible and stands well on its own. In light of the above, Mbokazi (2013) asserts that it may be impracticable to have a consensus on leadership practices across the varied contexts of practice. This suggests that leadership may not be categorically defined by specific behaviours and practices because of the dynamic and

diverse nature of the contextual realities within which leadership functions are discharged. Thus, it is arguable that the context of practice influences leadership behaviours and practices.

The concept of leadership is defined by Chemers (2014, p.1) as “a process of social influence in which one person is able to enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task.” Bush and Glover (2003, p. 5) state: “leadership is a process of influence leading to the achievement of desired purposes.” Likewise, leadership is conceptualised as a process whereby an individual generates and stimulates influences on others in order for organisational goals to be accomplished (Northouse, 2007; 2015; Rowe, 2007). Chemers (2014) explains further that leadership is an interactive process that involves the achievement of a common task. Chemers noted, however, that this is not as straightforward as it implies because many processes exist at the levels of intrapersonal and interpersonal interactions between the leader and follower as well as the dynamic environment in which they operate. The complexity of the leadership processes at these various levels is due to involvement of thoughts and emotions of both the leader and followers at intrapersonal and interpersonal levels. Chemers argues that if the thoughts and emotions are well harnessed, it will consequently stimulate the power of attraction, communication and influence between the leader and the follower in a way that result in the achievement of shared goals. From these scholastic standpoints, it can be inferred that leadership revolves around the terms ‘process’ and ‘influence’ in the accomplishment of a set goal.

2.2.1 Leadership as a process and influence

Leadership as a *process* points to the fact that leadership is not an end in itself; rather, it is a series of actions toward achieving an aim. Leadership as a *process* can also be typified in the light of being a purveyor (supplier) of certain inputs such as behaviours, characteristics or practices that guarantee the achievement of a set objective (Adebiyi, 2015). Leadership as *influence*, on the other hand, involves attraction (charm), communication, and influence Chemers (2014). According to Maxwell (1998), influence may be argued to be the hallmark of leadership because influence culminates in others willingly giving themselves over to achieving the objective at hand. This outcome depends on the leader’s input of behaviours and practices delivered with charm and by means of effective communication thereby facilitating intellectual, relational and economic productivity and profitability. Influence and process are two sides of the coin in terms of leadership. Hence, influence can be conceived as an end, but

can also be viewed as a means to an end – a process. Influence as an end implies that, it is the end result of the input of leadership behaviours and practices, which is the achievement of organisational goals. Influence as a means to an end describes the saturation effect of certain leadership behaviours and practices on others within the organisation that results in the achievement of a common goal. Bush (2007) accedes to this perspective, as he describes leadership as the convergence of two social roles. In his construct, the follower abdicates some aspect of autonomy while the leader infiltrates the space and establishes authority over the follower. Although leadership may be assumed to be a composite of functions or responsibilities, it is suitable to state that the functions of leadership involve the process of influencing other people towards achieving a set objective.

There are certain features identified as particularly related to leadership in schools. Bush and Glover (2003), as a result of surveying the many definitions of leadership, assert that school leadership displays four distinct features. These features are: influence, value, vision and management. Influence appears as the pillar and forerunner for the three other leadership features. Influence stands as a central issue in the literature on school leadership. In this sense, school leadership is the exertion of intentional influence by the school principal to structure the activities and relationships in the school (Yukl, 2002). The aim is to influence the activities and relationships within the context of a school to fulfill the aims and objectives of education. However, contextual challenges tend to influence behaviours and practices. Dede (2006) asserts that contexts shape the individuals that inhabit them through rewarding or inhibiting the various types of behaviours they put forth. From this it can be inferred that contextual realities tend to dictate the process by which school leaders influence the entities (teachers, learners, parents and the community) involved by the input of necessary behaviours and practices that will enhance the achievement of a common goal (achieving high academic performance for learners). The achievement of high academic performance for learners follows after its initial creation in the mind (Bush & Glover, 2003). This demonstrates the importance of vision to learner achievement. Bush and Glover (2003) state that visionary leaders require an effective management structure that will ensure stability in the school setting. Hence, the next section will discuss issues regarding leadership and management.

2.2.2 Leadership and management

Leadership and management are often considered as independent concepts. However, there is an overlap between the two concepts (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). I propose that although both management and leadership retains certain distinctive sets of behaviours and practices, nevertheless, management functions occur as an outgrowth of leadership functions. Based on this position, I further propose that successful principals in challenging contexts are leaders who exhibit leadership behaviours and practices but are dynamic enough to assume or effectively delegate management functions when necessary. Nienaber (2010) argues that leadership and management functions are interwoven although there are some basic functions of managers that appear not to exist in the functionality of leaders. Some scholars are critical of the term 'management' (Armandi, Oppedisano & Sherma, 2003; Kent, Crofts & Azziz, 2001; Spurgeon & Cragg, 2007). They view management as a temporary, uneventful and boring function that does not necessarily ascertain organisational success. However, Bush and Glover (2003) describe management as a function contributing to the efficient maintenance of the current organisational set up, whereas leadership tends to innovate and initiate change within the organisational set up by shaping the goals, motivation and actions of people. Naylor (1999) differentiates managers and leaders by means of certain features and attributes. According to him, managers demonstrate attributes such as structured, deliberate, tough-minded, persistent, consulting, rational, consulting, authoritative, problem solving, and stabilising. He describes leaders as being visionary, passionate, creative, flexible, inspiring, innovative, courageous, imaginative, experimental and initiators of change. With these stated features and attributes, Naylor concludes that managers lead from the head while leaders lead from the heart. According to Bolman and Deal (1999), an organisation that is properly managed but poorly led will eventually lose purpose while an organisation that is overtly led with an ineffective management will get saturated and crash. They also argue that effective management caters for the daily running of an existing organisation. Leithwood et al. (2006) stress that stability is the hallmark of management while improvement is the focus of leadership. Thus, between the levels of planning and implementation, an effective management provides a balance to the leadership quest for achievement of organisational goals. In line with the foregoing, management can be described to be situated in the domain of maintaining the creation of leadership which emerges through innovation or the introduction of change.

As with leadership, management is also referred to as a process. However, this process is argued to be a composite of features which include creating, directing, maintaining and operating purposive organisations through systematic, coordinated and cooperative human effort (Yukl, 2002). Hence, the process of ‘creating’ in management may not necessarily refer to the overlap between leadership and management functions as Bush and Glover (2003) purport. The term creating in management may describe the function of setting organisational goals, but not a process to stimulate and introduce change (Begley, 1994; Bush, 2007). Nienaber (2010) defined management as maintaining an efficient and effective organisational arrangement. In line with these earlier statements, Bush (2007) states that the process of deciding organisational goals lies at the core of what educational management entails. He posits that school principals alongside the School Management Team (SMT) members come together to work out the aims and objectives of the school. It must be highlighted that the goals and objectives of the school emerge from the vision of the principal and then are shared with the school management teams for review, modification and adoption. School principals who are able to effectively develop the school goals with other SMTs are referred to as advanced visionary leaders (Begley, 1994). These principals are able to synergise with others in the creation of a collaborative vision for the school. Leithwood et al. (2006) observed that management failure at the level of the Department of Education is the result of leadership instability with respect to principal and deputy principal turnover. They noted that stability (management function) and improvement (leadership function) are intertwined and require interdependent relations because it is impossible for leadership to alter the status quo when the system is imbalanced. This therefore, opens up space for further discourse on the issue of the context within which leadership and/or management functions in an organisation occur. An organisation experiencing challenges which call for immediate improvement require leadership to challenge the situations at hand by establishing a vision and mission (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2006), shaping goals (Begley, 1994), and influencing the system to improve (Marks & Printy, 2003).

Considering the above, it is too simplistic and vague to look at leadership and management independently especially in regard to organisational stability and improvement. This is because although leadership and management tend to present independent functions their functions are interdependent in gaining overall improvement and stability of schools in challenging contexts. Thus, in this study I conceive of leadership as being an engine that powers the achievement of goals and management being the wheel bearing it. In the context of school, the principal is

therefore considered to be the engine that powers the achievement of educational goals, that is, the achievement of high academic performance for learners while the management team is the wheel bearing the engine. Mbokazi (2013) argues that principals who succeed must do things differently, going beyond the limits of the contextual realities in their schools so as to enable the achievement of high academic performance for the learners. This is indeed a leadership function. Therefore, with respect to the purpose of this study, which is to explore the instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions of successful principals in challenging contexts, principals in this study are viewed from the perspective of leadership. The next section will consider the pluralistic functions of school principals.

2.3 Pluralistic functions of principals

Principals, by virtue of the functions they carry out, are the academic and administrative heads of schools. Ayeni (2012a) states that the position of the principal is that of a chief executive officer (CEO) who performs a complex range of duties. However, the nexus of all the principals' functions, no matter the variations in size of school and contexts where they serve, is to ensure the normal functioning of all the aspects of the school (Lunenburg, 2010). Principals' primary portfolio includes: leadership functions, administrative roles, management skills, task dimension, human resources activities and lastly behavioural dimensions of principal activities. These functions are reviewed below.

2.3.1 Principal leadership functions

Principals discharge their activities by interlocking various functions which include planning, organising, leading and monitoring. These are the functions that enable school principals to use school resources optimally so as to achieve high academic achievement for learners.

Planning is a core function of principals (Nienaber, 2010). This function is core to the smooth and effective running of schools. This refers to defining the future of the school and mapping out the path to getting there (Casida & Parker, 2011), or, as per Covey (2012), beginning with the end in mind. The school and all its constituents get direction through goals and plans. The teachers, school counsellors, heads of departments and all personnel within the school setting are expected to be involved in goal setting and strategy development for effective alignment for collective achievement (Bush & Glover, 2003; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Goals are signposts for collective achievement while plans are strategies for achieving the goals which

present a sense of direction as these set forth the tasks involved and how to go about achieving them (Gardner, 2011). Planning forms the basis for monitoring and evaluating the specific tasks discharged by all personnel involved in the effective running of the school. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2010) remark that educational contextual constraints, which may be social, economic or political, should facilitate the understanding of internal and external boundaries so that goals and plans are strategically positioned to ensure improved learner achievement and effective schools.

Effectiveness in planning is harnessed through organising. There are three basic components involved in organising. According to Argyris (2011) these include: developing the entire structure of the organisation, recruitment, selecting and training staff, and establishing a model of work patterns and systems. Developing the organisational structure means to create an organisational chart that depicts the line of command, defining how relationships should be maintained and specifying the departmental tasks and responsibilities (Jones, 2010). Organising sets the stage for organisational actions by helping the staff recognize their specific job functions. It also involves coordinating individuals' specific input by creating an effective work schedule to avoid delay in job delivery (Lunenburg, 2010). Principals see to development of the organisational chart, and align each staff member to the various departments with specific work schedules and effective timetabling.

Leading is at the heart of all functions carried out by the principals. Northouse (2015) refers to leading as the act of guiding and influencing others towards achieving a common goal. After organisational planning and the harnessing of staff in the process of organising, leading is the next step. This is because the principal needs to give the staff the 'why' to get the job done. English (2007) states that leading involves communicating the school's goals to the staff and thereby engaging their interest and passion towards achieving it. This requires that the school principal motivates (influences) the teachers and learners towards achieving high academic performance.

Monitoring is an ongoing phase of the school programme as it ensures that the school does not veer out of line from the plans earlier mapped out for the school (Moloi, 2005). The principal at this point is an on-site manager who encourages team planning at the level of the departments and gets feedback promptly so as to reward good performance. The principal maintains high visibility while monitoring plans of action as decided by the various departments; he/she also gives feedback and rewards good performance. The principal must work with all stakeholders

in the school with collegiality so that organisational goals are achieved (DuFour, DuFour, Eaker & Karhanek, 2010). Furthermore, Ayeni (2012) maintains that principals as instructional leaders have the responsibility to supervise, assess, evaluate and circulate important information on educational policies and update teachers with new teaching techniques so as enable effective curriculum delivery. Knowing now what constitutes principals' main functions; it is apposite to explore the skills that are required for their optimal job performance.

2.3.2 Leadership Skills

The leadership skills needed for the effective performance of the above functions have been categorised by Lunenburg (2010) as: conceptual skills, human skills, and technical skills.

Conceptual skills enable principals to be able to effectively gather, analyse and interpret information received from various sources within the school so as to make complex decisions so as to facilitate achievement of the set goals of the school (Kowalski, 2005). Principals work through a maze of information ranging from educational policies, reform mandates, parent input, learner input, environmental realities and challenges, teacher input, amongst many others. This mesh of information sources makes it imperative for them to think strategically before decisions can be made (Barrera-Osorio, Patrinos & Fasih, 2009). For effective monitoring to occur Sergiovanni (2009) emphasises the importance of conceptual skills. This skill allows principals to clearly perceive what is happening around them.

From a practical point of view, a school is people centric. Thus, the principal spends most of the time relating to people. Various researchers have conducted studies on principals' daily activities (Goldring, Huff, May & Camburn, 2008; Ubben, Hughes & Norris, 2015; Sergiovanni, 2009). Findings from these studies showed that principals spend most of their time on interpersonal interactions with various persons within and without the school confines on subjects that often revolves around the school and its achievement of set goals. This emphasises the need for principals to acquire good human skills. Human skills refer to the principals' ability to persuade, facilitate, direct, lead, communicate and connect, resolve conflict and influence everyone within and outside the school community (Arnett, Burns, & Lubbers, 2010).

According to Locke (2010), technical skills refer to the knowledge, approaches and procedures of a particular discipline. Principals need some knowledge of the technicalities related to the

activities they oversee. Heads of department and line supervisors require greater knowledge and skill as they deal with more details unlike the principal who manages the whole process (Lunenburg, 2010). Having looked at the pluralistic functions of principals, the next section will describe leadership theories and typologies in order to synchronise these with school leaders' functions.

2.4 Successful school leadership and leadership typologies

The past two decades have brought enormous pressure to bear on the educational system as policymakers all around the world continue to raise the standards for learner academic achievement (Day, Gu & Sammons, 2016). These demands have prioritised amongst other things accountability and improved learner performance (Ball, 2003; Baker & LeTendre, 2005). Despite the changing educational policies and obviously school leadership profile, yet, there is an agreement in policy and research that school effectiveness and improvement is a leadership function (Day et al., 2016; Mulford, 2013).

It is difficult to understand why schools fail, when the sole purpose of setting up schools is to eradicate failure. The reality is that many schools are grappling with issues that are crippling them and made some dysfunctional while others are merely existing and passing time. Literature is awash with volumes of studies on various factors responsible for successful schools (Anderson, Gronn, Ingvarson, Jackson, Kleinhenz, McKenzie, Mulford & Thornton, 2007; Creemers & Kyriakides, 2006; Ewington, Mulford, Kendall, Edmunds, Kendall & Silins, 2008; Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Mulford, Kendall, Ewington, Edmunds, Kendall & Silins, 2008; Robinson, Hohepa, & Lloyd, 2007; Rowe, 2007). Several studies have been conducted to know what type of leadership results in school success. Therefore, in the subsections following, leadership types and theories that have been associated with school success will be reviewed. These are managerial leadership, distributed leadership, contingency leadership, transactional leadership, transformational leadership and instructional leadership.

2.4.1 Managerial leadership

Despite Bush's (2007) argument that managerial leadership is preferred in managing schools, there is limited empirical evidence that this form of leadership has resulted in school effectiveness and school improvement. The managerial leadership model portrays the

interconnectivity of leadership and management (*see section 2.2.2*). According to Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999, p. 14), managerial leadership is a formal, hierarchical type of leadership which primarily focuses on behaviours, practices and functions. They claimed that the managerial leader aims to work effectively so as to motivate their followers to optimum productivity. Bouie (2012) claims that public school leaders are bureaucratic officials put in place to ensure that educational policies and procedures are effectively implemented so that set goals can be achieved. This form of leadership is based on the argument that school leaders need to entrench their functions, behaviours and practices to cover certain aspects of management and leadership functions. Caldwell (1993) lists a set of behaviours that this type of leader demonstrates. These are: goal setting, identification of needs, priority setting, planning, budgeting, implementing and evaluating.

These highlighted practices appear not to be sufficiently explored in order to ensure school improvement. Bouie (2012) argues that these types of leaders are boxed within bureaucratic machinery with limited options for creativity and improvement thinking. This reveals an overriding emphasis on management functions rather than leadership functions. In line with this, Bush (2007) argues that the managerial leader's sole focus is to manage existing activities rather than creating or envisioning a better future for the school. Thus, it is presumed that goal setting engaged in by managerial leaders does not clearly define a vision for future school improvement. This position therefore undermines the possibility for improvement in schools with contextual conditions that limit the achievement of high academic performance for learners. Challenging conditions, necessitate that the school principal create a vision that will reposition the school towards achieving more learning in order for improved academic performance. Setting a vision is regarded as pivotal to influencing and motivating followers towards achieving a common goal (Bush & Glover, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2006) and so enabling the emergence of successful schools irrespective of context and contextual realities. Vision setting is about getting the teaching staff to develop common goals which results in shared purpose that eventually act as the stimulant for improved learner achievement (Begly, 1994; Russell & Stone, 2002). Leithwood et al. (2006) state that vision setting in order to have successful schools requires certain specific practices: developing shared vision, fostering the approval of common goals and establishing high-performance expectations. Considering that the core practices of managerial leadership are ensuring the management of existent systems, the managerial form of leadership in a context that requires improvement is unlikely to deliver

on school improvement. For this reason, other forms of leadership have been investigated, such as distributed form of leadership (Day et al., 2016).

2.4.2 Distributed leadership

The distributed form of leadership has been promoted by certain scholars as a suitable replacement for the bureaucratic, managerial style of leadership. However, it has failed to present sufficient empirical evidence for school improvement and school effectiveness (Hallinger, 2011; Spillane & Orlina, 2005). In contrast to the managerial and hierarchical style of leadership considered above, the distributed form of leadership is a decentralised form of leadership in which leadership is shared across the organisation (Gronn, 2002; Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Silins & Mulford, 2002). This style of leadership analytically opposes earlier studies which projected the principal as the central focus of school leadership (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). In favour of distributed and teacher leadership, Sergiovanni (1999) argues that leaderful (leader full) organisations may account for organisational success. However, these theories are flawed. Leithwood and Jantzi (2000) state that leadership from all sources does not significantly result in improved learner outcome whereas principal leadership does significantly result in improved learner outcomes. Moreover, the notion of everyone being a leader seems to defy the definition of leadership. This type of reasoning implies that there are no followers illustrated by DuFour and Eaker (2005) who declared that principals should refer to themselves as leaders of leaders. This idea appears impractical because someone has to project the vision while others run with it. If everyone projects their own vision, in effect, the organisation runs into chaos with everyone navigating their own paths. This argument corroborates Leithwood et al.'s (2006) position that though leaders and followers are equally relevant to organisational success they must be viewed as the "two sides of the coin". They are equally important but there is a head and a tail.

In order to clarify the concept, Spillane and Orlina (2005) argue that distributed leadership is not synonymous with team leadership, participative or democratic leadership, emphasising that distributed leadership should not be lumped with other styles of leadership that necessarily involve followers in the achievement of goals.

Elmore (2000) states that distributed leadership refer to the achievement of a common task through the effect of multiple sources of direction and guidance. Hall and Hord (2006) assert that principals are not sufficient to achieve the objective of ensuring sustainable school

effectiveness. Principals need to collaborate with the other sources of leadership in the school including the deputy principals, heads of departments, teacher leaders and other members of the school community in running a successful school. Harris (2003) argues that this does not mean that there is no space for formal leadership that accounts for the performance of the organisation. Harris (2003) claims that the sole functions of formal leaders are to tie up the pieces of the leadership responsibility shreds to make a piece in the achievement of a common objective. Several models of distributed leadership have emerged, with Spillane's model of distributed leadership enjoying greatest prominence. Spillane argues that leadership occurs from a variety of sources and is centered on the interactions between people, situations and artifacts such as goals, visions amongst others (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001). Spillane's model draws attention to the situations that surround the schooling context as being a central element accounting for the successful running of schools. This emphasises the interdependence between the people (sources of leadership) and their context of functioning. Spillane's theory of distributed leadership is centred on three co-leadership practices. These are: collaborative leadership distribution, collective leadership distribution and lastly, coordinated leadership distribution (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). Collaborative leadership distribution refers to the activities of various leaders at a particular time and place. Collective leadership distribution is a function of multiple leaders working on different things but the entire project is interdependently connected. Coordinated leadership distribution describes sequential routines carried out by multiple leaders. These three co-leadership practices are relevant to the day-to-day practices in normal school setting making this an attractive theoretical model. Moreover, Spillane's definition of distributed leadership situates the context as a central consideration in the evaluation of leadership practices and behaviours. However, Spillane (2012) remarks that the weakness in the distributed leadership model is the inability to provide empirical evidence that links it to promoting instructional improvement and increasing student academic achievement. This also validated the assertion of Hallinger (2011) that empirical evidence that connects distributed leadership and student learning is lacking. However, certain studies have shown that contingency leadership is effective in relation to the dynamic realities of schools (Goldring et al., 2008).

2.4.3 Contingency leadership

Contingency leadership has shown significant empirical evidence of achieving more learning for learners in challenging contexts (Tan, 2016). Fiedler (1964) presented the behavioural

theory with the supposition that there are certain prevailing variables, which accentuate leadership behaviours and, thus, performance of leaders in varied situations (Chemers, 1993). This theory proposes that leadership effectiveness is woven around the traits and situational occurrence of individual leaders. There are several other theories that have developed from the contingency theory. These include path-goal directive theory (House, 1971), normative decision theory (Vroom & Jago, 2007), the multiple influence model (Osborn, Hunt & Jauch, 1980), the multiple linkage model (Yukl, 1989), and situational leadership (Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer, 1979).

Path-goal theory states that leadership behaviours have a causative effect on followers' job satisfaction, motivation, and overall productivity (Chemers, 1993). This theory integrated situational variables as moderators of the effect of leadership behaviours. Chemers (1993) argued that integrated situational variables are moderators of the effect of leadership behaviours. This claim suggests that the situational variables are determinants of when and how leadership behaviours culminate in the satisfaction, motivation and productivity of the follower. Yukl (1999) presents a model which illustrates the relationship between leaders' behaviours and the corresponding followers' satisfaction, motivation and productivity.

Vroom and Jago (2007) developed the normative decision model which deals with decision-making that affects a group or team. The model was subsequently improved, to form the Vroom-Yetton-Jago model of decision making, which related a range of decision strategies to a set of situational variables. The decision strategies are positioned against the degree of followers' participation. These decision strategies are: autocratic, consultative, and democratic.

The multiple-influence model of leadership was put forward by Hunt and Osborn (1980; 1982). Yukl (1989) further developed this model, improving on path-goal theory. The multiple linkage model developed by Yukl deals with the relationship between the intervening variables and the leaders' behaviours that affect them. The process variables included in the model are:

- Followers' effort, implies the extent to which followers commit themselves to the task objectives;
- Role clarity and task skills;
- Work organisation, which implies the extent to which personnel, equipment, and facilities are effectively organised;
- Team cohesiveness and cooperation;

- Resources and support services and
- External coordination, which is the extent of synchronisation between work group and other units.

Hersey, Blanchard, and Styles (1996) put forward the situational contingency theory of leadership. Bush (2007) refers to this as not a single model of leadership practice but represents responsiveness to leadership challenges, which requires careful diagnosis of the situation. After diagnosis, the most appropriate leadership style to engage the situation or challenge at hand is selected. However, studies have not shown how application of this form of leadership translates to improved student achievement (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2006; Southworth, 2002; 2005). Other leadership theories such as transactional leadership have been proposed to attain further clarity on how school leadership may contribute to high academic performance of learners.

2.4.4 Transactional leadership

As is the case with managerial leadership, Avolio, Walumbwa and Weber (2009) argue that transactional leadership is effective in existing organisations. Thus, transactional leadership is not effective in improving schools. According to Miller and Miller (2001) transactional leadership is a makeshift leadership approach which operates on the basis of exchange of valued resources. The transactional leader rewards or punishes the follower in exchange for loyalty, productivity or failed expectations as the case may be (Miller, 2001). The basis of the relationship between the transactional leader and the follower is the exchange (Bass & Bass, 2009). The sustainability of the relationship depends on the mutual satisfaction derived from the exchange by both the leader and follower (Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003). This type of leader primarily concentrates their energy on getting the job done and enforces follower submission. The transactional leader motivates people through goal setting and consequent rewards for goal actualisation. Yukl (2008) notes that there are three dimensions to transactional leadership which are contingent, namely, reward, active management-by-exception, and passive management-by-exception. The contingent reward dimension of transactional leadership refers to leadership behaviours in which the leader establishes a clear reward system for the follower's effort through the process of negotiation (Yukl, 2008). The dimension of active and passive management-by-exception in transactional leadership describes how leaders react to the error of their followers. The dimensions of active and passive

management-by-exception are differentiated only by time in the sense that the active management-by-exception searches for errors and corrects them, whereas passive management-by-exception waits for errors to be committed then punishes them. Passive management-by-exception is a form of the traditional, totalitarian and autocratic form of leadership (Jansen, 2013; Miller & Miller, 2001; Yukl, 2008). Bass and Bass (2009) argue that this form of leadership is effective in a reinforced (strengthened) organisation. That is, transactional leadership seems to be effective in a well-resourced environment where the leader is capable and has means of rewarding the followers in exchange for their efforts. This implies that the behaviour of the transactional leader may not be sustainable in a challenging context or a context with multiple deprivations. As noted by Maringe et al. (2015), multiple deprived contexts are challenged by multiple factors of which poverty is largely a stakeholder. This makes the reward for effort system of the transactional leader impracticable even. Avolio et al. (2009) argue that transactional leadership is enhanced by reaching goals through transformational leadership inputs.

2.4.5 Transformational leadership

This form of leadership has been argued to result in school effectiveness and school improvement (Ararso, 2014; Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008). Bass and Riggio (2006) describe transformational leadership as a style of leadership that inspires followers to commit to the shared goals and vision of the organisation, motivating them to take initiative for solving problems and to develop their leadership capacity through participation in coaching, mentoring and modelling. There are four core behavioural dimensions that defines transformational leadership, namely, individual consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation and idealised influence (Leithwood, 1994). Burns (1978) describes this leadership theory as a process in which a person interacts with others and therefore creates a sustainable relationship based on trust and increased motivation (both intrinsic and extrinsic) in both leaders and followers. Yuen, Law, and Wong (2003) refer to transformational theory as the criterion for educational reforms.

Subsequent to the Burns (1978) construct of transformational leadership, there has been continuous development on the construct. Leithwood (1994) improved on the construct of transformational leadership, in which he developed an eight dimensional transformational model for school leadership. This model identified certain behaviours and practices that

transformational school leaders should display, including identifying and articulating a vision, fostering the acceptance of group goals, providing individualised support, intellectual stimulation, school culture and collaborative relationships. Amongst other practices, transformational leadership aims to understand and develop people to achieve more for the organisation. This practice immensely contributes to team motivation, which is essential to the achievement of organisational goals (Leithwood et al., 2006; 2008). The foundational aim of the practices of understanding and developing others is for the purpose of building teacher capacity (Ntloana, 2010). In addition, transformational leadership aims to meet teachers' individual needs relative to their personalities (commitment, capacity and resilience) so as to perpetuate the application of new knowledge and skills in order to foster the growth of the organisation. This core practice has been simplified into practices that are more specific: providing individualised support and consideration, fostering intellectual stimulation, and modelling appropriate values and behaviours. Leithwood et al. (2006) claimed that research has validated that these practices are ways in which successful leaders can optimise their personalities within the professional context leading to profound organisational success.

Furthermore, transformational leadership is directed towards reorganising and establishing a conducive environment that is viable for the personal and professional growth of teacher, creating typical work conditions that allow teachers to make the best of their motivations, commitments and capacities. This comes through with redefining the school culture such that the teachers' prior beliefs and ethics are altered and become synchronised with the newly informed culture that enables the successful achievement of goals (Johnson, 2007). Specific practices are building a collaborative culture, restructuring and re-culturing the organisation, building effective relationships with parents and the community, and integrating the school with its wider environment. These behaviours have been empirically linked with academic achievement of learners (Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, there are claims that only one out of four studies in this field associates transformational leadership with student outcomes (Hallinger, 2011; Robinson et al., 2007; Prytula, Noonan, & Hellsten, 2013). Instructional leadership has however continued to take the central role on its effect on student learning.

2.4.6 Instructional leadership

Hallinger (2011) notes that the emergence of transformational leadership appears to limit the influence of the instructional leadership model, but Leithwood and Poplin (1992) and Marzano

et al. (2005) claim that instructional leadership has served school well and remains the most popular model for educational leadership. The emergence of instructional leadership is consequent to the demand on school principals to be more accountable for running schools successfully (Rowan, Bossert, & Dwyer, 1983; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Thus, principals had to concentrate on leading teaching and learning in school and motivate teachers towards ensuring improved learners academic performance (Hallinger, 1992b). At its inception, instructional leadership theory was referred to as the emphasis of school leaders on the behaviours of teachers as they engage in activities that directly affect the academic growth of learners (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999). At that time, the practice of instructional leadership focused primarily on principals as being solely responsible for the success of the school (Lashway, 2002). A study on effective principals between 1970 and 1980 revealed that their behaviours and practices revolved around instructional leadership practices. Effective principals have a commitment to ensuring academic goals are projected and achieved, ensuring that the school climate facilitates learning and ensuring that the time allotted for teaching and learning is judiciously utilised. Andrews and Soder (1987) described these principals as instructional leaders. Andrews and Soder (1987) depicted instructional leaders' behaviours and practices in the school as including resource provision (setting the climate for the achievement of school vision and goals), instructional resource provision (directing continued improvement of instructional programme and ensuring teacher professional development), effective communication, and maintaining a visible presence throughout the school. This understanding of principals' instructional leadership highlights the role of principals as instructional leaders who exhibit practices focusing on learner academic achievement. This understanding emphasises the bilateral focus of such principals which is learner achievement through effective classroom engagement and continuous teacher development. This understanding is reflected in Sheppard's (1996) notion of narrow conceptualisation of instructional leadership. Sheppard argues that instructional leadership conceptualisation includes two categories, namely, the narrow and the broad conceptualisation of instructional leadership. In his analysis, he states that the narrow definition reveals a perspective that instructional leadership flows from the administrative responsibilities. This depicts instructional leadership as actions that are directly linked with teaching and learning such as class supervision. Sheppard's (1996) broad definition is that all leadership behaviours and practices are directed towards learner academic achievement. Southworth (2002) is of the view that the broad definition of instructional leadership provides clarity on the functions of instructional leaders.

Despite the model's popularity, instructional leaders have been criticised as being formidable, superhuman, running a one-person show with a top-down approach that limits the inputs of other staff within the school (Camburn, Rowan & Taylor, 2003; Lashway, 2002). The criticism of principal centredness of the instructional leadership model has faded as instructional leadership embraces transformational and distributive models of leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons & Hopkins, 2007; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; MacNeill, Cavanagh & Silcox, 2003). This emerging and interdependent model of instructional leadership brings to focus the indispensability of teacher empowerment and teacher professional development to the development of effective schools. Hallinger (2003) argues that instructional leadership shares similar features with transformational leadership. Both theories ensure the creation of a shared sense of purpose in the school by incorporating SMTs and teachers into goal setting. Both theories enable the development of a climate of attainable high expectations and a school culture that is dedicated to enhancement of effective teaching and learning. Other commonalities include shaping the compensation framework of the school in relation to the school goals set for staff and students; coordinating and providing intellectual stimulation and staff development; maintaining a visible presence in the school; and, demonstrating the values that are being nurtured by the school. The differences between the two models, according to Hallinger (2003) lie in the objective for improvement or change, the extent to which the principal exercises control and coordination versus the principals' empowerment strategy, and the extent to which leadership is located in an individual or is shared.

This construct of distributive and transformational instructional leadership theory has further been improved leading to the emergence of the integrated leadership framework. Marks and Printy (2003) endeavoured to create a merger of transformational and distributive leadership with instructional leadership. These authors argue that the consequent integrative framework of instructional leadership presents analysable differences that exists between transformational and instructional leadership models yet projects the effectiveness of the merger in practice. They describe the practices of the principal as a transformational leader who motivates teachers towards demonstrating a strong commitment to the goal of school improvement. The instructional end of the principals' practice focuses on staff organisation towards the attainment of high academic performance for learners in the school. Hallinger (2003) and Hoy and Miskel (2007) note that the integrated framework has been sufficiently described by contingency theory. Hoy and Miskel (2007) describe this theory by stating that the specific features of the context blend with the traits and skills of the principal and thereby determine the principals'

leadership behaviour and effectiveness. Situational, environmental and organisational factors have a direct impact on the principals' effectiveness. Peariso (2011) argues that the integrative model justifies the need for alternate leadership practices. For instance, top down instructional leadership may be necessary to upturn a low performing school in a challenging context, however, in order to achieve good academic performance for learners, transformational and shared leadership must be deployed to maintain the continued record of academic performance. Despite the criticism of instructional leadership theory and because of its evolutionary development to mitigate those criticisms, instructional leadership has remained empirically the most effective in improving learner academic achievement (Robinson et al., 2007). In addition, Hallinger (2009) notes that there is a global demand for accountability and school improvement that has necessitated that principal function primarily as instructional leaders. In a bid to clarify the subject of school improvement and school leadership, the following section will review literature on successful school leadership.

Looking at the above, principal leadership requires certain behaviours and practices that account for success irrespective of the context of functioning. Covey (2012) from his review of 200 years of literature on successful leadership behaviours and practices lists the behaviours and practices of successful leaders as follows: being proactive, beginning with the end in mind, putting first things first, thinking win-win, synergising, seeking first to understand and then to be understood, and then sharpening the saw. He remarked that the first three behaviours account for private victory, the next three accounts for public victory, and the last behaviour re-invents the wheel. It can therefore be argued that before a principal can perform outstandingly, such a principal must engage in certain practices that will ensure his/her personal victory.

Dekker (2014, xvi) claims that "behaviour is systematically connected to features of people's tools, tasks and operating environment." Therefore, the next section focuses on the context of school leadership, describing the global experience of leading schools in challenging contexts.

2.5 Conceptualising 'challenging context' and 'multiple deprivation'

West, Ainscow and Stanford (2005) argue that despite the growing interest in investigating leadership in challenging contexts, literature has not sufficiently conceptualised nor theorised the concept. Maringe and Molestane (2015), in a bid to obtain clarity, traced the origin of the concept of 'challenging contexts' to policy makers. They noted that it is widely known that policy makers have always raised concerns about the impact of poverty on communities in

various parts of the world. It is therefore the responsibility of the smallest administrative units close to such communities to be able to clearly identify and describe the challenging realities of their environment. This helps to bring to focus the challenges and deprivations within the setting they work in to design and deliver the necessary interventions needed (Noble et al., 2010).

Several scholars (for example, Clarke, 2003; Gore & Smith, 2001; Maden & Hillman, 1996; Wolfendale, 1992) have tried to conceptualise schools identified with challenges and deprivations. In the United Kingdom, the Department for Education (DfE) describes such schools as having academic achievement below a standard bar and eligibility for free school meal (FSM) are indicators that the school is in a challenging context and is situated in a disadvantaged community (MacBeath, Gray, Cullen, Frost, Steward & Swaffield, 2006). There are core indices that the DfE in the UK uses as parameters to classify schools as being disadvantaged, including that schools that are located in areas with harsh social-economic challenges, and learners have low prior academic attainment, little or no motivation and poor self-image (Mbokazi, 2013). In addition, to the parameters stated, these schools also have very high number of transient learners. These parameters resonate with Maringe and Molestane's (2015) description of multiple deprivations. Maringe and Moletsane state that multiple deprivations are a multifaceted concept. Various factors combine to devalue the importance of education such as poverty, lack of an educationally stimulating environment, cultural and social differences. Noble et al. (2002) describe multiple deprivations based on four elements: income and material, employment, education and living environment. Some of these negative circumstances and situations describe some educational contexts where learners learn in the Nigerian context. There are three main factors that influence learner academic performance. The first is in-school factors (school quality such as facilities, quality of teaching and learning and the allotment of instructional time). The second is social economic status and the third is parental attitude towards education (Wachs, 2000). The last two factors may be most responsible for influencing behaviours, motivation and prospects of learners regarding learning and life in general (MacBeath et al., 2006). Natriello (1990) described schools located in challenging contexts as exhibiting certain related features, namely, poverty, single parenting, low literacy levels, instructional language barriers in schools. Schools located in low socio-economic status areas are at risk of not attaining good academic performance for learners and possibly end up being dysfunctional because of issues such as poverty, poor self-image, child

abuse, alcohol, drug and substance abuse amongst others (Mbokazi, 2013; Zill, Morrison & Coiro, 1993).

Socio-economic status is a major indicator for learners, learning achievements and their prospects in life (Mbokazi, 2013). Poverty is a combination of various elements including income poverty, material poverty, capability poverty, health poverty, nutritional poverty, ethical poverty and epistemological poverty (Noble et al., 2010). Poverty alignment with family structure and community setting is a knotty shot that have not been fully comprehended as well as its overall effect on learners learning (Thompson, Grandgenett & Grandgenett, 1999; Thurlow, Bush, Coleman, 2003). Poverty can be alluded to as being an over-arching factor that mitigates the possibility of academic achievement. Hunger is an outgrowth of poverty, which is a result of people not having the capacity to produce food, nor the income to make provision for it (Oteh & Ntunde, 2011). The consequence of hunger on the behaviours, emotions, health and academic performance of learners is overwhelming (Alaimo, Olson & Fronglilo, 2001). Free school meals have become a necessary panacea to deal with hunger in schools situated in challenging contexts as the impact of hunger on learner academic performance has been empirically proven (Alaimo et al., 2001). A number of countries around the world such as the USA, UK, South Africa, Nigeria deal with the reality of hunger by making provision for meals at schools considered eligible (Abdulkareem & Fasasi, 2012; Christie, 2008; Hopkins, 2001; Maringe & Molestane, 2015; Ylimaki et al., 2007). These challenges have been argued to impact the behaviours and practices of principals located in these schools (Leithwood & Day, 2013; Hallinger, 2011).

Studies from Nigeria revealed that the failure of government over the years to adequately fund education over the years has led the malfunctioning of the education system (Adeniji, 2002; Ogunnu, 2001). There are claims that national failure is responsible for the lack of teachers' competence, the failing curriculum instruction in schools, inadequate or lack of learning facilities, resources and funding, crowded classrooms, the use of outdated and inappropriate equipment as well as failing school management (Adeniji, 2002; Ayeni & Adelabu 2011; Fafunwa, 2010). The overall impact of these challenges bedeviling the Nigerian schooling system makes a great impact on the teaching and learning programme, including the proliferation of examination malpractice in schools and poor academic performance of learners in externally moderated examinations (Ayeni, 2012b; Fafunwa, 2004).

2.5.1 Influence of individual behaviour on context and contextual realities

Looking beyond what principals are supposed to do to what they are actually doing in various challenging contexts in different parts of the world, Leithwood and Day (2007a) observe that the different contexts in which school principals perform their functions impact their overall leadership effectiveness and, consequently, their output. This point is supported by Einarsen, Aasland and Skogstad (2007) who assert that the behaviours and practices of school principals in any context appears to be influenced amongst other things, by the contextual realities within which they operate. At the same time, Zaccaro (2007) claims that the context wherein leaders function appears to be influenced by leadership behaviours and practices in a manner in which such behaviours determine the success or failure of the leader. Drawing on both perspectives, Dede (2006) asserts that contexts shape the individuals that inhabit them through rewarding or inhibiting the various types of behaviours they put forth. He further asserts that the individuals within a context can influence the settings of the context by changing its characteristics (realities) in a way that alters the behaviours that the context reinforces or suppresses. In line with the forgoing, it can be deduced that though the context is capable of influencing the behaviours and practices of the individuals within it, contextual realities may be inhibited or strengthened by the behavioural inputs of the people therein. The implications of this approach in regard to school leadership, is that the behaviours and practices of school leaders in a context determines their overall output and not necessarily the prevailing circumstances within that context (Zaccaro, 2007). It is arguable therefore that principals located in challenging contexts and areas with multiple deprivation have to demonstrate exceptional behaviours and practices in order to make learners to achieve high academic achievement. However, the concepts of challenging contexts and multiple deprivation need to be clarify so as to know how successful principals respond to the contextual realities within the jurisdiction of leadership performance.

2.5.2 Successful school leadership in challenging contexts

There is a growing body of evidence, though still very limited in Africa, that in spite of the challenges faced in some schools, some principals have been able to input successful behaviours and practices that have turned the trend of poor academic performance around, thereby making their schools achieve excellent academic performance for learners (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Rooyen, 2010; Kamper, 2008; Naicker, Chikoko & Mthiyane, 2013). West et al. (2005) noted that as early as 1997 the American Federation of Teachers developed

a manual for improving low performing schools which emphasised the need for schools to initiate policies that prioritise high standard and goals. The Nigerian context, like many other African contexts where rural and township secondary schools are situated, shows a remarkable range of challenges and deprivations with little or no funds, poor infrastructure and many other socio-economic challenges yet some principals have brought their schools to the spotlight of academic achievement (Abdulkareem & Fasasi, 2012). Most studies in Nigeria scholarship have focused on the functions of principals as custodians of effective curriculum delivery in schools (Ayeni & Akinfolari, 2014; Ekpoh & Eze, 2015). These studies have provided insight into the context of principals' leadership and how principals respond to the contextual challenges in order to ascertain outstanding academic achievement (Akinola, 2013; Duze, 2012).

Studies from elsewhere have specifically explored the behaviours, practices and functions of principals serving in challenging contexts. For instance, Harris and Chapman (2002) highlighted the core practices and behaviours of principals situated in challenging contexts. They claimed that such principals demonstrated leadership practices and behaviours such as improving the environment, generating positive relationships, focusing on teaching and learning, community building, and teacher continuous professional development.

Smith and Bell (2014) conducted a study in the UK involving four head teachers located in an area with social and political challenges. The schools in this context were described to have the worst national attendance ranking; many of the learners in these schools were registered for FSM and Special Educational Needs (SEN). However, Smith and Bell revealed that of the four school head teachers involved in the study only one was able to turn things around in the school. The principal that was able to achieve better academic results exhibited behaviours and practices that portrayed transformational leadership while the remaining other three head teachers portrayed transactional leadership. The authors noted that data was gathered over an extended period of time.

Chikoko et al. (2015) conducted a study involving five South African principals using servant leadership and an asset based approach as theoretical lenses. The study on these successful principals functioning in challenging contexts revealed that they used the inside-out improvement approach to deal with the challenges within their contexts. They focused their attention on what they considered to be their greatest assets and used these to obtain what they

did not have. Time, commitment and accountability are what these principals envisaged to be within their sphere of influence and with these they pushed against the challenges within their context to achieve more for their learners academically. This study positioned successful leadership in challenging context as being leadership that refuses to accept the challenges being faced as final or fatal. They do not perceive themselves as victims of the challenging situations around them and find strength from within to deal with these issues. An earlier study conducted by Naicker et al. (2013) used instructional leadership as the theoretical framework to engage this study. Arising from that study the authors advocated for a paradigm shift in the instructional leadership framework. They claimed that instructional leadership theory needs to reinforce an approach which shapes the structures and cultures of the schooling context in response to the contextual realities of the schools.

Mbokazi's (2013) study of successful school leadership in three South African township schools located in areas with multiple deprivations revealed certain behaviours and practices of these successful school principals. Mbokazi describes four main dimensions of successful school leadership behaviours and practices, namely, strategic, regulatory, pedagogic and compensatory dimensions. These dimensions were further broken down into specific practices as follows:

- The strategic dimension which includes goal setting, creating an organisational climate of high expectations and hard work, and capacity building
- The pedagogic dimension which includes managing teaching and learning, frequent monitoring of learner progress.
- The regulatory dimension which foregrounds maintenance of discipline.
- The compensatory which relates to building and strengthening home-school relations and parent and community involvement.

Thus, there is a direct relationship between learner achievement and the evolution of an effective school where leadership resonates with behaviours that counteract challenging realities of their context.

2.6 Chapter summary

The discourse on successful leadership in challenging contexts appears to be emerging and on-going as scholars aim to clarify and develop a consensus on the behaviours and practices that account for improved academic performance in schools located in deprived areas. Leadership

theories reveal a gap as existing theories have not sufficiently depicted the behaviours and practices that tend to account for successful leadership in challenging contexts. There are a few studies which seek to account for what leaders do differently to succeed in challenging contexts of South Africa and some other developed nations around the world. but there is a dearth of literature on successful leadership behaviours and practices of principals in challenging contexts in Nigeria. These are the major gaps observed in the literature reviewed and are what the current study sought to address.

CHAPTER 3 : THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Having reviewed local and international literature in the previous chapter, which put forward the discourse on successful school leadership behaviours and practices in challenging contexts, this chapter will foreground the theoretical framework guiding this study. In order to understand the principals' instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions, particularly, when functioning in a challenging context, I realised that a unilateral dimensional view of leadership theories would not sufficiently cover the scope of the study. Therefore, I combined Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership and the context responsive leadership theory to explore the multi-dimensional perspectives of successful principal leadership in challenging contexts. Hence, the instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions were investigated on the one hand and on the other, the impact of the challenging context on the principal's instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions. Therefore, these two theories have been knitted together to form a framework that will enable me to adequately account for the practices, behaviours and functions of the principals involved in this study. In developing this chapter, I first delve into the historical background of instructional leadership and then focus on the Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model of instructional leadership. Secondly, I will present and discuss the context-responsive theory. Thirdly, the theories will be combined and discussed as a framework.

3.2 Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) Model of Instructional Leadership

Research on effective schools in the 1980s revealed that the key to running successful schools was the principal taking responsibility for the management of curriculum and instruction (Hallinger, 2010). Emerging from their study, Rowan et al. (1982) established the need for the management of instruction in schools. However, at its inception, management of curriculum and instruction was a concept with no systematic approach to theorising and there was no empirical inquiry into its practice. Consequently, Rowan et al. (1982) developed an instructional management construct which quickly fizzled out and was replaced with instructional leadership by researchers and practitioners (Hallinger, 2010). The term

'instructional management' inferred that the basic functions of school leaders are purely managerial, considering the fact that they have to coordinate and control the curriculum and its instructions. In addition, principals were expected to operate based on formal authority and power rather than expertise and influence in generating positive and enduring impact on staff motivation and behaviour as well as student learning (Blase & Blase, 2000; Lineburg, 2010; Lyons, 2010). Moreover, Rowan et al. (1982) remarked that instructional leadership was a tool that would enhance the understanding of how educational leadership impacted learner learning and achievement.

Evidence showed that in the middle of the twentieth century, instructional leadership had become the most common tool in scholastic studies relating to school leadership in terms of learner performance and overall school improvement and school effectiveness (Hallinger & Heck, 1996). This is apparently because policy makers internationally raised the bar on educational performance demanding leadership for learning (Gewertz, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2006; 2008; Murphy, Elliott, Goldring & Porter, 2007).

Instructional leadership is still evolving in meaning, concepts and models (Hallinger, 2005). Leithwood (1999) notes that instructional leadership assumes that the critical focus of school leaders is the behaviour of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students. This position seems to fall within the narrow purview of analysis conceived by Sheppard (1996) (*see Section 2.4.1.6*). Hence, Leithwood's conceptualisation indicates that instructional leadership is the principal's actions that are directly linked with teaching and learning such as class supervision only. However, instructional leadership has been described as all the management of teaching and learning as well as other functions that account for learner achievement in schools (Rowan et al., 1982; Hallinger, 2003; 2008; Murphy, 1990). Maher (1986) divided the instructional behaviours of school leaders into instructional and non-instructional leadership behaviours. In Maher's construct, instructional supervisory behaviours are composed of observing instructional performance of teachers, providing teachers with performance feedback and involving teachers in instructional performance improvement. Maher's non-instructional leadership behaviours are programme planning and evaluation, identifying, hiring and scheduling, directing staff activities, preparing budgets and related information, maintaining other personal and professional contacts and miscellaneous. A decade later, Maher's categorisation was considered a narrow definition of instructional leadership which demonstrates a limited understanding of what instructional leaders do (Sheppard, 1996).

Constructing meaning for instructional leadership has resulted in the development of models with the aim of facilitating a clearer perspective of the concept.

Several models of instructional leadership have been proposed since the eighties. Some of these models include those of Hallinger (1983), Hallinger & Murphy (1985), Murphy (1990), Weber (1989), Alig-Mielcarek (2003), Alig-Mielcarek, Hoy & Miskel (2005); Hallinger, 2003; Webber & Robertson, 1998). Other models of instructional leadership developed have been directed towards improving Hallinger (1983) and Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) models. For example, Murphy (1990) presented an elaborated framework for instructional leadership made up of four basic dimensions of instructional leadership which was broken down into sixteen different roles or behaviours. The sixteen roles attributed to instructional leaders are embedded in the ten job descriptors of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership. It is arguable that the roles ascribed to developing a supportive work environment, promoting an academic learning climate and managing the educational production function under the basic dimension of Murphy (1990) are already incorporated in the ten roles of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership. Although Murphy's (1990) model provides some clarity to the instructional leadership functions it does not present new angles to improving the Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model of instructional leadership. Weber's (1989) model is nothing different, as it dwells on shared leadership and site-based management and based on his review of the literature, he came up with a model that is consistent with the earlier models. Weber (1989) identified five domains for the practice of instructional leadership: defining the school's mission, managing the curriculum and instruction, promoting a positive learning climate, observing and improving instruction and assessing the instructional program.

These three models have shown three similar fundamental instructional leadership functions: defining and communicating goals, monitoring and providing feedback on the teaching and learning process, and promoting and emphasising the importance of professional development. These instructional leadership functions have been considered pivotal and effective to staff motivation and consequent school improvement. Locke and Latham's (1990) goal setting theory is arguably one of the most effective theories for employee motivation and this is consistent with these three functions of instructional leadership which Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model presents (Alig-Mielcarek, 2003; Hoy & Miskel, 2001). In spite of the revisions of the Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model of instructional leadership and the subsequent development of other models of instructional leadership, the Hallinger and Murphy (1985)

model of instructional leadership still presents a comprehensive overview of the behaviour and practices required in leading teaching and learning in schools. Hence, this study engaged Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership for the purpose of investigating the behaviours, practices and functions of principals who are successful in leading teaching and learning in their schools. This study assumed that the principals' instructional behaviours, practices and functions might be responsible for the achievement of outstanding academic performance for learners even while serving in challenging contexts.

Hallinger and Murphy (1985) developed a framework on instructional leadership from their empirical and theoretical analyses of school leadership. Their construct of instructional leadership has three functions and ten job descriptors (behaviours and practices). This model of instructional leadership brings to light a detailed and comprehensive perspective on the concept of instructional leadership, which is, leading teaching and learning in schools. The conceptual definition of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership is a three dimensional function composed of defining the school's mission, managing the instructional program and promoting a positive school learning climate (Hallinger, 2003; 2005; 2010 Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). These are further outlined into ten instructional leadership behaviours and practices, which are framing clear school goals, communicating clear school goals, supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, monitoring student progress, protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, providing incentives for learning (Hallinger, 2009). Hallinger and Murphy (1987) present a construct for assessing and analysing principals' instructional leadership which is referred to as the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS). Therefore, this study used Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership, using the PIMRS as the tool to analyse and understand how principals in challenging Nigerian context exert their instructional leadership. The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale is shown in Figure 3.1.

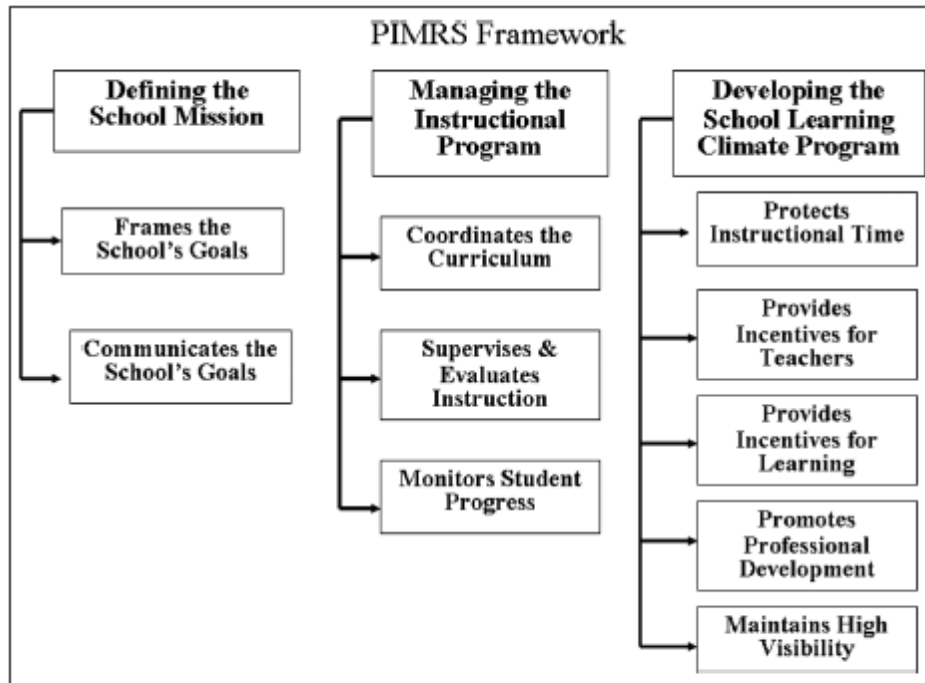


Figure 3.1: The Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale

As indicated in the previous chapter, some theories (managerial, distributed, transformational, contingency, amidst others) (*see Section 2.2.2*) of leadership have presented a link between these theories and successful leadership behaviours and practices. The scholastic review of the theories of leadership positioned instructional leadership under the spotlight for scrutiny, culminating in concise and clear conceptualisations of instructional leadership (Alig-Maricarek, 2003). Alig-Maricarek describes instructional leadership as the principal’s ability to demonstrate certain behaviours that result in high academic achievement for learners. These conceptualisations are not that far apart from the Hallinger and Murphy’s (1985) definition of the concept. Exploring the construct as presented by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), one can see that the first function of instructional leaders is the principal’s ability to frame and communicate effectively the school’s goals. Framing the school’s goals establishes the end from the beginning in order to chart the course for all school activities. It is arguable that goals are an essential motivation that harness and cohere the input of teachers and learners through resilience and intellectual stimulation to improve the strategy of action (Locke & Latham, 1990). Most decisions taken by instructional leaders are informed by clearly established shared goals. Successful principals usually have clear vision and goals and also have the needed expertise for achieving these goals (Cotton, 2003; Harris, 2007; Lashway, 2002; Leithwood

&Reihl, 2003; Lyons, 2010; Marzano et al., 2005; Portin, Schneider, DeArmond & Gundlach, 2003; Robinson, 2010).

Bush and Glover (2003) describe principals who are able to develop their goals alongside their staff as outstanding leaders as it gives the entire staff a sense of ownership and responsibility for the goals. Robinson et al., (2010) argue that to frame school goals is an all-encompassing process that involves setting, communicating, and monitoring of learning goals, standards and expectations, and the participation of others for clarity and consensus. This definition holds true to an extent, yet it can be contended that framing of goals may include setting and communicating goals, and the inclusion of others in the process. However, the monitoring function in his definition is arguably not a framing function, rather, it is a management of teaching and learning programme function as Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) construct depicts it. At the point of setting and communicating goals, the leaders' goals are clearly communicated and collaboratively designed for achievement (Leithwood & Reihl, 2003; Marzano et al., 2005). Communicating the goals is an important function of instructional leaders. In communicating goals, the pivot in effectiveness in this process is communicating meaning (Bush & Glover, 2003). The mastery of communication in leadership is essential to successful achievement of framed goals (Southworth, 2002; 2011). Thus, goals must be communicated in a manner that captures the commitment of every member of the school community. Framing and communicating goals connects directly with the process of managing the teaching and learning programme, as this tends to relate to Robinson et al.'s (2010) point of monitoring of goals in the conceptualisation of framing goals.

The second function in the Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model refers to managing the instructional programme. This appears to be the central function of instructional leaders. The Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model of instructional leadership reveals that managing the instructional programme basically is a function associated with the coordination of the curriculum, supervision and evaluation of instruction, and monitoring learners' progress. This function requires that principals be deeply engaged in stimulating, supervising and monitoring teaching and learning in the school (Hallinger, 2005). Alig-Maricarek (2003) contends that maintaining high visibility throughout the school, providing praise and feedback to teachers about classroom performance and/or behaviours, and facilitating the maintenance of instructional time are aspects of the job descriptors for the instructional leader. These functions described by Alig-Maricarek (2003) presents clearly the behaviours and practices involved in

managing teaching and learning. Instructional leaders are to some extent knowledgeable on the content of the curriculum, and are apt to deliver their input on curriculum delivery (Alig-Maricarek, 2003) thereby motivating the teacher towards the achievement of the shared goals. Moreover, instructional leaders are directly involved in the instructional program of the school and can account for teachers and learner performance due to their high visibility in school. Furthermore, coordinating the curriculum refers to all principals' activities that are directed towards creating a platform for teacher collaboration in order to align curriculum delivery with the school's shared goals (Lyon, 2010). Creating a platform for teacher collaboration aids instructional leaders in creating and promoting a positive learning climate in their schools.

The third function in the Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model of instructional leadership is creating and promoting a positive climate in schools. Instructional leaders operate in a way that they are able to create and promote a positive school learning climate by protecting the instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers, developing high expectations and standards and providing incentives for learning. The highlighted behaviours and practices affirm that effective schools create an academic climate saturated with a culture of continuous improvement through the development of high standards and expectations from teachers and learners (Hallinger, 2005; 2008). According to Poole (1985) organisational climate deals with the entire organisation; it is also a statement of the organisation's values, norms, and beliefs. These values, norms and beliefs develop into the daily routines and practices of the members and influences the behaviour and attitudes of the members of the organisation (Poole, 1985). In other words, climate is the lingering quality of an environment that affects the behaviours and practices of the members of the community (Alig-Maricarek, 2003). Therefore, an academic climate or school climate is the prevailing characteristics of a school that sets the tone of behaviours and practices for every member of the school community. Research reveals that academic press is created in a climate where clearly communicated shared goals are set with high expectations for teachers and learners, and there is emphasis on academic content as well as the establishment of an orderly and safe environment (Alig-Maricarek, 2003; Hallinger, 2005; Hoy, Tarter & Kottkamp, 1991). The level of emphasis on these above stated factors in a school climate is a determinant of the level of academic press maintained in a school (Alig-Maricarek, 2003). A high level of academic press is a reflection of the management of the instructional programme. Teachers will generally respond to the kind of environment that they find themselves. Teachers working in a high academic press school have a greater tendency to synergise with their colleagues.

They will be personally motivated towards professional development and will ensure constant monitoring of student academic progress (Alig-Maricarek et al., 2005). In effect, learners in a high academic press school have a greater tendency for high academic achievement.

In spite of the criticism of the instructional leadership model, empirical evidence from studies on effective schools have shown that instructional leadership is central to the successes observed in effective schools (Hallinger, 2005). Criticisms levelled against the instructional leadership model range from having an overview of bureaucratic leanings to having an outlook of having fragmented functions that creates more time for effective teaching and learning supervision and monitoring and cannot possess proficiency in all aspects of the curriculum amongst others (Goddard, 2003; Goddard, Sweetland & Hoy, 2000; Hallinger, 2003; Prytula et al., 2013). Prestine and Nelson (2005) argue that principals as instructional leaders have a measure of understanding in various subject areas in their archive of knowledge, and are apt to identify an effective instruction when they see it and encourage it when they do not. They also ensure that there are conditions for continuous academic learning among their teachers. In any case, instructional leadership has refused to fade into oblivion as many studies continue to link instructional leadership to school improvement and school effectiveness (Hallinger, 2005; Southworth, 2002; 2011).

Investigating the highlighted instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions, further triggers queries regarding how the context of practice informs the principals' behaviours, practices and functions. Therefore, the next section will discuss the context-responsive leadership theory.

3.3 Context-responsive leadership theory

In unravelling the intersections of context and leadership of school principals as the case is in this study, this study investigated the context-responsive leadership theory. This study focuses on understanding instructional leadership behaviours, functions and practices exerted in a multiple deprived or challenging context. Researchers over time have emphasised the need for research on the effect of context on leadership behaviours and practices (Antonakis, Schriesheim, Donovan, Gopalakrishna-Pillai, Pellegrini & Rossomme, 2004; Howell & Shamir, 2005; Shamir & Howell, 1999; Tosi, 1991). Boal and Hooijberg (2001) contend that many emerging leadership theories are context free. This indicates that the theories do not factor in the environmental and organisational context into the leadership process. Therefore,

the context-responsive leadership theory emerged with the aim of filling this gap in literature (Bredeson, Klar & Johansson, 2008). This theory seeks to establish a bridge of understanding of the interactions that exist between leadership and the context with a focus on how the context influences the behaviours and practices of leaders while they are engaging in various leadership processes in order to achieve organisational goals (Bredeson, Klar & Johansson, 2011). This theory essentially investigates the behaviours as against functions of leaders in contexts that are less favourable (Bredeson, Klar, & Johansson, 2008). This implies that the theory in effect seeks to know how leaders respond or react to contextual realities and not particularly investigating what leaders are meant to do by virtue of their leadership positions. Bredeson et al. (2011) conceive context-responsive leadership as a balanced application of an intricate blend of knowledge, abilities and characters properly entrenched and discharged by effective leaders which enables them to prudently interact with the evolving situational variables and characteristics of their context. This kind of leadership is not necessarily specific to a style or theory of leadership but displays a set of behaviours which exerts a level of restraint or reception of certain features of a particular context in order to achieve the expected results (Bredeson et al., 2008; Dempster, Carter*, Freakley & Parry, 2004; Hargrove & Owens, 2002; 2003). Hoy and Miskel (2007) corroborate that there are times that leaders respond to situations and circumstances around them in a manner not specific to a leadership approach.

The debate in the literature on leadership behaviours and practices with regards to contextual realities has been ongoing and appears not yet resolved, neither concluded with concepts that can be clearly understood (Goldring et al., 2007). Thus, the context-responsive theory emerged as an extension of the existing theories of leadership. The context-responsive leadership theory was not developed by merely matching leadership styles to functions and practices, followership and contexts. It emerged as a result of an empirical study which was conducted to demonstrate the intersections of leadership behaviours and contextual realities (Bredeson et al., 2011). Over time, there have been some leadership theories that have some reference to the context of practice, for instance, distributed and contingency leadership theories. Bredeson, et al. (2008) argues that these theories have not sufficiently positioned context. An example of this is Spillane's distributed leadership theory.

Spillane's distributed leadership theory situates school leadership within the context of operations (Spillane, 2012; Spillane & Orlina, 2005). This theory argues that multiple actors take part in school leadership, and thereby establish that there is an interface between the school

actors' interactions, situations and artifacts (Davis, 2009). However, the focus of a distributed form of leadership is primarily on collective leadership (Harris, 2003). Furthermore, Heck and Hallinger (2009) reveal that distributed leadership is not grounded on contextual issues but collaborative leadership though it is obvious that the context of leadership is not absolved from the multiple leadership processes as conceived of in the distributed leadership theory. Another leadership theory that factors context into leadership is the contingency theory, as summarised by Fiedler (1964, p. 96):

The question is not whether people behave as they want to behave, but rather under what conditions they do what they want to do, and under what conditions the influence of situation on personality is the primary determinant of behaviour... if leadership behaviour is determined primarily by the individual's 'will', then we can easily teach him, or persuade him, to behave in the most effective way. If his behaviour is largely determined by the situation, then our efforts to teach him how to behave will corresponding be less successful.

This position reveals the need to investigate how personality traits influence leadership behaviours and practices in light of contextual realities. This is because the 'will' of a person is grossly influenced by the traits of the individual. According to Yulk (1981), contingency theories are aimed at identifying key traits, skills, and behaviours necessary for leadership success within a particular context of functioning. The focus of this study however is focused on identifying the behaviours and practices that account for leadership success in challenging contexts and to understand how leadership situation and context influence leadership behaviours and practices, not to account for leadership traits and skills.

Behaviours are demonstrated within a context where people exist. However, contexts are specific with their unique circumstances and situations (Minton et al., 2014). This opinion is corroborated by Hargrove and Owens (2002) who explain that context determines the boundaries of actions and there exists a reasonable level of fluidity enabled by such boundaries. In line with these thoughts, Dede (2006) presents the view that as much as the context can influence behaviours of individuals in it, so it is that behaviours can have a reciprocal impact on the context. Differences in behaviours within a context may be situationally directed rather than being habitual or generic (Vroom & Jago, 2007). This, however, signals objectivity in understanding the behaviours that are locked up within a situation presenting themselves in the boundaries of certain performance. This reinforces the claim that successful leadership is

contingent on its base of operation (Leithwood, Seashore Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom 2004; Leithwood et al., 2006; 2008). Thus, leadership behaviours and practices should not be inclined to a singular approach (Bredeson, 2011; Bredeson et al., 2008). This implies that there is a high likelihood of alteration in leadership behaviours and practices in the light of change in context.

Hallinger (2003, p. 346) concludes that "...it is virtually meaningless to study principal leadership without reference to context." It is necessary therefore to understand the instructional leadership behaviours and practices of principals who are succeeding in challenging contexts using the lens of context-responsive leadership theory as well as instructional leadership. A review of literature presents a range of instructional leadership behaviours and practices of school leaders related to school effectiveness and school improvement (Alig-Maricarek, 2003; Cotton, 2003; Harris, 2007; Lashway, 2002; Leithwood & Reihl, 2003; Lyons, 2010; Marzano et al., 2005; Portin et al., 2003). However, there are also claims that leadership and effectiveness is context bound (Osborn, Hunt & Jauch, 2002). Thus, it is arguable that individual school principals perform their functions differently depending on the prevailing realities such as district size, community demographics, organisational culture, history, political realities, personality attributes to mention a few (Bredeson, 2011; Bredeson & Kose, 2007). Moreover, there is a consensus that the context of operation matters in considering leadership behaviours and outcomes (Bredeson et al., 2011; Leithwood et al., 2004). While there seems to be no unanimity on the set of leadership behaviours and practices, there exists a fair degree of agreement in the components of the context (Murphy et al., 2007). The context where principals work is complex, mostly dynamic and often requires different approaches to discharge their functions (Goldring et al., 2007).

Gronn and Ribbins (1996) decry the fact that context has not been well theorised in relation to leadership. They contend that context should be conceptualised as a sum of the situational, cultural and historical circumstances that constrain leadership. In response to this, the context-responsive theory provided a coherent effort to correct this observed imbalance in the literature. The context-responsive theory underscored five key variations in context. These variations are school district size, organisational culture, community context and geographical location, the fiscal context, and the political context. In these varying environments, the context-responsive framework relates to the leaders preemptive and proactive engagement with dynamic situations of practice. However, this emerging theory failed to examine the behaviours and practices of

school leaders situated in challenging contexts (Bredeson et al. 2011). Nonetheless, it is argued that context-responsive leadership reveals the capacity of school leaders to ‘push back’ against challenges that tend to limit the goals and vision they have projected for the school (Bredeson et al. 2011). Push back in this regards refers to the school leaders’ defiance of the difficult situations capable of rendering them as failures or losers. Thus, context-responsive theory provides a mirror with which leadership behaviours and practices can be understood with respect to context and contextual realities. Bredeson et al., (2008) affirm that leaders of this type are keen to know when, where, why, and how to push back or reconfigure the elements of their context in order to provide a more promising context for achieving their aims and objectives. The context-responsive theory describes the behaviours and practices of context-responsive school leaders as including managing the school’s vision, mission and direction, professional development of teachers, fostering normative relationship with all members of the school community, focus on learner achievement and development, dealing with internal and external influences and managing the school’s resources (Bredeson et al., 2008).

3.4 Theoretical framework

In congruence with Hallinger and Murphy’s (1985) model of instructional leadership and context-responsive theory, this study aimed to explore leadership inputs (behaviours, functions and practices) of two Nigerian principals who thrived in leading teaching and learning in spite of their challenging contexts, to provide answers to the questions ‘*what*’ and ‘*how*’. The ‘*what*’ question aimed at understanding behaviours and practices of the principals involved in this study in order to account for the instructional leadership behaviours. The ‘*how*’ question seeks to understand how the context informs the instructional leadership behaviours of these principals. Considering the behaviours, practices and functions projected by these two theories (Hallinger and Murphy’s (1985) model of instructional leadership and context-responsive theory), it is assumed in this study that successful leadership in a challenging context is not limited to a particular leadership approach. Accordingly, the behaviours, practices and functions set out by Hallinger and Murphy’s (1985) instructional leadership model were aligned with the behaviours and practices of the context-responsive theory to project the emergence of context-bound instructional leadership.

The emergent context-bound instructional leadership framework sets in motion the understanding that the principals who succeed demonstrate instructional leadership features

(behaviours and practices) alongside context-responsive theory behaviours and practices. The Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model of instructional leadership has a shortfall in dealing with contextual issues which is paramount in schooling contexts, particularly, in challenging contexts. According to Smith and Bell (2014) schooling context is a highly dynamic setting which can be chaotic and sometimes challenging. Focusing only on teaching and learning, without having a set of spontaneous and dynamic behaviours and practices to respond effectively to contextual realities, is unlikely to achieve good academic performance for learners. The context-responsive theory projects some behaviours and practices that intersect with the behaviours and practices of the model of instructional leadership used in this study. However, the context-responsive theory has failed to sufficiently define the function of managing teaching and learning in school. As it is earlier presented, the achievement of good academic performance for learners is achievable in relation to the principals' effectiveness in the function of managing the instructional programme in the school (*see section 3.2*). It is therefore believed that the behaviours, practices and functions associated with the context-bound instructional leadership model may result in successful school leadership in challenging contexts. Emerging from these theories, the behaviours, practices and functions associated with the context-bound instructional leadership framework are: framing school goals, communicating the school goals, coordinating the curriculum, supervising and evaluating instruction, monitoring learner progress, protecting the instructional time, providing incentives for teachers, providing incentives for learning, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility and dealing with contextual internal and external influences. This framework is graphically presented in Figure 3.2.

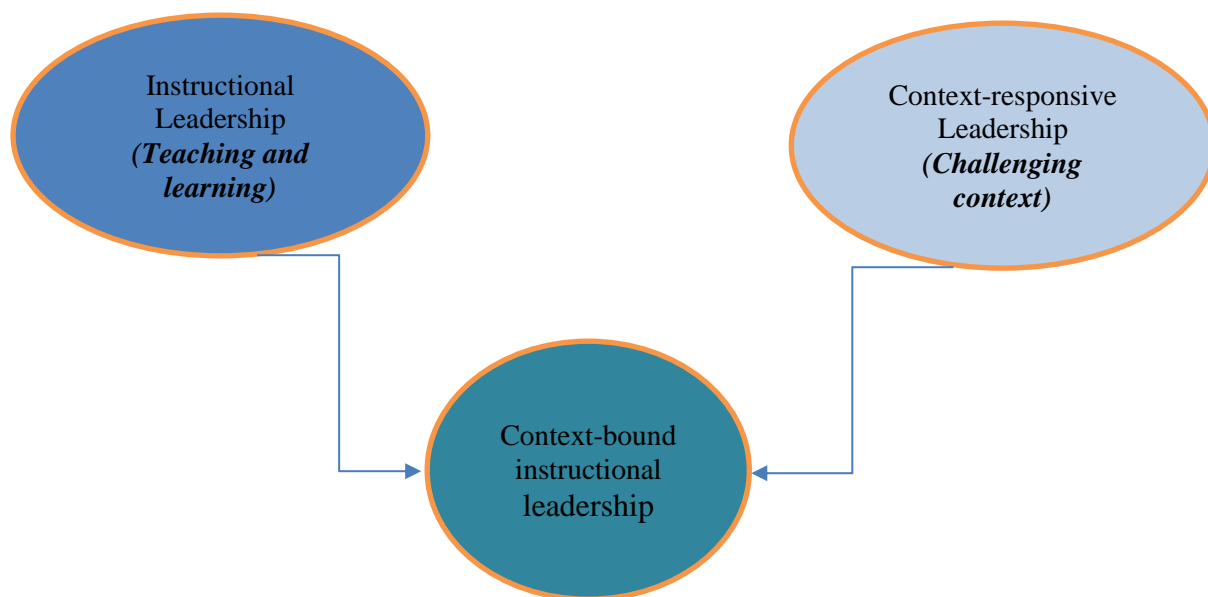


Figure 3.2: Theoretical framework for context-bound model of instructional leadership in challenging context

3.5 Chapter summary

Two leadership theories were used to form a framework guiding this study: Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership and the context-responsive theory were engaged to form the context-bound model of instructional leadership. The Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model of instructional leadership describes the three main functions of school principals as being defining the school's mission, managing the instructional programme and developing the school learning climate. Ten behaviours and practices elucidate these functions. The context-responsive theory specifies six behaviours and practices that are characteristic of context-responsive school leaders. The gap in these two theories leads to emergence of the context-bound model of instructional leadership with eleven behaviours and practices regarded as being necessary for successful principal leadership in challenging contexts.

CHAPTER 4 : RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the theoretical framework, highlighting Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership and context-responsive theory as the framework guiding this research. This chapter will proceed to discuss the methodology employed in conducting this research including the research paradigm, research design, research methodology, selection of research participants, methods of data generation, instruments design for data generation, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study, and ethical considerations.

4.2 Research paradigm

The interpretivist perspective guides my philosophical beliefs in this study. The ontological claim of the interpretivist paradigm is that participants bring their own unique experiences regarding the topic under investigation (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006; Yin, 2015). Moreover, the interpretivist paradigm allows for multiple realities. Thus, this study has engaged different participants which includes teachers and principals in order to give multiple meanings to the kind of leadership that the principals involved in the study practice (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013; Myers, 2013). Other than the principals and teachers interviewed, observation and documents were also used to provide multiple realities in this study.

Besides the above ontological claims in this paradigm, McMillan and Schumacher (2014) describe the epistemological claim in the interpretivist paradigm as being grounded in the belief that human beings comprehend and make meaning of the realities in their world as a result of their recurring actions and interactions (behaviours, practices and functions) with the world around them. For this reason, this study asserts that principals' behaviours and practices cannot be understood without understanding their interactions with the context in which they live and function. Therefore, based on the nature of the knowledge to be generated in this study, dialogic approaches were used. Semi-structured individual interviews were used as a medium to engage the principals while semi-structured focus group interviews were the medium through which

the teachers were interacted with. Denzin and Lincoln (2009) state that the interpretivist paradigm situates the researcher in the world of the researched so as to engage effectively with the social issues within their context. Hence, this paradigm afforded this researcher direct access to the instructional leadership behaviours and practices of successful principals located in challenging contexts.

4.3 Research design

This study used a qualitative research design. Research design presents the means whereby the research objectives are achieved (Myers, 2013) and can be referred to as a summary of all the processes involved in conducting the research (Creswell, 2013; Silverman, 2013). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) argue that the use of textual data enables the generation of in-depth views about issues under scrutiny. This study required in-depth exploration of the views, values and beliefs of thriving principals in order to generate an understanding of what constitutes their instructional leadership behaviours and functions (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen et al., 2013; Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). A qualitative research design is suitable for this purpose. A qualitative design allows the researcher to exist in the real world of the participants in order to make meanings of their lived experiences (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009; 2011; Myers, 2013). Engaging directly with the participants in this study using an interactive approach such as interviews and informal conversations afforded the researcher the privilege of knowing, and having a clear understanding of, the instructional leadership behaviours and practices of the principals involved in this study.

Hening, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004) state that the variables involved in a qualitative research design are beyond the control of the researcher, hence, there is a natural and unhampered emergence of themes in generating data. In line with the purpose of the study and without predetermined assumptions, I generated data through individual interviews, focus group interviews, documents, informal conversations and unstructured observations which provided unlimited themes. These themes enabled the researcher to clearly depict the instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions of the thriving principals in the context in which they function. Veal (2005) asserts that qualitative inquiry sets out to obtain a large amount of data from a small number of participants, such as the two principals and eight teachers involved in this study. A large amount of data was obtained from each of the participants involved in the semi-structured interviews and subsequently a large amount of data

was generated from the teachers involved in the focus group interviews. Scholars claim that the critical questions in a study determine the research design, research methodology and techniques relevant (Cohen et al., 2013; Myers, 2009).

There are several methodologies that could be engaged using this paradigm such as life histories, ethnographic studies amongst others (Yin, 2013). This study selected the case study methodology as being suitable because it is an explorative method able to generate in-depth knowledge of the instructional behaviours and practices of the principals involved in this study (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). To ensure quality in case study methodology, trustworthiness of the data generated during the research was ascertained through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Descombe, 2014; Shenton, 2004).

4.4 Research methodology

This study is grounded in the case study epistemology as a methodology. The philosophical underpinnings for case study methodology weave around the notion that the subjective nature of the human mind creates its own meanings (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2015). Hence, this study seeks to understand the meanings constructed by two principals and eight teachers in Ekiti State, Nigeria, and thereby explore what constitutes the principals' instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions. Case study methodology is utilised when a scholarly exploration focuses on a unit of a phenomenon that is bounded, with features that are dissimilar and exclusive from other cases (Merriam, 2002). According to Merriam (2002), 'bounded system' refers to an entity that provides space for exhaustive investigation. This corroborates Yin's (2015) position that case study design is used when a researcher has no jurisdiction on the flow of information from participants within a context of investigation and aims to answer questions that probe 'why', 'what' and 'how'. This study focused on the 'what' and 'how'. Thus, the case study methodology is an "intensive, holistic description, and analysis of a single unit instance, phenomenon or social unit" (Merriam, 2002, p. 27). Moreover, it is established that case study is important when there is need to provide clarity regarding a particular phenomenon, and to explain the reason for its occurrence, in order to make meaning that may be applied in similar situations. Strauss and Corbin (1998) argue that a case study requires comprehensive inquiry of the relatedness and interdependencies of parts and the patterns that are emerging. By implication, a case study explores a phenomenon within its real-life context such that the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly

obvious and therefore allows for multiple sources of evidence to be accessed (Creswell, Hanson, Plano & Morales, 2007). In light of Creswell et al.'s (2007) position, this study is therefore a case of two Nigerian principals' instructional behaviours and practices that accounts for their success within the challenging contexts where they function. This case is accessed through interviews, observation and document review.

In a quest to replicate findings across cases so that the researcher can predict comparable results across cases or predict conflicting result based on theory, a multiple-case study is preferred for this study (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003). These two principals and their contexts form the unit of my analysis as noted by Yin (2009). The sample of schools provided a clear understanding into the context of the two schools and the principals' performance in spite of the challenges they have to deal with.

Choi (2014) also critique case studies as not being representative of a broader view of a phenomenon. Flyvbjerg (2006) queries the criticism on case study methodology arguing that the criticism portrays nothing but a simplistic and myopic conceptualisation of the case study methodology. Ketokivi and Flyvbjerg (2006) go on to argue that concrete, practical context-dependent knowledge is of more importance than a general, theoretical and context dependent knowledge. This validates the choice of the case study research methodology engaged in this study.

4.5 Selection of participants

The participants for this study were selected using the purposive method of sampling. According to Petty, Thompson and Stew (2012) purposive sampling refers to an approach to selecting samples for precise reasons. Kumar, Mohanraj, Sudha, Wedick, Malik, Hu and Mohan (2011) refer to purposive sampling as an approach that allows the researcher to engage with participants who have the relevant information required to answer the critical questions guiding the study. Hence, two principals considered to be successful, serving in schools located in contexts with multiple deprivations were approached to investigate their instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions. They were identified by means of locating schools that were performing well above average in the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in Ekiti State. The first school is referred to as Price-Waters Secondary School (PWSS) and the second is referred to as Chesterville High School CHS). These are not their real names as pseudonyms are being used for the sake of anonymity.

The criteria used in the selection include their performance in SSCE results in Ekiti State over the past three years, awards and recognition received by these principals and their schools. It should be stated that the school PWSS has been the recipients of several awards locally and internationally. The principal of CHS was nominated and received the award of the best performing principal for the year 2014 from the Ekiti State Ministry of Education and was also nominated as the state representative for the prestigious national award in successful principal leadership in 2015. Both of these principals had served at least four years in their schools which are located in multiple deprived contexts. Furthermore, teachers were involved in the study. The teachers were purposively selected based on the fact that they had spent at least a period of three years under the leadership of these principals. The question may be raised as to why should teachers be involved in a study trying to understand principals? The inclusion of teachers was motivated by the fact that teachers in any school are at the receiving end of principals' instructional leadership behaviours and practices. They are therefore best positioned to describe the kind of practices and behaviours exhibited by their principals. In this case, instructional leadership of principals is about supporting teaching and learning and teachers are in a good position to talk about how their principals support teaching and learning in their schools.

4.5.1 Data generation methods

Going by the phenomenology of the research design and the epistemological underpinnings of the research methodology, this study used a multiple approach to generating the needed data for this study. Carter and Porter (2000) affirm that data generation approaches in qualitative study can be varied, stating that in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, observation, and document analyses can be used to generate the needed data. This helps to eliminate biases that may otherwise limit the trustworthiness of a study (Clissett, 2008). Therefore, to be able to explore the instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions of the principals involved in this study, in-depth interviews, focus group interviews, observation, and document review were engaged as methods for generating data. In-depth interviews were used to generate data from the principals while teachers were engaged by means of focus group interviews. The principals were the focus of observation. Evidence of the principals' instructional leadership behaviour was searched for in the documents provided.

4.5.2 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews are able to focus specifically on a study topic so as to provide insights from which inferences can be deduced (Tellis, 1997). Semi-structured interviews are conversations between the researcher and the participants using opened ended questions which allow the participants to present a clear description of the phenomenon being researched (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). This is premised on the argument that human beings are social actors in their world and are able to construct their own meanings regarding the realities in their world (Yin, 2009; Cohen et al., 2013). This study used in-depth semi-structured interviews to engage the principals. Semi-structured interviews are a means for a researcher to have a deep and insightful understanding of the lived experiences of study participants (Creswell, 2002; Creswell et al., 2007). The semi-structured interviews were based on certain predetermined questions also known as an interview schedule. During these sessions stories based on experiences were discussed as they related to the purpose of this study. Issues that emerged from the answers to the predetermined questions were discussed as appropriate. The danger of interviews alone in qualitative research is that some participants may veer off the point (Tellis, 1997; Walker, Bush & Oduro, 2006). It is therefore recommended that other methods of data generation such as focus group interviews, observation and document analysis be used to generate rich and comprehensive data (Denscombe, 2014; Glesne, 2006). The generation of data in this study also included teachers, who were engaged in a focus group session.

4.5.3 Focus group interview

The purpose of a focus group interview is to give answers that provide substantial, multifaceted, intriguing and distinctive descriptions of how the four teachers in each of these schools, construct meaning and provide interpretations regarding the understanding of the behaviours and practices of their principals (Yin, 2009). ‘Focus group interview’ refers to a social space in which the response of a participant stimulates the notions, beliefs and views of other participants thereby giving clarity to the phenomenon under study; in this case, the instructional leadership behaviours and practices of the teachers’ principals (Myers, 2009). Unlike in-depth interviews, the combined effect of the teachers involved in the study produces a broader scope of information, because the comment of a teacher ends up spiraling into a chain of responses from other teachers (Flyvbjerg, 2011; Ketokivi & Choi, 2014; Yin, 2009). In the overall analysis, a focus group ensures trustworthiness, as it allowed for triangulation of data

(Myers, 2009; 2013). In exploring the principals' instructional leadership behaviour, practices and functions, the multiple data sources from teachers situates reference points which clarify and diminish biases in the study. Observation was also used to generate data.

4.5.4 Observation

Observation is a means of comprehending the realities of a particular field of research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014 Myers, 2013). This was achieved by the researcher by being on site to see and hear the realities on the ground. In this way I was able to study what constitutes the principals' instructional leadership behaviours and practices. This approach provided insight into how the principals negotiated the challenging realities of the context they function within in relation to the educational demands. I spent four days in each school and interacted with the principals in and out of office. I adopted a stance of a non-participating observer so as not to get distracted nor get emotionally involved (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014) thus enabling concentration and objectivity in the task of understanding the principals' practices. I took note of occurrences and situations and my reflections on these as they related to the study. The data from the observations was abstracted inductively (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). I engaged in this observation without predetermined assumptions, observing the principals and gaining insight into the leadership practices obtainable in their schools. Other than on-site observation, I also used documents to track the behaviours and practices of these principals.

4.5.5 Document review

The objective of this study was to account for the principals' instructional leadership behaviours and practices; it was therefore necessary to obtain documents which could provide a trail of principals practices over time. Therefore, certain documents were purposively selected which provided quality information on the instructional leadership behaviour, functions and practices of the principal. Documents have been considered as important in engaging studies like this (Bush & Glover, 2012). According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), official documents in organisations occur in different forms, and may provide evidence regarding the phenomenon under study. Therefore, documents such as school prospectuses, time books, minute books, staff duty rosters, principal profile (Chesterville High School), The Champion (Price-Water Secondary School Awards Profile), time-table and termly plan were perused. These documents were purposively selected to cover a period of two to three years and these

were reviewed to find the trail of the principals' instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions.

4.6 Field work experiences

The process of generating data was an interesting but challenging experience. The study was conducted when Nigeria was going through a deep economic recession. This almost threatened the possibility of conducting this study because at the time of the researcher's arrival teachers were on strike for non-payment of salaries. Before visiting one of the schools, I called one of the principals involved in this study to schedule an appointment, who quickly informed me of the need to pray so that the school could resume normal functioning. It required determination to ensure that the study was conducted because it took a while for the school to settle in after the strike action was called off, because the government breached their agreement with the teacher union. Although data collection was scheduled to occur over a period of four weeks, this was restricted to two weeks because of the strike. During this period, I was in and out of the two schools to observe, conduct interviews and review relevant documents.

4.7 Data analysis

In order to answer the research questions guiding this study, data generated from documents, semi-structured individual interview and semi structured focused group interviews were analysed using qualitative methods. This study used thematic and discourse analysis to analyse data generated from semi-structured and focus group interviews. Thematic analysis is a concept derived from grounded theory and is a tool to make meaning of the data obtained through the interviews (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The onus lies on me to give meaning to the generated data and be keen enough to identify themes, incidences, patterns and trends (Creswell, 2002). Discourse analysis was used to understand and give meaning to raw data obtained. Verd (2004) described discourse analysis as a way of framing, refining and inferring meaning from a conversation. The raw data was recorded and transcribed, as discussed below.

4.7.1 Transcriptions

Bailey (2008) posits that transcribing is a straightforward technical task which involves well considered appraisal about what level of details to choose, data interpretation and data representation. This involves the representation of audio and visual data in written format. In

this study, data generated were recorded with the aid of a voice recorder. I assigned the transcription of the data to a qualified data transcriber. The transcription was not without some challenges as the interview sessions were conducted during school hours in one of the schools. The challenge was due to noise interference in the recording. Also, at one point a participant had to excuse himself to attend to emerging issues while others continued with the interview.

4.7.2 Stages of data analysis

Data analysis as conceived by Miles and Huberman (1994) is a chain of activities that includes data reduction, data display, drawing conclusions and verification. Data reduction refers to the process of selecting, simplifying, abstracting and transforming data from the transcribed documents while data display refers to the approach in which data is placed into logical and meaningful categories (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this way the data was examined in a holistic way such that others can easily understand the data, by simplifying and categorising the data. These categories refer to the coding process which enabled the researcher to access relevant data easily. The last stage of the data analysis is data verification and this simply refers to the process of interpreting and inferring meanings to the displayed data. This involves noting patterns and themes, comparing and contrasting in order to confirm triangulations (Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, discourse analysis was carried out in the following steps as laid out by Creswell (2013).

- Step 1: The transcribed data was reduced thereby separating the trivial from the relevant information before proceeding to organising and coding.
- Step 2: Interviews from the principals and teachers were organised and prepared for data analysis.
- Step 3: Transcripts were read to get familiar with the emerging thoughts from the interviews with principals and teachers as well as the observations and documents related to the principals' instructional leadership behaviours and practices in the school. Then, main themes were identified and written out.
- Step 4: The text data was then coded and arranged in categories. Coding is the process of organising the data before discourse analysis is commenced within the categories.
- Step 5: Principals and teachers discourse as well as the emerging themes from observation and documents were conveyed through narrative interpretation (Creswell, 2013).

4.8 Trustworthiness

Shenton (2004) argues that the issue of trustworthiness has been criticised by postpositivists partly because their concepts of validity and reliability cannot fit into the naturalistic settings. Nevertheless, Guba and Lincoln's (1994) construct of trustworthiness, which includes credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability was used in this study.

4.8.1 Credibility

Credibility deals with the question of how the findings from the study relate to reality (Creswell, 2002; Shenton, 2004). Creswell and Miller (2000) present various means through which credibility of qualitative research can be ascertained, including member check, persistent observation, peer debriefing, prolonged engagement, thick description. In order to ascertain the trustworthiness of this study, I ensured that my colleagues were engaged to assist in reviewing the consistency of the findings with reality. In addition, I ensured that I immersed myself in the data generated before giving interpretations by listening to the recorded interviews again and again as well reading through at least thrice the transcribed interviews. I requested my colleagues conducting research as well as my lecturers to ask me reflective questions about the field work. These steps enabled me to provide a thick description of the findings.

4.8.2 Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which the findings from the study can be applied to other situations (Merriam, 1998). However, there is an understanding that findings from qualitative case study inquiry are limited to the individual or small group investigated within a particular context. Hence, it is impossible to generalise such findings (Shenton, 2004). It is arguable however, that although the findings from each study are unique they are an example from the broader group. I provided a clear description of the context in which the study is undertaken so that lessons from the study may be applied to schools that share the same contextual realities with the context of the study.

4.8.3 Dependability

In order to address trustworthiness in a qualitative study, the issue of dependability should be clearly addressed. The processes involved in conducting the study must be clearly shown so that a future researcher will be able to replicate the study, such that the findings from the

repeated study aligns in detail with the earlier research (Schwandt, Lincoln & Guba, 2007). Thus, in reporting this study, I have presented the research design and its implementation, the operational detail of data gathering as well as the instruments used in data gathering.

4.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is the extent to which the researcher accepts his or her own predispositions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This accentuates the researchers' concern for objectivity. Thus, triangulation is used as a tool to reduce the effect of the researchers' bias (Patton, 2005). In this study, I ensured that I triangulated information from various sources. I compared data generated through the semi-structured interview with principals with the data from the focused group of the teachers from their schools. Furthermore, I proceeded to confirm the authenticity of the triangulated data from both principal and teachers from both schools involved in the study with the documents obtained from those schools. Thereby, making use my possible biases were eradicated or to a very large extent reduced.

4.9 Ethical considerations

Issues of ethics cannot be overlooked when conducting studies that engage with humans lived experiences (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholis, & Ormston, 2013). The University of KwaZulu-Natal provided ethical clearance after receiving a letter of approval from the two principals of both schools. The researcher endeavoured to abide by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Code of Ethics in carrying out the study at the approved schools. Informed consent refers to the participants of the study being given the rights to confidentiality, anonymity, and privacy. Based on Bertram and Christiansen's (2014) assertion that participants in a study provide informed consent to being part of the study, all participants in this study signed an informed consent form to declare that they were in no way coerced into the study. The purpose of this study and the issues of ethics such as informed consent, non-maleficence and non-beneficence were explained to the participants involved in this study. According to Cohen et al. (2013), non-maleficence refers to the fact that the study will not constitute undue intrusion, distress or harm to the participants. Participants were informed that pseudonyms would be used instead of their names and the names of their schools.

4.10 Chapter summary

The research utilised the interpretivist paradigm and the design for the research used a category of qualitative approach called the case study for its methodology. The case study methodology focuses on a unit of a phenomenon, which, in this case, was to account for what constitutes the instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions of two Nigerian principals who are thriving in challenging contexts. The research participants in this study were two principals considered to be successful in spite of the difficult circumstances around their schools. In addition, eight teachers, four from each school, who have worked with these principals, were included in the study. The data was generated using semi-structured interviews, a focus group, unstructured observation, informal conversation and documents. The data generated during the research was analysed using thematic analysis. The steps involved were clarified and ethical issues considered were described.

CHAPTER 5 : PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

*We shall not cease from exploration,
And at the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started,
And know the place for the first time.*
T.S. Elliot (1888-1965)

(REFERENCE)

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter described the research methodology in order to ensure the trustworthiness of the findings from the study. This chapter presents a brief profile of the principals that participated in this study. The findings from this study will be presented, analysed and discussed in two categories. The categories are (i) focus on teaching and learning and (ii) implications of contextual realities on the instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions of principal in challenging contexts. Eight themes are presented in the first category while three themes are emergent from the second category.

5.2 Profile of the principals

The profile of the principals involved in this study are presented to provide an overview of their principal leadership and success.

5.2.1 Profile of Price-Waters Secondary School's Principal

The principal of Price-Waters Secondary School (PWSS) began his job as the principal of the school in October 2007. This happened to be his first principalship. Prior to being appointed as principal of the school, he was a lecturer in a tertiary institution within the LGA. He has a Master's Degree in Business Administration with specialisation in Human Resources. According to him, he has just finished serving as the Dean of the School of Vocation and Technology. He was appointed to take over the leadership of the school based on his excellent performance as a dean and the need to salvage the school from failing. In October, 2009, the

principal got the Benchmark Distinguished Achiever's Award in Ekiti State for the sterling academic achievements recorded by the school and the visible physical development in the School. Under his leadership the school has won many awards locally and internationally.

5.2.2 Profile of Chesterville High School's Principal

The principal of Chesterville High School (CHS) has spent thirty-one years in the teaching profession both as a teacher and principal. She is still in her early fifties. She has been principal in two other schools before CHS. She has only spent four years in her current school as principal, assuming office in October 2012. The principal has received several meritorious awards and letters of recommendation in her three principalships. Recently, she won the award for best performing principal in the Ekiti State, 2014. Moreover, the principal progressed to being nominated for the very prestigious, 2015 national best principal award in Nigeria. The principal is a PhD candidate in Ekiti State University, at the time of the interview she was preparing for final PhD defense.

5.3 Presentation of findings, discussion and interpretation

Leading teaching and learning in challenging contexts requires that principals do things differently (Naicker et al. 2013). As introduced earlier, two emerging categories of findings are expected to provide answers to the two questions guiding this research. Under these categories are eleven themes presented as they emerge from the findings from this study. The first category is presented and discussed below.

5.3.1 Focus on leading teaching and learning

In the process of analysing the data, it was emergent that successful principals in challenging contexts demonstrate certain behaviours and practices that indicate that they lead with a focus on teaching and learning in their schools. These behaviours and practices are presented and discussed as follows.

5.3.1.1 Beginning with the end in mind

The principal of PWSS noted strongly the need to begin with the end in mind. When the researcher probed to know the behaviours and practices that accounted for his success in the challenging context he had to serve as principal, he said:

When one start to work, he should start from the end not from the beginning. That is, the goal is for the students to have good result. Then you will be able to plan our work towards achieving it (Principal, PWSS).

In this principal's opinion the function of leading teaching and learning begins with introspection, then thinking forward in a bid to project the expected end from the start of the work. The principal shed more light on this by stating:

So many things start from the beginning but in this education thing one should start from the end. Now, I am here as the principal, what do I want the students to achieve (I have not even started) but I have projected this from the beginning that they must all have good results. Then what are the things that will bring good results? All this time, we continued to work on the beautiful environment and conducive environment, teacher-learner relationship, the curriculum. The teachers that will teach them, how will I make them happy? How will I come in so that they will be able to concentrate? (Principal, PWSS)

With the statement above, the concept of beginning with the end in mind became clearer as the principal presented what his expectations are in leading the school. He envisioned that all his learners must have good results, and that the school must be beautiful and conducive for learning. He also envisioned how to motivate the staff so that they can do more in improving the academic performance of learners.

The principal highlights that there is a need for a school principal to know the essence of being a principal. He stated:

for someone to be a principal of a school, that person must understand the nitty-gritty of the institution - why is the institution established? What is the goal? What are the objectives? And for any secondary school to be called a good secondary school, it must be that the students there have a good result... (Principal, PWSS)

It is inferred that the awareness of the principal's reason for being assigned to leading a school will enhance the principal's introspection towards the creation of a desirable future for the school. This is arguably the reasons why the principals in this study ensured they created a direction for the schools they lead.

Beginning with the end in mind is traced to the work of Covey (2012) in his book “Seven Habits of Highly Successful People”. Covey (2012) states that all things are created twice, meaning that there is the imaginative phase of creation and then the physical execution of the imagined creation. He however noted that all first creations are either intended or unintended. With respect to this, it implies that some creations in the mind are a function of the influences within or around the context of functioning. These influences could emerge from people, situations and/or circumstances within or around their contexts (Dede, 2006). Covey (2012) states that when other people, situations or circumstances influence creativity, a default creation is manifest which resonates with the realities around the individual’s context. It is necessary to remind the reader that the challenges within the context of the principal’s functioning (as described in Section 4.5.1) has crippled performance over the years. However, Covey notes that the first creation could also be an output of purposefulness which requires the leader’s intentionality to break out of the current realities in order to create the preferred future.

This exemplifies what the principal began to do as he engaged himself in creating a future which had never existed for the school before he began working there. This appears to be a superlative definition of framing school goals as described by Hallinger and Murphy’s (1985) model of instructional leadership. This is because beginning with the end is the act of creating the desired future in the mind while framing school goals as defined by Bush (2007) is the process of crafting the school vision. Emerging from this study is that principals serving in challenging contexts should begin with the end in mind so as to overpower the challenges within their contexts. I suggest that this behaviour of beginning with the end in mind informed the development of vision and mission statements for their schools.

5.3.1.2 Development of vision and mission statements

The principals of both schools involved in this study revealed that when they arrived at their schools they discovered that their schools had no written vision or mission statement. These principals found it necessary that the schools should be committed to certain goals in order to establish directions for themselves and the people they lead.

The absence of a school vision and mission at the time of her appointment as principal in the school is confirmed by the principal of CHS in the following statement:

Since the inception of the school, there was no document written or published where anyone could find information. So I invited my VP Academics and we developed together the school prospectus. (Principal, CHS)

It was quite shocking that a school would not have vision and mission statements, therefore I probed further to know if she was able to develop the school vision and mission statements. She responded in the affirmative, as follows:

The Ministry of Education has not informed school principals on the need for vision and mission statements until last year while we went for a seminar. But for me, immediately, I got to the school, I discovered that the school had no statement of vision and mission. I brought my vice principal (academics) in and we developed what you are seeing there. (Principal, CHS)

In order to affirm this assertion, I probed the teachers involved in this study, but they could not say much whether a written vision or mission statement existed before the principal's arrival. However, they were unanimous in their assertion that the school prospectus was published when the principal arrived in the school. To further confirm this claim, the V.P. academics stated:

The principal is a visionary, as soon as she got here, she was swift to spot the missing links and one of the first things she did was to create the school prospectus which showed us what she wants the school to look like. (VP Academics, CHS)

Amongst other documents obtained from the school, the school prospectus provided a lot of useful information about the school. The school vision and mission statements is conspicuously included in this document and was made available to all learners and teachers. Alongside the written vision and mission statements in the prospectus, specific objectives were pointed out to set direction for the school. In another document received from a thick pile of files, specific goals for the 2012/2013 academic session were clearly documented and typed. The goals covered the aspects of academics, discipline among teachers and learners, and safety and security in the school.

In the case of PWSS, while interacting within the semi-structured interview with the principal of PWSS asked what are the things he did that he considered instrumental to his success as a principal. He stated:

Part of the things that assisted me was that as soon as I got to the school, I developed a vision statement; there was none before I got there, and a mission statement. And as a matter of fact since it came from me I have to work hard to achieve it and the mission statement is for the school to become a top class school for pursuit of excellence in knowledge as well as in character.(Principal, PWSS)

The principal of PWSS assumed responsibility for leading teaching and learning in the school which had been running without a vision and mission statement. He envisaged however, that for him to be able to achieve viable results. He must set goals ahead of himself for the school. Thus, he developed a vision and mission statement for the school. This act positions him as a visionary leader.

In line with these, the teachers in PWSS agreed with the principal's claim. He notes that the principal with the support of teachers developed the vision and mission statements of the school.

The vision and mission statement of the school were developed by the principal at his arrival in the school though this happened with the support of the teachers as he ensures that everyone was carried along in all that he did (Teacher 1, PWSS).

The voices of the teachers in this study clarified the doubt regarding the school's existence without the vision and mission statements. Moreover, the teacher pointed out that the development of the vision and mission was not without the support of the teachers. This points to the fact that the principal is a democratic type of leader because he allows the involvement of others in taking critical decisions in the school such as the development of the school's vision and mission statements. Price-Waters Secondary School presented two documents which clearly stated the vision and mission statements as well as the school objectives.

Developing school vision and mission statements is a behaviour of instructional leaders which connects with the Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership described as framing school goals. This is also the same as creating vision and setting direction for the school as described by Leithwood et al. (2006). Several scholars regard development of school vision and mission statement as central to the successful running of schools (Bush & Glover, 2003; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood et al. 2006). It must have been a shock for these principals to find their new schools being managed without vision and mission statements, but their behaviour is worth noting. Both principals were not subdued by this

unfortunate reality but went ahead to develop the school vision and mission statement, thus setting the direction in which the school will proceed.

Southworth (2002) states that the function of school leaders accounts for improved academic performance in learners is solely entrenched in their ability develop a shared vision. It must be noted however, that for a vision to translate into commitment by the entire team it has to be shared. Begley (1994) affirms that leaders that are able to carry along their team in the development of their vision are referred to as advanced visionary leaders. According to Bush (2007) the ability of leaders to develop the vision for the organisation along with their subordinates provides a sense of ownership of vision by all the team members and causes them to be accountable for the achievement of the organisational goals. As described by Bush (2007), the principal of PWSS upon seeing the need for the development of the vision and mission statements for the school, went a step further to bring on board the contribution of the teachers in the development of the school's vision. However, the principal of CHS rather than involving the input of the entire staff, she only solicited the assistance of one member of the School Management Board, the VP (Academics) to work with her on the project of creating the school vision and mission.

The importance of creating and setting a vision for the school cannot be over-emphasised. Developing a vision for the school has been argued as the approach to getting the staff to commit to the achievement of common goals and shared purpose (Begley, 1994; Russell & Stone, 2002). This act of developing the school vision and mission are considered an imperative for staff motivation and learner achievement (Leithwood et al. 2006; 2008). Su (2013) stepped up Leithwood et al.'s (2006; 2008) position by stating that goal setting coheres and directs the energies and efforts of the team towards achievement of set goals. What is obvious in both schools is that the entire school community was mobilised for action. I observed that learners were neatly settled in class and teachers were there attending to them. In CHS, I observed that while the strike was on-going and other schools were shut down, there were still teachers in the school teaching learners and preparing them for their certificate examination free of charge.

It is evident that principals aiming to lead in teaching and learning in challenging contexts must be able to conceive goals that will lead the school out of the challenges to exceptional academic performance.

5.3.1.3 Focus on curriculum coverage

While engaging the data from this study, three participants described in different but related ways the behaviour of principals in leading teaching and learning in their schools by maintaining focus on the coverage of the curriculum.

The principal of PWSS was asked what was responsible for the success recorded in his school, he responded:

When I got there, I went through the curriculum, we have to adjust..., and one thing I decided to focus on was the coverage of the curriculum (Principal PWSS).

The principal's behaviour of ensuring focus on the curriculum coverage begun by first going through the curriculum content to decide what has to be done differently in order to achieve the school goals. This introspection on the content of the curriculum informed him on the need for some necessary adjustments. Moreover, this behaviour from the principal in ensuring that the curriculum is covered properly sets a tone for the academic climate expected in the school. It is implied that teachers are meant to be up to the task and are conditioned to be in class for teaching and learning as and when due.

In the focus group interview session held with the teachers of PWSS, they confirmed the principal's statements, affirming the principal's drive for coverage of the curriculum.

He is a type of leader that will always ensure that the teachers are up to the task, meaning that when they are supposed to be in a class, he will ensure that they are there teaching and carrying out their duty... (Teacher 1, PWSS)

The affirmation of Teacher 1 regarding the principal's behaviour in ensuring that the curriculum content was effectively discharged timeously was supported by him ensuring that teachers with sufficient content knowledge are positioned to handle curriculum delivery. Beyond this, it can be implied that the principal maintains an oversight function on classroom activities which ensures that the teachers are in their classes for teaching and learning.

Regarding the point of ensuring that teachers that are up to the task are engaged to ensure that the curriculum is effectively engaged with and covered, the principal of PWSS asserted:

I'm used to going round the school to monitor the teachers. About two teachers were withdrawn from the classroom when they were not performing up to expectation. I just

don't like the way they were teaching in the class therefore; I withdrew them from the class. I made them to become office assistants. (Principal, PWSS)

The principal of PWSS approached his job with astute determination. Not only did he go through the curriculum content, he proceeded further by establishing a classroom presence in order to ascertain teachers' classroom management effectiveness.

In the case of the principal of CHS, she also demonstrated the behaviour of covering the curriculum content although the practice was only revealed in the form of classroom supervision. In describing how she leads teaching and learning in her school she said:

It is still part of my schedule to supervise teachers while teaching whether those teachers will take curriculum delivery either with full or partial supervision. (Principal, CHS)

The statement above reflects the principal's concern regarding the coverage of the curriculum, although this was displayed in her supervisory roles of monitoring the classroom teaching and learning activities. I obtained the supervision book, to see the classroom visits made by the principal, and could see that the principal was in class on several occasions to supervise the teaching and learning process. Her approach to ensuring coverage of the curriculum content in her school was not totally different from that of the principal of PWSS. However, the practice of maintaining focus on the coverage of the curriculum by the principal of PWSS was more deeply involved than the practice exhibited by the principal of CHS.

The practices of these two principals in ensuring that the curriculum is covered resonates with the behaviour described in Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership referred to as coordinating the curriculum. Coordination refers to the process involved in bringing several units and sub-units together into a combined system of activities directed towards the achievement of shared organisational goals (Ayeni & Akinfolari, 2014). Curriculum coordination, which in some texts is referred to as curriculum organisation (Ayeni, 2012a), is defined as the summation of all actions carried out by the principal to ensure that teachers are able to engage in their primary function of teaching and learning, such that the curriculum is covered and the school goals are consequently achieved (Alig-Maricarek, 2003). Therefore, it can be inferred that coordinating the curriculum is a combination of activities resulting in high academic achievement for learners. The practice of the principal of PWSS in ensuring a focus on curriculum coverage included going through the curriculum content,

adjustment it, and monitoring classroom teaching and learning in order to guarantee that learners achieve improved academic performance. Although, Ayeni (2012) states that coordinating the curriculum essentially requires lesson planning, instructional methods, classroom management, students' assessments and record keeping. However, the involvement of the principal in lesson planning may not be direct because of the many other activities they are engaged in.

This study has revealed that principals who succeed in challenging contexts ensure that they maintain a focus on the coverage of the curriculum through a review of the curriculum content, making adjustment where needed and sustain oversight on classroom teaching and learning. Following up on these findings, one of the adjustments made by the principals in this study was the creation of more instructional time in their schools.

5.3.1.4 Creation of more instructional time

Three participants in this study revealed that to be able achieve the goals of their schools, the principals created more time for instruction in the schools.

While still engaging with the question on how the instructional time was managed, the principal of PWSS proceeded to describe how he managed the instructional time so that the curriculum was covered. In his words:

We introduce two types of preparatory classes, one in the afternoon and one in the evening because it is a boarding school system anyway... Because if you have left everything for normal classes only, little would have been achieved. (Principal, PWSS)

By implication, the principal had been part of the preparation of the termly lesson plans and was clear that the time allotted for the instruction would not be enough so in a bid to beat this challenge he created more teaching and learning periods.

The teachers of PWSS also added their voices as they explained that the principal created more instructional time even on weekends.

Teachers and students will come to school on weekends or outside the school time to attend to some of this coaching... (Teacher 2, PWSS)

The principal of PWSS affirmed that for these classes to be result-oriented, he comes to school very early and leaves at night when the preparatory classes are over.

I may not leave the school till 7:00pm...I normally leave the school late because I need to monitor the preparatory classes. I will be the first person to get to the school and the last person to leave the school. (Principal, PWSS)

It is evident that the principal personally oversees the preparatory classes so as to ascertain that they are carried out as expected and that their purpose, which is the coverage of the curriculum, is not defeated.

In a similar vein, the principal of CHS created more time for learners when she recognised the passivity of learners towards reading. The purpose and approach to creating more time by the principal of CHS is different to that of the principal of PWSS. The teachers in the focus group interview session stated:

She has to make the student to see the need for reading, whether they like it or not. In order to making them read, she introduce a reading system when she discovered that we only teach them, but they never read their books. So, Saturdays they will come into the school through the supervision of a teacher that volunteer to stay with them and read on their own. She tried to cultivate the habit of reading in them... Then within a week there is a day for reading, during the prep. I think that comes up on Thursdays. (Teacher 1, CHS)

The principal of CHS observed the lackadaisical attitude of the learners towards reading. With the understanding that the curriculum must be covered, she created time outside the instruction periods to impart the culture of reading to these learners. For effectiveness, the principal enlisted volunteer teachers to take over the supervisory function while the learners were in school reading.

It is noteworthy that the literature has focused more on the protection of instructional time rather than the creation of more time for instruction as depicted in Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership. It is emergent from this study that in order to be able to cover the curriculum and achieve maximum impact of teaching and learning in schools, it is an imperative that principals create more time for instruction. This may come in the form of preparatory classes or special reading time where specific tasks will be achieved by learners. However, it must be noted that this practice of creating more time for instruction requires the supervisory functions of the principal or teachers so as to achieve the objective of the coverage

of the curriculum with learners. It must be noted that these principals also protected the instructional time.

5.3.1.5 Protection of instructional time

Going beyond creating more time for instruction, three participants revealed the principals' need to strike a balance between curricular and extra-curricular activities and other distracting activities that can hinder or limit the time that should have been spent on teaching and learning.

The principal of PWSS, when discussing how he ensures that the instructional time is not mismanaged and misappropriated, said:

We have a timetable committee and I have a copy of the timetable with me. There was a stage I bought a note book for the class captain to take a record of teachers who failed to attend his class. At the end of the week, I collect them, after which I query teachers who have defaulted.(Principal, PWSS)

The principal is democratic in that he engages the timetable committee on the task of producing the school timetable. Moreover, the principal seems to be a very meticulous person with an astute sense of accountability as he went further to provide class captains with teachers' attendance record book which were submitted to him every Friday.

The findings from the principal of CHS show that she uses a different strategy for protecting the instructional time. When she was probed on how she manages the school schedules so that other activities do not overlap on the instructional time, she stated:

We work with time... (Principal, CHS)

In order to further investigate how time is appropriated in the school, I probed this during the focus group interview session with the teachers and they confirmed the assertion that the principal of CHS ensured that instructional time is not intruded upon. Teacher 2 said:

within the school capacity there is what we call school timetable... each of the activities has its own time limit. A teacher spends just 40minutes in the class and then there is another teacher waiting, so if you have a teacher waiting you cannot go over your time limit because it is all allocated (Teacher 2, CHS).

When probed further about how the principal ensures that other activities do not take over the instructional time. Another teacher had this to say,

You were talking about extra-curricular activities, may be it will eat deep into the period of teaching and learning... She is a disciplined person... she will always do things at the correct time. That is who she is, so extra-curricular activities will not in any way affect the academic activities but yet there are extra- curricular activities.
(Teacher 3, CHS)

Moreover, the documents such as duty roster, termly plan, year plan, committee list, school daily routine time-table, extra-curricular activities timetable from CHS showed clearly that the 2013/2014 academic session was already planned. It was divided into three terms, the termly agenda, well-structured timetable and clearly arranged extra-curricular and co-curricular were positioned in their school plan for the year. Similarly, PWSS was able to produce documents that showed the plan of work for everyday of the week for all boarders but for some reasons they could not present their termly and year plan. However, the Vice Principal (Academics) who received me at my arrival to the school claimed that these documents are available but could not be given out because of the absence of the committee head in charge.

The behaviour and practice of protecting instructional time is defined by the function of promoting school climate in the Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership. Earlier research on effective schools linked effective utilisation of instructional time to successful principal leadership (Edmonds, 1979; Persell, Cookson & Lyons, 1982). Peariso (2011) explains that effective utilisation of instructional time refers to reducing the amount of disruptions in school activities as a result of announcements from public address system, procedures for dealing with tardy and truant students and encouraging teachers to maximally use the instructional time for its intended purpose. It can be argued that Peariso's definition is a miniature of the many time consuming activities that occur in school. Looking at the responses of the teachers from CHS, there are quite a number of extra-curricular activities which tend to take over the effective usage of the instructional time. However, the very essence for schooling is for teaching and learning to occur and that curriculum should be covered so that learners can effectively compete with their counterparts locally and internationally (Fafunwa, 2004). It is therefore important to state that discipline is required of the principal to be able ensure that the school's schedule of activities is managed properly and timeously so that other activities do not superimpose on the periods scheduled for classroom teaching and

learning. Discipline in this regard, refers to the interest to exert on oneself to do what must be done when it should be done (Tracy, 2013).

In light of this, I want to argue that the term ‘time management’ is a misleading term as it does not provide an accurate description of management of principals’ schedule of activity. Adejo (2012) defined time management as the period, short or long, in which people use time carefully to achieve results. However, what this definition fails to reflect is that management of any sort goes beyond how resources are merely being utilised for a purpose. Management is a process that revolves around planning, organising, coordinating and controlling resources for the purpose of achieving organisational goals (Lunenburg, 2010). However, time itself is a resource which cannot be planned, organised, coordinated or controlled. This is because time is a unique resource, which is scarce, constant and cannot be replaced once utilised (Ojo & Olaniyan, 2008). Time management is arguably a misnomer which should be debunked forthwith. This can be argued to be the reason why principals as managers and leaders in their school fail to make use of their productive time. The focus of many principals is not on planning, organising, coordinating and controlling their schedule of activities but on managing time which is actually impossible to manage because no one has no power over it. In this regard, schedule management is a preferred term rather than time management. In accordance to the characteristics of time, I argue that schedule management is the discipline required to effectively appropriate well-prioritised activities in relation to the limited time available.

Arising from these findings it is evident that principals serving in challenging context must exert discipline on their schedules so that the instructional time can be protected.

5.3.1.6 Supervising teaching and learning

These principals maintained focus on the coverage of the curriculum, created more instructional time and protected the instructional time in their schools. Nevertheless, it emerged from the voices of six of the other study participants that it is important for principals in challenging contexts to supervise and evaluate instruction, and supervise and evaluate teachers and learners in their schools. I observed that the two principals’ approaches to solving problems emanating from classroom practice were different.

The principal of CHS had this to say:

People say it everywhere, an average person doesn't want to work, we have a few teachers who will work very well without being supervised. But a good number of them will still require supervision. So as busy as my daily schedule is, I still go around at regular intervals... At other times when my schedule is too tight, I will instruct the VP to go round the school to make sure that every teacher does his or her work. (Principal, CHS)

In other words, it can be argued that the principal of CHS's leadership style is informed by MacGregor's theory X of management. This therefore informs her approach which ensures that she breaks out of her busy schedules to visit the classroom to monitor teaching and learning. And when she is not able to do this, she readily delegates to the VP.

While pursuing the purpose for the supervision, she explained the following:

When the teachers are teaching you still find something to correct, and so supervision will ensure that teaching is done. Sometimes you get to a class for supervision and discover that the teacher is not available, I need to find out the reason behind it. Sometimes you get to the classroom, and discover that a teacher had left the classroom early. (Principal, CHS)

Experience seems to have informed the position of this principal that classroom teaching and learning requires monitoring. She stated further that teachers tend to do the right things when they know they are consistently being supervised. Explaining this, she said:

When they know that you can bump into the class anytime like that they will like to utilise the time maximally... I always discover the need of doing it. You can see teacher making spelling mistakes, technical mistakes... some teachers will be teaching without having full control of the classroom and some students will be doing another thing at the back.(Principal, CHS)

This principal's practice of supervising teaching and learning appears to be informed by her prior experiences. This allows the principal to be able to correct errors that occur in the teaching and learning process.

In following up on the claims of the principal, I engaged the CHS teachers in a focus group interview session. They affirmed the supervisory position of their principal. One of the teachers said:

She uses instruction to supervise the teachers, corps member, and every other staff of the school.(Teacher 5, CHS)

This shows that the principal does not excuse anyone from her oversight function; she makes everyone accountable to her leadership. This is likely to be due to the need for everyone to be on course for the achievement of school goals. Moreover, another teacher corroborated the claims of the principal stating:

She will delegate the SMTs to different areas to supervise. So beside that, she herself will move round to supervise them... (Teacher 2, CHS)

Teacher 2 from CHS's description confirms what the principal said about classroom visitation and her delegations to the VP for classroom supervision. To further confirm these assertions, I obtained the supervision book, to see the classroom visits made by the principal. I discovered that the principal was in class on several occasion to supervise the teaching and learning process. In the records, I gathered that the observations of the principal were immediately communicated with the teachers involved.

Similarly, the principal of PWSS also practices supervision and evaluation of teachers. The principal said:

I use to go round the school to monitor the teachers... I have always loved teachers to make their teaching student-centred so each time I go out for supervision... (Principal, PWSS)

The principal does not leave the function of curriculum delivery to the teachers only, he moves around the classes to monitor how effectively they discharge this duty.

Further than classroom visitations, the principal of PWSS noted that he runs an open office, stating:

I'm also very free and welcoming... some members of staff will tell you how they have to get the students out of my office at times. (Principal, PWSS)

The principal does not restrict himself to classroom visitation, but also engages teachers and learners in and out of the classroom. This gives him ample opportunity to relate to their challenges as regards instruction and otherwise. To confirm these, teachers from PWSS

involved in this study agreed that the principal interacts freely with everyone, including parents, learners and teachers.

The door is open to everybody, there are some time even when he is eating it can take him hours before he can finish the food, just because he stops and attends to people when eating. (Teacher 4, CHS)

Furthermore, the principal of PWSS was keen on problem solving both for staff and students. This was affirmed in the following answer provided by Teacher 1:

Anytime they come with a challenge or challenges faced in the class he will ensure that he solve the problem even with the contribution of other teachers. He will call them together, discuss the problem and try to analyse and find possible solution to the problem faced by any teacher in the class. And any time a particular student is observed facing a particular challenge especially that has to do with academic instruction. The problem will also be discussed during this meeting where he will meet with the teaching staff and will find possible solution to the problem. (Teacher 1, PWSS).

As part of the principal's supervisory role, he identifies the challenging areas of the curriculum and ensures he proffers solutions but the approach of the principal is worthy of mention. His approach is to involve all the teachers in the problem solving process.

The principal's behaviour of maintaining an oversight function of supervising and evaluating instruction assured maintenance of standards and upgrading teaching and learning activities in the classroom (Robert & Tim, 1998). This behaviour is defined in Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership under the function of managing the instructional programme. Supervising and evaluating instruction by means of supervision is regarded as an "internal mechanism adopted by principals for self-evaluation, geared towards helping teachers and students to improve on their teaching and learning activities for the purpose of achieving educational objectives" (Ayeni, 2012a). Both principals in this study kept up with the teachers and learners by making it a priority in their schedule to visit classes to check on teachers and learners so as to be able assure the quality of curriculum delivery and be able to improve on the weak aspects. Ayeni (2010) affirms that it is imperative for the principal to interact with teachers and learners regularly on both academic and social levels inside and outside the classroom. The principals in this study engaged in supervision by social interaction beyond the closet of the classroom. They were accessible and free to converse with anyone in the school

community. This is considered a necessity because the principal stands in a privileged position to be able to mobilise all entities within the school community towards the achievement of shared school goals and objectives. The principal needs to be clear on the strengths and weaknesses of the school so as to improve and deal with them so that school goals can be achieved (Adetula, 2005; Ayeni, 2012a).

Garman, Glickman, Hunter and Haggerson (1987) offer a research based approach to supervision in schools. The research based approach is a methodical system of collecting and analysing data to proffer solutions to emerging problems. In light of this approach, it is expected that the principals engage teachers individually or in teams to find solutions to the problems identified rather than merely dictating solutions to problems related to teaching and learning. One of the criticisms faced by instructional leaders is that they cannot know everything about the curriculum content (Cuban, 1988). In my opinion, the practice of the principal of PWSS in solving problems associated with curriculum delivery has debunked this criticism. This is because the principal engages the practice of collaborative problem solving which shows that the principal does not assume the frame of 'knowing it all' and at the same time the practice helps the principal to know something about that aspect of the curriculum such that he can be of help in supervision some other time. The approach of the CHS principal is to proffer solutions to identified problems during individual supervision.

5.3.1.7 Provision of incentives for learning

Further than the practice of maintaining an oversight function of the instruction, the principals in this study have in different ways responded to the provision of incentives and resources for learning in their schools. The principal of PWSS provided more clarity on this issue than the principal of CHS.

The principal of Price-Waters in describing what he did in the school, stated that there are four areas of development witnessed in the school under his leadership; physical, academic, finance and spiritual. However, I will only highlight the aspects that relate to learners' learning which includes physical and academic. In line with this, the principal presented the incentives and resources he facilitated in the school.

The first thing I did that even motivated the students, that they were happy... In the hostel where we have about three hundred students, they have just two toilets for both

male and female hostels and the house mistress that was staying with them sharing all those things. First thing I did there was that I built 12 toilets with bathroom with shower and I bought fans in all the hostels, put nets in all the windows.(Principal, PWSS)

This behaviour demonstrated by the principal revealed his passion towards motivating learners through the provision of the basic amenities that will make life comfortable for them. In justifying his motive for improving the existing structure he met, he said:

living in a conducive environment is what gets the learners ready to learn.(Principal, PWSS)

The principal further described other things he had to do in order to make learning conducive for learners. He said:

Then on the physical development, you were in the school I didn't know if you observed the roads. We tarred all the roads to the hostel, dining, classroom and other places all the roads were tarred. And we planted flowers and made the place beautiful, we have the water fountain, we had a place where the students can relax, there was physical development. Then God helped me to build a hall upstairs and hostels for ladies.(Principal, PWSS)

The principal's effort in improving the physical structure of the school seems to grow from his deep interest in ensuring that the school steps out of the demeaning outlook of backwardness and deprivation to a school that can attract people from well-resourced schools and contexts. It is noteworthy that the principal made providing incentives for learning a priority. On the issue of providing academic resources for learning, the principal said:

I did not compromise standard of teaching materials and equipment to be used by the students. I always make sure we bought materials into the laboratories to teach the students. We have computer laboratory, science laboratory, and so on, where we always teach the students to achieve academically and all these things helped the students to achieve better.(Principal, PWSS)

Going by the statement above, the principal appears to commit to achieving the school goals, thereby ensuring that is needed for the achievement of these goals is provided to the required standards. The principal also explained how he encouraged teachers to improve their teaching

and learning to be able to cope with the trends and technological demands of upgrading their classroom performance. He said:

I also encourage the teachers to change their methods and improve on them. There was a time out of the money we realised from the business I introduced I have to buy laptops for the teachers although they paid in instalments in order for them to do some research.(Principal, PWSS)

The teachers in the school were not left to themselves to sort out how to get learning materials, the principal went ahead to provide laptops to make it easier for the teachers to be able to access the materials they needed to improve their instructional methods.

In a bid to affirm the claims of the principal, the teachers in PWSS affirmed the fact that the school witnessed tremendous development under the administration of the principal compared to the administrations before him. My observation field notes were filled with enough physical development as much as my eyes could catch. The school was well-structured, tidy, tarred, the flowers were properly trimmed. In the course of my observation, I engaged Teacher 1 to confirm if the principal was responsible for the visible turnaround in the school. His words were:

Yes, of course, it was the principal with his wisdom that orchestrated the visible change in the school... the school went from being unknown to being known nationally and even internationally under his leadership. (Teacher 1, PWSS)

The principal of CHS mentioned a few things on the issue of providing incentives for learning. During my visit to the school, as part of my observation, she showed me certain areas of recent development which came from the money she raised from the school PTA. She showed me the number of repairs she had to do ranging from classrooms to the provision of other facilities. Moreover, she raised money for the purchase of a much needed, long overdue, school bus, which was a record-breaking, history-making project for the school. I was also made aware of the project of beautifying the school which was embarked on by the principal but was stopped because of a particular incident. Although there were no new structures in sight, the old ones were maintained. There were a few broken doors in evidence, but most were still intact.

The provision of incentives for learning is as crucial as motivation of staff. This makes it possible for teachers and learners to be able to conveniently work together toward achieving

the shared school goals (Cole, 2002; Ofoegbu, 2004). Ofoegbu (2004) notes that the condition of the class and the environment of the school generally create a wave influence that may impede or impact positively on the delivery of instruction and the achievement of the school goals. It is noted that the school should be safe, healthy, equipped with necessary facilities and learning resources so as to culminate in the enhancement of the school goals. The principal of PWSS was succinct in his words that learners learn better in a conducive environment. He ensured he left no stones unturned to provide a decent and serene atmosphere for learning. The provision of these incentives for learning became a major motivation for the learners to learn, seeing that their basic needs had been well catered for. Moreover, the teachers became more effective in their discharge of teaching and learning in the classroom with the provision of laptops which gave them access to multiple materials to use in engaging lesson preparation and of course, curriculum delivery. In furtherance to this, the principal maintained that he did not compromise on instructional materials. He ensured what is needed for effective classroom teaching and learning was provided so that the goals of the school could be achieved. The principal of CHS, in similar vein was able to identify the basic needs that make learning easier and teacher participation in classroom activities more efficient and worked out strategies to meeting those needs.

Ayeni and Akinola (2008) describe the failed attempt of principal's motivation on teachers' job performance due to the absence of adequate instructional materials, decent staffrooms and conducive environment for learning. Invariably, the absence of adequate resources for instruction and conducive learning limits the impact of the principals in being able the academic performance of their learners. Therefore, it is expedient that principals that succeed in challenging contexts require innovation be able to provide the necessary resources for learning.

5.3.1.8 Providing incentives for teachers

Providing incentives for learning was not the last of the practices of these principals, the principals of PWSS and CHS also made use of various means to motivate their staff into doing more by providing incentives for them.

The principal of PWSS explained what he did in providing the teachers with incentives. He said:

When I got there I introduced so many businesses - the tie we sell to the students the uniform we sell to the students, the uniform is being sown and sold to the students. We invited a tailor to assist the sewing mistress and we do it and sell to the students. All the gain we generated from this at the end every term, I give the members of staff N3,000 each and then buy them rice and some other things.(Principal, PWSS)

This principal's behaviour of creating businesses is believed to be a step to move the school from the financial deprivations that has beset the school in time past. However, the assertion by the principal of giving all those gifts to the teachers seemed too good to be true. Therefore, I interacted with the teachers in the focus group interview session to confirm the principal's statement. This was said by Teacher 2 in confirmation of the principal's statement:

He is somebody that apart from the issue of salary, he uses incentives to encourage the teachers. When you give incentive, you motivate the teachers to work harder. And apart from even giving incentives, he gives some encouraging words, appreciating the staff and when you are appreciating your staff and giving a form of encouraging statement, it will induce them to perform their duty without any grudges and ehh... I think those are the methods he has been using, I mean giving incentive. (Teacher 2, PWSS).

The teachers in PWSS seem to derive satisfaction in working with their principal as he seeks to motivate them by providing for their basic needs.

The principal of CHS uses a different strategy to that of the principal of PWSS in motivating her staff. In her words:

I love to motivate people personally. I want to ensure that they are happy with me when doing the right thing... On assembly ground, at the end of each session, the most hardworking teacher will be rewarded in cash and kind. I will also give them a certificate of merit alongside with the gift. (Principal, CHS)

This behaviour of motivating the staff was clearly documented in the documents presented by the school. In the schedule for the prize giving ceremony for the 2012/2013 academic session, it showed how the principal identified teachers who contributed immensely towards the success of the academic session.

Providing incentive for teachers is a behaviour that Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership positions under the function of promoting school climate. The

achievement of the school framed goals is inherently grounded in the principal's ability to successfully motivate the teachers to be committed to teaching and learning. Ayeni (2012b, p. 63) argues that teachers must be well motivated in order to "sustain their interest so that they can be dedicated, committed, willing, enthusiastic and inspiring" on the job. The task of inspiring teachers to work efficiently as individuals or in teams requires that principals develop their own approach to motivating them (Neeru, 2003). The two principals developed different approaches to motivating their staff. The principal of PWSS relies mostly on providing some basic incentives in addition to their salary. This practice seems to inspire the teachers in this school as the teacher participants in this study speak highly of him and his approach to getting them to work. The principal of CHS conceived of the idea of giving teachers certificates of merit and cash or material reward for outstanding performances demonstrated within the academic session. It must be noted that the motivational factors in school include equitable distribution of workloads, sharing of responsibilities, delegation of authority, participatory decision-making, collegial relationships and school-based reward systems (Ayeni, 2012b). Emerging from this study is the fact that the principals have responded to the question on motivation by describing an efficient reward-based system for their staff.

Perie and Baker (1997) claim that teacher compensation; including staff benefits and supplemental income generate long-term satisfaction in the teaching profession. Perie and Baker (1997) assert further that teachers, who are not motivated, generally are not as productive as those who are. Motivation is a form of a stimulus that elicits a behaviour that consequently results in the achievement of an expected objective (Cole, 2002). Motivation in this regards refers to the psychological needs of the staff such as money, status and security. Ayeni and Afolabi (2012) support the above statement, emphasising that highly motivated teachers add value to the quality of teaching and learning activities in the classroom which will consequently result in high academic press. The principal of CHS was quick to point to the responsiveness of the teachers working for her as a result of the incentives she uses in encouraging them to do more for the learners.

5.3.2 Implications of contextual realities on principals' instructional leadership behaviours and practices

The above section discussed what constitutes the instructional behaviours and practices of principals who have succeeded in challenging contexts, thereby providing answers to the first

question guiding this research. This section focuses on presenting, analysing and discussing data so as to provide answer to the second research question.

5.3.2.1 Thinking leadership

The principals in this study to varying degrees have demonstrated thinking leadership which is exhibited by beginning with the end in mind, proactivity, thinking win/win and effective prioritisation in their practice of instructional leadership in schools. Though the principal of CHS demonstrated thinking leadership, the principal of PWSS was more effective in terms of the thinking leadership function. The challenges they were faced with at first required them to exert thinking leadership in leading teaching and learning.

The principal of PWSS, in describing how he approached the job of leading teaching and learning in school, said:

When one start to work from the end not from the beginning. That is, the goal is for the students to have good result. Then you will be able to plan to work towards it... this education thing one should start from the end. Now, I am here as the principal, what do I want the students to achieve (I have not even started) but I have projected this from the beginning that they must all have good results. Then what are the things that will bring good results? All this time, we continued to work on the beautiful environment and conducive environment, teacher-learner relationships, the curriculum. The teachers that will teach them, how will I make them happy? How will I come in so that they will be able to concentrate?(Principal, PWSS)

It can be argued that this principal is a thinking leader. The principal of PWSS did not begin to work without making a conscious effort to introspect. He looked beyond the contextual realities to imagine the end he preferred for the school. This is referred to as beginning with the end in mind. Therefore, the principal began his work by setting direction for the entire school. He explained this in the following sentence:

Part of the things that assisted me was that when I got to the school I developed a vision statement, there was none before I got there and a mission statement and as a matter of fact since it came from me I have to work hard to achieve it and the mission statement is for the school to become a top class school for developmentof excellent knowledge as well as the character.(Principal, PWSS)

The principal of PWSS was proactive and quickly responded to the lack of vision and mission statement. This is a function of an active and imaginative mind that is taking responsibility for giving direction to the followers irrespective of the contextual challenges. The principal's thinking mind informs him of the need at hand and swiftly provided a plan of action. This ability may be referred to as proactivity.

Moreover, the principal's thoughts were central to what to do to achieve good results as well as motivate learners and teachers to work together in order to achieve the objective of the preferred future he has designed in his mind. He said:

When I got here, I discovered that we needed money for improvement in order to make both the students and the staff happy... God helped me to introduce so many businesses.
(Principal, PWSS)

Creating internally generated revenue for the school was a feat of proactivity to get the school out of financial difficulty, creating a more stable and sustainable situation in which the school can provide incentives for learning and for the staff. The principal was not only focused on how to revolutionize the school but was particular on how to make the teachers and the learners happy, thus creating a win/win situation for all.

When the principal was asked how he generates his ideas for the development in the school, he said:

I normally receive my ideas mostly in the night and ruminate over them in the night, the possible difficulty and the outcome. (Principal, PWSS)

This habit further positions the principal as a thinking mind who can independently create plans to move the school out of the challenging situations in which it finds itself.

More importantly, the principal appears to have a priority list when he communicated the following:

One thing I decided to focus on was the coverage of the curriculum. (Principal, PWSS)

It is obvious is that there are quite a number of challenges in the school but what the principal demonstrated is the function of thoughtfulness. He was fully aware of what should be at the top of his priority list. Hence, he began his job with a focus on curriculum coverage.

The principal of CHS also demonstrated thinking leadership to some extent, aside from the vision and mission statements that projected the general directions for the school. From school documents perused the principal's meetings with individual teachers revealed that the principal clearly set the direction with them. She described what the goals are and how they can be achieved. The three areas of primary concern for the principal are academics, discipline and security. The principal also proactively developed fundraising campaigns through the alumni of the school and PTA to generate funds for the school as revealed in the documents.

As earlier stated in Section 5.3.1.1, beginning with the end in mind is a behaviour that requires forward thinking, particularly, when the context is challenging and deprived. Principals need to exert themselves to project the future beyond their present contextual realities. In other words, beginning with the end in mind means that the principal breaks out of his/her current contextual realities to design the preferred future for the school. Bush (2007) refers to this under the practice of framing goals. However, framing goals is a microscopic view of the concept of beginning with the end in mind. The concept of creating the end at the beginning can be conceived of as the process of designing a roadmap to the preferred destination. Both principals practiced this but the principal of PWSS did so with more precision and was able to introspect on where the school was going and how the school was going to get there. Both developed vision and mission statements for their schools but the principal of PWSS proceeded to further query in his mind on how he intended to achieve the end he had designed in his mind. Beginning with the end is just one step in the process of thinking leadership; the leader must still proceed to proactively map out plans towards achieving the goals.

Proactivity is behaviour that relates to the leader's response-ability to the challenging realities within their sphere of functioning. Response-ability weaves around the leader's awareness (Spears, 2010; Goleman, 2006) and imagination (Goleman, 2006, Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2013). With awareness and imagination, the leader is able to create what to do to achieve the objective of a preferred future (Goleman, 2009). This is exemplified in the questioning navigations of the mind of the principal of PWSS as he probed himself "*what are the things that will bring good results...*?" He had set the vision that all the students must have good results. Then he proceeded to asking himself what can be done to achieve this. This enquiry is a function of being aware of the surrounding challenging realities within the context and then a function of imagination. With imagination, he began to work on developing a beautiful and conducive environment for learning, establishing means to improve teacher-

learner relationships, and then provided incentives so that the curriculum could be covered. Rather than being blinded by the challenging realities within the school, he opened his mind to doing things that would lead to the achievement of the set goals. Thus, he introduced businesses into the school which became a source of revenue to answer to the financial requirements in achieving the objective of developing a beautiful and conducive environment, effective teacher-learner relationships and coverage of the curriculum.

In mapping out the path to the future, the leader needs to create a win/win situation (Covey, 2012). The leader has to be able to think how everyone within the community of his/her leadership (learners, teachers, and parents) will benefit from the imagined future. This type of thinking is demonstrated by the principal of PWSS; having projected the hallmark goal of ensuring that all learners have good results, he began thinking aloud saying “...*the teachers that will teach them, how will I make them happy...?*” This kind of thinking made it clear that the principal was looking at creating an outcome of mutual benefit for all within the school community. Having begun with the end in mind, proactivity and thinking win/win, it is necessary that the leader then creates a priority list of all that needs to be done. This will enable the leader to effectively direct his/her activities in achieving the preferred future imagined. Effective prioritisation allows for the leader to lead themselves as well as leading others by engaging in what is urgent and most important first (Markus & Kitayama, 1991).

The principals in this study were able to sidestep the challenges in their context by demonstrating thinking leadership as discussed above. The challenges in their school required that they do things differently. Thus, their instructional leadership behaviours had the underlying force of thinking leadership that enabled them to emerge as successful in the challenging contexts where they found themselves. Thus, the function of thinking leadership informed all the instructional leadership behaviours and practices of the principals in this study. In exerting the instructional leadership behaviours earlier discussed (*see section 5.3.1*), the contextual realities were woven into the thoughts of these principals and they developed effective ways to limit them in order to achieve their objectives.

In summary, the principals of PWSS and CHS exhibited thinking leadership, in that as soon as they arrived at their schools they discovered the need to create the preferred future for their schools. Beyond this, however, the proactivity of the principal of PWSS is considered responsible for his continued thinking on creating possible ways to recreate the realities within the context where he had to serve as a principal. Moreover, the principal had the desire to reach

everyone within the sphere of his concern and influence them to become beneficiaries of his mind’s creation. He was clear on his priority that the coverage of the curriculum should come first on his agenda for the school. These behaviours demonstrated by this principal summarises the leadership function termed *thinking leadership*.

Emerging from the findings of this study is that successful principals in challenging contexts are able to inhibit or suppress their contextual realities by demonstrating thinking leadership while leading teaching and learning.

Thinking leadership is represented diagrammatically in Figure 5.1.

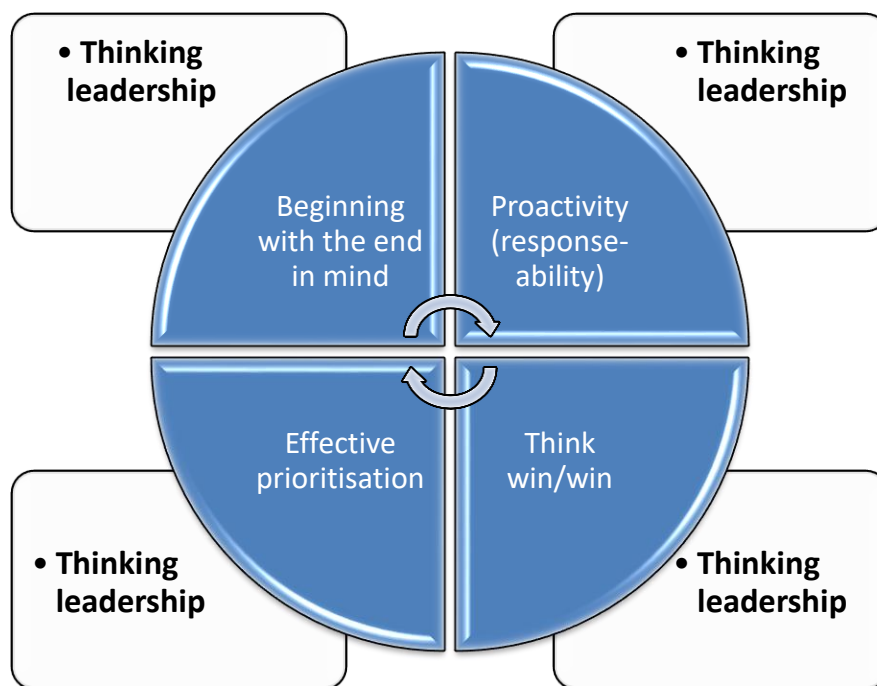


Figure 5.1: Diagrammatic representation of thinking leadership

5.3.2.2 Building synergy

The principals in this study went beyond thinking leadership to building synergy. In building synergy, they ensured they cared for others, created more opportunities for principal-to-teacher collaborations and established satisfying motivation.

The principals in this study demonstrated the function of building synergy in varying degrees. The principal of PWSS, while talking his drive when embarking on the journey for leading teaching and learning in this school and what was the major contributor to his success, said:

I always love to help people to succeed... First of all, you need to love everybody, seek the progress of everybody, work towards the progress of everybody. Pray for everybody as well. Ask God to allow everybody to be greater than you... I love progress for everybody, I want everybody to succeed and live better - that is what I do. (Principal, PWSS)

This statement demonstrated how the principal highlights that he is concerned about helping people succeed. This act in itself is a base for motivating both staff and learners. I probed to affirm these claims in the focus group interview session with the teachers. One of the teachers said:

To me personally, he is just like a father, the reason I said that is this, sometimes if he finds any of his staff, and not only staff, even students that is having problem outside the school situation now, he will look into it and see how he can contribute and find solution to that problem, so that is his nature and that his own life. He always come to see that there is solution to this very particular problem so when the students come with their problems, challenges probably what they are facing at home, he will go into it, he will not just stop there, and say that please don't worry. But he will want to see what can be done to find solution the problem. (Teacher 2, PWSS)

The statement from this teacher confirms the statement of the principal, and clarifies that the principal is indeed concerned about the welfare of his staff and seeks to help them solve their problems as soon as he discovers them even when it does not relate to teaching and learning.

The principal of CHS is not left out on this matter. The principal said the following while explaining how she gets along with the staff:

The goal in my mind is to impart lives successfully... have the interest of the people in mind for their well-being both physiologically and psychologically. (Principal, CHS)

It is inferred that the principal is interested in the all-round well-being of her staff, not just driving the staff to work without caring for their physiological and psychological needs when necessary. In order to affirm the principal's claim, I engaged teachers in CHS in their focus group interview session and this is what one of them had to say about the principal:

She cares to help others develop... She did something; I think she had gotten uniforms for some students, yes, living in tattered uniform, so she can use her finance to support parents... (Teacher 3, CHS)

In addition to caring for others, in order to build synergy, these principals endeavoured to establish collaborations with their teachers. While being probed on how he works with the teachers in his school, the principal of PWSS said:

A tree can never make a forest however big, fine or robust a tree is, it cannot make a forest. It is good for a leader to have good ideas but it is better when you carry others along... You have to let others know your ideas and you have to open up to them so that they can show interest in them, and see the reasons why you are bringing the ideas... and as for me I normally receive my ideas mostly in the night and ruminate over them in the night, the possible difficulty and the outcome. And on getting down to the school during the day, I will call them and will explain to them regarding my ideas and I will allow them to contribute but I don't allow them to kill my ideas but then I share from their ideas. When you allow people to contribute even if you didn't want to use their ideas by doing that you will win their heart so that is the method I used. And at times one of them may modify the ideas to a better one. (Principal, PWSS)

This may refer to a collegial approach to decision making on the part of this principal. Despite the fact that he gets the ideas on his own, he mobilises the support of the teachers to clarify, modify and build consensus in the achievement of the ideas. This is a form of principal-to-teacher collaboration which brings everyone to the table to be part of the development of the school's goals.

While engaging the teachers in PWSS, one of them described the principal as follows:

I can describe the principal as a visionary leader and somebody who relies on team work.(Teacher 2, PWSS)

The description of this teacher shows that as much the principal leads with a focus on repositioning the school, he does this while carrying everybody on his team along. The principal may be argued to be a team leader. Furthermore, another teacher sheds further light on the behaviour of building principal-to-teacher collaborations. He stated:

And any time a particular student is observed facing a particular challenge especially that has to do with academic instruction. The problem will also be discussed during this meeting where he will meet with the teaching staff and will find possible solution to the problem. So from the suggestions given by the teacher then he will look at the one that could be more effective and then he will try to implement the suggestion.
(Teacher 1, PWSS)

Inferring from the above statement, the principal does not display a 'I know all' disposition. Instead, he facilitates the involvement of other teachers in solving knotty issues that he encounters during classroom supervision. Due to this approach to problem-solving the principal-to-teacher collaboration is enhanced. The documents received from the school show that several committees working together with the principal to achieve the objectives of the school.

In the case of the principal of CHS, she worked mostly with the VPs and then through committees as reflected in the documents presented, unlike the principal of PWSS that worked with his entire team.

For instance, the principal of CHS stated that in developing the vision and mission statements of the school she worked with the VP academically. In her words:

...I invited my VP Academics and we developed together the school prospectus... If I want to make a decision on some member of staff, I will first of all sell the idea to the VP and let him realise the important of decision and ask for their opinion, some may suggest that we do it in a particular way and if I am convinced I will ask them to do it but if they have a superior reason I will ask them to do it as suggested. (Principal, CHS)

The principal of CHS's approach to establishing principal-to-teacher collaboration seems to be through teams not necessarily as individuals or groups. This may not effectively produce the collaborations required for school goals to be achieved.

Besides principal-to-teacher collaborations in building synergy, these principals established ways to satisfactorily motivate the teachers, as stated by the principal of PWSS:

To motivate and encourage the staff... I introduced business that will yield profit and how we spend the money was opened to everybody and all enjoyed the money and they were happy. So that was what we need the money for in order to motivate the staff and

the student and make the environment very beautiful... During December period, a staff gets a chicken plus N3000 plus rice and other things. We also have poultry farm in the school, students were happy for that. We also have fish pond and other things to motivate them.(Principal, PWSS)

The initial expectation of the principal is for the teachers to be happy as they go about the duty of delivering the curriculum content. The achievement of this objective necessitated that the principal set up businesses to generate revenue for the staff. The principal satisfied their basic needs by giving them additional money, food stuff and other necessary things. This is expected to ignite the passion of the staff to do more in achieving the school goals.

The principal of PWSS also motivated the learners in the school by providing with the basic facilities that would facilitate their comfort in school. In describing this the principal said:

First thing I did there was that I built 12 toilets with bathroom with shower and I bought fans in all the hostels, put nets in all the windows. The students were so happy, such that if I say hey! They were ready to respond in whatever direction I was leading them. and I did most of these things with my own money although the money was paid back.(Principal, PWSS)

In CHS the principal motivated the teachers using a different strategy. She said:

I love to motivate people personally. I want to ensure that they are happy with me when doing the right thing... On assembly ground, at the end of each session, the most hardworking teachers will have rewarded in cash and kind. I will also give them a certificate of merit alongside with the gift.(Principal, PWSS)

The approach by this principal only considers rewards to a few staff whose contributions surpass that of others. This is appearing to be a transactional leadership style that rewards performance such that all other teachers will have to wait for another year for them to prove themselves worthy of rewards. Thus, this may foster competition amongst the staff to work hard enough and be credible for the yearly reward for hard work.

Synergy is defined as “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts” (Covey, 2012). There is a lot of literature on the term ‘teamwork’. However, the concept of teamwork has simply revolved around the mutual coming together of individuals in order to achieve shared objectives (Marzano et al. 2005; Sparks, 2013). However, building synergy as referred to in

this study goes beyond merely coming together or interactions between principals and teachers for the achievement of shared purpose. It is first an intentional demonstration of care for others, rooted in altruism and love (Page & Wong, 2000). Page and Wong state that caring for others is a practice rooted in genuine and consistent demonstration of interest in the betterment of other lives. The principal of PWSS displayed care for others by going on to meet the core needs of the learners even when he had to use his personal money to achieve this. Moreover, this behaviour was also reflected in the concern the principal raised regarding “how can he make the teachers happy?” This question motivated the principal to create businesses to give them termly bonuses. This practice is argued to be a major form of motivation as it enables collegial relationships between the principal and the teachers (Ayeni, 2012b). The awareness that the principal genuinely cares about their personal challenges motivates the staff to work tirelessly in the achievement of the school’s goals.

Genuinely caring for others initiates a chain reaction that sparks the creation of a collegial atmosphere in which decisions and problems are solved together. This atmosphere allows the principal and teachers to effectively collaborate on issues that will lead to the achievement of the school goals. The principal of PWSS demonstrated this, while engaging with issues that challenge either staff or students. Moreover, this principal gathered the entire staff to share his ideas and give them the space to influence and modify their ideas. This attribute of synergy can give the entire team a sense of ownership (Bush, 2007). Thereby, everyone is aboard to make the vision a reality.

The establishment of mutually satisfying motivation for staff, learners and the school ignites the commitment of all of the stakeholders (Ayeni, 2012b). The principals in this study developed strategies with which they rewarded the efforts of their staff. Cole (2002) argued that satisfying the psychological needs of teachers is an external stimulus that makes them respond with behaviours that drive toward ensuring the organisational goals are achieved. The approach of the principal of PWSS appears to be far-reaching as the teachers showed enthusiasm in describing the experience of going home with a bumper pack at the end of term.

Emerging from this study is that principals serving in challenging contexts should demonstrate behaviours that build synergy. It should be known that there is no stand-alone behaviour amongst the three behaviours in building synergy. The three behaviours of caring for others, principal-to-teacher collaborations and establishing satisfying motivation are knitted together in building synergy in the school community. Building synergy becomes the major driver, next

to thinking leadership, in the achievement of school goals irrespective of the challenges that may be present in the context.

5.3.2.3 Exerting discipline and accountability

The principals involved in this study exerted discipline and accountability to different degrees in discharging the function of leading teaching and learning in challenging contexts.

The principal of PWSS demonstrated accountability in the leading the school during the process of defining the school vision and mission. He said,

Part of the things that assisted me was that as soon as I got to the school, I developed a vision statement; there was none before I got there, and a mission statement. And as a matter of fact since it came from me I have to work hard to achieve it and the mission statement is for the school to become a top class school for pursuit of excellence in knowledge as well as in character. (Principal, PWSS)

Despite the fact that at least three other principals had led the school before his arrival, he demonstrated accountability to the school he was going to lead by first setting the direction for the school.

Moreover, the principal of PWSS demonstrated accountability as he discharges oversight regarding the activities of the staff in and out of the classroom. He said:

...monitoring punctuality by myself, I was always punctual and all the member of staff have no choice than to be punctual and because they knew I always be in the classroom every day to monitor... and you will be surprise, I leave the school when others have left around 2:00pm or some minutes after 2 except when we have lesson and we leave the school at times 4:00pm. I may not leave the school till 7:00pm...I normally leave the school late because I need to monitor the preparatory classes. I will be the first person to get to the school and the last person to leave the school.(Principal, PWSS)

This principal's purpose is to maintain high visibility so as to ensure that teachers are in school to time and teaching and learning occurs as and when due. He does not leave the school to chance; he supervises the teaching and learning process so that everyone is in line with the school goals.

In addition, the principal also demonstrates accountability towards the learners by enforcing discipline in the school. He said:

...Because I don't play with discipline, I enforce discipline as and when needed. You dare not mess up where I am. I think that was why we got the award for being the Most Disciplined Secondary School in Nigeria.(Principal, PWSS)

Amongst other things, the achievements of this school may be traced to strength of discipline with which the principal coordinates the teachers and learners.

Furthermore, he ensured accountability to learners as he followed up on their progress to see how he could assist the weak and improve the low performing learners. He said:

...when I got to the school, I think it was about two or three times that we have changed the system there was a year that those that were weak were put together into a class and those that were good we put them into another class with the aim that the weak class will improve. (Principal, PWSS)

The principal proved to be accountable for the achievement of holistic success as the school vision depicts. He was committed to improving the performance of all learners. This informed the categorisation of learners according to their strengths.

The principal of CHS also demonstrated accountability, supervising teaching and learning in the school despite her herculean task of leading a large school.

So as busy as my daily schedule is, I still go around at regular intervals... (Principal, CHS)

The largeness of the school could have been an excuse but she considers herself accountable for supervising the teaching and learning program. Besides, this behaviour requires discipline, looking at the multiple activities the principal will have to engage with on a daily basis. She has to be able to be assertive to schedule her priorities to be able to make time for classroom supervision.

The CHS principal also demonstrated accountability to the learners. She stated:

I found out lack of willingness of the students to learn, wrong attitude to learning, not being ready to learn... ... as soon as I noticed this among the students I thought it was

as a result of ignorance, lack of vision for the future, disorientation, misplacement of priority and things like that and from the inception I have started trying to plead with the students to their mind by the way of counselling and advising them. And by enlighten believing that there will be change of attitude in them. This is what even led to the seminar you came for the other time. (Principal, CHS)

The principal's action to motivate the learners through counselling and motivation, having observed their uninterested approach to learning is a form of accountability.

The leadership function of exerting discipline in this context does not relate to punishment alone as represented in the literature of educational leadership and management. In the light of this study exerting leadership is referred to as the capacity to exert the overarching function of control and regulation. The behavioural component of the leadership function of exerting discipline is accountability.

The demands for accountability in educational leadership have increased recently more than ever before (Day et al. 2016). The need for accountability has become a critical requirement of a principal and this covers all aspects of the school program. Accountability simply put means being answerable for tasks engaged with (Leithwood, 2001; Liethwood and Riehl, 2003). Accountability demands taking responsibility for doing things right and providing details of what is done. I argue that this behaviour is what accounts for the success of all behaviours and functions. For instance, the principal of PWSS embarked on major businesses such as a poultry farm, fish ponds and others. If he was unanswerable for the financial expenditure of the businesses, he would have failed in providing incentives for learning and staff motivation. The consequence of his thinking leadership function allowed him to come up with profitable business ideas, but if he had not implemented the ideas in an accountable way, the contextual realities of the school would have remained and possibly the school goals framed would never have been achieved.

Another major aspect of being answerable included effective curriculum delivery; the principals in this study went out of their way to exert discipline on themselves so as to not fail in ensuring adequate oversight function regarding teaching and learning in their schools. Both principals ensured they were in school early enough to oversee the affairs of the school. More than just being punctual in school, the principal of PWSS sometimes exerted discipline on himself, missing his lunch to stay over in school till evening in order to ensure that other

preparatory classes to help the weak students and improve the bright students were adequately attended to.

Since, they are answerable to the academic performance of learners, the principal of PWSS ensured that he enforces discipline in the school so that all learners abide strictly by the rules and regulations they have signed to abide with. In my observation in my four days of visiting the school, all learners were in class except for during break time. The learners even during break comported themselves as well-trained students as they were not in any way unruly.

5.4 Chapter summary

In order to provide answers to the key research questions engaged in this study, this chapter presented the findings that emerged from the data provided through document review, observation field notes, semi-structured individual interviews and focus group interviews. The principals involved in this study have been found to exhibit certain instructional leadership behaviours and practices that enhance their success in the challenging contexts they serve. Moreover, the contextual realities they had to battle with influenced these principals to act differently. Thus, their instructional leadership behaviours were influenced by certain leadership functions, behaviours and practices. These included thinking leadership, building synergy and exerting discipline and accountability. This is argued to have accounted for the successes of these principals within the challenging context they work in.

CHAPTER 6 : SUMMARY OF STUDY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*“Men make history, and not the other way around. In the periods where there is no leadership, society stands still. Progress occurs when courageous, skillful leaders seize the opportunity to change things for the better”
(recorded in Blumenson, 1985, p.6).*

6.1 Introduction

The findings and interpretations from the data obtained from this study involving two successful principals serving in challenging contexts were presented in the previous chapter. This chapter will provide a summary of the study as well as a summary of findings and from there make recommendations arising from the findings. The summary of findings will be categorised into two based on the two research questions engaged with during the course of this study. Then, a diagrammatic representation of the emergent context bound instructional leadership model will be presented. This diagram will portray the instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions that account for success in challenging contexts.

6.2 Summary of the study

This study was engaged in with an assumption that school principals' successes in challenging contexts where they served can be attributed to a set of instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions demonstrated by them. Thus, the purpose of this study was to affirm the authenticity of this claim and thereby account for the behaviours, practices and functions that are responsible for successful instructional leadership in challenging contexts, particularly in the Nigerian context. Moreover, the study aimed at understanding how contextual realities influence the instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions of principals serving in challenging contexts. In order to achieve the purpose of this study I began with an explorative journey into the literature to know what and how the literature could guide me. I engaged local

and international literature to correctly position this study and find the gaps so as to be able to orientate the study to be able to fill them.

My literary exploration exposed me to the multiplicity of concepts in leadership as well as to the as yet unresolved dichotomy that exists between the concepts of leadership and management. This study led me to see that effective school leadership requires that the principal doubles as a leader and manager. School principals should be able to bring stability as managers and be able to effectively advocate change and new approaches when necessary as leaders (Lunenburg, 2011). Arising from the literature, I could see that leadership is conceived of as the process of supplying a set of behaviours and practices that establish a wave of influence that culminates in the achievement of organisational goals. School principals are beset with a flurry of activities or functions in leading their schools, but not all of these activities result in improvement of teaching and learning in their schools (Bottery, 2004). Teaching and learning is the core activity to be engaged by school principals, requiring certain behaviours and practices for schools to emerge as being successful. Amongst other elements, Leithwood et al. (2006) identify creating vision and setting direction, developing people, restructuring the organisation and managing teaching and learning as core to successful school leadership.

The literature reveals that some schools located in challenging contexts are performing exceptionally well academically while other schools in such contexts are groping in a state of haplessness, while others are already dysfunctional (Chikoko et al., 2015). It is therefore intriguing to know what behaviours and practices set these successful schools apart from their failing counterparts. Mbokazi (2013) conducted a study which identified practices that have accounted for successful instructional leadership in challenging South African township schools, but the literature review revealed that scholarship has not focused on identifying behaviours and practices generating success in a Nigerian challenging context. Moreover, it appears that the literature has not yet covered the aspect of understanding how contextual realities influence the functions, behaviours and practices of successful principals in challenging contexts. Therefore, data generated from this study has endeavoured to fill these observed gaps in the literature.

With respect to the purpose of this study, two theories were engaged to form a framework for this study. Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership and context-responsive theory (Bredeson et al., 2008) were used as the lens through which to view these two successful principals operating in challenging contexts in Nigeria. The context bound

instructional leadership framework emergent from the amalgamation of these two theories therefore houses eleven behaviours and practices which were used to analyse these principals. the behaviours in the context bound instructional leadership framework are framing school goals, communicating school goals, coordinating the curriculum, supervising and evaluating instruction, monitoring learner progress, protecting instructional time, providing incentives for teachers, providing incentives for learning, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility and dealing with internal and external contextual realities.

The purpose of this study was to answer two research questions. To provide the answers to these questions, this study was situated in the interpretive paradigm using a qualitative approach which allowed me into the world of the researched, so as to be able make meaning of their lived experiences. This approach also gave me allowed me to engage the phenomenon under study using multiple sources to generate the data required to answer the research questions. The study used a case study methodology, with the case built around two principals who are successful in challenging contexts. While exploring these two successful principals' behaviours, practices and functions, I ensured that issues of trustworthiness and ethics were adhered to in the study.

With respect to the lens of context bound instructional teaching and learning, I used thematic abstraction to analyse and give meaning to the raw data obtained from the principals and teachers through interviews, focus groups, observations and document review. Two main categories are emergent from the findings in this study. These are:

1. Focus on leading teaching and learning.
2. Implications of contextual realities on principals' instructional leadership behaviours and practices.

Successful principals who succeed in challenging contexts are able to influence their schools with the instructional leadership behaviours of beginning with the end in mind, development of vision and mission statements, focus on curriculum coverage, creating more instructional time, protection of instructional time, provision of incentives for learning, providing incentives for teachers. This is achieved to the extent that thinking leadership, building synergy and exerting discipline are utilised as guiding forces underlying these highlighted instructional leadership behaviours and practices. The interactive and interdependent relationship between these emergent context-responsive leadership functions and instructional leadership behaviours and practices form an emergent framework for analysing successful leadership behaviours,

practices and functions in challenging contexts. This emergent framework is shown in Figure 6.1.

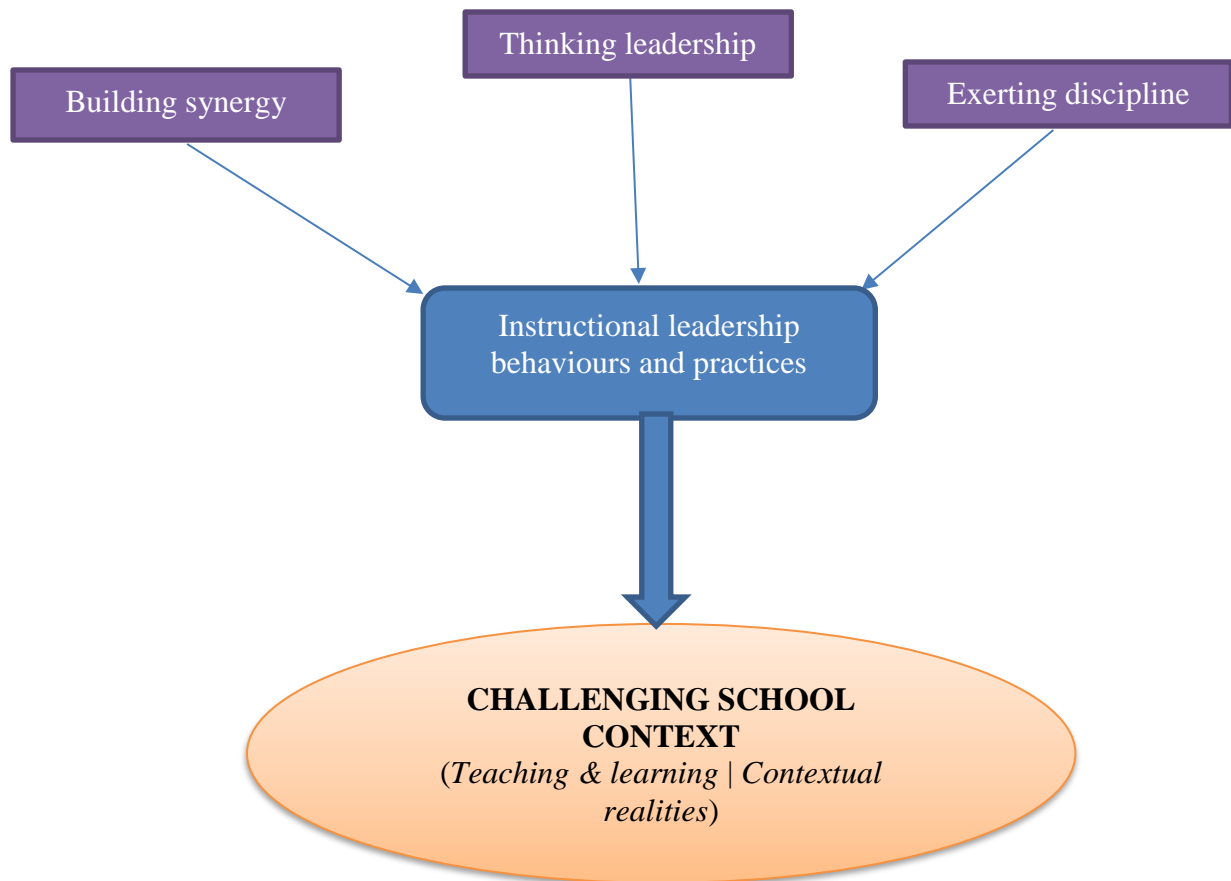


Figure 6.1: Diagrammatic representation of the context bound instruction leadership framework

6.3 Contribution of the study

The review of literature in the Chapter 2 of this dissertation revealed the dearth in the literature on successful leadership in challenging contexts. Despite the recent shift in literature towards understanding the roles and impact of the context on leading teaching and learning in schools, the influencing factors that enable the instructional leadership behaviours and practices that overcome contextual realities remains largely unknown. Moreover, there is not yet a theoretical tool which can be used to analyse successful principal leadership in challenging contexts. This study has been able to uncover the influencing factors in the practice of leading teaching and learning in schools situated in challenging contexts. Furthermore, the diagram above shows a framework that can be used in analysing instructional leadership behaviours in challenging contexts.

6.4 Recommendations

Arising from the findings of this study it is evident that appropriate leading of teaching and learning can result in learner achievement, even for schools situated in challenging contexts. The following recommendations are specifically directed to principals in challenging contexts and also to researchers in this field.

6.4.1 Recommendations to principals

For schools to achieve the objective of teaching and learning in schools and thereby ensure that learner performance improves, it is imperative that principals engage in behaviours and practices that account for successful leading teaching and learning in schools. These behaviours and practices are: creating and communicating school goals, coordinating curriculum, supervising and evaluating instruction, maintaining high visibility, protecting instructional time, providing incentives for learning and for teachers, promoting professional development and monitoring learners progress.

However, these above mentioned behaviours and practices are not sufficient when leading schools that are situated in challenging contexts. It is imperative that principals in these contexts be aware and therefore be guided by the context-responsive leadership functions which have been studied here namely: thinking leadership, building synergy and exerting discipline. Each of these context-responsive leadership functions have associated behaviours that coordinate their dependencies and interdependencies. Thinking leadership is guided by beginning with the end in mind, proactivity, thinking win/win and effective prioritisation. Building synergy revolves around the behaviours of caring for others, principal-to-teacher(s) collaborations and establishing satisfying motivation. Exerting discipline is solely related to the behaviour referred to as accountability.

It is therefore recommended that principals serving in challenging contexts inform their practice of creating and communicating school goals, coordinating curriculum, supervising and evaluating instruction, maintaining high visibility, protecting instructional time, providing incentives for learning and for teachers, promoting professional development and monitoring learners progress through thinking leadership, building synergy and exerting discipline.

6.4.2 Recommendations to researchers

There is still much to be done in understanding how the context-responsive leadership functions of thinking leadership, building synergy and exerting discipline influences instructional leadership behaviour for a school turnaround. Since this is a small study involving only two successful principals, the results are not generalisable. It is recommended therefore that large-scale research be conducted so as to facilitate in an improved knowledge of how principals serving in challenging contexts can effectively deal with contextual realities while leading teaching and learning in their schools.

6.5 Limitations of the study

The major limitation to this study was the scope of the study; the study explored the instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions of two Nigerian principals. Despite the value this study contributes to the body of knowledge and to the practice of principal leadership, it cannot be generalised to other settings. Nevertheless, I have provided a thick description of the research methods, findings and the context of the study. This will enable clear interpretations to be made and encourage appropriate adaptations in cases where the similarities in context are similar to the contexts of this study.

6.6 Chapter summary

This study was conducted to account for the instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions of principals who succeed in challenging contexts and to understand how contextual realities influence their instructional leadership behaviours and practices. It emerged that instructional leadership behaviours such as framing and communicating school goals, coordinating the curriculum amongst others are responsible for successful leading teaching and learning in schools. The study showed that principals in challenging context are able to succeed in leading teaching and learning by being able to influence their instructional leadership behaviours and practices by means of three context-responsive leadership functions. These context-responsive leadership functions are: thinking leadership, building synergy and exerting discipline. These functions formed a framework for context bound instructional leadership. Figure 6.1 depicts an analytic tool for exploring successful leadership in challenging contexts. Based on the emergent findings, recommendations were made to school principals with similar

contextual realities as the context of this study and also recommendations were made to researchers for further studies in this regard.

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APPENDIX A



Prem Mohun
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Govan Mbeki Centre,
Tel +27312604557
Fax +27312604609
E-mail
mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
06 June, 2016

The Principal,
Price-Waters Secondary School,
Ikere-Ekiti,
Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Dear Sir/Ma,

REQUEST TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN PRICE-WATERS SECONDARY SCHOOL, IKERE-EKITI, EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

ADEBIYI DAVID OLAOLUWA, a postgraduate student of the above named institution, hereby requests that you grant me permission to carry out a research in your school. I am undertaking my project on thriving instructional leadership in challenging contexts which necessitates my choice of your school.

Findings from previous research reveals that effective leadership is instrumental to successful organisations as well as successful schools. Therefore, the study I intend to carry is aimed at

exploring the instructional leadership behaviour, functions and practices of principals who succeed in thriving contexts.

The research would involve a direct interview using previewed questions with you and a focused group interaction with four other teachers in the school. I must also state that all entities involved shall not be disclosed, as pseudonyms would be used rather than their real names, and an electronic version of the research findings shall be forwarded to the school.

I shall be greatly enthused for an approval on this research, as I look forward to hearing from you soon.

For further information regarding this research you may contact either myself or my supervisors Dr Phumlani Myende 031 260 2054 (073 991 2392), Mr Sibonelo Blose 031 260 1870 ().

Your cooperation will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Adebiyi David Olaoluwa
061 127 7044

DECLARATION

As the principal of this School, I understand that:

I am not being forced to take part in this study,

Anonymity will be guaranteed at all times, the names of the school and teaching staff will not be revealed on any documents to be completed or in the study.

Confidentiality will be guaranteed at all times, information gathered will only be used for the purpose of this study.

I _____ the Principal of Price-Waters Secondary School, Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria, hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the study. I consent to taking part in this study.

Signature of Principal

Date

APPENDIX B



The Principal,
Chesterville High School,
Ikere-Ekiti,
Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Dear Ma,

REQUEST TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN CHESTERVILLE HIGH SCHOOL, IKERE-EKITI, EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

ADEBIYI DAVID OLAOLUWA, a postgraduate student of the above named institution, hereby requests that you grant me permission to carry out a research in your school. I am undertaking my project on thriving instructional leadership in challenging contexts which necessitates my choice of your school.

Findings from previous research reveals that effective leadership is instrumental to successful organisations as well as successful schools. Therefore, the study I intend to carry is aimed at exploring the instructional leadership behaviour, functions and practices of principals who succeed in thriving contexts.

The research would involve a direct interview using previewed questions with you and a focused group interaction with four other teachers in the school. I must also state that all entities involved shall not be disclosed, as pseudonyms would be used rather than their real names, and an electronic version of the research findings shall be forwarded to the school.

I shall be greatly enthused for an approval on this research, as I look forward to hearing from you soon.

For further information regarding this research you may contact either myself or my supervisors Dr Phumlani Myende 031 260 2054 (073 991 2392), Mr Sibonelo Blose 031 260 1870 ().

Your cooperation will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Adebiyi David Olaoluwa
061 127 7044

DECLARATION

As the principal of this school, I understand that:

I am not being forced to take part in this study,

Anonymity will be guaranteed at all times the names of my teaching staff will not be revealed on any documents to be completed or in the study.

Confidentiality will be guaranteed at all times, information gathered will only be used for the purpose of this study.

I _____ the Principal of Chesterville High School, Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria, hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the study. I consent to taking part in this study.

Signature of Principal

Date

APPENDIX C



Prem Mohun
University of
KwaZulu-Natal,
Research Office:
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E-mail
mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
06 June, 2016

The Teachers,
Price-Waters Secondary School,
Ikere-Ekiti,
Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Dear Sir,

REQUEST FOR YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN MY STUDY

ADEBIYI DAVID OLAOLUWA, a postgraduate student of the above named institution, hereby requests that you grant me permission to carry out a research in your school. I am undertaking my project on thriving instructional leadership in challenging contexts which necessitates my choice of your school. This study is aimed at exploring the instructional leadership behaviour, functions and practices of principals who succeed in thriving contexts.

I hereby seek your permission to participate in my study. Data will be collected from the teaching staff using an interview schedule in a focused group session. The teaching staff who decides to participate in this study will be required to complete a consent form. Their

participation in this study is voluntary. Sir, you are kindly requested to fill in the attached declaration and consent form which acknowledges the permission granted to participate in the study.

I must also state that all entities involved shall not be disclosed, as pseudonyms would be used rather than their real names, and an electronic version of the research findings shall be forwarded to the school.

I shall be grateful for your interest to partake in this research. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

For further information regarding this research you may contact either myself or my supervisors Dr Phumlani Myende 031 260 2054 (073 991 2392), Mr Sibonelo Blose 031 260 1870.

Your cooperation will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Adebiyi David Olaoluwa
061 127 7044

DECLARATION

As a teacher in this school, I understand that:

I am not being forced to take part in this study,

Anonymity will be guaranteed at all times the names of the school and teaching staff will not be revealed on any documents to be completed or in the study.

Confidentiality will be guaranteed at all times, information gathered will only be used for the purpose of this study.

I _____ a teacher of Price-Waters Secondary School, Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria, hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the study. I consent to taking part in this study.

Signature of Teacher

Date

APPENDIX D



Prem Mohun
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Tel +27312604557
Fax +27312604609
E-mail
mohunp@ukzn.ac.za
06 June, 2016

The Teachers,
Chesterville High School,
Ikere-Ekiti,
Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Dear Ma,

REQUEST FOR YOUR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN MY STUDY

ADEBIYI DAVID OLAOLUWA, a postgraduate student of the above named institution, hereby requests that you grant me permission to carry out a research in your school. I am undertaking my project on thriving instructional leadership in challenging contexts which necessitates my choice of your school. This study is aimed at exploring the instructional leadership behaviour, functions and practices of principals who succeed in thriving contexts.

I hereby seek your permission to participate in my study. Data will be collected from the teaching staff using an interview schedule in a focused group session. The teaching staff who decides to participate in this study will be required to complete a consent form. Their participation in this study is voluntary. Sir, you are kindly requested to fill in the attached

declaration and consent form which acknowledges the permission granted to participate in the study.

I must also state that all entities involved shall not be disclosed, as pseudonyms would be used rather than their real names, and an electronic version of the research findings shall be forwarded to the school.

I shall be grateful for your interest to partake in this research. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

For further information regarding this research you may contact either myself or my supervisors Dr Phumlani Myende 031 260 2054 (073 991 2392), Mr Sibonelo Blose 031 260 1870 ().

Your cooperation will be appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Adebiyi David Olaoluwa
061 127 7044

DECLARATION

As a teacher in this school, I understand that:

I am not being forced to take part in this study,

Anonymity will be guaranteed at all times the names of the school and teaching staff will not be revealed on any documents to be completed or in the study,

Confidentiality will be guaranteed at all times, information gathered will only be used for the purpose of this study.

I _____ a teacher of Chesterville High School, Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria, hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the study. I consent to taking part in this study.

Signature of Teacher

Date

APPENDIX E: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



16 November 2016

Mr Olaoluwa D Adebisi 214585527
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Adebisi

Protocol reference number: HSS/1523/016M

Project title: Thriving instructional leadership in challenging contexts: Lessons from two Nigerian secondary schools.

Expedited Approval

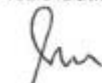
In response to your application dated 13 September 2016, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

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

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully



.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/px

cc Supervisor: Dr PE Myende & Mr S Biose
cc Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc School Administrators: Mrs B Bhengu-Mnguni, Mbalenhle Ngcobo, Philiwiwe Ncayiyana, Tyzer Khumalo

APPENDIX F

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research Topic: Thriving principals in challenging contexts: Lessons from two Nigerian schools

PLEASE TICK AS APPROPRIATE

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA ON PRINCIPAL

A. Gender:

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
------	--------------------------	--------	--------------------------

B. Age group:

25-35	<input type="checkbox"/>	36-45	<input type="checkbox"/>	46-55	<input type="checkbox"/>	56-65	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------	--------------------------	-------	--------------------------	-------	--------------------------	-------	--------------------------

C. Years of service as a teacher:

D. Years of service as a principal of present school:

E. Number of principalships:

F. Level of study:

Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>	Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Postgraduate	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------------	--------------------------	---------	--------------------------	--------	--------------------------	--------------	--------------------------

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE SCHOOL

G. Student enrolment for the year

Male	
Female	
Total	

H. Age range of students:

PRINCIPAL'S INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The following are the questions used to engage in semi-structured individual interview:

1. What constitutes the instructional leadership behaviours, functions and practices of principals who succeed in challenging context?
 - How is teaching and learning programme managed in the school?
 - How is the time allotted to teaching and learning judiciously managed?
 - How is learners progress evaluated and measured?
 - How are the needed resources generated for the school's progress?
 - How are decisions come by in the school?
 - How are the staff motivated to engage effectively in teaching and learning?
 - What set of values are unique to school's success?

2. How has the challenging context influenced the behaviours, functions and practices of the principals?
 - What are the challenges that informed your leadership behaviours, functions and practices?
 - What is the influence of the context on your behaviour, functions and practices?

 - What personal or professional attributes or traits are considered to be essential to successful leadership

3. How do these principals exert their leadership behaviours, functions and practices in such that it penetrates and influences the school system thus leading to more learning for students?

- How is the principal influencing the system?
- What is it that makes the school system works successfully in spite of the challenges around?
- What are your expectations of teachers in engaging teaching and learning program?
- What are your expectations of students in terms of their academic performance?
- How does the principal deal with parental expectations regarding student's achievement?

APPENDIX G

PLEASE TICK AS APPROPRIATE

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA ON TEACHER

A. Gender:

Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
------	--------------------------	--------	--------------------------

B. Age group:

25-35	<input type="checkbox"/>	36-45	<input type="checkbox"/>	46-55	<input type="checkbox"/>	56-65	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------	--------------------------	-------	--------------------------	-------	--------------------------	-------	--------------------------

C. Years of service as a teacher:

<input type="text"/>

D. Years of service as a teacher of present school:

<input type="text"/>

E. Level of study:

Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>	Degree	<input type="checkbox"/>	Postgraduate	<input type="checkbox"/>
-------------	--------------------------	---------	--------------------------	--------	--------------------------	--------------	--------------------------

TEACHER'S FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

The following are the questions used to engage in semi-structured individual interview:

1. What constitutes the instructional leadership behaviours, functions and practices of principals who succeed in challenging context?
 - Comment on leadership and management approaches adopted by school principals
 - Description of key experiences that readily come to your mind concerning leadership in your school
 - How is teaching and learning managed by the school principal
 - What processes are involved in decision making
 - How is time management issue handled by the principal?
 - Evaluation of learner progress
 - Use of resources in the school
 - What are the values that has ensured the successful management of the school?
 - What are the principal's achievement in the school?

2. How has the challenging context influenced the behaviours, functions and practices of the principals?
 - How have the challenges in the context of the school informed the behaviour practices of the principal?
 - What behaviours and practices were necessitated by the context?

3. How do these principals exert their leadership behaviours, functions and practices in such that it penetrates and influences the school system thus leading to more learning for students?
 - How is the principal influencing the system?
 - What is it that makes the school system works?
 - What is the principal's view to the challenges they face on job?
 - What are the expectations of the principals from teachers in engaging teaching and learning program?
 - What are your expectations of students as teachers in terms of their academic performance?
 - How does the principal deal with parental expectations regarding student's achievement?

APPENDIX H

PRINCIPAL'S OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

This observation schedule will be used alongside semi-structured interview schedules. This observation is expected to be for a period of five working days in order to have real time details on the principal's instructional leadership behaviour, practices and functions.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: _____		
SCHOOL: (Pseudonym)_____		
DAY OF THE WEEK: _____		
Focus of observation: Principal's instructional leadership behaviour, practices and functions What behaviours and practices are emerging? Where does these principals display these behaviours and practices? (Staffroom, principal's office, classrooms, assembly ground) What is the level of interaction with others?		
Description of what happened	Interpretive notes (consequences of instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions)	Preliminary analysis of the instructional leadership behaviours, practices and functions of principals and possible consequences

APPENDIX I:

TURNITIN REPORT

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IRP 2016 Independent research project 2016 - D... Roadmap Paper 15 of 79

Originality GradeMark PeerMark

THRIVING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS, PRACTICES AND

BY DAVID ADEBIYI

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Murphy's (1990) model, Weber's (1996), Alig-Mielcarek's (2003) model (Alig-Mielcarek, 2003;

Hoy, & Miskel, 2005; Hallinger, 2003; Webber & Robertson, 1998). Other models of instructional leadership developed have been directed towards improving Hallinger (1983) and Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) models. For example, Murphy (1990) present an elaborated framework for instructional leadership made up of four basic dimensions of instructional leadership which was broken down into sixteen different roles or behaviours. The sixteen roles attributed to instructional leaders are embedded in the ten job descriptors of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership. It is arguable that the roles ascribed to developing a supportive work environment, promoting an academic learning climate and managing the educational production function under the basic dimension of Murphy (1990) are already incorporated in the ten roles of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model of instructional leadership. Though it appears that Murphy's model presents a bit of clarity to the instructional leadership functions yet they do not present new thoughts to improving the Hallinger and Murphy (1985) model of instructional leadership. Weber's (1996) model is nothing different, as it dwells on shared leadership and site-based management and based on his review of the literature, he came up with a model that is consistent with the earlier models. Weber (1996) identified five domains for the practice of instructional leadership: defining the school's mission; managing the curriculum and instruction; promoting a positive learning climate; observing and improving instruction and assessing the instructional program.

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APPENDIX J:

DR RICHARD STEELE

BA, HDE, MTech(Hom)
HOMEOPATH and EDUCATOR
Registration No. A07309 HM
Practice No. 0807524
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Email: rsteele@telkomsa.net

EDITING CERTIFICATE

Re: David Adebiyi
Master's dissertation.

I confirm that I have edited this dissertation and the references for clarity, language and layout. I am a freelance editor specialising in proofreading and editing academic documents. My original tertiary degree which I obtained at UCT was a B.A. with English as a major and I went on to complete an H.D.E. (P.G.) Sec. with English as my teaching subject. I obtained a distinction for my M.Tech. dissertation in the Department of Homeopathy at Technikon Natal in 1999 (now the Durban University of Technology). During my 13 years as a part-time lecturer in the Department of Homoeopathy I supervised numerous Master's degree dissertations.

Dr Richard Steele
20 December
2016 *electronic*