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**INYUVESI
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**THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS IN
ESTABLISHING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS**

THULANI DLADLA

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**THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS IN
ESTABLISHING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS**

BY

THULANI DLADLA

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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This dissertation has been submitted with / without my approval

Mr. S. E. Mthiyane (Supervisor)

MARCH 2014

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DEDICATION

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ABSTRACT

This exploration study focused on the roles of the school principals as instructional leaders in establishing professional learning communities in schools. A case study was conducted with four school principals that included two principals from the primary schools and two from the secondary schools in the Pinetown District. The study explored the understandings of the schools principals in supporting teaching and learning at schools; how they collaborate with others to support teaching and learning, the challenges that school principals' experience from teachers, learners, parents, Department of Education and teachers' unions as they enact their roles and the strategies used to overcome the challenges experienced. This qualitative study was located in an interpretive paradigm. The methods used to generate data were both semi-structured interviews and documents review. The frameworks underpinned the study were instructional leadership theory and distributed leadership theory. Local, continental and international literature was utilised to analyse the data and literature provided insights on the extent of research in this field. The analysis and the discussion of the generated data produced the findings that to a certain extent corroborated the understandings of the school principals of their roles. Succinctly, principals' roles include the creation of academic vision and communicating it to the stakeholders for improved schools' performances. Collaboration, networking, staff development and roping in of various organisations were essential roles. Weber's (1996) model of instructional leadership theory dominated the study. This model propounds five dimensions that underpin the roles of principals in successful schools.

The generated data yielded findings which in turn produced conclusions. Principals create vision and share it with teachers. Learners are put at the centre because every attempt school principals make is aimed at improving and enhancing learners' performance. However, it transpired that principals are faced with challenges as they strive to enhance learners' achievement. Learners as central stakeholders contribute in thwarting efforts of school principals. Pregnancy and the drugs /substances abuse are the contributory factors in learners' indiscipline and poor academic performance. Recommendations were crafted informed by the conclusions. These recommendations were presented to suggest possible strategies to curb

challenges impinging on the efforts principals make in the management of schools performance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents	page no.
Title page	i
Declaration page	ii
Supervisor's statement	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Dedication	v
Abstract	vi
	vii
Table of contents	viii

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 The purpose of the study	1
1.3 The rationale for the study	2
1.4 Objectives of the study	2
1.5 Critical questions	3
1.6 Theoretical and conceptual frameworks	3
1.7 Literature review	4
1.8 Research design and methodology	5
1.9 Definition of key terms	6
1.9.1 Instructional leadership	6
1.9.2 Professional learning communities	6
1.9.3 Leadership	6
1.9.4 Management	6
1.10 Validation	7

1.11 Delimitations of the study	7
1.12 Chapter outline	8
1.13 Chapter summary	8

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction	9
2.2 School principals as instructional leaders	9
2.3 The principals' experiences and challenges in supporting instructional leadership in schools	18
2.3.1 Principals' experiences	18
2.3.2 Principals' challenges	18
2.3.3 The strategies schools' principals use to navigate their challenges in supporting instructional practices in schools	20
2.4 Role of principals in creating professional learning communities	22
2.5 Benefits of teamwork in professional learning communities	25
2.6. Theoretical frameworks	26
2.6.1 Instructional leadership theory	26
2.6.2 Distributed leadership theory	30
2.7 Chapter summary	32

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction	
3.2 Research design and methodology	33
3.2.1 Research design	33
3.2.2 Research methodology	34
3.3 Research paradigm	35
3.4 The rationale for using case study methodology	35

3.5 Research methods	36
3.6 Data generation tools	36
3.7 Sampling	38
3.8 The pilot study	39
3.9 Triangulation	39
3.10 Ethical issues	40
3.11 Chapter summary	41

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION AND DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction	42
4.2 Presentation and analysis	42
4.2.1 Principals' understandings of their role in supporting teaching and learning at school	42
4.2.2 Principals' practices in supporting teaching and learning at school	48
4.2.3 Principals' collaborating with others to support teaching and learning	53
4.2.4 The challenges to principals' management of teaching and learning	58
4.2.4.1 Challenges posed by teachers	58
4.2.4.2 Challenges posed by the Department of Basic Education	60
4.2.4.3 Challenges posed by learners	62
4.2.4.4 Challenges posed by parents	63
4.2.4.5 The challenges posed by the teachers' unions	64
4.2.5 How principals overcome the challenges they experience as they manage teaching and learning in schools	66
4.3 Chapter summary	71

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction	72
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5.2 Study summary	72
5.3 Conclusions	73
5.3.1 Principals' understandings of their role as instructional leaders	73
5.3.2 Principals' practices in supporting teaching and learning	73
5.3.3 Principals' collaboration with others to support teaching and learning	74
5.3.4 The challenges principals encounter as they support teaching and learning	74
5.3.4.1 The challenges posed by the teachers	74
5.3.4.2 The challenges from the Department of Basic Education	75
5.3.4.3 The challenges posed by learners	75
5.3.4.4 The challenges posed by teachers' unions	76
5.3.5 Principals overcoming challenges	76
5.3.4 Recommendations	76
5.4.1 Involvement of all stakeholders in the implementation	77
5.4.2 Practicing dispersed leadership	77
5.4.3 Forging synergy among stakeholders	78
5.4.4 Promotional of interpersonal relations	78
5.5 Chapter summary	78
REFERENCES	79
LIST OF APPENDICES	83

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study intended to explore the role of principals as instructional leaders in establishing learning communities in schools. The Minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga identified the need for improving learners' achievement in schools. She believed that was achievable if sufficient support was provided to school principals by the districts and in return, principals and school management teams would be empowered to train educators and support them with necessary pedagogical skills.

Having been in the teaching fraternity for the past nine years, I have observed principals as influential in determining whether the school was known as a successful school or underperforming school. Principals of schools as instructional leaders in establishing professional learning communities shared ideas and also developed teachers in schools and encouraged networking among them. Principals were able to create environment that stimulated interests of learners to learn. Principals as heads of institutions had a vision that was biased towards improved learners' performance. The continued decline in learners' performances in schools implied failure or lack of understanding of the roles principals had to play in schools to be the successful.

As a product of apartheid education system, I had an understanding that superintendent education managers were working closely with schools hence, teachers were in most of the time sufficiently prepared for their classes since superintendent education managers were visiting schools without any prior notices. The Minister of Education encouraged district officials to support school to improve learners' academic performances. As a result, the focal point of district planning was on improved learners' outcomes and effective delivery of learner-teacher support materials to schools, and effective utilisation of available teachers. Learners' achievement was the main focus of the government which schools' principals remained responsible for it.

1.2 The purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of principals as instructional leaders in establishing professional learning communities in schools. The dwindling culture of teaching and learning in schools while principals are there as instructional leaders triggered the need to explore whether or not they understood their roles as instructional leaders.

1.3 Rationale for the study

The motivating factor to undertake this study was in three folds, the observation that I made over my teaching period, the interaction I had with other teachers about the standard of education that was dwindling, especially in township schools, and lastly the literature that I read.

I had been a teacher for that past nine years and observed and interacted with teachers both in my school and colleagues from other schools. The functionality of the schools was dependent on principals. Schools led by principals with clear vision which was well communicated to teachers tended to be the successful schools. Learners were always at the centre of planning. The success of the school was mainly determined by the performance and the achievement of learners. In high schools it was grade twelve results.

Most teachers believed that the success of the school was dependent on the teachers' working relations in a school. They also believed that networking with successful schools benefited teachers and learners. Teachers went to class full of confidence. The principals were orchestrating the networking avenues for the teachers.

Most researchers concurred that the role of the principals was to empower teachers to be able to carry out their duties with confidence to assist learners perform well. Cheng Sim (2011) argues that principal's role is to develop staff. Horn & Loeb (2010) posit that principals have a role of clarifying vision to the staff so that they work with confidence. Principals created the environment that created school culture and supported learning. Luneburg (2010) emphasises that principals as instructional leaders need to come up with strategies of improving learners' performance. It is against this background that I felt that this study was worth to be conducted.

1.4 Objectives of the study

1.4.1 To explore instructional leadership in establishing professional learning communities in schools.

1.4.2. To uncover the obstacles that principals encounter in establishing professional learning communities.

1.4.3. To explore the characteristics of instructional leaders in school principals.

1.4.4. To determine the how principals establish conditions necessary for professional learning communities.

1.5 Critical questions

This study intended to answer the following questions:

1.4.1. What is the role of principals as instructional leaders in establishing professional learning communities at schools?

1.4.2. How do principals perform their responsibilities as instructional leaders?

1.4.3. What are instructional leaders' characteristics and conditions necessary for effective instructional leadership practice?

1.6. Theoretical and Conceptual frameworks

This study was underpinned by two theories, mainly instructional leadership theory and distributed leadership theory. Distributed leadership theory is informed by collegiality model where people work collaboratively. Bush (2003) points out that collegiality is about people working together as a team, share ideas to enhance school functionality. Distributed leadership acknowledges various capabilities within the institution by creating spaces for all stakeholders to contribute in the development of the organisation. The principals of schools have a responsibility to encourage networking amongst educators so that they learn from each other. Distributed leadership is not confined within the school management team members. However, all educators need to be delegated with some responsibilities for their own empowerment and of the colleagues.

Instructional leadership theory is also one of the theories that are promoting collegiality. Principals as the heads of institutions were expected to lead instructional practices at schools. Principals as instructional leaders were expected to assist teachers to be confident in conveying

matter to learners. Learner achievement was the focal point at school. Instructional leadership in the main is the prerogative of the principal. However, in this democratic dispensation, power needs to be shared for the benefit of the organisation and to offload the principals so that is able to focus on the deployment of human resources correctly and development of human resources to benefit the entire organisation. Drawing from Southworth (2009), the principal has to focus the attention to teaching and learning. The class visits remain essential to be carried out by the principals so that they identify the strengths and the weaknesses of educators and design proper developmental and scaffolding programmes for the teachers to become more effective in the classroom. Instructional leaders' role encompasses engendering the human relations amongst educators. The efficacy of the proper instructional leadership surfaces in the outcomes of the learners. Instructional leaders delegate responsibilities to enhance organisational goals. Delegation is chain from the higher rank to the lower rank within the institution (Smit, Cronje', Brevis & Vrba, 2007)

Teamwork was the conceptual framework that aligned itself with distributed leadership theory. Blasé and Blasé (1999), Mendels (2012) and Prytula, Noonan and Helsten (2013) agree that principals are instructional leaders who need to ensure that teachers work collaboratively, giving each other help, guidance to improve instructional leadership practices. Distributed leadership suggests that the principal of the school has to spread leadership around to benefit learners.

Teamwork among staff was the element of collegiality hence collegiality was promoted amongst staff members. Teachers in their collaboration discussions focused on the learner achievement. Distributed leadership promoted sharing of powers and ideas. Teachers in their collaborations shared pedagogical methods with the learners' achievement in mind.

1.7 Literature review

Literature that was used in the study ranged from international literature, continental to national literature. The main purpose of literature review was to have a full picture of the discussions around the study as it was the case with the study I was doing, there was a lot that was written internationally as well as continentally.`

Sharma (2012) argues that instructional leadership promotes effective learning in the classroom and out of classroom. Cheng Sim (2011) posits that instructional leadership impacts positively in learner achievement. Southworth (2009) contributed to the study by pointing out that instructional leadership has to consider teaching and learning as the centre of focus for the school management mainly the principal.

Continental, there was information on instructional leadership but was not widely attended to as international literature seemed to address to issues of instructional leadership.

Locally or nationally the subject was attended to at a minimal scale and this was understandable on the ground that this was a new phenomenon in the South African context.

1.8 Research design and methodology

This is a qualitative research design which used a case study as a methodology. An interpretive paradigm was used in a study. Case study focused on a particular case and in this case I intended to explore the role of school principals in establishing learning communities in school. This was a phenomenon that was new in our education system hence the need to study it. Bassey (1999) defines case study as the extensive data from the people being questioned trying to find some meaning that was not apparent before and try to express in a clear form. Case study allows the researcher to generate unrehearsed responses from the participants (Pieterse & Maree, 2007). The interpretive paradigm was relevant because interpretivists take the position that social phenomenon emerged from the ways in which the actors in a setting construct meaning. The researcher understood the behaviour of participants and made the meaning attributed to the participants. Interpretivists assume that the reality is not objectively determined but is socially made. This paradigm further claims that if people are placed in their own context, it becomes easier to understand their way of thinking and behaviour (Maree, 2007). Emerging from this background, the principals were the most suitable participants for the study since they were the custodians of the data I sought to generate.

Qualitative research design did not allow one to generalise as a result of the sample size. The findings of the study helped one to have an understanding of the phenomenon but could not be used to generalise. The principals of four schools were the participants in the study. There were two principals from the primary schools and two from the secondary schools. They were the

practising principals hence they had relevant information about their practices as principals in their schools.

The sampling method chosen was purposive sampling. The participants were chosen on the basis that, they were fit for the purpose. The participants were identified before conducting the investigation. The principals were the chosen participant and were practising in their various sites / schools. Pieterse & Maree (2007) point out that purposive sampling means, the participants are chosen because of some defining characteristics which make them holders of that information required for the study. Principals were the holders of the information that was required hence they were the chosen participants in the study.

When generating data, semi-structured questions were utilised. Mdabe (2005) suggests that researchers who have used qualitative approach in their study have tended to use various methods, styles and skills as well as strategies. These methods include observation, formal interviews as well as informal interviews and collection of documentary to mention a few. This allowed the researcher to generate sufficient and relevant information.

1.9 Definition of key terms

The following were the main concept in the study:

1.9.1. Instructional leadership

According to Bush (2003) instructional leadership is a model that stresses the need to focus on teaching and learning as the prime purpose of educational institutions. Jenkins (2009) defines Instructional leadership as leading learning communities, in which staff members meet on regular basis to discuss their work, collaborate to solve problems, reflect on their jobs and take responsibility for what students learn.

1.9.2 Professional learning communities

Professional learning community refers to community of practice, such as schools or school board which is engaged in organisational learning. It is a complex innovation that must, itself, be implemented and that implemented in an inherently complex process (Sheppard, 2006).

1.9.3 Leadership

Leadership is about direction and purpose. Leaders look outward and to the future. Leadership is also about getting things to change (Clarke, 2007). Smit, de J Cronje', Brevis, and Vrba (2007) define leadership as the process of directing the behaviour of others towards the accomplishment of the organisational goals.

1.9.4 Management

Management is about getting systems to operate effectively. Look inward and to the present (Clarke, 2007). Management is essentially about getting things done through other people in order to attain the goals of the organisation (Smit, deJ Cronje', Brevis and Vrba, 2007).

1.10 Validation

Validation was maintained through the use of the relevant tools in generating data. Mdabe (2005) draws from Ary, et al, (1996) to affirm this view who posit that, validation is generally concerned with the extent to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Principals who were practising as heads of institutions were chosen as the participants. Interviewing principals helped me to generate authentic data.

1.11 Delimits of the study

This study was confined to one circuit of Pinetown district. The study focused on four principals. The two principals were from primary schools and the other two were heading secondary schools. Primary school principals were not excluded in the study albeit the focus was on grade twelve results. However, one was also mindful of the attention being given to certain grades in senior and junior phases in primary school through Annual National Assessment (popularly known as ANA). Nonetheless, these results were not as valued as grade twelve results were valued and made known to the public.

1.12 Chapter outline

Chapter One was about the exploration of the role of the school principals as instructional leaders in establishing professional learning communities at schools. The purpose and rationale for the study was outlined. The background and the orientation of the study were

provided for choosing the topic as the phenomenon to be explored. The justification of the study was made. Aims and objectives were identified with key questions that the study sought to answer.

In Chapter Two, I presented the literature review and theoretical frameworks.

In Chapter Three, description of research design and methodology was made. Interpretivist paradigm was used. Semi-structured interviews informed data generation method accompanied by documents review. Purposive sampling method was used since the participants earmarked for the study were already known to be the principals. Ethical issues, limitations and trustworthiness of the study presented.

Chapter Four presented research findings with regard to my research topic. Local, continental and international literature and theoretical frameworks were utilised to analysed data.

Chapter Five provided the conclusions, recommendations and study summary.

1.13 Chapter summary

This chapter encapsulated the purpose of the study and the rationale. Objectives of the study were listed as well as the critical questions. Key terms were defined. Lastly, delimits of the study were highlighted as well as how the validation of the study was maintained. Literature review summary was highlighted. An overview of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks was presented.

The following chapter focuses on the theoretical / conceptual frameworks which are instructional leadership and distributed leadership. These are interlinked with the concept teamwork.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter the study was introduced where I discussed briefly the rationale for the study, the research questions, a brief literature discussion was also presented as well as the research design and methodology. In this chapter I explored how school principals as instructional leaders lead, manage and support instructional leadership practices in their schools. In this chapter I also discussed the two theories which were instructional leadership theory and the distributed leadership theory that underpin this study. I then concluded by presenting the summary of the chapter.

2.2 School principals as instructional leaders

Instructional leadership is becoming more dominant as opposed to administration and management (Hoardly, Christie & Ward, 2009). However, it is vital that a leader possesses both leadership and managerial skills to run an institution effectively and efficiently. There is vast literature on instructional leadership and in professional learning communities from the western countries that addresses issues of instructional leadership. Eileen Horng and Sussan Loeb, Richard DuFour, Joseph Blasé and Jo Blasé to mention a few have contributed a lot in the accumulation of knowledge in instructional leadership sphere. Despite the abundance of literature from the international researchers, very little has been written about instructional leadership in African continent including South Africa. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) contend that the literature review is a synthesis of various materials that unpack challenges and lead to conclusions that can be further explored. Maree (2007) asserts that literature review is an overview of the current but sometimes not current literature yet still relevant to the study. In addition, Maree (2007) argues that literature review explores the silences and gaps in that study. In exploring the role of school principals as instructional leaders in establishing professional learning communities in schools, international, continental and national literature was reviewed.

Principals are faced with a mammoth task of leading schools efficiently and effectively. The expectation of learners, parents and government is that schools are producing learners that can be able to contribute meaningfully in the country's economy. Hence, a lot of money is pumped in to the development of teachers and teaching and learning classrooms (Ushie, 2009). Joyce (2004) posits that times of strategic planning are over and collaborative and team-teaching have taken over. The school as a learning community encourages teachers to work in groups, focus on teaching and learning whereby they borrow and generate ideas for improving practice, put those ideas in action and then study the results. Principals have to play a leading role in this regard (Blasé & Blasé, 1999 and Wanzare, 2012). Ushie (2009) points out that teacher education shall continue to take cognisance of changes in methodology and in curriculum. Principals as leaders had to ascertain that there was continuing teacher development where teachers were regularly exposed to innovations in their profession.

In addition, principals as leaders had to create hospitable environment for teaching and learning. This could be achieved by providing the resources and space for development. Odhiambo and Hii (2012) contend that the responsibility of the principal involves provision of opportunities to learners to learn and providing the resources, space and facilities for teachers to teach effectively. In addition Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) contend that leaders need to influence classroom practices if they are to make a difference to learners' learning. Further, they acknowledge numerous changes that have taken place in many countries over a numerous decades. They attribute these educational changes to a desire of governments to improve the effectiveness of educational organisations in order to improve learners' achievement. Uchie (2009) contends that principals are responsible for spearheading innovations. Lunenburg (2010) asserts that the role of the principal as instructional leader is to help the school to maintain a focus on why school exists. The existence of the school is to provide quality education to learners. The effectiveness of the school is gauged by the learners' achievement. The role of principal includes shifting the focus of instruction from teaching to learning, forming collaborative structures and processes for the teachers to work as a team to improve instruction; and ensuring that professional development is continuing and focused on school goals. Emerging from this view I believe that principals had to create the conditions conducive for both teaching and learning. They had to be emotionally intelligent and be sensitive to their circumstances. Most importantly ascertain that learners were able to achieve academically to their utmost abilities.

Wanzare (2011) posits that principals have to encourage managers (heads of departments and deputy principals) to be in continuous communication with teachers about supervisory experiences and expectations. The communication on the expectations of the managers from teachers helps in that, teachers know exactly what is expected of them. The leaders also get to know the challenges that educator faces. Wanzare (2011) also posits that instructional leadership improves teaching and learning conditions. A principal gains an understanding of teachers' concerns and classroom conditions by being closer to teachers. Hence, it becomes easier for the principal to offer assistance to teachers. Similarly Kruger (2003) posits that the role of the school principal as instructional leader is multifaceted. Most importantly, the role of the principal encapsulates defining the school vision and mission, managing instructional programme which entails knowing and coordinating the curriculum and instruction, supervising, evaluating instruction and monitoring learners' progress, and promoting a positive learning environment by setting standards and the expectations, protecting the instructional time and promoting improvement. The role of the principal has a lot of tasks which are not instructional practice related. Hence, a principal has to delegate some of the tasks to the members of staff (Odhiambo & Hii, 2012). Kruger (2003) maintains that though teachers have the responsibility for their own professional development, however, the professional development of teachers still remains the responsibility of the principal. Fullan (2001) reiterates that principals and other executive teachers (heads of departments) have a special role and accountabilities. However, leadership is not the sole responsibility of the principals or heads of department. The principal has to develop professional development programmes for the teachers.

The professional development of the teachers has to impact positively in management of the curriculum and learners' achievement. Wanzare (2011) posits that in Kenya instructional leadership has often been seen as the vehicle through which to improve teaching and learning in schools spearheaded by the principals as instructional leaders. The vision and the mission which the principal sets and communicates to teachers have to be managed as it is aimed at improving teaching and learning. Instructional supervision encompasses all the activities that are aimed toward establishing, maintaining and improving the teaching and learning process in schools. The supportive teacher supervisory interaction is done by the principal working with other management staff (Wanzare, 2011). In managing instructional practices, a principal has to supervise instruction in the classroom. Sim (2011) asserts that instructional leadership is directly

related to teaching and learning process. Hence, it involves the interaction between the teachers, learners and curriculum. The implementation of the instructional practice requires the principal observe classroom teaching and learning. Bezzima and Testa (2007) point out that effective professional learning community has to always favour the collaborative and consultative approach to working with people. Principal has a role to maintain unity among team members and ascertain that classroom observation in serving its intention which is to support teachers. Teachers need to be motivated and supported in doing their work (Harris & Jones, 2010 p.174). Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) advocate that successful instructional leaders talk to teachers about their instruction, encourage collaboration between teacher and empower teachers to foster decision-making, professional growth, teacher leadership, status, autonomy, impact and self-efficacy. The principal has to delegate certain duties to teachers to empower teachers and involve them in decision making processes. However, teachers need to account to the principal for all what they have done. The staff learning has to be collaborative and shared to serve the organisation in its quest to change. Teacher need to use the outcome data to make appropriate learning interventions and principal has to provide opportunities for teachers to learn from one another as means to embed and improve practice (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2010).

Principals as instructional leaders provide the support through creation of the environment that is hospitable to teaching and learning. Fullan (2001) argues that the responsibility of schools is to create a culture of lifelong learning, which provides learners with the skills and understanding they will need to live positive, satisfying lives and contribute to the global community. In addition, Fullan (2001) points out that teachers, principals, parents and learners alike must be actively involved in this course of lifelong learning. Blasé and Blasé (1999) assert that most significant to the role of the principal is talking with teachers to promote reflection and promoting professional growth. They further assert that giving feed back after classroom observation is vital. Giving feedback however has to be on what the principal has observed in the classroom. It has to be presented in a caring manner and providing praise. Principal has to appear as a critical friend. Coaching, critical friend and mentoring are the some of the means that principals use to support teachers. Principals need to promote partnership teaching because it enhances and increases the knowledge base of teaching because teachers draw on other teachers' experiences and experimental knowledge. When teachers identify their own training needs, it motivates and empowers them (Ushie, 2009).

Mendels (2012) asserts that principals in giving support to teachers, ensure that teachers do not work in isolation from one another, but work collaboratively, giving each other help and guidance to improve instructional practices. Principal creates the opportunities for the teachers to learn and work collaboratively. Mendels (2012) further asserts that the crux of the principal's job today is not as it was in the recent past, to sit at the top and attend to administrative tasks, but to work collaboratively and unleash potential. Principals therefore need to be enthusiastic about their jobs and understand the importance of utilising the potential of other educators for the improvement of learners' achievement. Drysdale and Gurr (2011) sum this notion of collaboration by pointing out that the important aspect of leadership is working with people to help them to develop relevant capacities. School capacity building is the area in which principals and heads of departments exert considerable influence. Drysdale and Gurr (2011) argue that the main reasons principals are able to maintain success are focused leadership, an inclusive leadership style, personal characteristics, values, and competencies that focused on developing supporting people. Pansiri (2008) posits that parental involvement is important in the activities of instructional leader. He further asserts that instructional leadership for school improvement essentially accommodates collaborative processes of teacher leaders-leadership, strategies of parental mobilisation and involvement and effective management of the resources.

Christie (2010) contends that one of the management approaches that have been introduced in educational contexts is that of performance management and setting of standards for principals and teachers to monitor their performance. Christie (2010) further argues that post apartheid in South Africa gave birth to reforms in the duties and roles of the principals. The activity of the principals is profiled as management which according to Christie (2010) signifies their responsibility for running schools and at the same time highlighting their role in transformation to meet new constitutional principles of democracy and equality. Kruger (2003) establishes that principals should take a cognisance of the fact that the educators' initial training is not always adequate for effective instructional practice. Principals should aim to improve educators' teaching abilities with the view to professional development and motivation. In addition, the learning process of learners is an important element of the educational programme of a school. It is then important that the climate is conducive for teaching and learning since it has a direct impact on members of the school and their productivity.

Promoting a sound and positive climate remains an integral aspect of the principal's instructional leadership responsibility (Kruger, 2003). Christie (2003) asserts that the organising activities and providing support to teaching and learning remains the task of the principals and management teams. In South Africa collaborative teaching is applicable as there are cluster where teachers share information regarding learner assessment and moderation of learners' work. Classroom observation is still a challenge in South African schools if not done for Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS). Christie (2003) also points out most schools are dysfunctional and are failing international tests, Schools in South Africa are still highly unequal in so far as resources and performance, and the context has a strong influence on the nature of the principals' work. This suggests that principals are not only responsible for instructional practices in school and besides, for leading instructional practice, context dictates how they need to operate toward improving learners' achievement.

Principal has to carry out three key responsibilities as an instructional leader that is leading, managing and supporting staff. Collaboration remains central in creating effective school. However, in the context of South Africa instructional practices are engulfed by the contestation between unions and the department of education. Unions view some of the innovations such as classroom observation as means that principals can use to victimise teachers whereas the department of education views it as a means to develop and empower teachers.

The responsibility of teachers is to improve academic achievement of learners (Thompson, 2009). In addition, there is a need to engage teachers in an approach where teachers teach teachers. Lunenburg (2010) suggests that teachers need to be provided with the training, teaching tools, and the support they need to help the learners reach high performance levels. In addition, the principals need to create learners' interventions and system for learners who are lagging behind in learning the curriculum. Principals put on support by attracting, retaining and developing staff, promoting shared leadership through a focus on improving teaching and learning, and building relationships (Drysdale & Gurr, 2011). Fullan (2001) posits that principals can participate as active partners in the lesson study and professional learning processes. In addition, by demonstrating a willingness to share their teaching and be seen as learners, the school principals acknowledge the values and importance of professional learning in the school. Ushie (2009) asserts that there is symbiotic relationship between new entrant teacher

and older teachers. The young teachers benefit as they learn about their professional roles and acquire additional skills by working alongside with other teachers in teams. The older teachers in the trenches do also benefit from the young teachers because they are more proficient in information and communication technology skills which they have acquired during their pre-service training. Mendels (2012) points out that the school principals in providing support to teachers and learners and begin developing a vision of commitment to high standard and the success of all learners. The principals further spells out the vision to all staff members. Principals spend most of their time in classrooms to evaluate instructional practices. Mendels (2012) posits that principals encourage group frequent, short and often spontaneous classroom visits which they quickly follow up with feedback to the teachers. This helps teachers understand areas where they need to improve and also builds their confidence after attending professional development programmes. The school principals are able to craft professional programmes that are relevant to teachers' needs.

The significant aspect of enacting support to instructional practice is creating positive relations between teachers and managers, collaborative relations between teachers. In addition, principals and senior management have to establish and maintain good social relations among staff as well as positive school culture for effective teaching and learning (Hoardly, Christie & Ward, 2009). For principals to be able to perform the supporting role has to understand the nature and pace of change make it inevitable that initial teacher education will need to be supplemented by professional development to enhance subject knowledge and pedagogy (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). The principal has to make teachers understand that the school context is not the same as college education. The changes in education require principals to be abreast with the innovations and craft programmes that are in line with teachers' needs. Rhodes and Brundrett (2010) assert that leadership which is alert to the wide variety of learning needs of learners, teachers, support staff and the needs of the whole learning community can place teaching and learning at the centre of the organisation. Furthermore, such leadership requires the establishment of both structural and cultural support to enable the necessary capacity to address the changes needed within the contexts, community and aimed future within which these improvements are carried out. The principal has to aim to create fertile organisational environment for teachers and learners.

Odhiambo and Hii (2012) assert that the responsibility of the principal is to provide adequate space, resources and facilities for teachers to perform their teaching effectively ensuring quality teaching and learning for learners. Classroom observation has been praised by many researchers including Mendels (2012) as means through which principals get to know the challenges and strengths of teachers. However, Buchen (2002) argues that while some will argue that principals' classroom observation keep them current, the truth is that most principals are not conversant as they should be with current classroom dynamics, cutting-edge pedagogy, and brain research. This may compromise the mission of the principals to help teachers improve their teaching strategies. Principals need to work in collaborative teams as principals to share strategies of improving teachers' instructional practices in schools (Spring, 2005). Buchen (2002) further asserts that for principals to be in touch with what is taking place in classrooms they must be in trenches as well teaching. Mead (2011) argues that principals are in the classrooms on a regular basis, observing teachers and giving feedback. Principals have to regularly analyse learners' achievement with teachers and support them in collecting and using the data to monitor learners' progress and evaluate and improve instructional practices. When principals are teaching, they can easily model to teachers what needs to be done. In the South African context, principals are very much exposed to classroom environment as they are also in trenches. In South Africa some principals carry significant load with regard to teaching (Hoardly, Christie & Ward, 2009). This suggests that principals in South Africa have an advantage of understanding cutting-edge changes and innovations in pedagogy and respond immediately by crafting relevant programmes for teachers to cope with new innovation.

The best support principals give to teachers is visibility and communication with individual teacher encouraging them to do their maximum best to help learners achieve quality results (Buchen, 2002). When principals are visible and accessible to teachers find it easier to coach teachers to improve learners' achievement. Ruff and Shoho (2005) concur with Buchen (2002) that principal has to be visible and accessible, however, they further assert that principal has to be enthusiastic, and fostering individual relationships; listening; observing; and quietly directing teachers in performing their duties. Spring (2005) asserts that principal as a coach provides instructional support, from goal setting to teacher support; mentoring; assessment expertise; and professional development. In addition, principals have the responsibility to prioritise, align, assess, monitor, and learn in order to achieve improved learners' outcomes. Principals have to

guide teachers, collaborate with teachers on aligning instruction and assessment. Principals also have to monitor teachers' work so that can be able to easily identify challenges and respond by creating a developmental programme to counter the challenge. Principals are obliged to be informed about the professional development teachers receive (Spring, 2005).

Principals have a responsibility to motivate not only teachers but also learners. Sim (2011) contends that principals have to identify outstanding learners who excel in academics by awarding incentives and certificates. Furthermore, principals use assembly time to motivate learners in their studies. Principals have to smile frequently and attempt to call each learner enrolled at the school by their first names (Ruff & Shoho, 2005). Teachers as the vehicles through which curriculum is carried out encounter various challenges ranging from learners' discipline to interpersonal conflict as staff members. Principal has to approach the situations by encouraging teamwork, collaboration, and collegiality (Ruff & Shoho, 2005). The principal has an organisational aspects responsibility of management of time, and structuring the day for learning in creating organisational containment and establishment around good quality teaching and learning (Hoardly, Christie & ward, 2009). Kemper (2008) concurs with the view that teamwork produces the best results. He extends his argument by mentioning respect for human dignity and culture, care for the learners' well being; commitment where teachers teach learners on weekends and holidays, excellence where all learners are given the same treatment and all learners deserve the same high quality of education; and accountability where both teachers and learners respect their duties. Wanzare (2012) contends that improvement often occurs in a formal context of supportive teacher –supervision interaction. In addition, Wanzare (2012) points out that principals need to make an attempt to work collaboratively with teachers to establish supervisory support and coaching teams that can provide confidence and reduce anxiety often experienced by teachers in response to classroom visits.

Principals remain charged with the responsibility to put into action support by creating conducive environment for teaching and resources. Principals have to promoting collaboration among teachers. Furthermore, coaching has to be taken into cognisance in improving instructional practices in schools. Learners need to be motivated by the principal to achieve good results. Principals have to encourage unity among staff members and also promote good relationships.

2.3 The principals' experiences and challenges in supporting instructional leadership in schools

2.3.1 Principals experiences

Principals tend to focus their attention in formulating and explaining the school mission, vision and goals (Odhiambo & Hii, 2012). Principals have to manage curriculum and instruction. However, they tend to focus more on smooth and effective teaching programme but less on the role of giving more attention and supervision on teachers who encountered challenges in instruction (Sim, 2011). Principals as instructional leaders have to provide guidance to teachers on curriculum and pedagogy, encourage learners to analyse weaknesses and guide teachers and learners. Moreover, principals have to improve the quality of teaching and learning. However, principals are faced with the challenge of limited resources. Sim (2011) further argues that principals are teachers in the apex of the school who have to manage schools to be effective schools. However, there is no smooth transition of the role of a principal as a school administrator to that of an instructional leader. Hence principals need to be trained or allocated a mentor after being appointed to principalship.

2.3.2 Principals' challenges

Buchem (2002) identifies time, ability, credibility, knowledge limitations and evaluation as the challenges to instructional leadership. Principals have both managerial and operational responsibilities hence operational duties supersede managerial duties. Mead (2011) reiterates that principals are faced with different operational, paperwork and other administrative demands that crowd out time they should be spending in classrooms. Many principals were attracted to the position for the reasons other than setting instructional standards and may be uncomfortable in the role of instructional leadership (Buchen, 2002). The role of the principals has changed drastically over the past decades. The role of the principal has expanded such that includes disciplining learners, motivating teachers and attending parents who come to schools for various reasons. In some cases, parents come to school to discuss their own personal problems during contact time. Moswela (2010) and Wanzare (2012) point out that teachers tend to regard the comments and suggestions made by their supervisors as negative criticisms rather than the alternatives for them to consider. Teachers also justify their own classroom practices rather than

keep an open mind about alternatives offered by their supervisors. The intention of supervisors is seen as the means to settle certain scores rather empowering teachers. Mead (2011) argues that the structure of the job of the principal is a barrier on its own to effective instructional leadership. In addition, states principals credentialing policies contribute to poor quality preparation, by creating barriers to effective preparation models. These policies are failing to ensure that principal preparation programmes equip principals with significant knowledge and skills, most importantly in child development and early education. Lunenburg (2010) asserts that innovations frequently fail because the individuals who make it happen who are class teachers, may not be committed to the effort or may not have skills to grapple with the basic challenge being posed. Principals have to introduce innovations that will improve teachers' performance and commitment to their work.

The programmes which are designed for teachers are not adequate to enhance their pedagogic skills because they are not intensive, ongoing and connected to classroom practice (Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson & Orphanos, 2009). Teachers are having challenges in concluding syllabus on time which impacts negatively on the performance of learners (Rulinda, Role & Makewa, 2013). This means that when the programmes are designed need to cater for teachers to manage their teaching time. Moswela (2010) argues that teachers in Botswana are not sanctioned if they decide not to implement class supervision whereas in the United States of America principals who fail to implement supervision are held liable. Christie (2010) asserts that the introduction of leadership to education is new phenomenon which has dominated from the business and industry. She argues that 'management dimensions of the school organisation are placed in the foreground and the principals are framed planning as managers to whom fashionable business approaches such as total quality management and strategic planning are offered as solutions to problems of performance'. Christie (2010) contends that the principals are assisted by governing bodies in raising school fund hence principals being able to create more space, employ additional teachers and provide the resources which are vital in improving learners' achievement. Pansiri (2008) reveals that principals sometimes fail to respond to teachers' needs on time. He also alludes that there is poor communication between parents and school management teams. Kemper (2009) argues that some of principals' experiences are related to dealing with learners who are from a poverty stricken environment. Furthermore, principals experience a situation where they have to provide learners' quality of life physically,

emotionally and educationally. However, principals remain with responsibility to create inviting venue for parents' involvement in school activities aimed at improving learners' performance. Principals have to motivate parents who cannot afford to pay school fees by assuring them that it is not a disgrace to be unable to pay school fees.

2.3.3 The strategies school principals use to navigate their challenges in supporting instructional practices in schools

Commitment to an idea is different from knowing how to take effective action to make it happen (Joyce, 2004). In a nutshell, principals need to have a clear vision, mission and goals for the school which serve to indicate the direction of the school. Most researchers including Blasé and Blasé (1999), Joyce (2004), DuFour (2004) and Pansiri (2008) state that collaboration is a vehicle through which effective schools are formed. Principals therefore can overcome the challenges by involving all stakeholders in the running of the school. Van Deventer (2003) suggests that principals need to promote good school community relations. Principals have to adopt distributed leadership where the power is shared among members of staff.

Mestry, Hendricks and Bisschoff (2009) assert that professional development is a process spanning an individual's career, whereby the teacher continue to develop the knowledge and the skills required for effective professional practice. Education is continuously changing so it is important that teachers are prepared by the principals to adapt to newly introduced innovations. In the case of South Africa, Since 1994 curricular changes effected range from outcomes based education, revised national curriculum statement (RNCS, national curriculum statement (NCS) and current there is curriculum and assessment policy statements (CAPS). In addition one has to understand that CAPS is not a new curriculum, but an amendment to the National Curriculum Statement Grade R-12 subject Statements. Wood (2009) argues that there is a need for learning communities for sharing teacher expertise. Teachers as agents of change need to be sharpened at all times to confidently and successfully carry out their duties and responsibilities. This notion is correct in the sense that any change needs to be clearly communicated and people need to be guided in adapting to change. Moloï (2002) defines school as a vision of excellence and posits that principals' role is to create an environment where the acquisition of skills, positive attitudes and knowledge is valued and rewarded and the individual learning styles are accommodated. Principals as instructional leaders have to ascertain that teachers share expertise so that they

become confident in their respective classrooms. Teachers generally learn more from their colleagues and in turn their learners benefit due to revamped skills their teachers have gained.

Similarly, Sharma (2012) posits that most studies reveal that instructional leadership purports to promote effective learning in the classroom, outside the classroom: learning values and ethics, and responsibility. Giles and Hargreaves (2006) posit that like all communities, learning communities can become victims of groupthink where members cover or insulate themselves from alternative ideas, thus turning shared vision into delusions. Principals have to remain close to the groups and monitor and support groups. Ruff and Shoho (2005) assert that instructional leader has to maintain a balance between people and programmes. This can happen when the principal understands the challenges that teachers face and craft a developmental programme that is directly in line with the challenge that teachers encounter. Principals need to encourage teachers to be reflective practitioners. Principals have to work closely with district officials for support to build solid foundations for learners' achievement. Harris (2010) states that principals need to adopt leadership approaches that match particular stages of school development with the hope of benefiting learners achieve quality results. Jones, Morgan and Harris (2012) purport that principals need to encourage collaboration and joint enterprise among facilitators, participants and moreover among participants themselves. As instructional leaders, principals have to stimulate communication, mutual understanding and consensus among teachers, learners and parents for the benefit of learners. The latter supports Buchem (2002) who posits that principals as instructional leaders have to be always visible and be in continuous communication with teachers. This relationship can strengthen trust and harness interrelations between principal and teachers. The problems teachers encounter can be identified at their infant stage hence appropriate remedial innovations can be formulated.

2.4 Role of Principals in creating Professional learning communities

The programmes that principals design for teachers have to stimulate intellectual and emotional growth for teachers and learners. Cogburn (2003) contends that principals can navigate instructional challenges by promoting peer networking. In addition, the principal has to promote or empower teachers to use the available technology. Patrick, Elliot, Hulme and McPhee (2010) contend that mentoring is the best tool principals use to support new entrants to adjust in their roles in schools. It has been cited earlier on that the new entrants enter the teaching profession

with technological skills which experienced teachers do not possess. Hence, collaboration allows for the exchange of skills. DuFour (2004) contends that schools are professional learning communities hence teachers must learn from one another. In addition, professional learning communities are informed by the assumptions that the central mission of the school is not solely to ensure that learners are a solution to be taught but that they learn. This mission is the challenge that principals encounter where they have teachers who are under-qualified or even unqualified. Professional learning communities is a solution in that teachers learn from other teachers in collaborative teams. Professional learning communities is a 'community of practice' (Jones, Morgan & Harris, 2012). In professional learning communities professionals come together to learn from one another. Lunenburg (2010) asserts that successful principals fulfil their goals by focusing on learning; encouraging; collaboration; analysing the results; providing the support to teachers; aligning the curriculum to school context to benefit learners, and assessment that will guide the principal in formulating interventions. Odhiambo and Hii (2012) assert that instructional leadership represents the set of tasks in which the principals engage in order to encourage and support teaching and learning. Principals therefore need to acknowledge and understand their responsibility and seek help where they fall short. Collaboration then is not confined to teachers in the classrooms. However, principals have to form their own collaboration where they share strategies of developing teachers and leading effective schools.

Drysdale and Gurr (2011) maintain that school capacity building is the area in which school principals exert their considerable influence. This means if principals strive to create hospitable environment to teaching and learning and involving stakeholders in running of the school, surely school improvement will be attained. Bush, Bell, and Middlewood, (2010) assert that the principals improve learners' performance by influencing classroom instructional practices. Furthermore, educational changes which have occurred in most countries have been due to a desire to improve the effectiveness of schools in order to improve learners' achievement. Lunenburg (2010) argues that collaboration is the integral component of effective schools. Therefore principals have to maintain the focus on why the schools exist which is to provide quality education to all learners.

Page (2011) contends that there is a tension between collaboration and the policy. The educational department poses policies that schools need to implement without providing

intensive workshop on the educational policy. Principals have to involve or persuade the education district officials to provide support in this regard. Page (2011) further asserts that though collaboration is eulogised as panacea to challenges related to school improvement, however, persuading stakeholders to join in leadership activities is a challenge for practising leaders. The principals' responsibility is to be visible and accessible to both teachers and learners and also create hospitable space for parents to come and contribute to school improvement. Property of Charlotte Advocates for Education (2004) contends that in professional learning communities, principals provide teachers with opportunities to visit other teachers in their classrooms both within the school and at other schools. Principals organise workshops for the teachers in addition to departmental workshops to sharpen their teaching skills and pedagogy. Further to that, they encourage teachers to be involved in the formal advanced training. Internally, the principals provide specific opportunities for teachers to learn continually which is done through peer coaching and study groups. However these groups need to be closely monitored and guided because sometimes teachers become more dependent on group hence, groupthink results. In addition, principals organise and provide additional training for those teachers who are showing leadership qualities.

Fullan (1998) asserts that the innovations that principals are introducing need to fit the purpose. Moreover, principals have to implement externally initiated innovations to bring about change. Darling-Hammond, Wei, Andree, Richardson and Orphanos (2009) argue that professional learning communities are contributing to school transformation in that teachers learn from one another. Teachers understand that isolation in their classrooms deprives them of the opportunity to gain skills and expertise from their fellow colleagues. Most interestingly is that principals themselves are striving to learn from experts, mentors and their peers to become the true leaders. The product of this symbiotic relationship is an effective professional learning system. Hong and Loeb (2010) are conscious of teachers who are not productive despite whatever means have been tried to develop them. They assert that principals to maintain effective schools retain teachers who are productive in the classroom and remove lower quality teachers. This, however, is not easy to implement due to labour rights and the involvement of teacher unions in education sector. In the case of South Africa, Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 stipulates that certain procedures need to be followed to assist an educator who performs poorly. The employer (principal) in this case, has to assess the incapacity of an educator and provide the educator with

further training, provide counselling, transfer the educator or terminate the employment of an educator (Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, 5a, (i) to (v)). However, the principal before instituting transfer or termination of employment of an educator due to poor performance, an educator needs to be given an opportunity to make a representation in response to allegations against her. The educator has the right be represented at the proceedings by either a co-employee or trade union representative (Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, 6a (iii)). This underscores the challenges principals have in supporting instructional practices. Teachers have many rights which at times they abuse to the detriment of the learners' achievement and the effectiveness of the school.

Steyn and van Niekerk (2007) contend that professional development programmes demand an intensive systematic analysis of needs so that the appropriate areas for professional development are selected and planned for. Therefore, professional development programme has to be designed by the principal in consultation with educators to close the obtaining gap. Educators can assist by spelling out their professional development needs. Effective principals develop an effective context for the staff. Principals understand the situation wherein educators work is as important as the people themselves. Therefore, principals provide an effective context for educators to perform to their maximum ability. In addition, job satisfaction, culture, structure, motivation, teams and maintenance, and improvement contribute positively to an effective context and enable enhanced educators' performance (Heystek, Roos & Middlewood, 2005).

Teamwork, collaboration and supervision of instructional practices are vital for the improvement of learners' achievement. In addition, monitoring and motivation as well as sharing ideas contribute to effective school instructional programmes.

2.5 Benefits of teamwork in professional learning communities

Teams are smaller than the entire staff complement of the whole school and larger than individuals. Therefore, they are more likely to represent a range of interests (Heystek, Roos & Middlewood, 2005). Team members are endowed with varied yet complementary competencies (knowledge, skills and values). The selection of team members is based on the technical skills they have and the interpersonal skills for the effective functioning of the school. This means each member in a team has a competency different from other team members. Hence team members

teach each other new competences (Smit, Cronje, Brevis & Vrba, 2007). Team members are committed to a common purpose and performance goals, and a work strategy for which they feel mutually accountable.

Principals have a responsibility of nurturing teams. They have to understand that teams are formed out of people with different ideas. Disagreement is inevitable in teams. However, principals have to monitor and guide members towards the attainment of the organisational goal (Nel, Werner, Haasbroek, Poisat, Sono & Schultz, 2008). Principals need to ascertain that whenever the group has disagreement, it is constructive and encourage members to willingly consider all ideas with an open mind. Clarke (2007) alarms that successful and effective teams do not simply happen, however, they can easily become ineffective if they are not effectively managed and led. In addition, effective teams are not only more productive work units than individuals. They also contribute more to the organisation's overall effectiveness.

There are direct benefits for both educators and learners in working together in teams. Steyn and van Niekerk (2007) assert that teamwork is significant for building a professional culture in school. Furthermore, educators become more effective and the learners benefit as educators share information about learners, teaching and learning strategies, and their roles as parents and teachers. Steyn and van Niekerk (2007) further argue that the best weapon teachers have against uncertainty is working in teams. It is a general feeling that where vision and mission of the school is shared amongst teachers, parents and learners, schools tend to be effective and successful. Squelch and Lemmer (1994) assert that in the past the individual educator was regarded as the primary agent of change and innovation and the seat of expertise. However, nowadays the team is regarded as the focal point of innovation in schools. Cooperation, information sharing, better quality decisions, morale and excellence are the benefits of teamwork. Moloï (202) argues that teamwork is collaborating to work and develop knowledge effectively in a small group. Therefore, it is important that a team has a shared vision to guide its future action.

The concept teamwork is tantamount to professional learning communities because, both are characterised by the notion of engaging in collaborative work, accepting joint responsibility for the outcomes of their work, teachers participating in decision making, having the sense of purpose. Harris and Jones (2010) assert that in Wales, professional learning communities are

operational and embrace all the characteristics prior mentioned. In addition, they argue that Improvement through professional learning community is only possible if teachers collaborate.

However, Harris and Jones (2010) alarm that collaborative networks fail if they are shallow and not focusing on improving learners' achievement. In addition, they contend that "If it is too loosely configured, it is easy for professional learning communities to pay attention to everything else except learning and teaching". Joyce (2004) posits that shallow, short and shapeless poor staff development cause a lot of frustration for teachers because, they do not yield what they desire. Therefore, Joyce (2004) contends that school improvement is most certain when teachers are engaged in a continuous, frequent, concrete and precise interaction about teaching practices. Joyce (2004) alludes that principals have to strive to develop cadres of teachers who shall serve their colleagues regularly. Moswela (2010) posits that instructional supervision (leadership) encompasses the notions of critical friend, developmental, moral leadership, collegiality, and coaching. DuFour (2004) asserts that collaborative conversations call on team members to make goals, strategies, materials, pacing, questions, etc. These discussions give every teacher someone to turn to talk to, and help improve classroom practices of teachers individually and collectively.

2. 6 Theoretical frameworks

This study is underpinned by two theories, mainly, instructional and distributed leadership theories and are presented below:

2.6.1 Instructional leadership theory

Instructional leadership theory is defined as those measures that the principals take or assign to others , to raise growth in learners learning and consists of describing the purpose of schooling; setting school-wide goals; providing the resources needed for the learning to ensue; supervising and evaluating teachers; coordinating staff development programmes; and creating collegial relationships with and among teachers (Khan, Khan, Shah & Iqbal, 2009) Similarly, Southworth (2003) defines instructional leadership as a model that assumes that the focus of attention by the leaders is the behaviour of the teachers as they engage in the activities that directly affect the growth of the learners. According to Hallinger (2003), instructional leadership focuses predominantly on the role of school principals in coordinating, controlling, supervising, and developing curriculum and instruction to schools. These foregoing definitions seem to have their

roots from Hallinger and Murphy (1985) who invented the instructional leadership framework which has three dimensions.

The emergence of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership model provided a clear direction to management of schools. A large number of subsequent authors including Weber's (1996) make reference to the model. Hallinger and Murphy's instructional leadership model is informed by three dimensions which are: defining the school's mission; managing the instructional programme; and promoting a positive school-learning climate. Weber's (1996) instructional leadership model/theory is an extension of Hallinger and Murphy's instructional leadership framework. Weber (1996) model seems to provide answers to the roles of the principals as instructional leaders since it was invented after a significant study conducted in ten elementary schools in both England and United states. It was also strengthened by the use of literature which mainly focused on school effectiveness and improvement (Alig-Mielcarek, 2003).

Emerging from the Weber's (1996) instructional leadership model, it is evident that principals need not to seclude parents, learners and teachers in the school matters. The importance of involving stakeholders surfaces mainly in the dimension that underscores the significance of developing a supportive work environment. According to Hallinger and Murphy (1995) and Weber (1996) promoting an academic learning climate denotes how instructional leaders establish structures and processes that support the learning process. The expectation therefore from the principal who has embraced this dimension has to create a safe and orderly learning environment; provide opportunities for meaningful learner involvement. Further to this, the principal has to develop collaboration and cohesion, secure resources in support of school goals and has to forge ties between home and school.

Weber's (1996) model is foregrounded on two assumptions which are: the principal is the main instructional leader, and the principal works with the leadership functions that are sometimes shared and sometimes not shared (Khan, Khan, Shah, & Iqbal, 2009). The functions of Weber's (1996) instructional leadership framework/model are: firstly defining the school' mission, managing the curriculum and instruction, promoting a positive learning climate, observing and improving instruction and lastly, assessing the instruction. Emerging from the Weber's (1996) model which propounds that the responsibility of the school principal is to ensure that the school

has a vivid academic mission and communicate it to staff, principals remain charged with the responsibility to set academic goals and ensuring that they give direction, purpose and meaning to the work of teachers. However, this is attainable if principals emphatically state to teachers that the purpose of the school is to educate all the learners to high levels of academic performance (Khan, Khan, Shah, & Iqbal, 2009). Moreover, the principals have to develop strategies of converting goals and the mission into a reality which can be realised when there is collaborative planning among all the stakeholders (parents, learners and staff). Since observation and improving instruction is a core duty of the principal, it is significant that teachers are roped in so that they understand the purpose of it. The purpose of observation is to offer informed advice to teachers about problems, offer valuable support that pinpoints areas that need improvement. Creation of positive learning climate requires the principal to be at all times visible to both teachers and learners and developing teachers. Most significant is that the principal has to protect instructional time. Southworth (2003) argues that there is a need of school leaders who do focus on classrooms and showing dedication to teaching and learning. Further, Southworth says leaders have to be concerned with developing the quality of classroom processes and those of the staffroom. The subscribing to the foregoing could mean principals wish to enhance the schools level of performance. The principal as an instructional leader is always portrayed as responsible for providing direction and orchestrating improvements at school. This, however, is possible if the school climate is conducive and the school culture is known to all stakeholders. Further, there must be a promotion of professional development of teachers so that they positively and meaningfully contribute to school functionality (Hallinger, 2003).

Similarly, Mendels (2012) asserts that instructional leaders cultivate leadership in others. Further, Mendels (2012) argues that effective principals know they cannot go it alone, instead they use all the skills and knowledge around the school. The conversation between teachers is transformative. Teachers are learning and teaching one another. Moswela (2010) points out that if instructional supervision is a teaching and learning improvement strategy, then it should be a continuous assessment tool that involves and provides the opportunity for teachers to continuously increase their ability to learn and assist their fellow teachers. This in a nutshell, supports the view of teachers working in teams to advance the learners achievement. Wanzare (2012) posits that there is a need of trust between the supervisor and teachers, open and flexible

to allow supervisor and teachers to speak from their own sense of integrity. There should be agreed human relations to adopt between supervisors and teachers in relation to decision making practices to facilitate teacher satisfaction. Instructional leadership theory encourages collaboration, communication, staff development feedback and managing time. Blasé and Blasé (1999) unpack a series of characteristics of effective instructional leader. Among other things they mention that principals support collaboration efforts among teachers with an understanding that collaborative networks among educators are significant for the successful teaching and learning. They model teamwork, provide time for collaborative work and promote the sharing and peer observation. Fullan (2001) argues that effective principals acknowledge that leadership in professional learning is not their sole responsibility. Hence, principals and other members of school management have their special roles and accountabilities. Fullan (2001) further asserts that schools need to involve all stakeholders in an attempt to encourage lifelong learning and developing a learning organisation.

In Botswana schools, there is no formal structure of instructional supervision however, it is implemented but with no accountability for not implementing by the school principals (Moswela, 2010). Instructional leadership is about the empowerment of teachers, school management teams and the principals to carry out their duties and responsibilities with confidence (Pansiri, 2008). The impact of instructional leadership is visible in effective school where teachers, learners, principal and parents work in unison to pursue the agenda of quality curriculum that shall improve the achievement of learners. Wanzare (2012) underscores that instructional supervision is the vehicle through which quality education can be attained. Principals are charged with the responsibility to spearhead instructional leadership to bring about positive changes in schools. Hoardly, Christie and Ward (2009) assert that typology of instructional leadership is the focus of the school; vision and expectations; dispersal of leadership; social relations within the school; management of the resources; external relationships.

2.6.2 Distributed leadership theory

Distributed leadership relies on building relationships through the validation of professional expertise and empowerment of people and the diversity, and thereby creating the culture of learning (Heika, Waniganayake, & Hujula, 2013). Distributed leadership provides the infrastructure that holds the community together, as it is the collective work of educators, at

multiple levels who are leading innovations that create and sustain successful professional learning communities (Harris & Jones, 2010). Principals who display distributed leadership understand that the success of an organisation lies on multiple members within the organisation. Furthermore, success is not yielded by only sharing tasks but deeper interactions between members working through shared goals (Heika, Waniganayake & Hajala, 2013). Principals, however, have to understand that distributed leadership does not replace the obtaining hierarchical structure. In addition, distributed leadership may comprise of teams, informal work groups, committees operating within a hierarchical organisation possess numerous varied skills that can benefit schools and relieve principal of some duties which are more informal. They argue that distribution of leadership creates space for alternative approaches to leadership that have arisen due to external demands and pressures in the school. It has been prior stated that principals' tasks are vast such that at times principals find it difficult carrying out instructional leadership. Principals then delegate some duties to deputy principals and heads of department which need less accountability. It is a truism that authority and responsibility can be delegated but not accountability. Harris and Spillane (2008) assert that leadership has to be stretched in schools. Furthermore, many school principals restructure their leadership teams and create new roles to meet their needs.

In schools there are various committees such as curriculum committee, institutional committee, sports and entertainment committee to mention a few which relieve principals from doing everything on their own. Heika, Waniganayeke, and Hujala (2013) posit that distributed leadership is not about sharing tasks in the organisation, instead, it is used to involve all members and unearth their abilities in various aspects towards the development of school. In addition, principals distribute tasks with the intention of diagnosing and design instruments that can be used to examine ways of experiencing and practising leadership. The focus of leaders is directed to practice rather than roles. It is a worrying that at times people in positions tend to undermine the voice of their subordinate. In mitigating this principals have to communicate clearly why a task is assigned a particular person. Hoardly, Christie and Ward (2009) assert that the principals spend most of their time on administrative duties and disciplining learners. Hence instructional leadership as overseeing teaching and learning and supervising teachers is not a function that takes up most of principals' times. This becomes possible because management of curriculum is dispersed across the school.

Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004) view school leadership as the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of social, material and cultural resources necessary to formulate the context for the possibility of teaching and learning. Leadership encompasses mobilising school staff and stakeholders to notice, face, and take action on the tasks of changing instruction as well as harnessing and mobilising the resources required to support transformation of teaching and learning. In a nutshell, all community members are created a space where they can contribute toward improvement of the school. Distributed leadership suggests openness of the boundaries of leadership. This means that it is predisposed to spread the conventional net of leaders, thus in turn raising the question of which individuals and groups are to be brought into leadership or seen as the contributors to it (Bennett, Wise, Woods, Philip & Harvey, 2003).

Prytula, Noonan and Hellsten (2013) assert that sharing expertise among one another, developing goals for learners, and collaboratively planning how goals will be achieved can happen if teachers work together. Harris and Spillane (2008) assert that distributed leadership focuses on the interactions rather than the actions. The work of all individuals who contribute to leadership is acknowledged whether or not they are formally designated as leaders. They argue that distributed leadership has positive impact on the effectiveness of the organisation and the achievement of learners. The success of distributed leadership is due to multiple groups of individuals in a school who work at a guiding and mobilising staff in the instructional change process. Moloji (2002) asserts that when a school interacts with the parent community, it becomes possible to create an affirming and enabling environment in which parents and educators bring their values, attitudes and perceptions about their roles and responsibilities closer together. In addition, principals have to facilitate the relationship with parents and the greater community to capture and share learning.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter dealt with the literature on instructional leadership practices in school. The concept ‘teamwork’ was discussed as well as the two theories underpinning the study. The subsequent chapter focuses on research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the literature review and the theoretical frameworks that underpinned this study. This chapter discusses the design and the methodology of this research. This study was underpinned by a qualitative research design and the case study as the methodology. An interpretive paradigm underpinned the study. The tools used to gather data, the rationale for choosing case study methodology and the research methods are discussed. The chapter also discusses sampling, triangulation, ethical issues and concludes by providing a summary of the chapter.

3.2 Research design and methodology

3.2.1 Research design

Research design is a plan or a strategy which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specify the selection of the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done (Maree, 2007). A description of a design of the study was made with regard to (inclusion of the selection and description of the site), the role of the researcher, initial entry for the interviews and observation, the time and the length of the study, the number of participants and how they were selected, data generated and analysis strategies used. There are various types of research designs, such as quantitative, qualitative and mixed method to choose from. I chose qualitative research design for this study. The research design used was a qualitative one while a case study was used as the research methodology. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) argue that qualitative research designs emphasise objectivity in measuring and describing phenomena. These researchers further contend that qualitative research designs use methods that are distinct from those used in quantitative designs. They also assert that qualitative designs put emphasis on gathering data on natural occurring phenomena.

3.2.2 Research methodology

This study utilised a case study design within a qualitative approach. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) a case study research is a systemic inquiry into an event or a set of related events which is aimed at describing and explaining the phenomenon of interest. A case study provides a unique example of real people in a real situation, enabling the readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) define a case study as an in-depth analysis of a single entity. Further, most of these data are in the form of words rather than numbers and in general, the researcher must search and explore with a variety of methods until a deeper understanding is achieved. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) further define case study as a bounded system or a case, over time in depth, employing multiple sources of data found in the setting. In addition, a case study examines a single case. In this research, principals were identified and interviewed in their own space about their understandings of their roles.

Case refers to an in depth analysis of a phenomenon and not the number of people sampled. Further, the case may be a programme, an event, an activity or a set of individuals bounded in time and place. Being bounded means being unique according to place, time and participant characteristics (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). School principals are in a school environment and are working with teachers and learners to improve learner achievement.

Qualitative researchers use cases to illustrate the interactions among variables and recognise that the same variables may be configured in different ways in other places or with other population over time (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). From interpretivist point of view, the typical features of the case study were that, they strived towards a holistic understanding of how the participants related and interacted with each other in a specific situation and how they made meaning of the phenomenon under study. Case study offers a multi-perspective analysis in which the researcher considers not just a voice and perspective of one or two participants in a situation, but also the views of the relevant groups of actors and the interaction between them (Maree,2007).

3.3 Research paradigm

Interpretive paradigm is characterised by a concern for an individual. It seeks to understand the subjective world of human experience to understand and retain the integrity of the phenomenon (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Interpretivism tries to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assigned to them. Principals as the heads of the schools practised instructional leadership. Teachers are supposed to be lifelong learners need a hospitable environment for them to develop their teaching skills. Learners' achievement as the determinant factor of the school that was functional or dysfunctional was regarded as a first priority. The aim of the interpretivist research is to offer a perspective of a situation and to analyse the situation under study to provide insight into the way in which a popular group of people make sense of the situation or the phenomenon they encounter (Maree, 2007). The meaning was made from the data that was produced and the researcher avoided biasness while generating data and avoided a situation where unshared pre-known data was used because the researcher had the information about the school. Information that was generated during the interviews was analysed guided by the theoretical frameworks and literature reviewed. The people who were the custodians of the data were the principals and they had direct experience of practising instructional leadership in schools. The analysis made was based on the data that the principals shared or offered.

3.4 The rationale for using case study methodology

Case study was relevant in the sense that the researcher was working with the custodians of the information. The respondents were knowledgeable about the phenomenon. Maree (2007) argues that a case study research investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. Case study method enabled the researcher to closely examine the data within a specific context. A case study selected the small area or a very limited number of individuals as the participants in the study. Zainal (2007) contends that case study explores and investigates current real-life phenomena through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. In addition, the researcher gets to the site where the participant is situated to gather data. Case study is able to capture deep data that experimental research would not be able to produce (Zainal, 2007). Principals as the

instructional leaders were chosen for the study to give a deeper understanding of “how” they carried out their responsibilities.

3.5 Research methods

The case study research used semi-structured interviews to gather data. The semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher an opportunity to interact with the participants. The researcher was able to have a direct conversation with the participants hence was able to make sense of the behaviour of the participants. The researcher was able to build a rapport with the participants and the responses that the participants provided were better understood because the researcher was able to observe the body language of the participant.

3.6 Data generation tools

Interviews were used in generating data. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) contend that the use of the qualitative research interviews contributes to the body of knowledge already in existence and that knowledge is both conceptual and theoretical based on the meanings that life experiences hold for the participants. Semi-structured interviews were most appropriate because they allowed the researcher to probe. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) assert that semi-structured interviews are the only data source for qualitative research project and are scheduled in advance. Further, semi-structured interviews are conducted once for an individual or a group and takes between thirty minutes to an hour to complete. They also suggest that the individual in-depth interview allows the interviewer to delve deeply into social and personal matters. In addition, the advantage of the interviews is that, the question that is not good in eliciting the required data is dropped and a new question is introduced. In the interview process it was important that there was good rapport between the researcher (interviewer) and the participant (interviewee). The rapport that was maintained, created trust and respect for the interviewee and the information sharing ran smoothly. Through sound rapport, a safe and comfortable environment is created for the interviewee. Hence, the interviewee trusts the interviewer and shares the personal experiences and attitude as they actually occur (DiCocco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The data generated was more authentic due to sound rapport that was created. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Interview technique was more flexible and adaptable. Interview technique is used with many problems, types of persons, such as those who are

illiterate or too young to read or write, responses can be probed, followed-up, clarified and elaborated to achieve specific accurate responses. Moreover, non-verbal as well as verbal behaviour can be noted in face to face interviews, and an interviewer has an opportunity to motivate the respondent (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). That data should include observer descriptions corroborates with Maree (2007) who says nonverbal behaviour can be noted in face-to-face interviews. The purpose of the qualitative research interviews is to contribute to the body of knowledge that is conceptual and theoretical and based on the meanings that life experiences hold for the interviewee (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Literature that was in existence validated the data being generated because the purpose of the interviews was to affirm the existed situation in its uniqueness.

In gathering data, a tape recorder was used. The method of generating data which was recording enabled restoration of data for transcribing purposes. However, it is vital that high quality tape recording is maintained to prevent difficulties in the research process (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). In addition, it is vital that the recorder has new batteries and back-up batteries as well. During the transcribing process, it is important to write the words as uttered however, that can be problematic because some people speak without a break hence transcribing result in the loss of the essence. According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) “transcribers often have difficulties capturing the spoken words in text form because of the sentence structure, use of quotations, omissions and mistaking words or phrases for others. Because people speak run-on sentences, transcribers are forced to make judgement calls”. They further assert that it is imperative for the transcriber to understand the language that the interviewee speaks so that a transcriber is able to make correct judgement calls in transcribing.

3.7 Sampling

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) assert that sampling is a process used to select a portion of the population for the study. Furthermore, there are various sampling methods such as probability or random sampling; non-probability sampling and purposive sampling methods. In this study purposive sampling was chosen. In purposive sampling often but by no means exclusively a feature of qualitative research, researchers tend to hand-pick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought (Maree, 2007) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011).

Purposive sampling was chosen for a specific purpose which was to have better understandings of principals of their roles in supporting instructional practices. The four school principals, two from the primary schools and two from the secondary schools therefore, were chosen on the bases of the knowledge they possessed and were then practising as the heads of schools. The principals have the first hand information in so far as what the study sought to obtain. The study pertained to principals' practices as it sought to explore principals' their enacting instructional leadership role. Hence, I identified them having in-depth knowledge on the phenomenon under study. Drawing from Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) it was evident that in many cases purposive sampling was used in order to access knowledgeable people, those who had an in-depth knowledge about a particular issue, maybe by virtue of their professional role, power, and access to networks, expertise or experience. While it may satisfy the researcher's needs to take this type of sample, it does not pretend to represent the wider population; it is deliberately selective and biased (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Qualitative researcher turns to two forms of purposive (purposeful) sampling which are, targeted or systemic sampling (Lapin, Quartaroli, Riemer, 2012). This study utilised targeted purposive sampling. They further assert that in *Qualitative sampling strategies* – the source of information used by qualitative researchers includes individuals, groups, documents, reports, and sites. Regardless of the form of the data, purposeful sampling is used. The researcher searches for the information-rich key informants, groups, places, or events to study. The samples are chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomenon the researcher is investigating (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). These elected four principals were sharing their lived experiences since were directly involved in instructional leadership as principals of schools. In qualitative research the emphasis is placed on the uniqueness of the phenomenon, group or individuals in question, i.e. they only represent themselves, and nothing or nobody else. How far they are representative of a wider population or group is irrelevant, as much qualitative research seeks to explore the particular group under study, not to generalise (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Qualitative research size is informed by 'fitness for purpose' for example this study intended to explore the role of principals in establishing learning communities.

3.8 The pilot study

It was recommended that before carrying out the interviews, questions were piloted. Before conducting the actual interviews I piloted my questions with the two principals. One principal was from a primary school and the other one from a secondary school. Franklin and Wallen (1990) assert that once the questions to be included in the interview schedule are formulated, the researcher is advised to use a small group similar to the intended respondents in a trial situation. This provides the opportunity to make alterations where the respondents encountered challenges in answering the questions. The language that is used in the questions has to be comprehensible to the participants. Isaac and Michael (1990) contend that a pilot study provides the research worker with ideas, approaches, and clues not foreseen prior to the pilot study. These ideas and clues mostly expanded the chances of generating accurate data in the actual research study. The significance of the pilot study was that, the weaknesses and the complexities of language in the study were deduced before the actual research interviews. The researcher had an opportunity to refine the questions to obtain the intended results. In the actual interviews the deleterious factors were non-existing since they were identified and counteracted in the pilot study

3.9 Triangulation

Interviews and documents reviews were used in this study. This brought about trustworthiness and validity in the study. Triangulation was maintained since the use of two or more methods of data generation were used in the study. Lapan, Quartaroli and Riemer (2012) argue that triangulation refers to an examination of how different sources of data on the same topic may complement each other to deepen understanding of a study topic. The data obtained can be verified against the methods used. The use of case study was relevant in that the experiences of the participants were explored and the participants spoke about their lived experiences. This gave birth to the comprehensive and authentic data. Albeit the reason that one was not intending to generalise, the data generated was not representative of the larger community. However, the case studied made the data more valid. Maree (2007) posits that interpretivist paradigm takes the position that social or cultural phenomena emerge from the ways in which actors in a setting construct meaning. Emerging from this notion, it was the principals who were well informed about their own context and situation and they understood their challenges as well as the methods they used to counter those challenges.

3.10 Ethical issues

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) ethics concern right and wrong, good and bad, and so procedural ethics are not enough, one has to consider how the research purposes, contents, methods, reporting and outcomes abide by ethical principles and practices. Privacy of the participant was paramount in the research. The use of pseudonyms was guaranteed to the participants. This was done with the intention of protecting the participants. Maree (2007) argues that the ‘right to privacy’ is usually contrasted with public’s ‘right to know’. Further, he argues that during the interview process information that points at the violation of certain right can be obtained and the researcher has to strike a balance between the right and confidentiality. In addition, anonymity of the participants has to be maintained and it is the responsibility of the researcher to assure the participants of their anonymity as well as their right to withdraw at any stage of the interview. Moreover, the participants can also not respond to the questions that they are uncomfortable to respond to. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992) underline the need for confidentiality of participants’ identities, and that any violations of this should be made with the agreement of the participants. The essence of anonymity was that information provided had to be kept as unrevealed as possible. The researcher (interviewer) guaranteed the participants’ confidentiality of their responses. The researcher was honest by providing all possible options that the participants had. This was done to assure the participants that were not coerced to participate in the study.

3.11 Chapter summary

This chapter addressed the research design and methodology as well as the paradigm that underpinned the study. It provided an overview of the rationale of the chapter. Research methods and tools were discussed. The sampling method was discussed. Piloting of the question was explained. Ethical issues and triangulation were illuminated. The next chapter focuses on the data generation and data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION AND THE ANALYSIS OF THE FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter delved on the research methodology and design informing this study. This section features the presentation of the study's findings, the analysis of the results and the discussion of the findings. The findings emerging from the interviews and documents reviewed are analysed utilising both the literature reviewed in Chapter Two and the theoretical frameworks. The discussion takes the form of inductive analysis as the literature reviewed is utilised to illuminate and strengthen the findings which were obtained through the primary data which were interviews and documents review.

4.2 Presentation and analysis of data:

4.2.1 Principals' understandings of their role in supporting teaching and learning at schools

In an attempt to illuminate the role of the principals in supporting teaching and learning at their schools, it became evident from the data/ findings that the main responsibility of the principal is to craft the mission and the vision of the school so that each role player in the process of teaching and learning clearly understands what to do, how to do it and when to do as the mission has to be communicated to all stakeholders clearly and effectively. The principals of four schools of which two were primary schools and the other two were secondary schools were interviewed and their documents were reviewed. The majority of the principals concurred with the view that the vision is the driving force behind school functionality. The foregoing is supported and justified by these concurring utterances from the participants:

I am responsible for the creation of the vision of the school. This is then communicated to all staff members so they own it. All the activities to take us to the realisation of the school vision are mooted in a staff meeting.

(Mr Malimela of Injabulo Secondary school)

The same notion was voiced by Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school who had the following to say:

..., but again it is also to advocate the mission and the vision of the school informed by that of the national department of basic education.

(Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school)

Congruent to the foregoing participants, Mr Ngcobo of Vuna Secondary school stated that:

..., adding to that, vision and the mission of the school is part of my responsibility as the head. I provide direction to the school. However, in doing this, I firstly influence the management staff before I communicate the vision to the entire staff.

(Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school)

Emerging from the foregoing utterances, it was evident that vision and mission is one of the pillars of instructional leadership. Odhiambo and Hii (2012) argue in the same vein that principals tend to focus their attention on formulating and explaining the schools' mission, vision and goals. In Kenya, instructional leaders set and promote the vision and the mission of the schools which aim to improve the standard of teaching and learning at schools (Wanzere, 2011). By and large, support is necessary for the teachers to be able to provide quality teaching and learning thereby improving learning. The need for schools to perform well necessitates the provision of adequate resources to support both teachers and learners. In response to whether the support from the principal was essential for the best achievement of learners, the following responses emerged:

I have to create the environment that is conducive to teaching and learning, making sure that I provide direction, as a leader. I provide the resources and support to both teachers and learners with a view to improve teaching and learning.

(Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school)

The same sentiment was echoed by Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school who stated that:

I need to always have the interest of the learners at the back of my mind. In ensuring that the environment in which they learn is safe and they receive quality

teaching. This, I do by providing the resources that help teachers teach and learners learn.

(Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school)

The statement of Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school did not only address the notion of support, but further acknowledged the creation of the environment that is hospitable to teaching and learning. Arguably, this statement suggested that a school principal has to provide the basic requirements including safety of both teachers and learners.

But again, it is to make sure that there is an implementation of effective teaching and learning for the principal to provide the necessary support.

(Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school)

The sentiments of Ms Mtshali were notably shared by Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school, who said:

My biggest responsibility is to provide necessary support for teachers to be able to deliver the content to the learners. Most significantly, I have to provide support to my teachers to improve the standard of teaching and learning.

(Miss Nzama of Impumeleleo primary school)

The foregoing assertions of Ms Mtshali and Miss Nzama suggested that support is vital for the improved learners' performances. Lunenburg (2010) unambiguously states that principals as instructional leaders can fulfil their goals by focusing on learning, encouraging collaboration; providing support to teachers and aligning curriculum to school context to benefit learners. Blasé and Blasé (1999) posit that collaboration is the core in the success of organisations.

It surfaced from fifty percent of the participants that all the stakeholders need to have a role to play for the benefit of the learners. Notably, Mr Malimela and Mr Ngcobo seemed to be propounding the notion of collaboration as an integral part to the provision of quality education. Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school pointed out that:

I involve all the relevant stakeholders in the community to contribute in making our school one of the best.

(Mr Ngcobo of Vuna Secondary school)

Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school shared the similar view where he stated that:

I believe all the stakeholders need to be at par with programmes, different committees need to collaborate at times such as the disciplinary committee and curriculum committee. (Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school)

The foregoing participants' utterances corroborate with Fullan (2001) who states that leadership is not the sole responsibility of the principal but as well for the deputy principals, HoDs in professional leaning, but must satisfy the changing needs of educators, promote collaboration, democratic group processes and interactions. Moreover, Darling-Hammond, Chung Wei, Andree, Richardson and Orphanos (2009) and DaFour (2004) argue that principals work with staff to create the culture, structures and dispositions for continuous support to help teachers continuously improve by better understanding learners' needs.

Ensuing from the Weber's (1996) model of instructional leadership, which surmise that principal needs to define the school's mission, promote positive learning climate, manage the curriculum and instruction, observe and improve instruction and assess the instructional programmes, the insinuation was that principals need to work with teachers so that teachers own the vision and the teaching and learning environment has to be always hospitable to the core duties of the teachers which is to teach and learners which is to learn. The foregoing was firmly endorsed by the following participants' voices:

I do class visits for the purposes of supporting my teachers, I work with my governing body to ascertain that we maintain our infrastructure in good order for teaching and learning to smoothly take place.

(Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school)

Similarly, Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school echoed the same view by saying:

I do class visits with my heads of departments (HoDs) with the intention of identifying areas where teachers need to be developed.

(Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school)

Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school conveyed the same notion which surmises the importance of hospitable environment to teaching and learning by stating that:

I try all means within my power to provide teachers with teaching aids they require for teaching. Moreover, I create environment conducive for them to teach.

(Mr Malimela of Njabulo Secondary school)

From a distributed leadership theory point of view, the school principal has to spread leadership around to benefit the learners. Further, distributed leadership is not only about sharing of tasks in the organisation, but is also used to explain deeper levels of interactions between members working through shared goals (Harris & Spillane, 2008).

Albeit the significance of information sharing, principals have to see to it that teachers are working and learners are learning hence monitoring of work of both teachers and learners forms the integral part of the principals' role. The majority of the participants shared the same understanding. Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school reacted as reflected hereunder:

I have to make sure that prime teaching and learning is not sacrificed for lesser priorities. I have to supervise and evaluate teachers' work to ensure quality teaching and learning. Furthermore, I monitor the running of the school mainly, late coming and class attendance by both teachers and learners, In doing this, heads of departments are the ones who are directly involved in monitoring class attendance and teaching and learning whether or not occurs as expected.

(Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school)

Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary reiterated the same where said:

I am responsible for monitoring the functionality of the school with the assistance of my management colleagues. (Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school)

Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school responded as follows: *I always ensure that there is quality teaching and learning at all times.* (Mr Ngcobo of Vuna Secondary school)

Similarly, the school records that were perused corroborated with what the participants had shared in the interviews. There were monitoring tools which were used by the school management team to monitor learners' class attendance. The school time books were signed on daily basis and where a teacher was not at school there were comments made stating the reason of absence. Log books also had notes which provided details of various significant events that had occurred at school. There were various files with significant information for the school including the behaviour of individual teachers and individual learners. Albeit the access to documents was granted, I was not allowed to make copies. Emphasising the significance of monitoring, Mead (2011) asserts that principals are in the classrooms on regular basis, observing teachers and giving feedback, they also use a full range of human capital management strategies to ensure effective teaching in the classroom, including hiring effective teachers. Albeit the necessity of monitoring, Moswela (2010) argues that if instructional leadership encompasses instructional supervision (which is monitoring) then, instructional supervision should be a continuous assessment tool that involves and provides the opportunities for teachers to continuously expand their capacity to learn and to help other. Moswela (2010) further states that classroom planning process of supervision needs to be such that teachers are in the forefront. Similarly, Pansiri (2008) argues that classroom instructional management is for all teachers therefore, there is a need for good co-ordination. This insinuated that principals need to value the existence of teachers at school and create opportunities for them to grow. Moreover, for a school to be functional the principals need to have a clear vision, create the environment conducive to teaching and learning and evaluate the programmes that are taking place at school, to mention a few.

Most principals seemed to understand their roles. Succinctly, it is evident that the responsibilities of the principals in schools include the formulation of the vision and the mission of the school. Moreover, the principals have to create the environment that is hospitable to teaching and learning which can be done through the provision of teaching and learning aids. Further, monitoring or supervision of the work of both teachers and learners seem to be important for the improved learners' achievement. Principals basically needed to ascertain that there was protection of teaching and learning time. This was achievable through monitoring and curbing late coming and reduction of absenteeism by both teachers and learners. Ensuing from the

Weber's (1996) instructional leadership model, one can claim that the principals have good understanding of their role as instructional leaders.

4.2.2 Principals' practices in supporting teaching and learning at schools

Staff development surfaced as the most significant part of supporting teachers. The majority of my participants concurred that development of staff was the essential element. They cited workshops, whereby different experts were invited to the school to offer skills that most staff members fell short in, even if one educator was in need of help. It also transpired that school management team members were involved in work-shopping staff. In describing the nature of support, Mr Malimela of Njabulo Secondary school noted:

Mr To support teachers there are staff development programmes in place, these are done in collaboration with teachers, and school management staff. Professional matters are my responsibility, so I allow SMT members to attend departmental workshops (INSET workshops) I organise workshops, In this regard, I invite different experts in various fields to capacitate us as SMT and as well as post level one educators. (Malimela of Njabulo secondary school)

The similar view shared by Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school and Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school who respectively mentioned that:

To promote and manage teaching and learning in my school, I do the following, I promote the empowerment of both teachers and learners by developmental programmes, meaning through professional development. I have invited subject advisors to assist and motivate my teachers.

(Miss Nzama of Injabulo primary school)

Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary emphatically expressed that:

I organise workshops for my teachers and management team. I also invite subject advisors to help my teachers with relevant teaching methods in their respective teaching subjects. I have a firm belief in capacity building.

(Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school)

From the foregoing assertions, it was notable that workshops were a significant feature of the support that teachers need. Most importantly, teachers were allocated to teach subjects that they majored in while at teacher training institutions. The reality is, curriculum policies frequently changed hence the need for teachers to be re-skilled for the benefit of the learners. *Property of Charlotte Advocates for Education* (2004) corroborates the foregoing utterances whereby Mr. Ngcobo points out that, principals need to be involved in formal advanced training, and provide specific opportunities within the schools for the teachers to learn continually which is done through peer coaching and study groups. These assertions of the principals corroborated with what the schools' year planners contained. Mr Malimela was the only one who went to the extent of showing me letters he wrote to different stakeholders with response letter from those he wanted to conduct various workshops for his staff. Drysdale and Gurr (2011) endorse the notion by stating that school capacity building is the area in which principals and other leaders exert their influence, but most importantly is working with people to develop their capacities. Patrick, Elliot, Hulme and McPhee (2010) assert that mentoring forms an important part in supporting new entrants to adjust in their roles. Networking, teamwork and collaboration were identified to be an integral part of teacher development. Various forms of networking were encouraged by the principals including the use of cluster meeting and moderations where subject teachers convene at a certain venue to share ideas and assessment strategies. There was consensus among the majority of the participants that it is easy to learn from your colleagues. Hence, networking and collaboration were promoted among the staff members. Some principals believed that when team teaching was promoted it benefited the learners. It was also a common view that the central part to education is the learners' achievement.

Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school reacted by stating that:

I advise and encourage the heads of the department to see to it that teachers who teach the same subject within the school, plan together so that a teacher who teaches grade 5 knows what is happening in grades 4 and 6.

(Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school)

Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school vented as follows:

I also encourage networking because I believe a lot is learnt through networking programmes since some teachers emulate those whom they observe in action. Generally, teachers network for just sharing ideas as subject teachers and new various methods of teaching the subject.

(Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school)

Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school reiterated that: *I also make sure that I involve all the stakeholders.* In valuing the moderation as one of the important tools in improving learners' achievement, Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school believed that both external and internal moderation is vital for improving learners' achievement. This became evident when stated that:

Clusters are vehicles that we subscribe to as a school for teacher empowerment. Our teachers actively participate in clusters of moderations. We also do internal moderations for quality assurance. (Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school)

In the same vein, Miss Nzama saw working with the best performing schools as the means to support teachers. When teachers share expertise, teachers from one school go to a school where there is school functionality and the teachers would observe and when they come back they report back on what they augmented from an adopted school. This is what Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school had to say:

I also encourage networking and I have allowed my teachers to go to neighbouring schools to learn and share pedagogical skills. I have also done the same with my management. (Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school)

There was succinct evidence that documents corroborated with the interviews. I managed to be exposed to school minutes which clarified the programme of the school in which it appeared that teachers were to visit their neighbouring schools programmes. Exchange programme was available for perusal in the principals' minutes. As postulated by Blasé and Blasé (1999) effective principals encourage teachers to visit other teachers, even in other schools, to observe classroom teaching and programmes. Further, this creates time for teachers to share the skills or

expertise to benefit the learners. Emerging from both Blasé and Blasé (1999) and Miss Nzama and Mr Malimela one could safely say it is important to have numerous methods of imparting information which is obtainable when teachers share skills and information so that learners improve in their performances. Ruff and Shoho (2005) argue in the same light that there is a need of the ideological shift from expertise to collaboration. Further, they contend that leaders should focus on the behaviour of the teachers as they engage in activities directly impeding on the learners' growth. Bush (2003) refers to distributed leadership as characterised by collegiality where people work together as a team, share ideas to enhance school functionality. Heikka, Waniganayake and Hujala (2013) posit that learners' achievement has to be the focal point.

Delegation of tasks and maintaining discipline were identified as means of supporting teachers coupled with monitoring and motivation advocated by most of the participants claiming that when there is discipline teachers obtain more time of focusing their attention to their core business which is teaching. As Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school mentioned that there has to be involvement of other members of staff. Herewith is the voice of Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school:

Some things one does to manage and support teaching, there are structures in place to bring about effective and efficient teaching and learning.

(Ms Mtshali of sibalukhulu primary school)

Following the probing which sought to know the type of structures in place, this is what he had to say:

These are various committees such as curriculum committee, discipline committee and examination committee to mention a few which positively contribute to teaching and learning. I also make sure that I involve all the stakeholders. ...If there is discipline in the school, teachers find it easy to discharge their duties since they need not to focus on peripheral matter of discipline over curricular matters.

(Miss Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school)

Similarly, Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school and Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school stated respectively that:

I make sure that when I delegate duties to educators, instructions are clear and I give all the necessary support so that they finish the task within the expected period.

(Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school)

Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school had the following to say:

...considering all the structures within the school, all must be fully functioning, so they need to be supported. To support teachers, staff meetings are held at least once per term from the meeting as the SMT we are able to picture how we need to do things and what teachers are not happy about.

(Mr Malimela of Injabulo secondary school)

Emerging from the above utterances I am tempted to claim that when the work is distributed among people and there is proper guidance as they carry out their task, they tend to learn in the process. I can also claim that the climate wherein teaching and learning occurs, has to be favourable and people need to feel secured. When committees exist in schools this suggests to me that leadership is distributed and people are hands-on in the activities they do. Obviously when a task has been delegated it becomes necessary that there is monitoring and support provided to those tasked with the responsibility.

The schools as organisations, are bureaucratic in structure, therefore, principals have to distribute work among teachers. However, distributed leadership is not only about the sharing of tasks in the organisation, but is also used to explain deeper levels of interactions between members working through shared goals (Heikka, Waniganayake & Hujala, 2013). The schools' year planners of all the participants did show that there are various committees with scheduled meetings. However, I did not get access in the minutes of those meetings scheduled except that in three schools I managed to get hold of the records of the learners who violate various school codes of conduct.

Principals seemed to have a clear understanding of how to support and manage teaching and learning. In a nutshell, Principals in supporting teachers to be able to do their work effectively, workshops were seen by most of the principals as significant tools. The workshops were mainly for staff professional development where teachers gained insight of new developments in their fields. Networking surfaced as the most productive tool where teachers shared various methods

of teaching. This was not confined to school but teachers worked even with their neighbouring school teachers where at times they worked in clusters. In addition, moderations and meetings also assisted school principals to get a glimpse of where and how teachers needed to be assisted to improve their teaching strategies.

4.2.3 Principals collaborating with others to support teaching and learning

It appeared from the majority of my participants that meetings were essential for every member to be able to either be assisted, or assist others. The principals believed that from the meeting, people were able to state their take on the obtaining situation. They viewed the meeting as the platform where issues could surface and also be clarified. This notion was supported by this view below, herewith:

I make sure that we have staff meetings that address the issues of curriculum and come up with strategies to improve the quality of our learners' achievement. Parents are invited to see the work of their children. We also invite SGB when we do planning for each forth coming year. (Mr Ngcobo of Vuna Secondary school)

Congruent to this previous view, Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school pointed out that:

We invite parents at the beginning of each term to observe the performance of their children during the previous term.

(Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school)

The same sentiments were shared by Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school who lamented that:

There are various scheduled meetings which appear in our year planner. ... We have staff meetings where we share ideas and gather challenges. School teachers encounter various challenges at school. Heads of Departments hold meetings with teachers and as management we have our own meetings.

(Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school)

Informed by the foregoing utterances, meetings are a tool that principals use the most to communicate and shape the direction of their schools.

I must indicate that albeit the visibility of the year planner, the minutes produced did not corroborate with the number of meetings suggested in the planner. However, there is proof that meetings do convene but not as planned. Networking between teachers in the same school and also with other schools stood out to be the common view among principals. They eulogised it as producing positive outcomes for them. The foregoing was supported by Miss Mtshali, Miss Nzama and Mr Ngcobo who had this to say respectively:

We network with the neighbouring schools whereby we take our teachers to schools that are well performing so that they share teaching methods and strategies to benefit learners and this helps teachers to reflect on what they do in their own work place (classrooms).(Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school)

The similar view shared by Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school who propounded that:

I also encourage networking and I have allowed my teachers to go to neighbouring schools to learn and share pedagogical skills. I have also done the same with my management staff. (Miss Nzama of Impumelelo of primary school)

Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school echoed the same sentiments where she said that:

I promote networking amongst my educators especially the ones in the same phase.
(Mr Ngcobo of Vuna Secondary school)

The minutes of the meetings where the teachers met to plan were available and corroborated with what surfaced from the interviews. I must indicate though that these minutes were with the ones for Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS). Delegation of tasks stood out as significant for most principals since there is a belief amongst them that when the teacher is delegated with a task in the process the teacher gets developed. Moreover, the principal gets relieved albeit he has to monitor progress and provide support but there is time that becomes available for the principal to attend to other tasks. The principals believed that teachers gain confidence and trust to the principal and feel that they are being valued in the organisation. These views were supported by these voices:

I delegate various responsibilities and make sure that I monitor progress and provide support and encourage the teachers to honour due dates.

(Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school)

Similarly, Miss Nzama posited that:

One of my heads of departments has a week ago, graduated with a certificate in leadership and management programme in a highly respected and recognised university in KwaZulu-Natal. I delegated or tasked him with a responsibility to workshop all my teachers on recording and filing of learners records since that is the area in which most my educators are falling short.

(Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school)

Mr Ngcobo echoed the same view by stating that:

I make sure that when I delegate duties to my teachers, instructions are clear and I give all the necessary support so that they finish the task within the expected period. I always after delegating the task, advise teachers to report any challenges they encounter with regards to delegated task so that an intervention would be made and time frames are met. (Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school)

The operations of these principals corroborate with a distributed leadership theory of Bush (2003) who advocates that collegiality is important where people work together as a team, share ideas to enhance the functionality of the school. The same notion is propounded by Heika, Waniganayake and Hujala (2013) who surmise that it is important to share tasks in the organisation for the attainment of the organisational goals. Similarly, Ruff and Shoho (2005) assert that principals need to have good working relations with teachers thereby motivating them and supporting them to become good teachers.

Emerging from the data generated that seemed to corroborate with the views of some researchers, one can claim that principals involved teachers in the affairs of the schools.

Incorporating parents in the school also prevailed as important since a child only spends plus or minus seven hours a day at school. The involvement of parents helped in that the learners realised that both teachers and the parents have a common goal in helping them to succeed in life

through education. When the parents came to school to discuss the learner's performance, it motivated the learners. The teachers and the parents began to devise strategies to improve learner performance in unison. In support of the foregoing, Miss Nzama echoed that:

We invite parents at the beginning of each term to observe the performance of their children during the previous term.

(Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school)

In the cases where learners are problematic at school the intervention of parents had been cited as of paramount importance hence their intervention is sought. This has been confirmed by Mr Malimela who pointed out that:

I, however, communicate with the parents of the learners who always appear in the list of late comers.

(Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school)

The significance of parents' involvement in the school affairs was also underscored by Miss Nzama who stated that:

I also visit or invite parents of those learners who show persistent absenteeism to come to school so we deliberate on causes of the child's persistent absenteeism trend. It is my responsibility to make the parent aware of the implications to the parent and the learner.

(Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school)

Principals to become successful in leading their schools need to understand that other stakeholders need to be involved. This view has been propounded by Fullan (2001) who stated that for schools to develop as learning organisations, they need to involve all the stakeholders who are parents, learners and teachers. Further to that, Fullan (2001) states that leadership is not the sole responsibility of the principal and deputy principal as well as the heads of departments, but also they must satisfy the needs of the educators in the organisation by promoting collaboration, democratic group processes and interactions.

In the same vein, Spillane (2006), from a distributed leadership theory perspective, purports that people need to be leaders in the roles they play in the organisation. Blasé and Blasé (1999), Mendels (2012) and Prytula (2013) surmise that principals do not have to see themselves as panaceas but create the environment where teachers can work collaboratively, give one another

help and guidance to improve instructional practices. In a nutshell, principals have to establish strong relationship with the staff and parents as well as establishing the programmes that are classroom focused and establishing teams across the school, recruiting talented teachers and building strong ties with community. The foregoing hinges mainly on the views shared by Jones, Morgan and Harris (2012) who argue that collaboration and joint enterprise, not only between facilitators and participants, but also among participants themselves stimulates communication, mutual understanding and consensus.

It appeared that principals made an effort to involve all the relevant stakeholders in supporting and managing instructional practices in their schools. This was evident since it appeared that teachers played various roles and there were networking from which we can conclude that teachers learnt from other teachers. It also surfaced that parents were roped in to pledge their support in assuring that there was smooth functioning of the schools.

4.2.4 The challenges to principals' management of teaching and learning

This sub-section was divided /presented according to each stakeholder's challenges:

4.2.4.1 Challenges posed by teachers

The findings suggested that there were various challenges that principals encountered which impinged on them enacting their leadership and management practices. Teachers as human resources that are paramount to teaching and learning, have numerous challenges that impinge on their behaviours. Among other things, teachers did not prepare beforehand on what they have to teach. Late coming and absenteeism emerged as major contributors to the challenges principals encounter. Personal problems of teachers impacted on school activities. Teachers lacked relevant teaching methods and took time to adapt to curricular changes. Some teachers were seen to be not valuing their duties since they sometimes came to school having not pre-planned what they would be teaching. In essence, teachers are supposed to help learners to achieve to their maximum ability but the opposite is true with some of the teachers. This view was shared by Ms Mtshali, who had this to say:

With regard to the challenges pertaining to teachers, is that they come to school having not prepared what they would teach for the day, as a result, teachers fail

to deliver the subject content to their best abilities, hence, learners are disadvantaged.

(Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school)

Similarly, Miss Nzama echoed the same view by saying:

In trying to unpack what I am trying to say to some teachers, not all of them, do not want to comply with what is expected of them, they come to school having not prepared what they will teach, do not want to be in class on time and on task

(Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school)

Mr Ngcobo echoed the same sentiments on teachers being lazy to prepare: *They come to school having not prepared some do not set their tasks on time.*

(Mr Ngcono of Vuna Secondary)

This was corroborated by the log book and the minutes which were convened by the departmental heads where they were addressing the teachers on the importance of prior planning what teachers would teach.

This conundrum of teachers not being effective is shared by Rulinda, Role and Makewa (2013) who assert that teachers are having challenges in concluding syllabus on time which impacts negatively on the performances of learners. Similarly, Lunenburg (2010) contends that the innovations frequently fail because the individuals who make things happen are class teachers and they may not be committed to the task or effort which may be due to lack of skills.

Instructional leadership theory encourages collaboration, communication, staff development and managing time therefore, it is significant that principals and heads of department identify teachers' challenges at their infant stage and come up with interventions to curb them. Wanzare (2012) makes an assertion that there is a need of trust between the supervisor and the teacher, open and flexible to allow supervisor and teachers to speak from their own sense of integrity. It also surfaced that teachers are lagging behind with teaching methods which to a certain extent was attributed to numerous policy changes. The support they get to develop them to cope with these changes is minimal. Hence, they do not offer to the learners the best information as expected. Miss Mtshali posited that:

Some teachers have the challenges in so far as delivering the content. They fail to adjust quickly to the curriculum changes.

(Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school)

Similar sentiments were also echoed by Mr Ngcobo who said that:

Curriculum changes I think they are putting a strain on us as principals in terms of resources as well as developing teachers to cope with new innovations since department trains them for on two half days for what they have to teacher for the entire year

(Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school)

The above utterances highlighted the lack of training that could equip the teachers to be confident in delivering the curriculum. It appeared that teachers had a responsibility of identifying their own short-falls and sought development so that they become competent in teaching. Emerging from the forgoing, it would be unfair that the expectations by the principal to teachers were to be hefty without proper workshop or training provided to teachers to be able to deliver quality in the classroom. Nonetheless, teacher education shall continue to take cognisance of the changes in the methodology and in curriculum (Ushie, 2009).

Drawing from Weber's (1996) model of instructional leadership, principals are expected to make instructional resources and support available in the use of instructional best practices. However, there is no training offered to principals to empower them to develop their teachers in the new innovations. Even heads of department do not get sufficient support hence they struggle to manage curriculum except monitoring that work is done, but quality they cannot measure since they lack of proper understanding. Steyn and Van Niekerk (2007) argue that professional development programmes demand an intensive systemic analysis of the needs so that the appropriate areas for development are selected and planned for. Simultaneously, Heystek, Roos and Middlewood (2005) contend that job satisfaction, culture, structure, motivation, improvement and maintenance contribute positively to an effective context and enable enhanced educators' performance. It is along these bases that one claims that there has to be proper workshop or training for teachers for the schools to obtain a positive turn over.

4.2.4.2 Challenges posed by the Department of Basic Education

The findings suggest that the challenges posed by Department of Basic Education on principals as they enact their instructional leadership practices are numerous. However, there were few challenges which principals felt were vastly affecting their performance in leading instructional practices at schools. The majority of participants claimed and complained that the Department of Basic Education permitted the employment of under-qualified teachers and those who are academically qualified without a professional qualification, late payment of temporary educators, classification of schools into quintiles, provision of support to schools and also of learner-support materials being delayed to schools.

The Department of Basic Education had a tendency of delaying the supply of the resources to schools which was a serious problem since the department has a specific number of days allocated for teaching and learning and one day that has passed by under-utilised or without proper teaching would always have a negative bearing in the life of a learner in the long run. These were the views which Mr Malimela highlighted as contributory factors to the frustrations of principals:

..., so you find yourself in conflict at times with your teachers due to failure of the department to respond to teachers' needs and because teachers expect the principal to provide resources on time at all times. You find that books are delivered to a school in the second school term, how do you explain that?

(Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school)

Similar sentiment was uttered by Ms Mtshali who claimed that:

..., also a procurement policy of the department of education is such that it is a stumbling block in buying the school materials (teaching aids) that will help the school to produce good results. You will find that books reach school very late in a year if not toward the end of first term it is in the second term, but the expectation of the department remains the same albeit it fails to supply teaching and learning materials on time. (Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school)

These utterances highlighted the challenge of the provision of the teaching and learning aids which the principals found hard to curb. In some instances school principals were not allowed to collect school fees which made it difficult for them supplement the teaching resources. Despite the circumstances, principals as the heads of schools have a responsibility to provide resources and create the environment conducive to teaching and learning. According to Weber's (1996) model of instructional leadership it appears that the principal has to create a positive learning climate. This is attainable by providing teachers with the resources that will help them to deliver the subject content. Ruff and Shoho (2005) highlight the importance of the principals' working closer with the district officials where they argue that this can build a solid base for learners' support and achievement. The importance of the positive climatic environment that is sound and supportive is purported by Kruger (2003) who states that promoting a sound and positive climate remains an integral aspect of the principals' responsibilities. Simultaneously, Christie (2003) asserts that organising activities and providing support to teaching and learning remains the task of the principal and the management teams. Further, Kruger (2003) alerts that principals need to take cognisance of the fact that educators' initial training is not always adequate for effective instructional practice. The principals should aim to improve teaching abilities with the view to professional development and motivation. Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2010) contend that for the principals to be able to enact their supporting role, they need to understand the nature and pace of the change and make it inevitable that initial teacher education will need to be supplemented by professional development to enhance subject knowledge and pedagogy.

4.2.4.3 Challenges posed by learners

There are similar challenges posed by learners to those of teachers such as late coming and absenteeism, not doing their homework, involved in drug abuse, bunking classes. Teenage pregnancy is a major challenge that has been hinted by the majority of the principals. The main challenges with regard to the learners include among many destitutions (poverty) and teenage pregnancy coupled with drug abuse. Indiscipline coupled with late coming and absenteeism were pointed at as additional challenges principals faced. This was underscored by Ms Mtshali who echoed that:

The problem with the learners is indiscipline. I have also said that late coming and absenteeism are common problems to both teachers and learners. Some are

coming from broken or disintegrated families you could see that when they come to school they are without food or other material that would assist them so that they are able to learn and to do well at school.

(Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school)

The same notion was qualified and validated by Mr Malimela who said that:

...they bunk classes, do not complete their work, absent themselves from school. I must also state that some of the learners come to school without food in their stomach for days and they head families, they are from broken families, ... drug abuse by boys mainly and after taking their drugs tend to disrespect and misbehave themselves especially toward female teachers. Also pregnancy is a serious challenge, this year alone I have thirteen pregnant learners and among those four (4) learners are doing grade 12.

(Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school)

These challenges were corroborated by the notes in the log book of Mr Malimela where parents of these learners were called to school. The class registers of both school supported their claims that there is high level of absenteeism and the cases where learners were caught with drugs were recorded and the copies of the letters to the governing body and parents were available in the files which were created for the offenders.

This has proven that in these schools there is cooperation of various stakeholders in dealing with learners' challenges. According to distributed leadership theory, stakeholders need to be involved in sharing tasks. The foregoing is supported by Kemper (2009) who posits that some principals' experiences are related to dealing with learners who are from poverty stricken backgrounds. Further, principals experience a situation where they have to provide learners quality of life physically, emotionally and educationally.

4.2.4.4 Challenges posed by parents

The findings suggest that with regard to parents, they don't attend parents meetings as expected and do not support schools with school fees to mention a few. Parents are seen by principals as distancing themselves in the education of their children since their participation is very minimal in school affairs especially the ones aimed at developing the future of learners. The outcry of

parents secluding themselves from school programmes has been shared by Ms Mtshali who claimed that:

Parents do not come in their numbers when they are invited for various reasons such as in parents meetings. (Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school)

Similar view was uttered by Miss Nzama who posited that:

Parents do not attend the meetings arranged for teacher-parents deliberations about learners' achievements. Even when as a principal you invite a parent to discuss the unruly behaviour of a child, the parent simple does not respond positively. (Miss Nzama Impumelelo primary school)

These utterances highlighted the challenges principals faced due to lack of support from the side of parents. This insinuates a situation where parents send their children to school with an intention to abdicate their responsibility of nurturing the child all-round. The information contained in the files which principals showed me corroborated the views which they shared during interviews.

Pansiri (2008) posits that there is poor communication between parents and school management teams. Albeit the response of parents being negative, the principals remain charged with the responsibility to create the inviting environment for the parents' participation in school activities aimed at improving the learners' performance (Kemper, 2009).

4.2.4.5 The challenges posed by the teachers' unions

The findings suggested that principals view teachers' unions as disruptive to teaching at times. The principals believed that unions are not afraid to compromise the education of learners. Nonetheless, there are some positives that unions bring to the education at a broader level. They conducted workshops for teacher development, especially if there was a paradigm shift. The CAPS workshops and other pertinent workshops were conducted by the unions to develop their affiliated educators. Albeit the unions conducting workshops for the teachers, damage they cause is so enormous, teachers are pulled out of classes at any time without notifying the principals so that he or she makes necessary arrangement for the learner supervision. Hence, learners were left untaught. Teacher unions were seen to be disturbing teaching and learning through their mass

meetings which clashed with contact time. Unions also interfered with how schools should operate since they opposed the class observation by the management with the view that their members were victimised in the process.

Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school had this to say:

The teacher unions also disturb teaching and learning by convening their meetings during school contact time. Some of their members do not even attend those meeting though having left school under the name of the union.

(Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school)

In the same motion, Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school expressed his challenge as follows hereunder:

The unions specialise in disturbing teaching and learning. As a school we do not have a plan of counteracting their meetings. They call their meetings at any time they so wish without considering the prime teaching time.

(Mr Ngcobo of Vuna Secondary school)

Similar sentiment was echoed by Miss Mtshali from Sibalukhulu primary school who emphatically said:

Unions disrupt teaching and learning in schools hence my school is not immune to this disturbance by the union meetings. Unions tend to convene their meetings during contact time hours. The teacher unions' programmes sometime run parallel with those of the school hence, disturbing teaching and learning.

(Ms Mtshali from Sibalikhulu primary school)

The principals log books corroborated their utterances about the unions' programmes which took place during teaching and learning time and principals had to shut school since they cannot keep learners at school without the supervision of teachers.

Drawing from the literature, it transpires that there is no conclusive voice about the impact of unions in educations. Various stakeholders have varying views about the impact of teacher

unions on education. The lack of consensus among stakeholders surfaces when the voices of the district officials and the principals collide with that of unions. Fenster (2009) argues that “literature has come to no consensus regarding the impact of agreement on learner academic performance”. Fenster (2009) further states that “the literature has no consensus regarding appropriate unit of analysis studying the impact of collective bargaining on student performance, with studies on the individual student”.

There was no conclusive and decisive negative impact stated in the literature that was posed by the unions. However, the South African context was as the principals depicted it. Teachers were called in to meetings by their leaders when the leaders felt it was convenient for them.

The foregoing discussions suggested that there were numerous challenges from various levels of stakeholders and the principals remained responsible for creating hospitable environment for the stakeholders to partake in school development. However, the other stakeholders needed to support the principals, since principals are teachers in the apex of the school bureaucracy so they are not a panacea to school challenges.

4.2.5 How principals overcome the challenges they experience as they manage teaching and learning in schools

The significance of policies was cited as paramount in diffusing the challenges principals had at schools. But most importantly, developmental programmes or capacity building workshops have been alluded to as integral part of nullifying the challenges principals experience when they manage teaching and learning. Some of the developmental programmes pertain to teaching and learning. Roping in various stakeholders to share their expertise in solving the existing challenges in school is a working solution to the challenges of the principals. The provision of the incentives for those who do well in different categories helps eliminating some challenges. Nutrition programme for schools is eulogised since learners who have nothing to eat at home do benefit a lot.

The significance of implementing the departmental policies after having work-shopped teachers helped since teachers did not want to have their salaries docked. The forthcoming utterances proved the significance of policy implementation:

..., I control the time book and take it to my office at 7h45 since the first bell rings at this time. Those who come late sign time of their arrival and state their reasons for late coming in a book specifically reserved for that, I calculate their hours and once they make a full day, they fill leave forms. This works since if one sees that she will be late, makes a phone call to report.

(Mr Ngcobo of Vuna secondary school)

The same sentiment was echoed by Miss Nzama who said:

I am very strict when it comes to leave forms and it is not a problem to tell a teacher that her leave is leave without pay. (Miss Nzama of Impumelelo school)

This seemed to be working for the principals since it had surfaced repeatedly in the interviews with the principals and it was confirmed by the information in their files that there were measures instituted against those who did not comply with the policies. There were even minutes which showed that teachers were workshopped on departmental policies.

It also transpired that there were developmental workshops for teachers and other relevant stakeholders organised by the school principals. This surfaced from Miss Nzama's utterances who pointed out that:

I strategise and come up with capacity building workshops in various areas. ..., I invite different stakeholders to share with us their expertise in various areas ranging from interpersonal relations to teaching methods (here I invite subject advisors) and social problems. (Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school)

Similarly, Mr Malimela stated that:

In dealing with most challenges that I mentioned earlier, I provide capacity building workshops conducted by capable experts.

(Mr Malimela of Njabulo secondary school)

The above sentiments corroborated with the records of the principals which showed the minutes of these workshops. However, some workshops were in the pipeline since their minutes were not available albeit the year planner suggested such meetings.

The teachers and learners were acknowledged for their contributions to schools. In showing the value of their contributions, the principals give different motivational support and encouragement. Certificates were given to them as a form of motivation. This was reiterated by Miss Nzama who posited that:

I must say that as a school we give some incentives to our teachers who perform well in various areas: teaching, sports, come early dressing up properly and formerly. We have been certificating teachers for various categories similar to learner.

(Miss Nzama of Impumelelo primary school)

The utterances of Miss Nzama were complimented by those of Ms Mtshali who claimed that:

I also make sure that teachers get incentives as well as learners and make sure that those who do well are motivated

(Ms Mtshali of Sibalukhulu Primary school)

I must though state that this did not appear anywhere in the documents that I reviewed in both schools and it was just an idea that these principals had in their minds about showing value and appreciation of what teachers did. Harris and Jones (2010) assert that teachers need to be motivated and supported in doing their work. Similarly, Rhodes and Brundrett (2010) contend that teachers on one hand need to use outcome data to make appropriate learning interventions. Principals on the other hand need to provide opportunities for teachers to learn from one another as means to embed and improve instructional practice. Further, when other teachers do well and get incentivised, there is a probability of others to aspire to receive incentives hence their attitude can change. Joyce (2004) alludes that principals have to strive to develop cadres of teachers who shall serve their colleagues regularly. Drysdale and Gurr (2011) contend that principals need to be enthusiastic about their jobs and understand the importance of utilising the potential of other educators for the improvement of the learners' achievement. Further, the important aspect of leadership is working with people and understanding that school capacity building is an area by which principals and heads of department exert their considerable influence. In a nutshell, principals needed to develop teachers so that they were confident in delivering the subject content resulting the improved learners' achievement.

Emerging from an instructional theory perspective, teachers need to be provided with the opportunity to continuously increase their ability to learn and assist their fellow teachers (Moswela, 2010). Similarly, in a distributed leadership theory perspective, success is not yielded by only sharing tasks, instead by deeper interactions between members working through shared goals (Heika, Waniganayake & Hajala, 2013). The third dimension of Weber's (1996) model of instructional leadership underscores the significance of promoting a positive learning climate. The fulfilment of this dimension by the principals as instructional leaders to promote a hospitable learning climate needs to communicate goals, establish expectations and hospitable environment.

The forgoing spelled out the importance of acknowledging the existence of other stakeholders by valuing their efforts. This could obviously be done by either delegating tasks to people and giving incentives for the completion of task on time or by acknowledging the innovations crafted by the teachers for the benefit of the school. One other vital element of managing schools pointed at as integral to proper functioning of school, was good communication by the management to the teachers and other relevant stakeholders. The latter motion was expressed by both Miss Mtshali and Mr Malimela. This was the utterance of Mr Malimela which endorsed the importance of communication:

As a manager of a school, I have to be accessible, visible and clearly communicate with my staff (Mr Malimela of Njabulo Secondary school)

This view was in agreement with that of Ms Mtshali as it underscored the significance of communication. Miss Mtshali had this to say:

I regard myself as good communicator because one of the ingredients of a good manager is to effectively and clearly communicate instructions to your subordinates, listen to their voices and be visible, accessible so that they can feel at ease to register with you their challenges or concerns. This means providing support, be a shoulder teachers can lean on.

(Miss Mtshali of Sibalukhulu primary school)

The above findings were also corroborated by the documents reviewed such as minute books which showed that meetings were held and that there was communication since minutes were

available as stated earlier on. There were suggestion boxes in some of the schools. However, as how effective that communication was, it remained an unanswered question. Also the yardstick for measuring effective communication was not spelled out clearly in our deliberations. Nonetheless, one can say there is communication taking place in schools.

From an instructional leadership theory point of view, there is a need for trust between the supervisor and the teachers, open and flexible to allow supervisor and the teachers to speak from their sense of integrity (Wanzare, 2012). This notion underscores the importance of communication between the managers and the subordinates. It surmises the significance of respect and understanding and acknowledging the differences amongst people in the work place. One can boldly communicate her personal problems to the superior if there is trust that confidentiality would be maintained. The similar view to that of Wanzare (2012) is shared by Blasé and Blasé (1999) who surmise that there should be agreed human relations. Instructional leadership theory promotes that there should be proper collaboration and communication. Heika, Waniganayeke and Hujala (2013) argue from a distributed leadership perspective that principals need to communicate clearly why a particular task is assigned to a person and what the expectation is, hence the importance of good communication by the leader to the subordinates.

Communication and visibility of the managers is confirmed by a few researchers as significant elements that managers need to display. The teachers need to have confidence in the principal. Teachers gain the principals' confidence when the principals are able to listen to them and provide them with the necessary support. Wanzere (2011) contends that principals need to encourage heads of department, deputy principals to be in continuous communication with teachers about their expectations from them. The communication of the expectations of the managers from the teachers helps teachers know precisely what is expected from them. Buchen (2002) vividly asserts that the best support principals give to teachers is visibility and communication with the individual teachers to encourage them to perform up to their optimal level to help the learners. Further, principals' visibility and accessibility to teachers, levels the field for principals to coach and support teachers to improve their skills. This view corroborated by Ruff and Shoho (2005) who contend that principal has to be visible and accessible. In addition, principals need to be enthusiastic and fostering individual relationships; listening and observing teachers.

The assertions of the principals interviewed were corroborated by the literature in most instances. Emerging from this premise, I deduced that principals had good understandings of creating the environment favourable to teaching and learning despite the challenges that obtained in their learning organisations.

The principals' responses revealed that they had good understandings of their roles. However, it was not esoteric to discover the myriad of challenges that hindered their efforts toward the development of schools posed by stake holder such as teacher unions, teachers and parents to mention a few. The majority of principals cited the partners in education as a source of some challenges they encounter as they implement instructional leadership practices. The principals further suggested some remedies to the challenges that their schools were faced with. However, some of the strategies were dependent on the support from the department of education itself of which it was a mammoth task to receive.

The support of both educators and learners was cited by the majority of the principals as vital in the efficacy of the school. Hence, principals were attempting to provide necessary support to teachers, which was evident even in some documents that were reviewed. Collaboration of the teachers within and outside school remained cognisance to the principals for their schools to be successful.

4.3 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the understandings of the principals of their roles as instructional leaders in supporting teaching and learning. It offers the precise practice of principals as they support and manage teaching and learning; provides clarity on how other stakeholders are roped in as principals are supporting and managing instructional practices in their schools. Emerging from the outline of the challenges that principals faced as they enacted their instructional leadership roles, the latter part of the chapter delved on strategies of curbing the challenges. It was then evident from the responses offered by the participants, backed by literature that principals had a reasonable understanding of their roles as instructional leaders. They made good attempts to support instructional practices in their schools. They acknowledged the challenges from various stakeholders in the organisation. Principals seemed to have reasonable strategies to counter the challenges. Interpersonal relations were identified by the majority as beneficiary in the

effectiveness of the school. Principals need to be approachable and accessible to educators as well as the learners. Collaboration with other educators identified as vital for effectiveness of the school. Moreover, Curriculum matters discussion with teachers was eulogised by the majority of principals as yielding positive outcomes.

The subsequent chapter features the presentation of the conclusions and the recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter delved on the analysis of the data generated. A myriad of findings were made and analysed. This chapter provides the summary of the entire study and recommendations ensuing from the analysis of the generated data. Drawing from the data presented in the previous chapter, the conclusions and recommendations are made. As this study was premised on qualitative research discourse, it levelled the grounds for the future research and, as such, the chapter suggested the implications for future research.

5.2 Study summary

Chapter One was about the exploration of the role of the school principals as instructional leaders in establishing professional learning communities at schools. The purpose and rationale for the study were outlined. The background and the orientation of the study were stated for choosing the topic as the phenomenon to be explored. The justification of the study was made. Aims and objectives have been identified with key questions that the study seeks to answer.

Chapter Two, presented the literature review and theoretical frameworks.

In Chapter Three, description of qualitative research design and a case study methodology was made. The paradigm informing my study was discussed as well as methods used to generate the data. In addition, sampling, ethical issues, triangulation and the limitations of the study were discussed.

Chapter Four presented research findings with regard to this research topic. Local, continental and international literature as well as theoretical frameworks were utilised to analyse data.

Chapter Five provided the conclusions, recommendations and study summary.

5.3 Conclusions

Based on the findings presented in the previous chapter, the following conclusions are made:

5.3.1 Principals' understandings of their role as instructional leaders

The findings in the previous chapter showed that principals have good understanding of their roles in managing teaching and learning. Based on the findings and Weber's (1996) first dimension, the study concludes that vision and the mission of the school are essential and communication of the vision to the staff is of paramount importance. The majority of the principals mentioned the importance of sharing the vision with the staff members so that they own it. The notion of sharing a vision offered all stakeholders an opportunity to discuss the principal's expectations for the school. Visionary principals ascertained that after communicating the vision to the staff, the environment was hospitable for teaching and learning to take place. Principals provided the resources for teachers so that they enhanced learners' achievement. Though principals were not the panacea to teachers and learner challenges, they gave all their best to help teachers focus on their teaching responsibilities and learners were focus on learning. After principals had provided the basic resources to enable teachers to teach, they ensured that teaching and learning occurred optimally by monitoring the work of both teachers.

5.3.2 Principals' practices in supporting teaching and learning

Research findings indicated that majority of principals are approachable to both teachers and learners. Teachers and learners felt at ease to seek principals' assistance if they had challenges. Similarly, Weber's (1996) second dimension and fifth dimension respectively, propound the significance of provision of resources and support of teaching and learning as well as creation of developmental opportunities. Based on these findings and theoretical framework, it was concluded that principals need to be visible, accessible and supportive to both teachers and learners to promote a positive and orderly learning climate. When teachers needed principals' assistance, the principals arranged or crafted development programmes for teachers. Principals also encouraged teachers to attend workshops planned by department of education. Principals appeared to be supporting any form of teacher development aimed at enhancing the learners' academic achievements. In addition, the study revealed that most principals acknowledged good teaching amongst teachers. Hence, principals encouraged teamwork among educators so that

they share various skills. Moreover, principals could not do everything alone, they needed to delegate certain responsibilities, evaluate and give feedback from time to time and be available for teachers and learners at all times to give guidance when challenges emerge.

5.3.3 Principals' collaboration with others to support teaching and learning

Principals appeared to be more comfortable to discuss curricular matters with teachers. Distributed leadership perspective advocates sharing of decision making. Similarly, Weber (1996) eulogises collaborative development of common vision and principals' contribution to planning, designing effective curriculum. Emerging from the foregoing notions, a conclusion is made that principal's forging and promoting collegiality with and amongst staff and other relevant stakeholders enhances the learners' performance. Principals must be actively involved in ensuring that teaching and learning happens. Further, they must encourage teachers to share their expertise. The principals ensured that they had meetings with teachers to discuss school programmes and they also encourage departmental and subject meetings. Based on the availability of the platform to share expertise, teachers felt valued and had a sense of belonging to the school. The foregoing assertion suggested that teachers own the school's programmes as a result they were dedicated to their work. Even after class observation, principals convened meetings with teachers for feedback and providing support when necessary.

5.3.4 The challenges principals encounter as they support teaching and learning

5.3.4.1 The challenges posed by educators

The principals encountered the challenges of some teachers not preparing enough to help learners perform to their maximum levels. A conclusion drawn from the findings was that some teachers went to their classes having not thoroughly prepared due to a lack of clear understanding of subject content or poor pedagogical methods. When teachers are not confident about their content understanding, they absent themselves from the classroom or school. Teachers' absence from school or classes impinged negatively on the learners' achievement. When the teachers were not at school, learners lost a lot of information in the process. The performance of their entire school dropped due to lack of proper teaching practised by teachers.

5.3.4.2 The challenges from the Department of Basic Education

The principals noted with concern the changes in curriculum. When curriculum changes are introduced, there is no proper support to school to adapt to changes introduced. Schools spend more buying resources since when curricular changes are introduced, books and other resources become obsolete. They further cited the training on the new curriculum being insufficient for teachers to be able to help learners to achieve excellent results. The conclusion drawn then was that there is lack of proper support from the Department of Basic Education to help teacher and learners perform at their maximum level in teaching and learning.

5.3.4.3 The challenges posed by learners

The principals cited female learners' pregnancy as their principal challenge since learners left school for labour and spent more time trying to raise their infants. The conclusion drawn is that learners' pregnancy impinged negatively on the school functionality. The high level of absenteeism increases learner poor achievement. The pregnant learners went for ante-natal clinic care once every month. That meant a learner could be absent at school for least nine days of learning. The pregnant learner's attitude changed due to hormonal changes and body activity changed too which in most cases impacted negatively on the performance of a learner. The challenge persisted even post natal since the mother learner had to collect grants for the infant. The school functionality dwindled as a result. Some learners did not return to school after labour since they have to look after their offspring. The challenge of drop-out was also caused by drugs / substance abuse and indiscipline. In addition, the findings showed that many learners dropped-out of school because of drugs and they disrespect teachers. After taking drugs the ability to focus is impaired. A conclusion is therefore made that, the learners' drugs /substances abuse affected them physiologically and mentally, hence could not perform well in their academic tasks which eventually led to overall poor performance.

5.3.4 2 The challenges posed by teacher unions

The major challenge principals advocated was the chaos that unions caused at schools. They complained of unions running their programmes parallel to those of schools which is teaching and learning. The research findings showed that principals were not happy with the manner in which teacher unions operated since teaching and learning was interrupted by the unions. The

teachers did not make means to recover the teaching time they wasted. Principals were frustrated by these actions of the union since they were the ones who account to the Department of Basic Education and the parents for the poor results.

5.3.5 Principals overcoming challenges

The voices of principals showed that good interpersonal relations benefit the functionality of their schools. Based on this finding, interpersonal relations are essentials for the success of the school. When teachers had good relations, it became easier for them to share expertise which in turn the overall performance of the school was enhanced. In addition, principals actively monitored and crafted programmes that supported and promoted school functionality. In doing all this, principals involved all the relevant stakeholders.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations were made:

5.4.1 Involvement of all stakeholders in the implementation

The principals' roles encompass a number of responsibilities which all are embedded in the academic vision and the mission of the schools. Most significantly, that academic vision and mission need to be owned by the entire school community. That is realisable when the principals democratically manage schools. Good academic mission and vision ought to benefit and surface in the learners' academic achievements. It is recommended that principals with the stakeholders have equal information and understandings about what is essential for school functionality and evaluate their own performances. Principals need to acknowledge the potential of the teachers and other stakeholders with the view of enhancing learner achievement. Moreover, principals need to understand that educational policies are fluid, as a result teachers need to be always developed in line with the effected curricular changes. When the teachers are continuously sharpened, which is the observation of the principle of a life- long learning, in addition, they become confident in executing their duties. The teaching time is utilised optimally to the benefit of learners.

5.4.2 Practicing dispersed leadership

It is common knowledge that collaboration is better than individualism, therefore, for the principals to succeed had to rope in other stakeholders to become role players. Ensuing from this notion, it is recommended that principals delegate certain responsibility to other members of staff. However, it is significant that there is continuous development of the stakeholders. Succinctly, Principals need to empower other stakeholders so that they can add meaningful value to the functionality of the schools. Principals' promotion of networking among the staff and with teachers outside their schools develops teachers and their potential is freed. The latter view is reinforced by the preamble of constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which states that "We, the people of South Africa, improve the quality of life of all citizens and free the potential of each person". The creation of platforms for the teachers to spread their wings in striving to support each other results in improved learner performance since teachers are oozing confidence to help learners maximise their academic excellence.

5.4.3 Forging synergy among stakeholders

Synergy among various stakeholders is recommended for schools' functionality. Principals need to spearhead the negotiations that learners, parents, Department of Basic Education and teachers' unions unanimously agree on principles of how they need to protect optimisation of teaching and learning time. Teachers' unions should assist schools principals in persuading the department to provide teaching and learning resources to schools on time. Functionality of schools hinges on the availability of resources. The female learners' pregnancy impacts negatively on school performance therefore; it requires principals to rope in Department of Health, South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) to educate learners about the prevention methods available. The schools need to have the sound relationship with non- governmental organisations to share their expertise with them in dealing with drugs /substance abuse, teenage pregnancy. Non-governmental organisations can help teachers deal with their personal problems some of which lead to teacher absenteeism. The Department of Basic education has to extend its nutritional programmes to all school so that learners are able to focus on their studies.

5.4.4 Promotional of interpersonal relations

Principals had clear understandings of their challenges and therefore, it is recommended that principals craft the innovations that directly seek to deal with the challenges. Principals can effectively thwart their challenges by drawing in the expertise of various bodies and fundraising to have sufficient money to counter myriad of challenges they experience. All the solutions to the challenges hinge on the availability of money and sound relations among stakeholders.

5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the conclusions of the findings emerging from the previous chapter. Recommendations made stem from the conclusions. These recommendations level the ground for future research and to a certain extent can help principals who can get exposed to this dissertation deal with their challenges as they manage their schools. The recommendations also pave the way for future research.

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