



**SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' INSTRUCTIONAL
LEADERSHIP PRACTICES: A CASE OF TWO
SCHOOLS IN THE PINETOWN DISTRICT.**

YACHNA GOWPALL

2015

**SCHOOL PRINCIPALS' INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP
PRACTICES: A CASE OF TWO SCHOOLS IN THE
PINETOWN DISTRICT**

BY

YACHNA GOWPALL

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
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Supervisor: Dr S.E. Mthiyane

Date submitted: December 2014

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Yachna Gowpall, declare that this research project: **School principals' instructional leadership practices: A case of two schools in the Pinetown District**, abides by the following guidelines:

- (i) The research presented in this dissertation is my original work and reference to the work of others has been duly acknowledged by means of complete references.
- (ii) This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
- (iii) This dissertation comprises no other person's data, tables, graphs, pictures or any such information unless the source is specifically acknowledged.
- (iv) This dissertation does not contain writings from other sources unless specifically acknowledged and the original sources declared in this manner:
 - Their original statements have been rephrased and referenced.
 - The exact words have been quoted, written inside quotation marks and referenced with the page number of the original document.
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Researcher: Y. Gowpall (208514059)

Date: _____

SUPERVISOR'S STATEMENT

This dissertation was submitted with/without my approval

Dr S.E. Mthiyane

2015

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

My family for their love, encouragement, understanding and support throughout this academic journey.

ABSTRACT

This research project explored the instructional leadership practices of school principals and was conducted as a case study in one education district of Pinetown, KwaZulu-Natal. The study included two school principals and eight post level one teachers at a primary and secondary school. It is within the context of the public school system in the Pinetown district that this research explored and investigated what school principals do to enact their roles of supporting instructional leadership practices in schools, including their overall experiences.

This qualitative study was located within an interpretive research paradigm. Instructional leadership theory was adopted for the study. International, national and continental literature was reviewed to seek greater insight into the research topic. In-depth semi-structured interviews and documents reviews constituted data generation instruments. Data generated was analysed employing thematic analyses that identified codes, categories and themes.

The conclusions arrived at indicate a general conclusion that the school principals' unique approaches and differing individual circumstances impact upon and influence their responsibilities of supporting teaching and learning practices in schools. These circumstances include resource availability, monetary circumstances, exposure to professional development, induction programme and the support of management which impact on the effectiveness of the school principal as an instructional leader. Effective instructional leadership can be a catalyst for improved academic performance of schools. The study revealed that the school principals needed to have a clear understanding of what their instructional leadership roles entail in order to enact this role. The conclusions arrived at and the recommendations made indicate that school principals undergo training and professional development workshops in order to gain the pedagogical knowledge and skills necessary to lead as an instructional leader. Other factors impeding the instructional tasks of the school principals were also identified in the research *viz.* that the subject advisors were not carrying out their duties in supporting school principals' or the impact of educational policies within the context of schools. In the light of the foregoing recommendations were made that aimed at improving the craft of the school principals as instructional leaders.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACE (SL):	Advanced Certificate in Education (School Leadership)
C2005:	Curriculum 2005
DoBE:	Department of Basic Education
DoE:	Department of Education
DTT:	District Task Team
HEI:	Higher education institutions
HoD:	Head of Department
IL:	Instructional leadership
NCS:	National Curriculum Statement
NSC:	National Senior Certificate
NPC:	National Planning Commission,
PLC:	Professional learning community
PPLC:	Principal professional learning community
RNCS:	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SASA:	South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996
SCI:	Subject, curriculum and instructional leadership
SL:	School Leadership
SMT:	School Management Team
WIC:	Work-integrated learning competency
CAPS:	Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background

Principals today face complicated and challenging contexts (Chikoko; Mthiyane & Naicker 2013) in the school situation. Legislative policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act (in the USA) and the South African Schools Act No.84 of 1996 call for increased demands on

school principals to lead instructional improvement in schools. Previously, principals played a minor role in instructional leadership in schools (Elmore, 2000). Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu and Van Rooyen's (2010) research show that large samples of Gauteng principals do not regard themselves as instructional leaders. Many principals proclaim that 'instructional leadership' (IL) is a concept which is fairly new hence signifying new knowledge, skills and practices (Akcaoglu & Gumus, 2013). Principals therefore require assistance in the arena of instructional practices and leadership. Despite literature on the availability of instructional leadership on a fairly large scale, Meredith (2007) maintains that literature often neglects its implementation and 'what this entails empirically', especially in South Africa (Hoadley & Ward, 2008). In South African schools, records on how school principals exercise instructional leadership or develop effective cultures of teaching and learning are quite scarce (Bush, 2006). This invariably creates a knowledge gap in literature, dealing with instructional leadership which has been portrayed as being conceptually blurred (Hallinger, 2014). Instructional leadership is viewed as being problematic because implementation, support and engagement with principals is lacking, and there's no clarity on the roles of principals. Given the above context, it is imperative that principals understand their instructional leadership roles within their contexts hence the need for this study. The problem question that emerges is whether principals placed in management positions are qualified, trained and have sufficient experience to lead by instructional leadership practices.

1.2 Purpose and rationale for the study

My interest on the phenomenon of instructional leadership, specifically the school principal as an instructional leader emanated from the distinct behaviours on how principals lead and manage schools. As an educator of three years' experience and having done my teaching practical's in a variety of schools for a duration of four years, I have witnessed the ways in which principals lead and manage schools. Principals should serve as instructional leaders, however, in practice few principals act as instructional leaders (Bush, *et al.* 2010). Principals need to encompass instructional leadership programmes that promote good teaching, attract and retain good teachers (National Planning Commission, 2011). The 2011 report for the National Planning Commission, on management of school's for instructional leadership suggests that successful schools maintain sound (competent, skilled and knowledgeable) individuals as principals accompanied with sound management teams who recognise and can fulfil their roles as curriculum leaders, ensuring that a structured environment suited to learning is always present. Although instructional leadership emphasises the principals' role

as the curriculum leader, I have observed that in some schools principals rarely support teachers in delivering and unpacking the curriculum. Instead of providing teachers with support systems, workshops and mechanisms that will enhance the delivery of the curriculum *viz.* staff development programmes, instead they act as monitors, supervisors and critics of teachers work. The principal in the role of an instructional leader is obliged to practise instructional leadership which offers an opportunity to improve the quality of leadership in public schools in providing the behaviours and techniques of supporting teaching and learning. This would require not merely monitoring and supervision of teachers but also devising systems to support teachers in their instructional role since teachers are seen as the vehicles of teaching and learning to students at school (Armstrong, Gustafsson, Spaul, Taylor & van den Berg, 2011).

I wanted to investigate how principals ought to serve as instructional leaders against how they perform as instructional leaders within their schools. Professionally I observed that at my school there was evidence of strong leadership. The principal has a doctoral degree in the discipline of education, leadership and management. He modelled successful leadership practices; kept abreast of changing trends in education and regularly attended workshops to improve school quality and productivity. He imparted his knowledge to educators at staff meetings and through the implementation of school practices. The school has earned recognition as a “quality school of excellence”. Leadership innovation was imperative at improving the quality. It was noteworthy that whilst my school was performing well neighbouring schools were underperforming. The markedly difference in performance levels peaked my interest in school leadership (Armstrong, *et al.* 2011).

According to Christie (2010), Hoadley and Ward (2008) and Hallinger (2011), instructional leadership practices are linked to school improvement/ performance and that some schools thrive under instructional leadership practices whilst others struggle. My study adds to the knowledge base of instructional leadership which principals of ‘struggling schools’ may draw upon. Furthermore the South African research base on leadership is restricted. Bush and Joubert (2006) argue that material on the management of teaching and learning is limited in schools in South Africa. To be precise Bush and Joubert (2006) state that description of how school principals and school managers, implement “instructional leadership” in their schools and how they seek to develop a successive culture of teaching and learning is unaccounted

for. In my study, I focused on the instructional leadership practices of school principals and how principals exercise their instructional leadership roles. Warner (2010) adds that presently research on school leadership is dogmatic, variations of schools are seldom accounted for, descriptions of successful practices are lacking. Relevant literature tends to aim at struggling/underperforming schools and its leadership. The intention of my study was to close the gap of current research by moving away from the over prescriptive one dimensional view of instructional leadership and focussing on school principals instructional leadership practices in primary and secondary schools which represented variations between schools.

1.3 Aims and objectives of the study

This study is guided by the following research questions and objectives:

- To establish principals' understandings of their roles as instructional leaders in their schools.
- To explore the practices that principals engage in as instructional leaders.
- To establish how educational policies impact on instructional leadership practices of school principals.
- To evaluate the organisational and management structures that school principals use to promote teaching and learning.

1.3.1 Research Questions

Collectively, this study seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the principals' understandings of their roles in instructional leadership practices in their schools?
- What instructional leadership practices do school principals engage in, that would ensure quality teaching and learning?
- How do educational policies impact on the instructional leadership practices of school principals?
- What management structures do principals have in place in order to effectively promote teaching and learning?

1.4 Clarification of key concepts

To avoid any misconception of terminology used in this study, the following key concepts will be clarified to ensure that correct meaning is attached to them.

1.4.1 Leadership

Leadership cannot be used without management. Wherever I use leadership management will be subsumed in it. According to Daft, (2005) leadership is concerned with an influence relationship among leaders (school principal) and employees (teachers). It is a social influence. In this study leadership is used to describe someone who influences others to achieve the aims of the organisation.

1.4.2 Management

Tripathi and Reddy (2008) describe management as the art of getting things done (procedures). It is concerned with procedures necessary to keep the school running. James (2000) describes these procedures as planning, organising, activating and controlling. In this study management is used to refer to the instructional leadership activities conducted by the principal.

1.4.3 Instructional Leadership

Hallinger (2010) refers to instructional leadership as resilient leadership concentrated on curriculum and principal instruction. In this study, I will use instructional leadership to mean the act of principals influencing the culture of teaching and learning through their practices and interactions with teachers and learners in efforts towards achieving effective curriculum delivery and coverage.

1.4.4. Leadership practices

Leadership practices refer to all those actions and tasks that the principal undertakes at school in order to promote teaching and learning. Jekins (2006) proposes that ‘leadership practices’ have a dual approach since practices of leadership should not only focus on physical practices i.e. a means of doing things, practices also include understanding. This understanding requires leaders to have ‘knowledge of practices and inquiry’ within institutions. Here leadership practices also include the art of knowing how to undertake tasks. In this study

leadership practices is understood as the activities both in theory and practice that the principal undertakes to ensure teaching and learning (IL).

1.5. Literature review and theoretical / conceptual framework

1.5.1 Literature review

Peariso's (2011) article contains aspects that focus on instructional leadership under an umbrella view. Based on the sample of high school principals, assisted by scholar studies of Hallinger (2000) and Opfer and Pedder (2011) the concept of instructional leadership was examined by Peariso (2011) who reviewed behaviours of leaders, contending that an inclusive, distinguished, holistic and learner focused leadership is required. Work on leadership has been drawn from schools in California. On the basis of findings, links were established between leadership and successful skills. At this point one should be aware that successful skills have been drawn from high schools in California and therefore cannot be generalisable to all school types in varying countries and context. Further to this, the study has been limited to the high school and drew on the studies of two authors who may have written based on a particular perspective. Noting this point, my study attempted to transcend some of the identified challenges, by reviewing research on the phenomenon of instructional leadership from various authors and school types (primary and secondary) and making it more adaptable to South African school types.

Peariso (2011) highlights three issues dominating leadership, *viz.* instructional leadership behaviours, principals' pedagogical beliefs and constructivism. The study highlights the prominence of instructional behaviours of leaders in effective schools. Similar to the exploration of the behaviours and practices of instructional leaders, my study aimed to explore how principals understood and enacted their instructional roles, including how they developed themselves and others, as instructional leaders to promote quality teaching and learning.

Further to the issues dominating leadership, Peariso (2011) during his interactions with scholars (Jonassen, (2009); Gomez & Herman (2009); O'Neill & Wise, 2009) on leadership found that leadership is socially constructed. A social construction of leadership is significant because leadership styles vary from school to school. Hence one has to establish a theory that works in the particular context instead of searching for a one-size fits all theory of

instructional leadership. He argues that empirical data on instructional leadership has been focused on one level (primary), but it should be conveyed by empirical data at different levels and by a multiplicity of leaders. He argues that we can only know effective leadership when we include stakeholder's perspectives and constructions of leadership. Extending on his argument, he pronounces that focus have been acquitted to poorly performing and disadvantaged schools, we have not fully considered leadership in other settings and its influence on educational leadership. My study extended on the perspective of leadership by not only eliciting views of the principals but also the views of teachers in an attempt to corroborate principal's interviews.

Other than providing an understanding of leadership Peariso (2011) conceptualises leadership, specifically instructional leadership is concerned with a social construction of leadership. He maintains that instructional leadership is about the behaviours of principals in their engagement with activities that affect student learning. Principals through engaging in different behaviour's leading to different outcomes begin to construct and adopt specific behaviours that lead to positive outcomes. Peariso (2011) therefore contends that positive instructional behaviours are constructed through the process of 'trial and 'error' or behaviour and outcome. He cautions that instructional leadership prevails among various dimensions/ varying practices.

Peariso (2011) has identified the following eight IL elements: framing the school goals; communicating school goals; supervision and evaluation of instruction; coordinating the curriculum; monitoring student progress; maintaining high visibility; providing incentives for teachers and professional development of teachers. The article by Peariso (2011) concludes that a wider study is required for developing the behaviours of instructional leaders, that instructional leadership demands leaders to have expertise knowledge of goals, curriculum, teaching pedagogy, assessment and incentives for teacher learning. His second conclusion is that instructional leadership occurs when there are distinctive organisational behaviours. According to Opfer and Pedder (2011), these are linked to professional learning communities. Finally Peariso (2011) argues that teachers possess knowledge and expertise, so instead of being mere recipients of knowledge, teachers should work closely with their school principals and policymakers to establish instructional practices geared towards school improvement. My study examined the practices of instructional leaders drawing on the instructional leadership theory of Webber (1996). Weber's (1996) theoretical framework enhances the study because

it is a culmination of instructional practices outlined by Blasé and Blasé, (1998) and Hallinger (2000) among other authors. It is therefore representative of a variety of successful school leadership behaviours entrenched in one model. Moreover my study heeded Peariso' (2011) argument that teachers are a valuable source of information to achieving quality education. They should therefore be included in school decisions and planning.

In exploring the school principals' instructional leadership practices, I acknowledge the contribution of teachers highlighted by Peariso (2011), by including them as research participants in my sample study. The findings of the study may therefore be used by policymakers in drawing new educational policies.

1.5.2 Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

Various authors such as Hallinger (2000), Weber (1996), Christie, Hoadley and Ward (2009) have written a variety of scholarly works and theoretical frameworks on instructional leadership. Each model is characterised by its own characters and dimensions. However my study was underpinned by Weber's (1996) model of instructional leadership. Weber's (1996) model looks at the leadership functions of school principals. This model was most suited to my study it was closely related to my research topic. In addition, it linked to other instructional leadership models *viz.* Hallinger's (2000) model on the dimensions of instructional leaders. Since the core function of instructional leadership is to improve teaching and learning Weber's (1996) model will assist in the attainment of school improvement. It proves beneficial to policymakers, practitioners and researchers. In my study, this model served as a catalyst for teaching and learning / instructional leadership practices. The model that underpinned my study was used to inform and enhance the study by filling in the knowledge gaps and deficiencies of instructional leadership models used in isolation since it is an extension and culmination of other models (Hallinger, 2000).

1.6 Research design and methodology

1.6.1 Paradigm

This study was located in the interpretive paradigm. It took an ontological stance that there are multiple realities (Creswell, 2012). This suited the study since I elicited information from principals on their understandings of instructional leadership practices. Through engaging

with principals, knowledge was socially constructed, taking an epistemological viewpoint located in the interpretive paradigm.

1.6.2 Research design

Research design, according to Maree (2007), is a plan that moves away from assumptions to more specific and structured details such as participant selection, data generation techniques utilised in the study and how data will be analysed. This study employed a qualitative research design based on a case study research. This was a case of one primary and one secondary school in the Pinetown District and a case of two principals' perspectives on their roles as instructional leaders and teachers' perspectives on their principal's role as instructional leaders.

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2010) case study's provide rich data thick in description, that portray lived experiences, thoughts and feelings of a particular situation. They involve looking at cases in real life contexts so cases are descriptive and detailed (Robson, 2002 p. 178). I have used a case study approach for this research as it focuses on the lived experiences/practices of school principals as instructional leaders. Further I have chosen a case study approach since results are more easily understood by a wide audience since the case is subsumed and written in everyday situations and language. Moreover case studies are immediately intelligible; they speak for themselves, they catch unique features that may otherwise be lost in larger scale data (e.g. surveys); these unique features may hold the key to understanding the situation and they are strong on reality (Robson, 2002, p.256). Since my study aimed to understand the role of the principal as an instructional leader and the instructional practices that he/she engages with, the case study was applicable to my study.

Semi-structured interviews were used to generate data since semi-structured interviews allows for more flexibility during data collection and creates the space for enquiry stimulated by the interview (Rule & John, 2011, p. 65). In order to triangulate what was articulated by the school principals, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the two teachers and two heads of department in each of the selected schools to gain their perspectives on the instructional role of their school principals. All interviews were digitally voice recorded, after which it was transcribed and thereafter subjected to content analysis.

1.6.3 Methodology

Delport; De Vos; Fouche & Strydom, (2005) state that research methodology is a theoretical paradigm or framework in which the researcher works. It comprises of study aspects such as the population, sampling method employed, strategy used for selection of methods. Further the methodology describes the techniques employed in the study, the particular measuring instruments that will be used, an account of the study procedures employed, the validity and reliability are also discussed. Ethical considerations and possible challenges/limitations will be identified and methods to overcome those will be suggested. Finally the procedures to analyse data and the generalisability of study finding are also discussed. Myers, (2009) refers to research methodology as a plan of enquiry, which interchanges from assumptions to focus on research design and generation of data.

Research distinguishes between two types or research methodologies namely qualitative and quantitative methodology (Cohen, *et al.* 2011). My study aimed to evaluate the role of the school principal as an instructional leader from the perspective of various principals locating it in qualitative research. Therefore, I used the qualitative methodology to understand the phenomenon of school principals' instructional leadership practices. Qualitative research premises that the researcher's ability to interpret and make sense of what he/ she sees is crucial for understanding any social phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). My study focused on school principal's practices and their experiences. A case study methodology was employed. Rule and John (2012) state that a case study provides rich insights into particular situations and allow for an in depth study of boundaries. In this study I used a qualitative case study approach because it allowed me to study the in-depth boundaries of my case. This was a case study of one primary and one secondary school and a case of principals' perspectives on their roles as instructional leaders.

1.6.4 Sampling and participants

Sampling refers to the process used for selection of the population for the study (Maree, 2007). There is a multiplicity of sampling procedures such as purposive, stratified, and convenient and snowball samplings. In this study one primary and one secondary school in the Pinetown District were purposively selected. In qualitative research, sampling is done purposively (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Purposive sampling, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), is where the researcher picks the cases to include in the study on the basis of their typicality, their own judgment or characteristics sought. I purposively selected two schools in the Pinetown district based on convenience. I selected the Pinetown

District of principals located close to me. This allowed for easy access to the participants. My participants constituted two principals and eight post level one teachers. The teachers of the two schools were chosen based on convenience purposive sampling since they were easily accessible to me in the schools I have chosen to research. Further it was also a case of intensity purposive sampling since the selected teachers were information rich cases which manifest the phenomenon intensely, since they represented different angles of participation. Four of the participants comprised of the teacher component while the other four participants comprised the heads of department at the schools.

1.6.5 Research methods

Research methods are techniques used to generate data (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). To generate data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with principals and teachers. The study was located within qualitative research therefore it lent itself to interviews as a tool for data generation. Semi-structured interviews allow for probing and a greater response rate from participants (Maree, 2011). The study focused on the understandings of principals; it therefore called for a greater response rate from participants. To corroborate what principals articulated in the interviews, interviews with teachers and document reviews were utilised. The advantage of document reviews is that it is an obtrusive means, rich in depicting the beliefs and values of participants in their naturalistic environments (Creswell, 2013).

1.6.6 Data analysis

All semi-structured interviews were digitally voice recorded. This allows the researcher concentration on how the interview is ensuing and where or what to proceed to next (de Vos, 2005) and assists the researcher in the transcription of the interview verbatim for analysis purposes. All interview transcriptions were subject to content analysis by generating categories and themes.

As the documents were reviewed, the researcher continuously examined the data, highlighting certain points in the text or writing comments in the margin. These may identify important points, note contradictions and inconsistencies, common themes that may be emerging, references to related literature, comparison and contrast with other data. The data / documents was subjected to categorisation, themes and comparative analysis.

Other than content analysis, comparative analysis was also used in the study to analyse the document reviews. According to Manson (2002) comparative analysis is when: as the interview transcripts are made and the documents assembled, the researcher continuously examines the data, highlighting certain points in the text or writing comments in the margin. These may identify important points, note contradictions and inconsistencies, common themes that may be emerging, references to related literature, comparison and contrast with other data. The data categorised.

1.6.7 Issues of trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) contend that, in a qualitative study the purpose of trustworthiness is to support the contention that the researcher's findings deserve or are noteworthy of attention. Trustworthiness comprises of four principles which are transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability (de Vos, 2005).

Transferability refers to “the applicability of one set of findings to another context” (de Vos, 2005, p. 346). He goes on to explain that transferability can be enhanced through the use of triangulation where data can be generated from other sources. In my study, I ensured that there was a paper trail in terms of the interview transcripts which other researchers who want to replicate this study in similar contexts can use. The principle of credibility denotes member checks where the researcher gets participants to check the accuracy of the written transcripts of the recorded interviews (Rule & John, 2011). Dependability according to Rule and John (2011, p. 107) refers to an attempt by the researcher “to focus on methodological rigour and coherence towards generating findings and case accounts which the research community can accept with confidence.” The last principle refers to conformability which De Vos (2005) explains as when the findings of the research are confirmed by the data. To ensure conformability I used my critical reader.

1.6.8 Ethical issues

Researchers must abide by ethical issues (De Vos, *et al.* 2005). De Vos, *et al.* (2004, p.63) defines ethics as “a set of moral principles” i.e. informed consent, non-maleficence and beneficence (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Informed consent is where participants

choose to participate in the research study after being informed of facts that may affect decisions (Chapman & McNeill 2009). In this study, I obtained informed consent using indemnity forms. Ethical clearance was sought from the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal (UKZN), thereafter permission letters from the gate keepers such as the KZN DoE, from the principals and teachers of the selected schools were also obtained.

The principle of non-maleficence (do not harm) is employed. Cohen, *et al.* (2007, p.59) state that researchers must always have the welfare of participants in mind. Pseudonyms of participants and schools are used in ensuring anonymity in the study. In terms of beneficence i.e. how the research will prove beneficial and for whom? Cohen, *et al.* (2007). I impressed upon participants of the value of my study.

1.7 Delimitation of the study

Maree, (2011) views delimitations of a study to be the researcher's choices which ought to be mentioned. Delimitations also describe the set boundaries for the study. My study was included in one primary and one secondary school in the Pinetown district. Whilst the geographical boundary of the study was limited to the Pinetown District and therefore cannot be generalisable to all districts, I therefore used both primary and secondary schools so that the study may be identifiable to all schools in varying districts. This minimised or delimited the spatial boundaries of the study.

1.8 Limitations of the study

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2007), limitations are those aspects of methodology or design that influence the interpretation of study results. A primary limitation to this study was its scope. The study could only address the instructional leadership role from the perspective of the principals due to the study's duration. The investigation did not consider how the other stakeholders such as teachers, learners among others could contribute to instructional practices. Secondly, geographical limitations underpinned this study. The study was limited to the Pinetown District and is therefore not representative of all educational districts. Furthermore, conducting this study in a different district context may have led to different results. Consequently transferability was also limited. In addition the short-term nature of data generation tends to limit our understanding of how sustainable this research may be for principals in years to come.

1.9 Organisation of study

This research study is divided into five chapters as follows:

Chapter One provided the background and orientation to the study. The focus, purpose and incentive for the study followed by the rationale for pursuit of this study were presented. Thereafter the aim, objectives and critical research questions informing the study were recorded after which the clarification of key concepts used in this study were described. This chapter concluded with an outline of the methodology utilised in the research study.

Chapter Two reviewed literature in respect to the critical research questions. The review commenced with a discussion on the theoretical tools employed in this study. An account of the theory of instructional leadership and a conceptual framework in relation to instructional leadership was presented. This was followed by a review of selected literature on instructional leadership and principal's instructional leadership practices. An overview of international, national and local literature was examined. The review of literature was done in an attempt to gain an understanding of the phenomenon instructional leadership more specifically principals' instructional leadership practices in the educational leadership context.

Chapter Three's focus was on the research design and methodology utilised in the research study. The research paradigm containing issues of ontology, epistemology and methodology was presented, followed by an elucidation of the methodological approach to the study. Thereafter, data collection methods, sampling, data analysis techniques, ethical issues and limitations of this study concluded the chapter.

Chapter Four concentrated on analysis, findings and discussion of the data derived from semi-structured interviews. The data was presented under themes and sub-themes which arose from research participants. A discussion of the data in relation to the conceptual and theoretical frameworks drawn in chapter two, as well as other scholastic works was presented.

Chapter Five presented the conclusions and recommendations that emerged from the study. Conclusions were drawn on the basis of the empirical findings and appropriate recommendations based on the conclusions drawn.

1.10 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the study introduction, rationale and motivation. The aims and objectives of the study as well as the key research questions were outlined. After which a

clarification of key concepts were explained in order to facilitate a better understanding. The research design and methodology was presented followed by the outline of the chapter. In the next chapter, relevant literature will be reviewed for the purpose of establishing a theoretical framework for the practice and implementation of instructional leadership of school principals.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

2.1 Introduction

An introduction and orientation to the study under investigation was provided in the previous chapter. This chapter focuses on literature review on instructional leadership (IL) and the role of school principals on student achievement in ensuring a management practice (IL) that would ensure quality education.

Literature on instructional leadership in schools is categorised into three areas, namely the theoretical knowledge base behind instructional leadership activities; the continuum of research on the behaviours of instructional leaders, and the investigations of how leadership affects teacher and learner outcomes (Buckley & Supovitz, 2008).

My literature review begins by presenting a brief historical background to instructional leadership. It also focuses on why instructional leadership is advocated to schools, thereafter the characteristics and practices of instructional leaders are explored, after which the link between leadership and management is established. Further to this, the challenges facing instructional leaders and the possibilities of instructional leadership are mentioned. Ultimately a framework for instructional leadership is discussed drawing the chapter to an end.

2.2 Review of related literature

A review of literature is as an evaluative report of studies derived from literature in relation to a specific area of research. It serves to succinctly summarise, describe, evaluate and clarify this literature and forms the theoretical base for the research (Boote, 2005). In this chapter I am reviewing literature dealing with the phenomenon of school principals' instructional leadership role. Literature reviewed in this section will be drawn from various international and local scholarly writings.

2.2.1 History of instructional leadership

The concept of instructional leadership dates back as early as the 19th century when the instructional dimensions of schools were attached to the role of the school principal (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee, 1982; Edmonds, 1979; Hawley & Rosenholtz, 1984; Purkey & Smith, 1983). Therefore, the attention of scholars, researchers and policy makers alike was on principal leadership. From then onwards, the concept of instructional leadership and what it represents for principals evolved, becoming more perplexed and confusing for school principals (Bossert, Dwyer, Edmonds, 1979; Hawley & Rosenholtz, 1984; Lee & Rowan, 1982; Purkey & Smith, 1983). During the 1960's, instructional leadership was seen as the

principal engaging in activities for improved instruction. Moving into the 1970's and 1980's it was tied to 'supervision'. The quality of teaching and learning may be improved through supervision. Hence supervision was intended to improve instruction (Evans & Neagly, 1976). The 1990's held the widespread belief that principals required to be trained as instructional leaders in the United States of America and around the globe (Hallinger & Murphy, 1992). Consequently instructional leadership was mandatory of school principals (Crawson & McPherson, 1994). A framework for instructional leadership was developed comprising of aspects such as the school's mission and goals, handling educational functions, promotion of an academic climate conducive to learning and developing and enhancing supportive working environments (Murphy, 1990). The 1990's were all about supporting the instructional programmes at school whilst emphasising quality teaching and learning. Modernity saw the concept of instructional leadership as being viewed as only the prerogative of the school principal (Hallinger, 2003). However, this conceptualisation has been highly criticised for focusing on the principal as the cohort of power and authority. This critique has led to an improvised and more apt concept of instructional leadership. Presently, the concept of instructional leadership has broadened its horizons to include all aspects that impact on teaching and learning. Further, it is inclusive of all stakeholders, teachers, learners, parents and the wider community that affect learning. The constructs of instructional leadership has reincarnated as a new term, "leadership for learning". Moreover, it has become the catalyst for schools and 'a new paradigm for the 21st century school leadership' (Hallinger & Heck, 2009, p.2). Why have I not used this new concept? However, I have deliberately not used the new term "leadership for learning" since many principals are still grappling to understand the concept of instructional leadership and what exactly this entails. For some principal's this new concept may be more confusing and represent new ideas. By clearly defining the concept of instructional leadership and the practices it entails, principals may gain greater insight and meaning into their instructional roles, without being confused of other terms 'leadership for learning' which will enable them to act in accordance of this role. Once principals have a clear understanding of their instructional roles can they begin to adopt other concepts of instructional leadership for example leadership for learning.

2.2.2 Significance of instructional leadership

The phenomenon of instructional leadership is a long established concept that links leadership and learning (Bush & Middlewood, 2013). It has been adopted in various schools across the country (Hoadley; Christie & Ward, 2010; Chikoko; Naicker & Mthiyane, 2013).

However, several terms are synonymous in describing instructional leadership. Some (Christie, 2010 & Zepeda, 2013) call it instructional leadership, while others call it leadership for learning (Bush & Middlewood, 2013; Hallinger & Heck 2009 & Southworth, 2005). However, despite the different terminology used in various schools, the constructs and characteristics of instructional leadership remain the same. This brings us to the question of why is there a need for instructional leadership in schools.

Moswela (2007) investigated how instructional supervision was carried out in Botswana schools. The purpose behind school instructional leadership practices was also revealed. It was found that instructional leadership of school principals came to the fore to address the problem of supervision of the academic curriculum. Previously it was the mandate of the education department to determine, maintain and raise the standard of academic performance while maintaining a degree of professionalism in the department and within operational institutions (School Inspectors Handbook, 2005 p.8-9). In fulfilling this duty, the education department, supervisors and inspectors were challenged by the 'remoteness and poor road networks' to get to some schools. Consequently decisions affecting curriculum implementers (teachers) were taken without the input of curriculum implementers since decisions were taken at headquarters a distance away' (Moswela, 2007, p.72).

The supervisory problems were exasperated by the increase of government schools. The increase of schools and the distance between schools meant that regular visits from the inspectors could not be sustained from a central office or a few individuals. Thus power was devolved to the 'head teachers' (school principal) in terms of monitoring and supervision of the curriculum in schools. Head teachers of schools are responsible for overseeing how the curriculum is implemented in schools (Teaching Service Management Directive No. 4, 1994, p.4, 7, Wallace Foundation, 2011, p.2).

Principals play a vital role in instructional leadership. However principals are not obligated by this responsibility to carry out instructional supervision at their schools. Rather than legislator the necessity to become an instructional leader should come from the principal's professional obligation (Moswela, 2007). Supporting documents such as the norms and standards for educators (Government Gazette, 2000, No 20844) including the school principal state that the norm of a professional is that, you must be a leader, curriculum manager and administrator. Accountability is an important aspect of principals' role and should be the cornerstone behind their instructional activities.

The concept of instructional leadership exists across countries. In the United States of America instructional supervision is a fundamental part of curriculum implementation and the 'head teachers' (principals) are held liable for supervision (Teacher Performance Evaluation Handbook, 1997-1998, p.103). Similarly, Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) state that instructional leadership is about the principal facilitating the teaching and learning process and providing the direction for the schools instructional programmes.

Bhengu and Mkhize's (2013) article focused on principals perspectives (a purposive sample) whose leadership aimed on improving teaching and learning at classroom level. Instructional leadership may be translated to teaching and learning, therefore this study is apt to research on instructional leadership, since its focus is on leaders whose practices are aimed at improving teaching and learning. This significantly contributes to the research base on instructional leadership. The practices of good leadership identified in the study can be entrenched in other schools wishing to assert successful practices. The scholarly view (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013) in this study and elsewhere seem to articulate that instructional leadership is entrenched in school practice and that the principal is responsible for the instructional practices at schools. Further, Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) in their qualitative study of schools in the Umbumbulu area also found that the environment, in which supervision of curriculum is maintained in schools, is intimidating and not receptive to teachers to make any meaningful contribution towards improvement of teaching techniques. Moreover they assert that the environment impacts on the culture of teaching and learning at schools which in turn affects learner outcomes. Consequently, the instructional supervisors' efficiency is constrained by the poor support of teachers in their professional capacities and in terms of their instructional strategies. In light of this Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) recommend(s) the restructuring of instructional supervision if it is to prove beneficial to the school. Moreover, teachers and head teachers need to take on a more effective and meaningful role.

Wanzare's (2013) study of secondary schools in Kenya undertook to establish principals and teachers perceptions regarding practices of instruction, supervision and staff development. The findings of the above study indicate that supervision of instruction was seen as a method of examining people's work in ensuring that proper and relevant procedures were followed. The practices of supervision allowed for facilitation of student's academic performance, monitoring of teacher's instructional work which led to improving teaching and learning. Furthermore problems associated with supervision of instructional practices were identified

as: lack of resources, consistency and questionable supervisory practices, teachers' negativity to practices of supervision. In a similar vein my study explores how principals carry out instructional roles in obtaining outcomes. Suggestions for improvement include designing policies that are clear in terms of instructional supervision, providing feedback, follow-up support and resources. Wanzare (2013) focuses on perceptions of principals and teachers, my study focuses on principals but utilises teacher's to corroborate principals' perceptions and triangulate the study.

Besides curriculum supervision, the aspect of accountability is also viewed as a proponent for instructional leadership in schools. Exploration into the time, place and effect of principal instructional leadership has threaded numerous paths. The principal's role and influence of leadership in environments plagued by policies which demand greater school accountability for learning outcomes (Cooley & Shen, 2003; Hallinger & Heck, 2009; Linn, 2003; Vanderhaar, *et al.* 2006, Lee, Chui, Lee & Walker, 2012) shadow these pathways. By means of illustration, school accountability policies progressively maintain a prominent place in education reform agendas internationally (Ingram, *et al.* 2004; Lee, *et al.* 2012a, b; Linn, 2003; O'Day, 2002). Considering that accountability is inescapable by school leaders and impacting on their practices it is imperative that one looks at the effects of instructional leadership practices on learner achievement in contexts of high accountability. A study conducted by Chui, Lee and Walker (2012) examined how different elements of instructional leadership impact on student's learning in secondary schools in Hong Kong. The schooling context is characterised by accountability policy environments. As South Africa is also characterised by high accountability policy environments, it would be noteworthy to consider the recommendations and the findings of this study to improve instructional activities.

The standardised test scores collected from students in 42 secondary schools were utilised in the study and data was generated from staff's perceptions of leadership practices. From a methodological standpoint although the study drew on staff perceptions to corroborate the results utilised in the study from the different school leadership types i.e. instructional management and direct supervision, the scope of the study was limited to the secondary school. An investigation into primary schools may have yielded different results. However it would have strengthened the study from a methodological standpoint. When conducting research, one should consider the impact of different contexts and participants on the topic under research. This research aims to bridge this gap by exploring aspects of instructional leadership in schools of varying contexts and levels.

In investigating the two dimensions of instructional leadership, management of instruction and instructional supervision were employed. Although instructional management and supervision are conceptually interdependent they are also distinctive. Hence the need for concepts to be explored as distinct terms yet interdependent. Approaching the study from this perspective allowed for the generation of rich data and greater depth into how principals manage instructional activities under contexts of accountability. Further to this, one could examine results of various types of principal approaches on student learning. It was evident that leadership practices focusing on instructional management enhanced student learning by increasing positive effect of student attachment to their school on academic achievement. Contrastingly practices of leadership in relation to supervision of instruction undermined student learning by wilting the positive effect of student ideas of school attachment on academic performance. The article may be considered valuable to practitioners because it revealed the contrasting effects of instructional leadership as a construct that is multidimensional. This is central to the present education reform agenda, steeped in accountability policies both national and internationally. Also the study depicted numerous implications for school principals as instructional leaders as they handle the demands of external accountability. Considering that the ability of principals' to effect instruction and supervision depends on factors internally and externally to the school (Knapp, 1997; Lugg, Bulkley, Firestone, & Garner, 2002) the study above remains pertinent to educationalists and policy makers.

An earlier work by Marks and Nance (2007) focused on the accountability context under reform and the effect of principal influence on instruction and supervision. Their study intended on investigating how accountability contexts affect the principals' ability to influence instruction and supervisory decisions in schools. Data for the study was drawn from schools and staffing surveys responses of elementary, middle and high school principals in low, moderate and high control school states. Data was also generated from school principals' concerning their personal influence and the influence of policies on decisions on instructional and supervisory domains in their respective schools. Considering that the data of the study was generated from a variety of school types namely low, moderate and high school, one can establish the influence of accountability in the different school types. It further suggests that the study results may be relied upon due to the nature of its data source. In addition the difference of school types lends balance and gives credibility to the study which holds the study in good stead.

Moreover, the study found that accountability contexts differentially affect the influence of school principals; it also varies by extent of state control, domain and region. It was also found that the principals' influence in supervision and instruction are closely related to the active participation of teachers' in decision making thus illustrating the benefits of inclusion in school leadership. In a school environment plagued by high accountability stakes it is important that all of its members (especially teachers) work in unison towards achieving the principal's goals. Failure to do so could impede the principals' ability to apply influence in the ways they best see fit (Marks & Nance, 2007, p.4) or lead to what Firestones and Shipps (2003) terms a 'systematic dilemma'. This may diminish the influence of school principals' (Marks & Nance, 2007) which would in turn impact on student achievement results. Despite principals being accountable for improving student performance, they work as a team with teachers (Marks & Nance, 2007).

The phenomenon of instructional leadership is indicative of teachers' dynamic involvement in decision making; it further indicates that teamwork decreases the seeming burden of reforms imposed by the state on accountability of school principals. However, in spite of the teacher's ability to reduce the state imposed burdens of school principals, one needs to be mindful that sometimes state-imposed rules and regulations influence the ability of principal's to make decisions in certain domains.

In addition, the study implied that the influence of accountability on the learning process for students led to a re-culture of the school. The nature of such a study is relevant to the present day education and schooling system under contexts of high accountability. In spite of the embedded nature of principalship, less is known around how the contextual influences that affect principals in their instructional and supervisory leadership roles (Firestone & Shipps, 2003).

2.2.3 Characteristics and practises of instructional leaders

Over the years numerous scholars have attempted to characterise instructional leaders. They are viewed as culture builders who create an academic precedence which fosters the high standards and expectations of students and teachers (Barth 2002). Instructional leaders not only provide clear and effective instruction but they also model high expectations (Hallenger, 2009; Leithwood 2004; Shaharbi 2010).

In recent years, Jenkins (2009, p.34) characterises instructional leaders as being instructional resource providers, who possess current knowledge of practices of instruction, curriculum and assessment. Horng and Loeb (2010) define instructional leaders as those who construct opportunities for teacher improvement. Muijs (2010), maintains that instructional leaders are those who take a hands on approach to the teaching and learning process, the school principal acts as the leader in such a process. According to Grobler (2014), the ‘hands on approach’ calls for school principal’s to monitor teaching tasks to ensure adequate curriculum coverage. The characteristics of instructional leadership are vital to the practice of instructional leadership. As a result characteristics are the facets that inform the practice of instructional leadership as they shape the principal’s activity in terms of their instructional role. It is for this reason one has to explore characteristics of instructional leadership in conjunction to principals’ practices.

The schemata of the characteristics of instructional leadership presented above denote that the core function of the principal as an instructional leader is to deliver leadership and management in schools which enables the foundation of supportive environments under which quality teaching and learning prevails (Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Van Rooyen 2010; McNeish & Scott, 2012). Scholars assert that successful leaders have successful schools (Bush, 2010). The prominence of school principals as instructional leaders, ‘culture builders’, resource providers, a continuum of knowledge, the model of high expectations and the leader of effective teaching and learning is believed to contribute to learner achievement (Zufiaurre, 2014).

The measure to effect positive instructional leadership is for school principals to glean on the characteristics of instructional leadership in informing practice. Alternatively, it is for school principals to expose themselves and teachers to professional development (DeMatthews, 2014). However, research reveals that some principals were unsuccessful in doing this (Ross & Gray, 2006; Berkhout, 2007 & Sims 2011). Bush and Joubert (2010) assert that many of South African principals do not consider themselves instructional leaders and do not understand what their instructional leadership roles entails. On the basis of such assertions Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) undertook a study exploring the instructional leadership practices of five principals in the province of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN). The study aimed at identifying the instructional practices that principals engage in within their institutions. The schools under study were situated in socio-economically deprived communities. The qualitative study employed a case study approach. The participants were mainly principals since the study

focus was on understanding the principals' instructional leadership practices. However, teachers and heads of departments (HOD'S) were used in the study to triangulate the study in terms of principal's responses. Purposive and convenience sampling was used to identify the schools. Semi structured interviews and document analysis were used in the study. Findings of the study revealed that all participants believe that principals should be instructional leaders. This finding is significant to practitioners as it corroborates with literature reviews that identifies the role of the principal as an instructional leader in schools. It also correlates with many statutory documents over various countries. According to the South African Standards for Principalship (Department of Education, 2005), principals must influence, direct and support the best quality teaching and learning to enable learners to attain the highest levels of achievement in their own interest, the interests of their community and of the country as a whole.

Further to these findings five themes emerged, these were the importance of instructional leadership; creating an invitational school environment; monitoring and supporting instruction; recognising and rewarding good performance; and promoting professional development of teachers. The use of empathy was also highlighted as a capability for school principals in their roles as instructional leaders. Literature reviews have provided us with a brief outline of the characteristics of instructional leaders. Principals have displayed human characteristics and therefore the emotional aspect and effect it has on principals in performing their duties as instructional leaders cannot be ignored. There is a consensus in literature (Goleman 1998; Boyatzis, Goleman & Rhee, 2000; Manser, 2005; Bar-On 2006; Singh, Manser & Mestry 2007; Singh & Patharikar, 2010) which strongly proposes that empathy as an instructional leadership skill is a significant component of emotional intelligence.

Sing and Dali's (2013) study explores empathy as a competency that school principals as instructional leaders must possess. The study explored principal's perceptions on their emotional competency (empathy) and its association to academic success in schools. The study focused on the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) school leadership (SL) programme offered by higher education institutions (HEI's) in developing the work-integrated learning competency (WILC) of empathy of school principals. A qualitative approach in achieving the study objectives was taken. Focus group interviews with teachers and single in depth interviews with principals were used to generate data. Data generation methods improved the study results since data extracted from principals were corroborated through focus group interviews with teachers. This allowed for a more accurate result of the

study findings. Interviews revealed that principals valued empathy as a characteristic of instructional leadership. Further, findings of the research indicate that principals share the stringent belief that their higher education institution training will continually assist them in and foster the development of their empathetic competency to deal with the human challenges that they encounter at schools on a daily basis.

The exploratory study offers twofold insight on empathy: Firstly a characteristic of instructional leaders and secondly an interpersonal skill of principals that are emotionally intelligent. The exploratory study offers a new paradigm to educational reform and has links to systems of accountability. Goleman (1996) contends that an empathetic principal is someone who asserts responsibility and encourages accountability. However empathy is an attribute that comes from within and therefore it also proved to be a concern in the study. Singh and Dali (2013) maintain that a key concern identified in the study was the challenge for the ACE programme was to develop the empathy competency in school principals which could empower them to deal effectively with the challenges that they face continuously. Moller (2002) expresses the view that leaders need to identify and empower those individuals whom want to lead. Those individuals who do not want to take the lead should be shown the same empathetic understanding as their contemporaries. Thus it would remain an area of concern for policy makers and school principals to explore.

In addressing this concern the ACE leadership contextualised the issue of empathy by allowing principals to outline the challenges encountered at their schools and the measures they employed in solving the problems. In order for principals to effectively utilise their influence of empathy, they have to firstly understand how emotional intelligence works. This is crucial to school leaders since they (principals) work with different people with diverse emotional dispositions (Manser, 2005; Singh, 2010). School principals as instructional leaders have to understand their own skills of empathy in order to understand their employees. Crawford (2008) claims that: Emotional relationships are central to all school-related work, and therefore remains a significant aspect when understanding educational leadership. This is because schools are immersed with a variety of relationships such as parent-teacher; student-teacher and teacher-teacher. These relationships may be increased or different but still remain central to schools and education. The principal exchange allowed them to reflect on control and better use of their emotions. Hence the concept of emotional intelligence has inspired various programmes of emotional intelligence and cognitive learning

in educational institutions (Lopes, Brackett, Nezlek, Schutz & Salovey, 2004). Moreover, Moller (2002) maintains that those individuals willing to lead have to be recognised and empowered. In an ever changing world, one needs to constantly keep abreast of changes impacting on the environments if one is to successfully handle change. The research aims to equip school principals with current developments in education theory and practice (Mestry & Singh, 2013).

Reviewed literature reveals that the characteristics of instructional leaders are multidimensional. Recent studies (Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010) argue the controversial nature of defining instructional leadership in today's world. Traditionally, instructional leadership was concerned with the teaching and learning aspects of school leadership which emphasised a directive of principal mentoring teachers and classrooms visits (Horng, 2010). Mestry, Moonsammy-Koopasammy and Schmidt (2013) maintain that this approach is unrealistic and unsustainable because principals alone do not possess curriculum knowledge of all subject areas to mentor all subject teachers, neither do they have the time required to mentor teachers daily and observe their classrooms. Horng (2010) asserts that classroom observations have minimal or no relation to improving student performance (Horng, 2010). Consequently, a more innovative, hands on and sustainable approach of instructional leadership is required. According to Horng (2010) this approach places primacy on managing the organisation for improving instruction as opposed to everyday teaching and learning (Horng, 2010).

Scholars (Clandinin & Hamilton, 2011; Middlewood, 2003; Pounder, 2006; Seyfarth, 2005) suggest that instructional improvement may be achieved through a change in organisational management. They propose that change in organisational management can be done by including teachers' especially senior teachers in the management of tasks. For example, senior teachers should be responsible for mentoring novice teachers, for observing lessons thereby relieving the burden of instructional leadership of the school principal. This will allow the principal time to spend more on issues pertaining to curriculum and instruction.

Further, this approach will locate the school principal differently within the instructional leadership paradigm. The principal in this new paradigm influences student learning through organisational management. Organisational management involves empowering teachers with the support they need to be resilient in the classroom. This can be achieved by the allocation of systems, resources, and by fostering a positive work and learning ethos. This newer

approach is proving to be sustainable (Mestry, *et al.* 2013), however it require principals to be strategic in the decisions they take. Horng (2010, p.67) states ‘strategic principals do the challenge in today’s global society; principals are receptive to the context in which they lead within this changing paradigm’.

Mestry, *et al.*’s (2013) study explored the new role of the South African primary school principal in the changing paradigm. Through the research findings, characteristics of instructional leaders are drawn. Characteristics pertain (s) to school principals identifying the ‘school vision, empowering and inspiring teachers, innovating practices in classrooms in an attempt to improve teaching and student learning’. The current instructional approach is focused on the organisation and individuals by fostering positive learning environments for students, supporting teachers and students in satisfying curriculum standards, assisting and developing teacher learning with professional learning, while being mindful of the culture and context in which leaders find themselves – in order to match improvement strategies with changing contexts over time (Hallinger, 2011& 2013).

Extending on Mestry’s *et al.* (2013) concept of empowerment and inspiration of teachers as characteristics of instructional leadership, a study by the Wallace Foundation (2010) of school leadership discovered that school principals may positively influence student learning and teachers. Professional learning communities outline a contemporary perception of fostering teacher motivation and supportive teaching conditions. Research at Stanford University according to Horng (2010) resulted in similar findings. Hord and Sommers (2008) contend that empowering and inspiring teachers implies that the instructional role of the principal is encouraging teachers to seek guidance from their colleagues, to emphasise teacher leaders and encourage teachers working together to mentor other teachers of effective instructional leadership practices. Reitzug and West (2008) refer to this practice as a community of professional learning.

2.2.4 The link between instructional leadership and management

The surplus information on the instructional leadership of school principals (Mendels, 2012, Mestry, 2013) resonates on aspects of strong leadership and good management. Schools effectiveness research looks at school characteristics, their organisations, content and structure.

There appeared to be to a link between school leadership and management according to the research's findings. Five factors for school effectiveness have been identified. They are: strong effective leadership, concentrated basic skills acquisition, a secured environment, high expectations of student achievement and continuous assessment of student progress (Scheeren, 2000). Scheern's (2000) description of school effectiveness concurs with other reviewed literature.

School effectiveness implies enhancing conditions and environments of schooling and has focused attention on the significance of leadership and its link to student achievement. To be an effective leader requires being an effective manager and being able to manage skills effectively to affect positive resultants (Clarke & Wildy, 2010). Here in lies the link between instructional leadership and management. Further the focus point of school leadership and school effectiveness has presumed a variation of theories of school leadership namely instructional leadership, moral leadership, and transformational leadership among a host of other leadership theories. While it is argued by school principals that their focus of schools have resounded on teaching and learning (Anderson, Caldwell, Dinham & Weldon, 2011) the core function of schools is on the leading and managing of the process of teaching and learning essentially 'instructional leadership' (Dinham, 2009 & Dinham, *et al.* 2011). Without leadership at all levels, the improvement process cannot be sustained. Commitment to quality has to be the prime role of the instructional leader.

Since recognising the importance of effective educational leadership and management, a continuum of studies at a national and international platform confirmed that effective leadership significantly increases student achievement and that leaders have to be champions of the quality process.

Bush (2008) corroborates the above view and states that while students contribute to their own academic success, leadership and effective management of school and teachers contribute more significantly to student achievement. In supporting this newly established ideology, Clarke (2008) states that the link between school leadership and school effectiveness has been advocated in the Austarlian context as it has been noted as the link to quality teaching, education and leadership.

A leadership 'theory' closely allied to instructional leadership and school effectiveness and becoming prominent in the national (Weber, 1996) and international education context (Dinham, 2011) is distributed leadership. This theory of leadership's prime concern is on the

co-performance of practices of leadership and the actions that contribute to the co-performance. In this theory, formal leaders (school principal) prompt developing and creative ideas among employees to whom leadership is distributed. Employees in acting leadership roles must manage their instructed duties, as opposed to one individual (school principal) managing controls over whole school process and outcomes (Harris, 2009). Here again the link between leadership and management becomes clearly evident as articulated by Harris's (2009) description of the distributed leadership theory. The development and distribution of leadership capacities within a school is in congruency to the management of the people and resources within a school, and is considered a key lever for the success of the organisation (Dinham, 2011).

Dinham (2008) alludes to there being a resounding pressure placed on educational leaders to heighten the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in schools in an attempt to improve student achievement levels in testing at international, national and internal levels. It is a challenging for developers of school leadership programmes to ascertain factors vital for preparation of school leaders, it also becomes a challenge for developers to take on increased responsibilities and to facilitate shared leadership and assert the link between leadership and student outcomes (Anderson, *et al.* 2007). The sentiments expressed by the various scholars (Anderson, *et al.* 2007 & Dinham, 2008) indicates that is becoming the expectation as well as the norm for leaders to become more proactive at all levels of school leadership. Without appropriate leadership no quality program will work. Leadership will serve as the most graphic example of what adopting a quality approach actually means in practice.

Principals have to take a greater effort in managing the school resources, human resources and activities so that they are readily available for use to achieve positive outcomes. As such the principal's role as a leader and a manager of school resources, its people, reform and change in attempts to achieve high student gains can never be ignored. As the core of instructional leadership focuses on the enhancement of teaching and learning for students. Thus it may be said that instructional leadership is entrenched in management. If significant changes in schools are to occur then it is important that those who are responsible for providing leadership possesses the vision, knowledge and skills that are needed to bring about the transformation.

2.2.5 Professional learning communities

Professional learning communities is a phenomenon that is fast growing in South African schools and around the world (Clarke & Harward 2006; Hirsh & Liberman, 2012 & Raj, 2013). DuFour and Eaker (2006, p.7) define a professional learning community as a platform where teachers work collaboratively to improve processes of teaching and learning through collective inquiry on improved pedagogy to achieve better learner results. They further state that, professional learning communities assume that the key to improve learning for student's lies in teachers continually learning. When teachers learn effective skills and teaching pedagogies generated through professional learning communities they are able to practice these skills in the classroom which leads to improved learning by students. Therefore Miller (2008) describes the professional learning community process as a continuous process. Schools that function as such invite the entire professional staff to learn within supportive and self-created communities. In such a setting, teacher learning is intense and fruitful since there is interaction amongst participants. Through participation, teachers can examine their ideas and methodologies and their assumptions which are challenged and new information is gleaned and processed through one another. When an individual learns alone, he/she becomes the only source of information, but when individuals learn together, new ideas are established through interacting with others. Expertise and sources of knowledge increase and test new and unfamiliar concepts as part of the professional learning experience.

Research conducted by Porter (2011) shows that achievement gaps demands by teachers are likely to be met if the principal and teachers work collaboratively, if they support and encourage teachers to view student work and achievement data together. If teachers are able to design and team teach lessons. Achievement gaps are also closed when teachers review the effect of their initiatives and collectively plan intervention strategies. A richer and stimulating environment is undoubtedly created through professional learning communities. According to Miller (2012) principals when creating conditions for professional learning communities need to understand the dimensions of professional learning communities before they can attempt to exert any influence in this process. Miller (2012) in his qualitative study in the United States addressed this ideology by exploring the implementation of the principal professional learning community (PPLC), as professed by elementary school principals through an interview process. It was found that opportune moments for principals to share thoughts and ideas with colleagues in principal professional learning communities resulted in improved performance. The principal professional learning communities encompassed (a) the attributes of skilfulness and high participation within leadership capacity reflected in daily practices.

(b) It's facilitative of a collaborative nature of school leadership and empowerment which is central to student learning. Further to this, principal professional learning community was reflective of instructional leadership, collaboration, student achievement, and principal management, also known as the attributes comprising the school based professional learning community model. The principal's responses invoke collaboration and enhanced overall learning. This finding was rather profound, as it is believed that principals' activities in terms of liaising with staff are in many ways one of isolation. This finding is significant to principal leadership and to school improvement since results indicate that principals themselves participate in the professional learning community process in order to develop themselves as leaders and to understand how to effectively implement teachers in the professional learning community process. Stoll (2006) maintains that the learning for the educational staff is a prerequisite for capacity building and the crucial link to improved student learning.

Stoll, *et al.* (2006) described five key, intertwined characteristics of a professional learning community. The first is shared values and vision which must be developed as a collective with regards to children and their ability to learn. The second involves the collective responsibility for student learning; ultimately the collective is responsible to ensure that there is student learning. The third characteristic of a professional learning community is inclusive of (a) reflective professional inquiry, (b) dialogue regarding practice and (c) curriculum development. The fourth characteristic involves collaborative activity and staff development. The fifth characteristic is the promotion of collective, group learning. Stoll (2006) extending to the characteristics of professional learning communities included the following: (a) mutual trust, (b) respect and support among staff members and (c) inclusive membership of a school-wide community.

2.2.6 Link between instructional leadership and professional learning communities in schools

In supporting the professional learning communities and the development of teachers, school principals need to play a pivotal role (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Principals should increase the depth of collaborative dialogue in professional learning communities (Nelson, *et al.* 2010). Printy, (2010) concurs that principals have a significant impact on teachers' practice when principals collectively work with teachers on features that influence teachers' classroom pedagogy. Various authors *viz.* Fitzsimons & Nehring, (2011); Printy, (2010) and Timperley, (2008) regard professional learning communities as the core function and responsibility of

school leaders to provide teachers with professional learning. Their responsibility consists of three main leadership roles in ensuring that teachers' learning is focused and on-going. These three roles include: (1) developing a vision for teachers' professional development for the purpose of teachers' learning, (2) an improvement on student performance and (3) school improvement. School instructional leaders need to lead teachers' learning by the following: assisting their areas of weakness, helping teachers to understand new concepts/ developments and through engaging teachers constructively in disagreements. This would include experimentation and changing of the classroom practice; being proactive on feedback from colleagues (teachers) and pupils; mentoring and modelling positive teaching techniques and attributes; hosting in school workshops based on self-evaluation, research findings; collaborative research and teacher participation in activities (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). Moswela (2006) posits that it is the responsibility of the principal to organise and arrange for well-managed and productive learning opportunities for prolonged and in-depth professional learning in a community of learners. The implication according to Hodkinson and Hodkinson, (2005) is that strategic planning is required for development and support of a positive learning environment in school. Moreover, the verification of teachers' development is required so that strategies may be amended and changed for the sake of effective and collaborative learning in schools. However Louis (2010) points out that it is unlikely that pressure on school leaders to bring about changes for principal-teacher collaboration will occur without the practical support within their complex school settings. Principals therefore need to ensure that necessary support structures are put into place to support principal-teachers collaboration efforts. Research by Pedder (2006, 2011) illustrates the significant relationship between school factors, such as teacher learning, support and collaboration accompanied by the level of teachers' learning. The implication of Pedder's research is that instructional leaders of schools strive to develop quality teachers and have to design and develop appropriate processes and practices for teacher learning (Pedder, 2006; Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

In developing and sustaining professional learning communities; instructional leaders need to foster networks with neighbouring schools. Networking of teachers from different schools has the potential to widen the scope for teacher's engagement and access to diverse teaching practices (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). West (2010, p.96) comments that 'schools have been viewed incorrectly and that individual schools should rather be viewed as 'untapped resources' in the education system. Leaders bear the responsibility of networking for school

success and the promotion of efficiency and productivity. This would include drawing up learning programmes and contingency plans for the coming year, orchestrating learning programmes, identifying potential resources and supports and bringing them to the teachers and students attention in order to ensure quality and performance improvement.

Prior to professional learning communities, literature on professional development focused on teacher learning as an individual process of construction, whereas literature on professional learning communities emphasises learning through collaborative involvement in school practices. Instructional leaders should provide a school environment that is conducive for learning. In collaborative learning in schools leaders need to carefully plan and organise activities in a way that engages teachers so that learners benefit. Katz, *et al.* (2008, p.134) best sums up the role played by leadership in stating that ‘explicit, conscious, and intentional strategies to support teachers in examining, understanding, and sharing practice within schools and across networks must be undertaken in order to help networks contribute to the cultivation of innovative knowledge communities’.

2.2.7 Benefits of professional learning communities

In professional learning communities, the practices of teachers became more student centred. Participants utilised techniques gained from interacting in professional learning communities such as being flexible with classroom arrangements and how to effect changes in instruction to enable student mastery through accommodating for the different learning levels. Wilson, S. & Powell, S. (2013) states that the professional community denotes support for achievement and increased levels of autonomy and authentic pedagogy. Several authors *viz* Bond, (2013) Hord, (2009) and Raj, (2013) concluded that professional learning communities made the teacher receptive to working as a team of teachers in areas of changing practices for improvement measures; it also led to the development of stronger instructional norms and increased learning for teachers.

Haris and Jones (2010) indicate that teachers participating in learning communities assert that their teaching has changed; they understand more about what they are doing and how to do it which ultimately leads to improvement. Similarly, Clauson’s, (2009) study found that characteristics of learning communities served to encourage changes in teaching pedagogy.

Collaboration lies at the core of professional learning communities as it contains strategies that “open” opportunities for betterment through behaviours that inspire sharing, reflecting, and taking risks necessary to change. Berry, *et al.* (2005) study found that professional learning communities assisted teachers in rural primary schools to investigate their pedagogical skills through collaboration efforts such as sharing of lesson plans and observations to inform colleagues of their teaching pedagogy. Bolam, *et al.* (2005) in a survey study examined sixteen elementary and secondary schools. Data obtained indicated that practices of teachers were more positive in those schools as a result of teacher collaborative activities.

Vescio (2006) in his survey study found robust evidence that teachers felt more involved in decisions at school when they engage in team teaching and learning. He concludes that granting teacher’s autonomy in decision making concerning their own learning process is key to improving student learning. Southworth (2012) elaborates on this point stating that sharing of leadership within professional learning communities enabled teachers and instructional leaders to cultivate teaching strategies that are innovative. This is in agreement with Stoll (2006) who postulates that participation in a professional learning community is facilitative of professional development because it concentrates on the needs of teachers as they embark on initiatives to attain the goals of student achievement. The importance of teacher’s continual learning is reinforced throughout reviewed literature (Berry, *et al.*, 2005; Bolam, *et al.* 2005; Stoll, 2006; Southworth, 2012; Vescio, 2006). More specifically, Berry, *et al.* (2005) reported that teachers from a particular learning community looked to outside sources to assist them in solving their dilemmas with teaching. Whereas Bolam, *et al.*’s (2005) study indicated that teachers noted that there was a link between leaning in a professional learning community and changes in their teaching pedagogies and how that improved student learning. Englert and Tarrant (1995) in another study stated that three special needs education teachers discussed ideas on how to deliver instruction and teach reading to slightly disabled learners. The reviewed literature provides a plethora of evidence that professional learning community’s impact on teaching (Miller, 2008).

All studies (Berry, *et al.* 2005; Bolam, *et al.* 2005; Vescio, 2006; Harris & Jones., 2010) under review, investigated the impact of teachers engaging in professional learning communities on student achievement, and the conclusion arrived at was that it improves student learning. The authors concur that the greater the degree of teacher participation in

learning communities, the higher the level of student progress in schools. In contrast, Supovitz (2002) and Christman and Supovitz (2003) study indicated that in professional learning communities where teachers engaged in supportive and structured instructional discussions, there was a marked improvement in teachers teaching techniques which ultimately led to student academic progress. The converse was also true. It was found that in communities where teachers embarked on professional learning but did not engage in structured work, student learning academic progress was not evident.

The contemporary perception of professional learning communities and instructional leadership take the burden of school principals as the sole instructional leader and allows others to lead in instruction through the domain of their classrooms (Mestry, *et al.* 2013). Instructional leadership may therefore be pronounced as a relationship of influence that inspires, empowers and supports teachers' in learning and to change their practices of instruction (Spillane, *et al.* 2003). In terms of innovation of classroom practice to improve teaching and learning (IL) in schools, Sparks (2002) postulates that, instructional leaders ensure that schools are focused on the learning process and on the necessary changes to improve teacher delivery of instruction to improve learner performance. As an instructional leader, it becomes incumbent upon the principal to play a crucial role in influencing and improving the academic achievement of learners (Glanz, 2006). According to Mestry, *et al.* (2013) innovating classroom practice to improve teaching and learning for students has seen a paradigm shift, from the principal being an inspector of teacher's competences to facilitating teacher growth and instructional leader (Marks & Printy 2003, p.374). Principals are tasked with the responsibility of improving teacher practices in efforts to improve teaching and learning. Mitchell and Sackney (2006) propose that collaborative leadership with teachers is an innovative approach by school principals to foster discourse, reflection, professional growth and professional learning which will impact positively on student outcomes. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) acclaims professional learning communities as communities where teachers are afforded the opportunity to discuss their work, establish professional working relationships whilst working with other teachers, solving problems, and teachers reflecting on their teaching practices and pedagogical skills whilst taking responsibility for students' learning. In exploring this paradigm shift of school principals, Jenkins and Pfeifer (2012) suggest that the principal's responsibility as an instructional leader is to find ways of improving student achievement, teachers' skills and knowledge of student learning. Teacher's knowledge and skills will

invariably affect student outcomes. The concept of principals driving the transformation of teacher practices, according to Baffour-Awuah (2011), is reflective of the fact that the quality of a teachers' work in a school is vital to the learning process.

Further, findings of the same study reveal that instructional leadership for school principals involves setting clear goals, managing the curriculum, monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. According to Glanz (2006) principals as leaders of instruction have to familiarise themselves with the concepts pertaining to curriculum development since the core function of schools is teaching and learning. Hallinger and Murphy (2013) list coordinating the curriculum as a role function of an instructional leader. This means that the instructional leader will have to keep abreast and be well informed of curriculum changes. Curriculum matters includes setting and evaluating targets for curriculum coverage by identifying areas of weaknesses, and effecting measures for improvement in teacher and learner performance. An interesting point among the research findings was that there was a consensus among the principals that if they engaged in the practice of teaching students themselves, they would be positioned to model, communicate and support good teaching practices. Literature on instructional leadership strongly advocates the notion of the principal as a practising teacher. Wejr (2010, p.52) concurs with the above and asserts that 'Teachers will respect the word of a person who can identify with what they experience and help keep them apprised of current classroom issues'. The study takes the position that schools must be viewed as learning organisations and as such learning should be the centre of every person within the educational institution. Research indicates that effective instructional principals are those considered to be lifelong learners who serve as models of learning and engage themselves in professional development opportunities. They encourage peer collaboration, and take measures to develop teachers and to encourage them in engaging in educational opportunities in as well as outside the school (Glanz, 2006; Fink & Resnick, 2001 & Gupton, 2003).

In expounding the principal's role as an instructional leader Reitzug and West (2008) offer a different perspective. They state that in outlining the instructional leadership role of the principal, one needs to first conceptualise instructional leadership. Therefore the qualitative study they embarked on sought to determine how principals view (conceptualise) their instructional roles and practices as instructional leaders. The study also focused on the outcomes that principals strive for. Data for this study was solicited from principals of successful schools through an interview process. Subsequent to this all principals were provided copies of his/her transcript to peruse through for accuracy and additions. The study

sample consisted of male and female principals from primary and secondary schools. This type of sample reduced issues of gender bias within the study. Hence the study is more applicable in today's educational institutions that are characterised by both male and female principals. The data alluded to there being four conceptualisations of instructional leadership namely relational, linear, organic, and prophetic forms of instructional leadership. It was indicated that each conceptualisation shapes the way the principals view their roles as instructional leaders, which in turn reflects the instructional activities that principals will engage in to achieve particular outcomes.

Four of the study's participants identified themselves as relational instructional leaders. Such leaders develop the idea that, improvement in instruction and greater learning does not occur from directly working with instructional programmes but rather as a result of relationship building (Reitzug, *et al.* p.697). For principals this may be translated as the efforts that principals take to help students and staff members feel better about themselves so that staff members and students try harder and make greater efforts to do better in their work. This can be done by spending time with the students, listening to them, counselling students and teachers and constantly checking that they are doing well. Reviewed literature on relational instructional leaders identifies a connection between building positive relationships with people and student success (Reitzug & West, 2008). Motivation for relational leadership of school principals and student academic success is drawn from literature on human relations and studies related to self-concept, self-efficiency and motivation. Human relations perspective maintains that combining individuals needs with organisational needs will lead to positive outcomes (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Leaders need to take cognisance of this point. Maslow's (1954) hierarchical structure of needs and concepts of 'self-efficiency, self-concept and motivation' best describes this phenomena.

Other principals in the study described themselves as linear instructional leaders. Linear leaders believe in a cause and effect theory (Burell & Morgan, 1997) and assume that one action will lead to a desirable outcome which leads to another desired outcome in a cycle pattern. Linear instructional leaders emphasise this leadership type since there can be careful monitoring so that positive feedback is reinforced in all aspects of the system so that the desired outcome is reached (Reitzug, *et al.* 2008). Principals in this study described this as a necessary alignment process since it is a means of monitoring the process of what's working and not working. Monitoring is an element of instructional leadership described by Hallinger (2010). The process described by the principals aligns curriculum standards and learning

objectives, it also monitors student outcomes against test data. As an instructional leader school performance is of prime importance (Reitzug, *et al.*, 2008). Linear instructional leadership is viewed as a form of instructional leadership because it is receptive to standard, outcomes and high- stakes testing environments (Reitzug, *et al.* 2008). Principals in the study reiterated that this system is highly effective and its processes are viewed as efforts to ‘teach to the test’ (Reitzug, *et al.* 2008, p.702).

Some principals in the study identified themselves as organic leaders. Organic instructional leadership premises that instructional leadership is only one dimension of a school which forms a piece of a larger whole. Organic instructional leaders believe that instructional components should not be seen in isolation from the whole. They also believe that instructional improvement stems from teachers continuous learning. Developing the capacities of teachers in collaborative environments is rooted in the literature of instructional leadership (Clifton, Dooner & Mandzuk, 2008).

The literature review maintains that schools are learning centres and the principals’ instructional leadership role encompasses facilitation and stimulation of this process (Reitzug, 2008). Prophetic leaders were those people identified as having set higher achievements than mere test scores for students. This type of leadership requires a principal placing value beyond academic testing and achievement scores. Such principals identify other aspects for example the school vision and mission statement and living up to those statements are equally important to student achievement. Prophetic instructional leaders believe that by only adopting the government’s vision of schooling is insufficient for increased learner improvement. They propose that rather a staff should embody its own vision of schooling and takes measures to meet their ideals so that there is increased learner improvement. Instructional leadership has long been concerned with improving school instruction and achievement levels, however some argue (Reitzug, 2008) that instructional leadership is more than improving instruction and achievement. For those scholars ‘it is not only about skill but also about purpose’ (Reitzug, 2008, p.709).

The article’s findings offer different avenues for principals looking at their roles as instructional leaders in schools. Each style of leadership has its own prescriptions so the challenge is for school principals to find the style/ styles of leadership that best encapsulates their schools. Each style has its own strengths and weaknesses. The article leans more towards the relational and organic style of instructional leadership. Reitzug (2008) believes

that these forms of leadership have the potential to turn schools into stimulating intellectual places for teachers who work in them which will in turn foster the development of a stimulating environment for students (Reitzug, 2008).

2.2.8 Changing landscapes

There is a wealth of research in South Africa and abroad which proposes that management is pertinent to the well-functioning of schools (Bush, 2003; Christie, 2010; Roberts & Roach 2006; Taylor, 2007). Research alludes to the significance of school management and cautions that if schools are not managed correctly then the core function of schools- teaching and learning is going to suffer (Christie, 2010). Despite the importance of management to schools, a review of the discipline education, leadership and management by various scholars Bush (2006) and Hallinger (2006) cautions that most of the research regarding management in South African schools was not conceptually rich, further it was noted that it is most necessary for a frame of research that is closer in context to South Africa. In advancing his argument Bush (2006), provides the limitations regarding the managing of teaching and learning. He states that manner in which school principals and school managers implement instructional leadership in schools and how they develop effective teaching and learning is unaccounted for. In surveying literature of instructional leadership in South African schools as a part of a large scale study, Hoadley and Ward (2008, p.11) observe that South Africa has a very limited research base, they further remark that these studies focus on policy and what policies says principals should do as opposed to what they actually do. There appears to be a gap in literature and cohesion among scholars in South Africa and internationally that they are not convinced neither are they confident that the current research base provides precise justification on the nature of schools, management and the complexity of management in schools, particularly in contexts of change. Bush (2008) puts forth the argument that the concept of 'management' from the 1980's onward in the UK research indicates that models for school management has been drawn from business. This model was adopted by schools as the ideal and schools were expected to conduct themselves from a business perspective. Rationalising this, all businesses are different and therefore cannot be run as a single business, herein lays the problems for schools. Schools differ in terms of their context and therefore cannot adopt a single model or one size fits all approach.

For this reason Christie's (2010) study embarked on the changing landscapes of South African schools in an endeavour to ascertain how landscapes affect school principals in

performing their duties (management) at schools. She argues that schools cannot adopt a one dimensional model of leadership for school success since the demographics, contexts and educational policies of schools differ. Christie (2010) argues that the inequalities continuing to plague schools means that the work of school principals will also vary depending on the demography, context etc. My study is undertaken in schools with varying contexts hence the need for my study, to establish how these variables shape the instructional leadership role of the principal.

Findings gleaned from the study indicate that policy frameworks (especially in South Africa) have a major influence on the work of school principals. Policies outline duties and responsibilities of school leaders. Christie (2010) describes policies as providing the terrain for principals to work in. Despite this framework, Christie (2010) cautions leaders that they should only work within frameworks if they are supportive of their schools. She criticises the new South African policies suggesting that they are more inclined to well-resourced schools rather than under resourced or dysfunctional schools. Hence the policies are unintentionally widening inequalities. As one of my research questions explores how policy informs the instructional leadership practices of school principals, my study will be able to either corroborate or refute the criticism of Christie (2010), providing insight and depth into the literature surrounding policy and instructional leadership. The article also established that school-based management steered major changes in the system of education and for school principals. Christie (2010) brings to our attention that the move to site-based management has brought issues of leadership and management to the fore, but in ways that are different for the differently positioned schools. The article concluded that various policies (South African Schools Act, 1996, The White Paper on Education and Training, 1994 among others) have shaped the education system in South Africa and brought about the ever changing role and responsibilities of school principals.

Findings also point to recommendations of education models from overseas that do not match the South African education system or which fail to account for the varying dynamics and contexts of schools. The article concludes that policy inevitably influences principal's instructional practices and principals who take on a "one size" fits all approach may be faced with challenges. The article recommends that the approach leaders should adopt is to take into account the policies that govern them but to be mindful of and recognise that schools are complex and operate under different situations. This would warrant planning accordingly.

Further to this, a thorough understanding of the changing landscapes of leadership is a focal point for mapping the required changes (Christie, 2010).

2.2.9 Challenges of instructional leaders

Presently the education sector has seen a paradigm shift towards instructional leadership in schools. Numerous studies (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013, Christie & Ward, 2010) have been conducted on instructional leadership, most of which has focussed on the benefits of instructional leadership in schools. I have noticed that very few studies conducted on instructional leadership focus on the challenges faced by instructional leaders. Yet the reality is, that all leaders at some point or another are faced with challenges whilst performing with their instructional duties. Acknowledging the argument that there is a dearth of empirical studies, on school principals as instructional leaders, and highlighting that even less is known about the instructional leadership practices of school principals in challenging contexts (Chapman & Harris 2004; Chikoko, Mthiyane & Naicker, 2013) qualitative study sought to explore instructional leadership practices that work in challenging contexts in South Africa. A purposive sample of principals was employed in the study; however circuit managers of the selected school principals were also interviewed as triangulation methods. The study findings were presented thematically under the following themes: ‘Walking the talk’, ‘Growing their own timber’, drawing on ex-students as role models, maximising teaching and learning, minimising disruptions during labour unrest and monitoring teaching and learning.

Walking the talk suggest that principals must model what they expect of teachers in terms of their instructional practices. The rationale being that the best way to model teaching is by doing it, the principal modelling skilful teaching pedagogy serves to show teachers how they should execute one’s duty in the classroom. Therefore Horng and Loeb (2010) assert that good instructional leaders ought to be outstanding teachers themselves, who use their exceptional teaching skills to impact student learning. ‘Growing their own timbre’ refers to educator development through induction and mentoring. In this regard, instructional leaders should focus on interventions to improve teachers’ knowledge, skills and practice which in turn impacts on learner achievement (Weber, 1996; Supovitz & Poglinco 2001). In terms of drawing on ex-students as role models and maximising teaching and learning, the implication is that when students are exposed to successful learners who have passed through the same system of schooling that they are exposed to, they are likely to adopt an attitude of belief that they too can be successful and can evaluate their role model thus picking up learner

performance levels. Maximising teaching and learning is about principals prioritising teaching and learning and most activities at school is geared towards teaching and learning. Minimising disruptions refers to instructional leaders continuing with the curriculum and schooling despite the union call 'to down tools'. Teacher unions have a disruptive impact on schools. Motsahi (2011) observes that in South Africa, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union, has significantly contributed to the collapse of normal routine school operations through their disruptive activities in township schools. Naicker *et al.* (2013) reinforces this in claiming that, instructional time is a direct correlate of learner achievement. In monitoring teaching and learning, instructional leaders should ensure that a degree of professional accountability is prevalent among teachers. In ensuring this, they should directly/indirectly monitor their institutional programme of teaching learning.

The findings further indicate that a distributed form of instructional leadership is rampant in these schools. The academic success is strongly emphasised and entrenched in schools. Human resources are viewed as assets of the school. Moreover time is utilised optimally. Other findings of this research have shown that in these schools of challenging contexts, the instructional leaders improve the quality of inputs which invariably ensures output quality. The study is significant because it points to a rethinking of instructional leadership practices, which focuses on reshaping of the structures and cultures of the school in order to meet the realities of the school community.

School leaders are exposed to a host of challenges. In exploring the challenges that leaders are exposed to, Drew (2010) identified five themes as most significant challenges experienced by educational leaders. The themes were as follows: Human and financial resources, flexibility, creativity and capability of change, responding to competing tensions, maintaining a high academic (student) achievement and effective strategic leadership. While instructional leaders and most of the reviewed literature alludes to 'maintaining academic quality' as a huge challenge for a substantial number of leaders contend that competing for resources and the time taken to gain funds whilst trying to manage a school is just as challenging for school principals. According to studies by the Wallace Foundation (2004), economics are determinants of school leader's decisions and experiences, principals grapple with daily questions concerning resource allocation.

This is not surprising since many scholars argue (Christie, 2010; Copland and Nawab, 2011) that very few studies are undertaken in rural schools. Hoadley and Ward (2010) contend that

this is especially the situation in South African schools. According to literature reports, the time factor serves as a challenge to school principals (since principals as instructional leaders) who are charged with the responsibility of maintaining high quality standards/ outcomes due to unprecedented policy and accountability measures thrust upon them (Drew, 2010). Policy contexts change considerably over time, school leaders are uncertain of how to carry out their instructional role in policy driven schools. Without leadership no quality program will work. It was noteworthy that research conducted by Bhengu and Mkhize, (2013) on successful school leadership practices exploring similar contexts (policy driven) reflects that challenging schools encouraged leaders to become more resilient.

Contributing to the review on the challenges of instructional leaders, Drew's (2010) study indicated that most leaders expressed that it is problematic to find a highly skilled and effective workforce, since teachers appointed to schools are sometimes inexperienced in the subjects or positions they are employed in. Teachers impart knowledge, and if they are not qualified/ competent to teach the subjects that they are employed for, students are disadvantaged on school achievement levels. Teachers are critical on academic achievement which impacts in changing and improving schools. Evidence (Wallace Foundation (2011), p.15) asserts that their 'pedagogical content knowledge' is key to their effectiveness. This poses a challenge for the instructional leader to identify and retain a highly skilled and effective workforce.

It was also noted by principals that as an instructional leader it is sometimes challenging to bring a host of professionals together who do not share the same values and encouraging them to work towards the same organisational goal. Managing tensions arising from the different factors such as personal values, professional values and school outcomes may prove problematic to instructional leaders (Drew, 2010). Yelder (2004) shares the belief that working with people of diversity in pursuing common goals can lead to conflicting situations.

The above challenges experienced by instructional leaders' warrants the need for change, flexibility and innovation of school leaders. It is premised that instructional leaders are considered as risk takers who possess the ability to reason and think in creative ways in attempt to effect change in schools. Leithwood (2004) extending this premise, says that instructional leaders need to be aware of the features in their organisations that requires attention. They also need to know the contribution of each teacher, in influencing the school life and the learning of the students if they are to be effective instructional leaders. Achieving

total quality is not simple e.g. instructional leaders must undergo a transformation to change in order to achieve improvement.

2.2.10 Possibilities of instructional leadership

Bush (2008) claims that at the helm of every school is a successful leader. However Robinson (2008) contends that less is known by leaders about what type of instructional leadership practices principals use or the impact they have on school performance. In addressing Robinson's (2008) contention, Bendikson's (2011) study sought to determine the possibilities of instructional leadership in schools. Utilising studies from low, middle and well performing schools and from the OECD reports, the study found that the prominent person to improve performance is the school principal. Improvement is mainly centred on principals' previous leadership experience and that different kinds of leadership factors determine school performance or improvement. The article concludes by stating that the possibility of school improvement is highly attainable when the principal is experienced, skilled and knowledgeable. Robinson (2008) suggests that apprenticeship as well as practical experience in managing a school is a good prerequisite for school improvement/ success.

An observation that needs to be highlighted was that the schooling environment was not always conducive or responsive to learning and under such circumstances the instructional principal may influence the environment by setting and communicating goals with teachers and students which communicate high expectations. Robinson (2008) alludes to the academic goal being central to instructional leadership, he goes on to state that a well-managed environment is a prerequisite to improving schools.

Further findings reveal that principals can turn around schools when they communicate high academic goals and manage instructional activities accordingly. Differing school contexts requires different responses from leaders resulting in different behaviours. Different behaviours impact differently. When instructional principals adapt to changes and school challenges, they identify school strengths and weaknesses accordingly. The possibility is that they are able to turn around schools since they are aware of how to respond to situations that they have identified.

The possibility of improving schools through communication, environmental control, management activities, knowledge and skills are all aspects of instructional leadership. Thus

the assumption is that when school leaders effectively carry out these aspects the possibility of success and turning around low performing schools is highly attainable.

2.3 Theoretical and conceptual frameworks

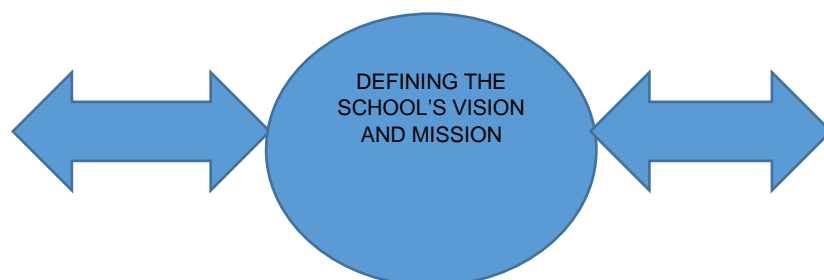
Theoretical and conceptual frameworks are pertinent to our understandings of a particular phenomenon (Ravitch & Riggan, 2011). They explain the way things work and why (Ravitch & Riggan, 2011). Various authors such as Hallinger (2000), Weber (1996) and Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2009) have written a host of scholarly works on theoretical frameworks of instructional leadership. Each framework is characterised by its own characters and dimensions. My study is underpinned by Weber's (1996) model of instructional leadership theory. Weber's (1996) model looks at leadership functions of school principals. This model is suited to my study since it is directly related to my research topic. Furthermore, it links to other instructional leadership models (Hallinger's, 2000) on the dimensions of instructional leadership. The model by Weber (1996) is based on instructional leadership with particular reference to teaching and learning. Since the core function of instructional leadership is on improving teaching and learning, this model assists in the attainment of school improvement. It proves beneficial to policymakers, practitioners and researchers. In my study, Weber's (1996) model serves as a catalyst for instructional leadership practices. The model underpinning my study is used to inform and enhance the study by filling in the knowledge gaps and deficiencies of instructional leadership models used in isolation since it is an extension and culmination of other models (Hallinger, 2000) of instructional leadership. Further Weber's model (1996) of instructional leadership incorporates research about shared leadership and empowerment of informal leaders to create a school that underscores the emphasis of academics and student achievement for all students. This is relevant to the South African context since the role of the principal as an instructional leader in schools has changed from an instructional leader to more of an instructional facilitator. This requires the principal as an instructional leader to adopt more inclusive methods of sharing the distribution of instructional tasks with teachers, including them in decisions that affect instruction. Weber's model of instructional leadership encompasses those aspects of shared leadership and empowerment of teachers.

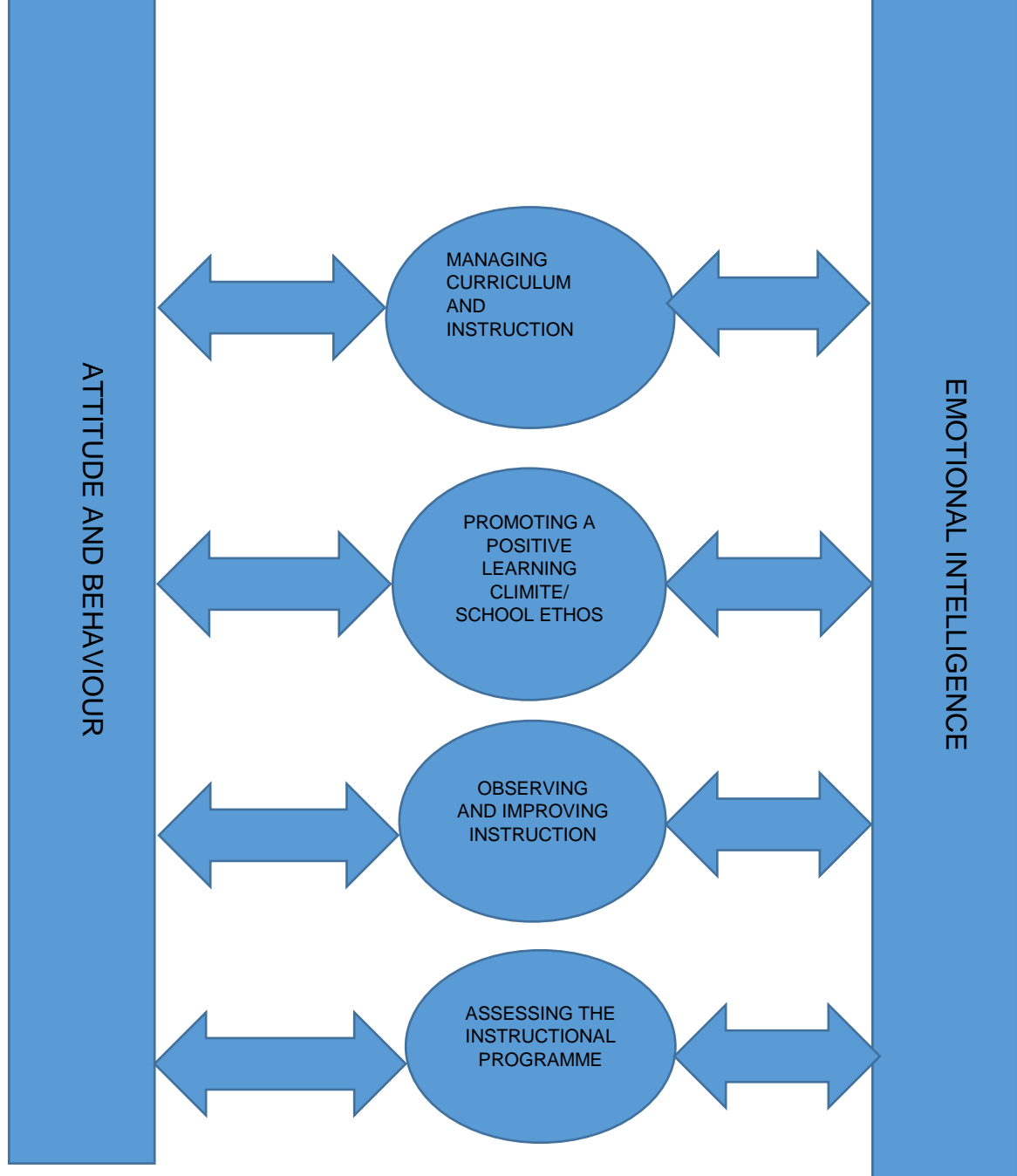
2.3.1 Weber's Model of instructional leadership (1996)

Weber's model of instructional leadership advocates the need for school instructional leadership. Weber (1996) indicates that an instructional leader is necessary in every school even if the leader is not the principal; there still is a need for a designated leader. He elaborates his point by stating that while a leaderless-team approach as an approach to a school's instructional program is a powerful tool, even this approach requires some form of a leader because a group of professionals still require an active advocate for guidance in teaching and learning (Weber, 1996). His viewpoint has never been more apt than in today's educational arena of distributed, shared and collaborative leadership. Hence the phenomenon of instructional leadership will continue in educational institutions despite the hierarchical nature of educational institutions. Weber (1996) identified five essential domains of instructional leadership *viz.* defining the school's mission, managing curriculum and instruction, promoting a positive learning climate, observing and improving instruction and assessing the instructional program.

WEBER'S (1996)

MODEL OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP (ADAPTED)





Through the reviewed literature and interviews with my research participants, I have adapted Weber's (1966) model of instructional leadership to make it more suitable for my study. Through intense literature reviewed (Goleman, 1996; Peariso, 2011; Singh & Dali, 2013) and the interviews, conducted with study participants, it became evident that instructional leaders need to develop and maintain positive attitudes and behaviors as they exercise their instructional leadership roles. Positive attitudes and behaviors lead to positive learning outcomes. Furthermore, instructional leaders need to be aware of their emotions, as well as the emotions of others since emotions hold the potential of influence over teacher action and outcomes. Additionally, emotions have an impact and influence in every domain of Weber's

(1996) model of instructional leadership. Hence instructional leaders need to be emotionally intelligent beings.

Below follows an explanation of the five domains of Weber's (1996) model of instructional leadership.

2.3.1.1 Defining the school's vision and mission

Defining the school's vision and mission is considered a cycle of co-operation and reflection of thinking in constructing an honest and clear school mission statement. The school's vision and mission serves to bind the academic ideals with the staff, students, parents and community. The instructional leader provides guidance and support to educational stakeholders for the orchestration of the vision/mission statement of the school. As a team, they construct a shared vision/mission for the school. In terms of Weber's first domain of instructional leadership my study will look at the principal's vision and mission statements, and the process of how he/she develops and communicates the vision at all levels of the school and its impact on student achievement.

2.3.1.2 Managing curriculum and instruction

The curriculum management of the principal must be closely aligned with the schools mission (Weber, 1996). The distinctive features of the leader's instructional practices, such as observation, supervising classrooms offer teachers the required means to provide opportunities to students to succeed. Further the leader offers teachers' insight into effective practices and teaching strategies to ensure school goals are achieved. However in spite of Weber's (1996) assertion, literature sometimes contends that supervision and observation do not make a significance contribution to student learning. Wanzare (2013) suggests that supervision produces negative results since it sometimes viewed as an uncomfortable process. On the contrary, Weber (1996) supports that supervision be an instructional priority since it recognises teacher's strengths and weaknesses and knowledge. Bearing in mind Weber's (1996) and Wanzare's (2013) contributions, my study will look at the distinctive features of principal's instructional leadership practices and how it impacts on teachers and student learning.

2.3.1.3 Promoting a positive learning climate/school ethos

According to Weber (1996), the school climate may be referred to as the school environment, or the social / learning climate which affects student achievement levels. It comprises of the beliefs, attitudes and values of the school community which are geared towards factors that affect students learning. A positive learning climate is provided by leaders promoting clear communication of instructional goals, determining high expectations for performance, creating a climate of learning that envisions clear and collaborative expectations, and increasing teacher commitment in school (Weber, 1996). In this regard Weber, (1996) proposes that the ethos of a school may be created by the leader exhibiting shared leadership duties with individuals who can perform them in collaborative processes. In a similar vein my study explores how the principal promotes a positive learning climate, looking specifically at the aspects of beliefs, attitudes and values of the school community as outlined by Weber (1996) as aspects contributing to the creation of a school learning climate.

2.3.1.4 Observing and improving instruction

The first step to observation and instructional improvement begins with the principal instituting relationships of trust and respect with staff. Weber (1996) maintains that observations provide prospects for professional interactions which in turn provide opportunities for professional development for the individual who is the observer and the individual being observed. This ensures a reciprocal relationship where the two participants gain information of value for professional development purposes. In contrast to Weber's (1996) belief, Letts, Wilkins, Law, Stewart, Bosch and Westmorland (2007) cautions, that observations are time consuming if they are to be effective. The (2010) executive summary of principal accountability states that teachers relatively have faith in the principals' assessment of their teaching. However the core function of instructional leadership is improving teaching and learning. My study seeks to establish the role that principals play in improving instruction. Improvement will be viewed in light of the relationship that principals establish with staff members, the degree of professional development that teachers are exposed to and the impact it has on improvement. Weber (1996) asserts that instructional improvement is attained through the leader developing relationships of trust and professional development with employees.

2.3.1.5 Assessing the instructional program

Weber's (1996) final domain of instructional leadership is known as the assessing of the instructional program, which is pertinent for improving the school's instructional program. In

assessing the instructional program, the leader is responsible for initiation and contribution to the planning, designing, administration, and analysing of assessments which evaluate and strengthen curriculum effectiveness. The continual assessing of the instructional program allows teachers to successfully meet the needs of students through the constantly revising and refining the learning programme. Drawing on Weber's (1996) definition of assessing the instructional program, my study will explore the methods principals' implement to assess the instructional program, with respect to teachers delivery of curriculum, time spent on assessments and curriculum coverage, the measures principal have in place to minimise disruption of instructional time among other aspects outlined by Weber (1996) in terms of assessing the instructional program.

2.4 Chapter summary

This chapter highlighted the views of various authors concerning instructional leadership. It provides insight into how principal's instructional leadership contributes to learner improvement and school success. It explored pertinent issues compounding instructional leadership such as the history of instructional leadership, the need for it, the characteristics of an instructional leader, the challenges and possibilities of instructional leadership. It also places the theory into an instructional leadership framework. From the exposition of relevant literature one may conclude that instructional leadership is aimed at attaining high learner performance and high standards of quality education for learners. It's also apparent that teaching and learning are reinforced by various factors. Key to the understanding and addressing these factors for maximum performance levels at schools rests on good instructional leadership of the principals. The next chapter focuses on the research methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

A review of literature on the phenomenon of instructional leadership was presented in the previous chapter. This chapter provided the research design and methodology employed in the study. The research design comprised of the research context and description whereas the

research methodology comprised of the description of the participants; the research instruments used and the procedures followed for analysis of data. Furthermore, issues of trustworthiness, ethical acceptability and the limitations to the study were discussed.

3.2 Research paradigm

According to social scientists (Creswell, 2007 & Morgan, 2007) there are four dominant research paradigms: post-positivism, constructivism, transformative and pragmatism. A new paradigm has emerged recently known by social scientists as the critical or subtle realism paradigm. This paradigm addresses the issue of validity of interpretive research methods, assumes that real world objects exist apart from the human knower. There is an objective/external reality. This theory claims that that reality must be subject to wide critical examination to achieve the best understanding of reality possible. Research paradigms are defined as basic beliefs that represent a world view (Mertens, 2006). They guide the process of inquiry and direct the researcher towards appropriate research methods and methodologies.

This study is located in the interpretive paradigm. Researchers (Creswell, 2012 & Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011) contend that within this paradigm premise that, there are multiple realities (ontology) and what we know about these realities and how we come to know it (epistemology) is based on our interactions with individuals. This was appropriate for the study since I elicited information from principals on their understandings of instructional leadership practices. Through engaging with principals knowledge was socially constructed, locating my research in the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm concerns itself with the individual and understanding the interpretations of the world around them. Ontology is concerned with what exists in the world i.e. the form and nature of reality, hence, what may be learned about it. It is one's view of reality. Ontological assumptions of the interpretive paradigm according to Cohen *et al.* (2007) assume that reality is constructed in an indirect manner based on the interpretation of the individual and it is therefore subjective. Extending on this people have their own interpretation and meaning of events. Since events are distinctive they are not generalisable, therefore there is a multiplicity of perspectives on an incident. Causativeness in social sciences is determined by interpreted meaning and symbols (Cohen, *et al.* 2000).

Epistemology's referred to as the acquisition of knowledge and is more concerned with the relationship between what the individual knows and what can be known about a phenomenon. Simplified epistemology is concerned with how do we know what we know?

Epistemologically, observers get their knowledge about the world by experiencing it. Epistemology assumes that knowledge is acquired through an approach that “respects the differences between people and the objects of natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action” (Grix, 2004, p. 64). Knowledge is gained to generate a theory. The creation of knowledge stems from particular situations and cannot be reduced to a single interpretation. Knowledge is gained through personal experience (Cohen *et al.* 2007). Ontology and epistemology may be referred to as a person’s world view. Simply put, one’s view of reality is called ontology and the view of how one acquires knowledge is termed epistemology.

The research methodology is a process of inquiry, which passes from an assumption to a plan of research (research design) and generation of data (Myers, 2009). Methods most commonly used in research are qualitative and quantitative methods. Research methodology refers to the method of how data is generated, analysed, and the generalisations derived from the data. Qualitative research methods allows the researcher to study cultural and social phenomena. According to Myers (2009), qualitative research is aimed at assisting researchers to understand people, and the contexts (social and cultural) in which they live. Data in qualitative methodology is derived from interviews, observations or from public documents (Cohen *et al.* 2007).

3.3 Research design

Research design, according to Maree (2007, p.70), is a strategy that passes from a philosophical assumption to stipulating the selection of respondents, the data qualitative research design based on a case study research. I selected this design since case studies allow for an in-depth description of cases (Mouton, 2001). Case studies “portray, analyse and interpret the uniqueness of real individuals and situations through accessible accounts” (Cohen, *et al.* 2011, p.129). This approach was suitable for my study since my study closely focused on the school principals and their behaviours, actions, beliefs etc. in establishing how principals enact their instructional leadership roles at school. The research assumed the form of a case study of two schools in the Pinetown District, it was a case of two school principals.

Pereira and Vallance (2006) identified challenges of a case study as: selection of the case study site is limited to the scope of the researcher, time and resources available in studying a particular case, research results cannot be generalised. Yin (2009) identifies other challenges of case studies asserting that case study’s lack rigour, challenges include the role of the

researcher in the interpretation process of research i.e. the researcher may be bias. Watts (2010) considers the ethical challenges in case study research includes issues of consent from participants constituting the case studied. My study has taken precaution of the challenges of case study research and tried to eliminate some of these challenges by gaining consent from research participants, allowing all participants access to their interview transcripts so as to avoid any biasness of the researcher.

3.4. Research Methodology

Research distinguishes between mainly two types of research methodologies namely qualitative and quantitative methodology. However, a mixed method approach to research may also be undertaken (Cohen, *et al.* 2011). My study aimed to understand the role of the school principal as an instructional leader from the perspective of various principals locating it in qualitative research. Qualitative research premises that the researcher's ability to interpret what he/ she sees is fundamental to understanding any phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). My study focused on principal's practices and their experiences. A case study methodology was employed. Rule and John (2012) state that a case study provides rich insights into particular situations and allow for an in depth study of boundaries. This study was a case study approach. It was a case of two schools in the Pinetown District. Further it was a case of two principals and eight teachers.

3.5 Sampling

Sampling refers to the process used for selection of the population for the study (Maree 2007). There is a multiplicity of sampling procedures, such as purposive, stratified, convenient and snowball sampling. In qualitative research, sampling is done purposively (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Purposive sampling, according to Cohen, *et al.* (2007) is where researchers specifically pick the cases to include in the study based on the characteristics sought. McMillan and Schumacher (2006) state that in purposive sampling the researcher identifies participants that are information rich meaning that they are possibly knowledgeable on the studying phenomenon. Participants were selected on the basis that they could supply information relevant to the problem under study. As my study was a qualitative study, it therefore utilised a purposive sample of two schools located in the Pinetown District based on convenience. One primary and one secondary school constituted my sample. I selected the Pinetown District of principals located close to me. This allowed for easy access to the participants. My participants were two principals and eight post level one teachers. I

chose to sample one primary and one secondary school in order to gain knowledge of instructional leadership from the perspectives of both the primary and secondary level. This bridges the gap of variations between schools.

3.6 Data generation methods

Qualitative data is derived from many sources, *viz.* interviews; observations; documents and reports; field notes, etc. (Cohen, *et al.* 2011). The more prominent method in qualitative research is interviews (Cohen, *et al.* 2011). To generate data, semi-structured, one-to-one interviews will be used with principals and teachers. All interviews will be voice recorded, after which it will be transcribed and thereafter subject to content analysis. Since the study was located within qualitative research, it lent itself to interviews as a tool for data generation. The aim of the interview was to gain insight into how participants feel and perceive their role as instructional leaders. The interviews took place at a time specified by the school. To corroborate what principals articulated in the interviews, interviews with H.O.D.'s and post level one teachers' were also conducted.

3.6.1 Interviews

Interviews are flexible tools for generating data, enabling verbal, non-verbal multi-sensory channels (Cohen, *et al.* 2011). Cohen, *et al.* (2011) maintains that interviews allow for intimate and prolonged involvement of the researcher with the research participants. This enabled the researcher to get into the core of what is being researched, a person's knowledge, likes and dislikes, the person's attitudes and beliefs on a specific phenomenon. De Vos (2011) outlines two types of interviews as data generating methods, one-on-one and focus group interviews. Other authors (Cohen, *et al.* 2011; de Vos, 2011 & Maree, 2007) are of the opinion that, questions in all qualitative interviews are open-ended, intended to reveal what is important to understand concerning the phenomenon under study. According to Maree (2007) semi-structured interviews offer a versatile means of generating data because it allows the interviewer to probe for clarification and elaboration of participant responses. Further, they allow participants to freely express themselves and enable researchers to observe the body language of participants (Maree, 2007). For my study, I chose to use interviews with research participants because it may be very productive since the interviewer can pursue issues of concern which may lead to constructive ideas. The advantage of one to one interviews according to Plaisant and Shneiderman (2005) is that, it is excellent in obtaining comprehensive information hence fewer participants are required to generate data that is rich and stimulating. As the focus on my research was on school principals' instructional

leadership practices, one to one interviews with principals allowed me the forum to ask principals' questions pertaining to my study. This enabled me to explore further this phenomenon in great detail. Semi-structured interviews allowed me (interviewee) the opportunity to elaborate and gain more information when required. Clough and Nutbawh (2007) state that semi-structured interviews allow for the emergent of rich data, as it allows for participants to express themselves and to talk freely which they may not have thought of in a structured interview. This allows for newer and greater depth to the study phenomenon, as well as it allows me further exploration of the comments from different participants which serves as triangulation (Plaisant & Shneiderman 2005). Denscombe (2007) cautions that interviews may sometimes be frowned upon since people respond differently depending on how they perceive the interviewer. This will have an effect on the kind of information that interviewee's are willing to reveal and their level of honesty in terms of what they reveal. Interviews are time consuming.

Interview schedules for research participants were generated in light of the research questions and objectives. Interviews followed the constructs of a qualitative interview. Questions that were likely to yield information on the study phenomenon and address the research aims and objectives were asked. It followed the constructs of qualitative interview, questions were open ended, neutral, sensitive and understandable (Silverman, 2000). The schedule begun with the easy questions and proceed to the more difficult and sensitive topics (Silverman, 2000). According to Silverman (2000) this can help put respondents at ease, build their confidence and rapport and generates rich data that further develops the interview.

3.6.2. Document reviews

Document reviews are often used in qualitative research to establish data on the background and history of the context you are studying (Creswell, 2013). It involves reviewing documents example minutes of staff meetings, departmental meetings or official reports with the purpose of learning how past events and interactions are related or give meaning and value to the phenomenon you are researching. For my study, I used document reviews. The documents under review were the minutes of staff meetings, departmental meetings, school reports and newsletters which provide opportunities to learn about particular persons (school

principals) of particular times in relation to my study phenomenon of the role of the school principal as an instructional leader. I reviewed documents from the period of the last three years so that I can gain insight into school matters, processes and daily functioning of the school. Document reviews proved to be advantageous to my research since it was an obtrusive means, rich in portraying the beliefs and values of participants in their naturalist settings. Further document reviews revealed the actions of people, why they do what they do and the value of their behaviour (Creswell, 2013). Moreover document reviews allowed me access to comprehensive historical information collected from different time periods, which was used to explore my topic of research and make it easy to analyse data (Creswell, 2013). Document reviews also provide valuable cross-validation of other methods used to support or disconfirm them (Creswell, 2013). However, this method is sometimes seen as time consuming and limiting since it may be representative of only one perspective and is therefore non generalisable to all populations. Robson (2002) contends that document reviews may not give the researcher the exact interpretation of what the researcher is seeking.

3.7 Data analysis

Nieuwenhuis (2010) describes qualitative data analysis as a continuous and iterative (non-linear) process that entails data organisation and explanation. In essence it is, sense making of data in terms of participants' responses, noting categories, patterns and themes (Cohen, *et al.* 2011). In my research, data analysis was conducted in accordance with the two methods of generation employed in the study. Principal and teacher interviews were digitally voice recorded. This allows the researcher to focus on how the interview is progressing and where to move to next (de Vos, 2005). It also assists the researcher in the transcription of the interview verbatim for analysis purposes (de Vos, 2005). Thereafter all interview transcriptions were subjected to content analysis by generating categories and derived from the research questions guiding the study (de Vos, 2005). Documents i.e. minutes of staff meetings, departmental meetings, newsletters were subjected to content analysis by generating emerging patterns and themes against what was articulated in the participant's interviews.

3.8 Issues of trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is referred to as the ability to trust research results and to have confidence in its potential success (Cohen, *et al.* 2007). Research may be considered trustworthy if it can

ascertain how conclusions are made and that research participants are real (de Vos, 2011). There are four principles of trustworthiness which are transferability, credibility, dependability and conformability (de Vos, 2011). The use of various research participants and different data generation methods would ensure trustworthiness of findings in my study.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility is referred to as the measure of the researcher's confidence in the findings of the research. In qualitative research, triangulation is a means of ensuring credibility. According to Creswell (2005), triangulation is seen as a primary form utilised by qualitative researchers to validate findings. Triangulation is described by De Vos, *et al.* (2011) as a method where the researcher uses a variety of sources that will provide insights about the same relationships or events. In this study, triangulation was employed by means of the different methods of collecting data, namely, individual interviews and focus group. Further to this, creditability of my study was ensured by allowing research participants access to interview transcriptions. The principle of credibility denotes member checks where the researcher gets participants to check the accuracy of the written transcripts of the recorded interviews (Rule & John, 2001).

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the applicability of findings to other settings or groups (de Vos, 2011). Transferability can be enhanced through the use of triangulation where data can be generated from other sources. In my study I ensured that detailed information was provided concerning the number of schools participating in the study, where they are based; the number of participants involved; the data generation methods employed and the length of the data generation sessions. I ensured that there was a paper trail in terms of the interview transcripts which other researchers who want to replicate this study in similar contexts can utilise.

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability according to Rule and John (2011, p. 107) refers to an attempt by the researcher "to focus on methodological rigour and coherence towards generating findings and case accounts which the research community can accept with confidence." In a more simplified definition, Bisschoff and Koebe (2005) state that dependability is associated with the findings of the research and its consistency, if the study was repeated with similar subjects in a similar context. My research ensured consistency by utilising rich, detailed

descriptions of the research methodology, as well as the availability of audio-recordings, and triangulation of different methods (document reviews) of data gathering.

3.8.4 Conformability

De Vos (2005) explains conformability as when the findings of the research are confirmed by the data. To ensure conformability, I kept records of the raw data generated through individual interviews; further to this I used my critical reader.

3.9 Ethical issues

The aim of ethical issues is to prevent 'harm', therefore researchers (de Vos, Strydom, Fouche, & Delpont, 2005) describe ethical issues as a set of moral principles. Silverman (2000, p.201) adds that researchers must be mindful that whilst they are conducting research, they inhabit the private spaces of the research participants. Therefore Creswell (2003) states that the researcher is obliged to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of their informants. There are several aspects that researchers should be wary of, these aspects are getting informed consent from participants, investigating if the research may cause harm to participants, being honest in presenting the data. Confidentiality and anonymity must be strictly adhered to and lastly looking into intervention and advocacy strategies should the research participants display behaviour that is illegal or harmful in any way.

Inform consent - is where the researcher informs participants of the nature and purpose of the research, thereafter the participant makes the choice whether to be included in the study after being informed of the particulars that may affect decisions (McNeill & Chapman, 2009). Further, the researcher explains to participants their roles. In this study, I obtained informed consent in writing. Ethical clearance was sought from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), thereafter permission letters from the gate keepers, such as the DoE, from the principals and teachers of the selected schools were sought.

Harm and risk – The principal of non-maleficence (do no harm) is employed. The researcher guaranteed that there will be no harm to participants' consequent of their participation, psychological or physical (Trochim, 2000). This may also relate to the issue of privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity. Pseudonyms of all schools and participants were used in ensuring anonymity in this study.

Honesty and trust - adhering to all ethical considerations serves as trustworthiness of study.

Voluntary participation -all participants were notified that the research was being carried out for academic requirements so participation in the study was voluntary. Furthermore the principle of 'beneficence' will be employed. Beneficence deals with the benefits that the research will bring and to whom (Cohen, *et al*, 2007). All participants will be informed of the value of my study verbally and in writing.

3.10 Limitations of the study

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), limitations are those aspects of methodology or design that influence the interpretation of study results. It is the constraints, shortcomings, influences on the generalisation and utility of the research findings which occurs because of the ways in which you have chosen to design your study and its methods. In essence it is the influences beyond the researcher's control (Creswell, 2009). A primary limitation to this study was its scope. The study only addressed the instructional leadership role from the perspectives of the principals and teachers due to the study's duration. The investigation did not consider how the other stakeholders such as the learners, community among others could contribute to instructional practices or to what outcomes could they lead. To address this challenge I utilised interviews with the H.O.D.'s and teachers to corroborate the school principals' responses. Through the consortium of teachers, their views, ideas, opinions and outcomes of instructional leadership was expressed. Secondly geographical limitations underpinned this study. The study was limited to the Pinetown District and is therefore non-representative of all educational districts. Furthermore conducting this study in a different district context may have led to different results. Consequently transferability was also limited. In addition, the short-term nature of data generation tends to limit our understanding of how sustainable this research may be for principals in years to come.

3.11 Delimitation of the study

Delimitation of a study is associated with the parameters of the investigation, which frequently deals with the sample, setting and research instruments (Cohen, *et al*, 2011). It describes the study boundaries set by the researcher and pertains to aspects of methodological procedures used and not used (why you have chosen to do/not do), the study sample (who and why?), the variables studied, the research instruments and theoretical perspectives,

(Creswell, 2009). My study was carried out in one primary and one secondary school in the Pinetown District. Whilst the geographical boundaries of the study was limited to the Pinetown District it cannot be generalisable to all districts, I have therefore used both primary and secondary schools so that the study may be identifiable to all schools in varying contexts and districts. In terms of the weaknesses identified from my research instruments, I navigated around this by informing all my research participants from inception of the value, nature and purpose of my study, so that it will have minimal or no effect on the response received from participants during the interview sessions. They will be aware of the researcher's intention and it would set their minds at ease. In assessing the level of honesty of participants, I used H.O.D's and teachers responses to corroborate principal's interviews. With respect to the issues of time I identified possible weakness/ limitations to the interviews and document reviews as methods of data generation, I addressed this by limiting the time period of documents I review to the last five years so that it is manageable to review and ample time is available to study these documents. With respect to the issue of interviews being time consuming, I limited the interviews to one interview from each participant so that they have the time to give me the information sought. Since interviews were conducted from different sources it also served as triangulation to my study.

3.12. Description of the case study schools

3.12.1. Crystal Primary School

Crystal Primary School is a pseudonym given to one of the schools in this study, located in the Pinetown District in Durban. It has a quintile ranking of five and falls under Section 21 schools according to the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1986. There are 30 teachers at the school. The SMT comprises of 3 members (all females).

Description of the participants

The principal of Crystal Primary School, Mr Sapphire, is a 52 year old male who has 10 years' experience as a principal. He has a Bachelor Degree, a Bachelor of Education Honours degree and a Bachelor of Education Masters degree. Mrs Emerald and Mrs Topaz, female heads of department with around 30 years of teaching experience between them, both have a

Bachelor Degree, a Bachelor of Education Honours Degree. Mrs Amemyth, aged 30 and Mrs Granite aged 40 holds a Bachelors Degree in Education.

3.12.2. Aquamarine Secondary School

Aquamarine Secondary School is a pseudonym given to one of the schools in this study, located in the Pinetown District in Durban. It has a quintile ranking of five and falls under Section 21 schools according to the South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1986. There are 44 teachers at the school. The SMT comprises of 5 members (3males and 2 females).

Description of the participants

The principal of Aquamarine Secondary School, Mr Tanzanite, is a 60 year old male who has 40 years teaching experience. He has a Bachelor Degree, a Bachelor of Education Honours degree, a Bachelor of Education Masters degree and a doctoral degree in Education, Leadership and Management. Heads of department, Mrs Diamond is a 52 year old female teacher who has over 30 years of teaching experience with a Bachelor of Education Honours and Master's Degree in education. Mrs Amber, 50 year old female has a Bachelor of Education Degree. Mrs Opal a 30 year old female and Mr Ziron a 50 year old male both have a Bachelor of Education Degree.

3.12 Chapter summary

This chapter provided information on the research design and methodology to be used in the study. The research paradigm utilised in the study was also explained. A case study methodology was described and the rationale for this methodology was provided. The context of the study, pertaining to who comprised the sample and the selection was also discussed. Data generation methods and data analysis were also discussed. Ethical issues and trustworthiness were examined. The next chapter focused on the data presentation and discussion.

CHAPTER FOUR DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter focused on the research design and methodology underpinning the study. This chapter presents the findings and discussions of data generated through semi-structured interviews and documents reviews. A discussion of the findings is facilitated through interrogating the key research questions, literature review and theoretical frameworks outlined in chapters one and two. In order to remind the reader the broad research questions of the study are re-stated here:

- What are the principals' understandings of their roles in instructional leadership practices in their schools?
- What instructional leadership practices do school principals engage in, in supporting teaching and learning at their schools?
- How do educational policies impact on the instructional leadership practices of school principals?
- What management structures do principals have in place in order to effectively promote teaching and learning?

Presentation of findings takes the form of themes that emerged through content analysis of the interviews and documents review discussed in the previous chapter. In addition, in presenting the findings, I wanted to ensure that the voices of the participants were not lost. To this end, verbatim quotations are used throughout the data presentation and discussion.

4.2 Data presentation

The following data is presented under themes that emerged from my analysis of the interview transcripts and document reviews. Ten themes emerged from my data as follows:

- The principals' perceptions and practices of instructional leadership,
- The cog in the wheel of teaching and learning (instructional leadership), styles of leadership,
- Exemplary leadership,
- The subject, curriculum, instructional leadership in instructional leadership (SCI's),
- Principals supporting teachers,
- Encouraging professional development,
- Developing the novice teacher, hands on approach and
- Parental involvement,
- Getting the learner back to the classroom,

- Policy and instructional leadership practices.

4.2.1 The principals' perceptions of instructional leadership

The two participating principals were resolute in their belief that principals should be instructional leaders. However the data suggest that the two principals held different views of how they perceive instructional leadership. Instructional leadership was understood as a leadership approach/style or as a practice of the school principal. Mr Tanzanite emphasised that instructional leadership is more concerned with a leadership style, he retorted:

Instructional leadership is how you can provide leadership in terms of the effective delivery of the instructional programmes i.e. the curriculum to ensure learning outcomes.

(Mr Tanzanite-Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

These sentiments differed from Mr Sapphire who maintained that instructional leadership is understood as:

Everything concerning teaching and learning. The policies, programmes and structures that are in place to promote effective teaching and learning. The entire school programme is my responsibility. To ensure that there is effective teaching and learning that is taking place so that there are high levels of academic achievement.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

Similar sentiments were echoed by the educators of the respective schools confirming their principals' pronouncements regarding their understanding of instructional leadership. The teachers at Aquamarine Secondary emphasised that instructional leadership was entrenched in a leadership style hence; the main responsibility of the principal was to adopt an instructional leadership style that was based on achieving outcomes. Mrs. Amber corroborates her principal's pronouncement that instructional leadership is concerned with a leadership style when she states that:

Instructional leadership is the management style and the leadership style which is based in achieving the positive goals such as teaching and learning.

(Mrs Amber-H.O.D at Aquamarine Secondary School)

In reaffirming the principal's assumptions Mrs Diamond asserts that instructional leadership:

Is about leading the professional staff or a leading professional. i.e. principal who leads his staff towards the culture of effective teaching and learning.

(Mrs Diamond-H.O.D at Aquamarine Secondary School)

The link between what the principal and the heads of department express seems to be related to one another and is confirmed by the school minutes of a staff meeting. The minutes of the staff meeting of Aquamarine Secondary dated 25/10/2013 reflect the principal's view of instructional leadership concerning a leadership style, which reads as follows:

Leading through teams: the staff was advised to work together and function as a team.

Principal explained managing a team and how to manage through teams and stressed that there can be only one captain.

This statement concurs with Mr Tanzanite's understanding of instructional leadership as being a process of influence of teaching and learning. Since leadership is pivotal to organisational success, the leader's style of leadership becomes important to the organisation. The implication is that leadership is a requisite to any organisation even if the organisation is working through a team based approach.

Mr Sapphire, (Principal of Crystal Primary School) seems to understand instructional leadership as being a practice-based because it is concerned with the school principal developing policies, programmes and structures to promote teaching and learning. In light of this understanding, Mrs Emerald confirmed her principal's assumptions by saying:

Our principal together with the school management team they work together as a team, they set up goals and standards that the teachers need to meet in their teaching and learning. We sit down at the beginning of the year, we set out the goals, we put up the programme for the year and we have policies that guide us in achieving our goals. We prioritise on things that we need to do or do each and every term.

(Mrs Emerald-H.O.D at Crystal Primary School)

Further, Mrs Emerald's responses and the minutes of the staff meeting of Crystal Primary School dated 25/01/2013, referred to some of the policies that Mr Tanzanite from

Aquamarine Secondary School seemed to have in place to promote teaching and learning. To support this, the minutes of the staff management stipulate that: *“There would be an audit on teachers and he would be monitoring staff and learners work.”* Monitoring and supervision are used interchangeably and suggest the observation of something which is highlighted by Grobler (2014) as a distinctive practice of instructional leaders. Needs of teachers are identified to enable leaders to provide them with the necessary supports/resources so that teachers using the supports/resources received may provide opportunities for students to succeed. Despite Grobler’s (2014) assertion, other literature reviews sometimes maintain that supervision and observation do not make a significant contribution to student learning. Wanzare (2013) suggests that supervision produces negative results since it is sometimes viewed as an uncomfortable process. Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) concur that supervision in schools is intimidating and unreceptive to teachers to make any meaningful impression or contribution to the improvement of teaching techniques. It sometimes creates hostile and limiting environments.

On the contrary, Grobler (2014) supports that supervision be an instructional priority since it recognises teacher’s strengths and areas of teacher’s weakness, knowledge and support. Based on the understandings of instructional leadership provided by the scholars and participants, one may deduce that instructional leadership may be understood on the basis of two aspects: the leadership style and the policies, programmes and structures that are in place to promote effective teaching and learning. The opinion that principals as instructional leaders should lead by distinctive leadership styles and through their active engagement with policies, programmes and structures to promote effective teaching and learning is also supported by scholars such as Yukl (2002) and Davidoff and Lazarus (2002). These scholars acknowledge that whilst the principal’s instructional leadership is about social influence that the principal exerts on his/her teachers to influence them to achieve the aims of the school, it is also concerned with the procedures necessary to keep the school productive. James (2000) describes these procedures as planning, organising, activating and controlling or the policies, programmes and structures that are in place to promote effective teaching and learning. Moreover, The Department of Basic Education (DoBE) 2005 prescribes that school principals should influence, direct and support the best quality teaching and learning that enables learners to achieve in all spheres of life, at school, in their community and in the country as a whole.

Grobler (2014) and Wanzare (2013) are in agreement with Weber (1996) on instructional supervision and implementation of policies, programme and structures to improve learner achievement. In managing the curriculum and instruction, Weber (1996) maintains that supervision affords principals the opportunity to detect strengths and weakness among teachers in an attempt to use that knowledge towards increasing learner achievement. Further Weber's (1996) domain of assessing the instructional programme alludes to the leader being responsible for initiation of the planning, designing, administration, and analysis of assessments that promote effective teaching and learning. Therefore Weber's model of instructional leadership advocates the need for school instructional leadership, which leads to school improvement and learner achievement. Since school instructional leadership requires an ongoing process of active involvement with the curriculum and constant assessment and refinement of the curriculum towards learner achievement, Weber (1996) is of the opinion that every school requires a leader.

To summarise this theme, the evidence emerging here indicates that principals should understand instructional leadership as a means of influence and as a system of policies; programmes and structures that principals need to engage in to promote effective teaching and learning. Hence instructional leadership is about resilient leadership focused on curriculum and instruction from the principal. The next theme focuses on the instructional leadership practices that school principals engage in as instructional leaders.

4.2.2 Principals' Instructional leadership practice

The findings from the participants identified eight instructional leadership practices that school principals engaged in. These were as follows and each is discussed below:

- The cog in the wheel of teaching and learning,
- Styles of leadership,
- The exemplar / programme director,
- The subject, instructional and curriculum in instructional leadership (SIC's),
- Principals supporting teachers,
- Encourage professional development,
- Developing the novice teacher,
- Hands on approach and parental involvement,
- Getting the learner back to the classroom,
- Policy and instructional leadership practices

4.2.2.1 The cog in the wheel of teaching and learning (instructional leadership)

Despite different understandings of instructional leadership displayed by the two school principals, both principals were in agreement that principals are essential to instructional leadership. They shared the view that principals must be involved in instructional activities and are the vital cog in the wheel of teaching and learning. This means principals should be active in teaching and learning. This view is illustrated by the following excerpts from the participating principals:

Principals are the vital cog in the wheel of teaching and learning and should be involved in teaching and learning, if a principal is not involved then there is no other work really of any significance.

(Mr Tanzanite-Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

In view of principal's involvement in matters pertaining to teaching and learning, Mr Sapphire commented that:

I will have to ensure that everything is taken care of. To that end I have to follow to the measures of the law, the need for teachers and their teaching of the curriculum, the resources and everything that would be supportive of that.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

Similar sentiments were also expressed by the teachers at Aquamarine Secondary School and Crystal Primary School who supported the view that their principal was actively involved in instructional activities:

Instructional leadership is where the principal takes a strong leadership with the learning and development of the school, he also looks at how he uses peoples best abilities to enforce better learning at the school, and if there are weakness where the learner or management might arise, he tries to uplift that teacher/ manager to enhance the teaching and learning at the school.

(Mrs Opal- Teacher at Aquamarine Secondary School)

Upon perusal of the management minutes of Aquamarine Secondary, it was evident that the principal took a strong interest in matters of teaching, learning and the development of the school which indicates that principals are fundamental in influencing the teaching and learning outcomes in a school system. According to the report of the management meeting of Aquamarine Secondary dated 16/5/2013:

All managers were issued with a booklet compiled by Edward Mosuwe (Chief Director: Further Education and Training) and they were requested to make a careful study of it.

Mrs Topaz agreed that her principal was actively involved in instructional activities and saw to it that everything was taken care off. To this end she said:

We (Principal and members of management) meet often, we often have our meetings and we do have follow up meetings to see if everything is being implemented, if there are any problems we also meet and discuss how to address the identified problems and challenges, as well as the outcome of the implementation.

(Mrs Topaz-H.O.D at Crystal Primary)

Further, the mission statement of Crystal Primary School underpins the principal's active involvement in instructional leadership by suggesting that the school principal is responsible for: "*developing relevant procedures, policies and programmes and empowering personal.*"

The assertion of principals as being the vital cog in the wheel of teaching and learning, thus actively involved in instructional activities of the school is embedded in literature and theory. Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) confirm that instructional leadership is about the principal facilitating the teaching and learning process and providing the direction to the schools' instructional programmes. Naicker, Chikoko and Mthiyane's (2013) study demonstrates that principals are responsible for curriculum implementation in schools. Supporting documents such as the norms and standards for educators (includes principal) state that the norm of a professional is that, you must be a leader, curriculum manager and administrator. Extending on the competencies of the school principal the Wallace Foundation (2011, p.2) cites the school principal as responsible for building good school leadership by performing five key functions *viz.:*

- Establishing a vision of academic success,
- Creating a climate conducive to learning,
- Nurturing leadership in others,
- Managing people an improving instruction through data analysis and school improvement plans.

This is in agreement with Weber (1996) who suggests that the first step to instructional improvement begins with the principal. In his last domain of instructional leadership, Weber

(1996) also speaks of the leader (principal) as being responsible for initiation, contribution to the plan, design, administration, and analysing of assessments which evaluate and strengthen the success of the curriculum. This confirms active involvement of the principal and indicating the principal's responsibility in initiating and contributing to the learning and development of the school.

The evidence presented here suggests that in order for principals to be instructional leaders they have to be involved in the instructional activities of the school, whether it is through direct involvement such as the principal teaching in school as displayed by Mr Tanzanite. Principals may be indirectly involved in instructional activities as demonstrated by Mr Sapphire. His instructional task, is to fully support the school instructional programme. He does this by providing teachers with curriculum support through resource provision, developing relevant procedures, policies and programmes and empowering personal so that there is effective instruction at the school.

In summary, "the cog in the wheel of teaching and learning" involves the principals' active involvement in instructional tasks (through teaching or developing policies and providing support/ disseminating information to teachers) be it by themselves or through others. The next instructional leadership practice focuses on the styles of leadership.

4.2.2.2 Styles of leadership

The second finding was the principals' leadership styles. Participating principals and all eight educators stated that the principal's leadership style influences teaching and learning. They believed that the style of leadership provided by the school principal helped to promote positive outcomes. The principal's leadership style is a vital ingredient in promoting and achieving quality outcomes. The style of leadership provided by the school principal also impacts upon the learning climate of the school. Various assumptions were provided concerning leadership styles. For example, Mr Tanzanite had this to say regarding leadership styles:

It is how you provide leadership in terms of the effective delivery of the instructional programmes i.e. the curriculum to ensure the learning outcomes are achieved.

(Mr Tanzanite- Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

While Mr Sapphire saw leadership as more concerned with the style of leadership that you as a leader can provide to your teachers so that they can achieve positive outcomes, this style of leadership encompasses leading through teams and a distributed form of leadership. He indicated that:

We have to lead teams; management cannot do everything on our own. I lead a management team. The management team leads the various departments. The various departments that have teachers that leads in their classrooms. So that devolution of responsibility from the department, to myself, to the management teams, to the teachers is done as per the instruction of the school.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

The teachers and departmental heads of the two schools verified their principal's responses regarding the styles of leadership displayed by the principals. The extracts below serves as verification:

Mrs Diamond of Aquamarine Secondary comments that the leadership style: "*is about the principal espousing professional knowledge and judgment*". She further stated that the leadership style is an "*Interpersonal dimension- the one to one direct influence that the principal has on the people he/she is working with*".

Her comments are in direct relation to her principal's view that the style of leadership chosen by the principal may have an influence on the employees in achieving outcomes. The professional knowledge and judgment that the leader espouses on his employees will affect the outcomes. At the heart of schools lie relationships: principal-teacher, teacher-student, parent –teacher, therefore the type of interaction that the principal has with his staff will be determined by his emotional intelligence and how well he is able to exercise his judgment and use his emotions to persuade people towards the desired outcomes since they themselves are emotional beings (Crawford, 2008 & Singh, 2010). According to Singh and Dali (2013), emotional intelligence is an interpersonal skill that can empower principals and influence others to effectively handle challenges/change in an institution and to work towards desired outcomes.

Mrs Emerald supports her principal's leadership style of teamwork. In expressing this view, she said:

Our principal together with the school management team work as a team, they set up goals and standards that the teachers need to meet in their teaching and learning...I

think his leadership is good and he is doing it right. His doing it right because he is an open person, we discuss things, he doesn't just impose, so I really like his management style and his always open to suggestions that we offer so makes us feel that our inputs are valued.

(Mrs Emerald-H.O.D at Crystal Primary School)

Mr Sapphire and Mrs Emerald seem to suggest that team work is a leadership style that is welcomed by educators and is essential to educational institutions because it instills in educators a sense of value and the benefits are limitless. Dinham (2011) describes teamwork as a distributed form of leadership, concerned with the sharing of leadership practice and the interactions that contribute to sharing of leadership. In explaining this, Harris's (2009) adds that distributed leadership involves the distribution of leadership tasks in an organization to develop the leadership capacities of all individuals so that it may be used to benefit the organization. It is also a methodology employed to share organizational tasks so that the organization can meet its daily demands.

In validating the assertions of the two principals, documents such as the minutes of staff meetings, newsletters, management documents at the respective schools were used to corroborate principals' responses. The minutes of the management meeting at Aquamarine Secondary dated 16/05/2013 reflect that there were numerous accounts of the principal attending workshops and thereafter cascading the information at workshops to his educators, thereby ensuring that curriculum outcomes are achieved. For example the minutes of the staff meeting show:

The principal attends meeting/workshop on the implementation of the national curriculum statement-curriculum and assessment policy.

The minutes of the staff meeting encompasses the responses elicited from the various participants. It demonstrates the type of leadership practiced by the principal from Aquamarine Secondary. His leadership is concerned with activities that promote learner achievement such as attending curriculum workshops, enabling him to be familiar on current matters pertaining to curriculum. This will allow him to effectively pass the curriculum knowledge onto his educators so that learners may benefit from this knowledge. It also shows that the principal espouses knowledge.

The management documents at Crystal Primary School illustrates the school organogram, which has the hierarchical structure of the individuals at school, starting from the school principal, the deputy, the HODS, educators after which the support staff is represented. This is just one example where the school functions as a team and each member has a role function to play as per the organogram. Further to the school organogram, the minutes of the staff meeting dated 5/3/2013 indicates that:

All teachers experiencing problems or requiring any assistance is to take the matter up with the school heads of department before approaching the school principal with the matter.

The presence of the school organogram and the line of reporting as indicated in the minutes of the staff meeting confirm the principals' and participants' statements that he leads through a team-based approach.

Bearing in mind the statements of all the participants of the two schools, one may conclude that there is no specific style of leadership; leadership is a multifaceted construct dependent on the type of leadership that the individual provides (Michael & Germane, 2010). Although the type of leadership style employed by school principals may differ, the style of leadership ultimately has a common goal as seen in both schools which is to achieve positive outcomes. It will have some bearing on the climate that prevails in a school since the leadership style will determine how and when things are done to achieve positive outcomes. Weber (1996) also maintains that the school climate refers to the beliefs, attitudes and values of the school community which is geared towards factors that affect the learning process. Leaders promote a positive learning climate through communication of instructional goals, establishing high expectations for performance, establishing a learning climate with clear and collaborative expectations, and increasing teacher commitment in school.

The principals in adopting positive leadership styles and exercising positive leadership, such as attending workshops and keeping his educators in the loop with what is happening regarding education or working as a team with educators to deliver the core function of schools i.e. teaching and learning creates a climate conducive to teaching and learning. In such a climate teachers no matter their level of knowledge with regards to teaching strategies, have the freedom to approach their principal, whenever challenges arise. Teachers are rightly aware that he attends workshops and is abreast with education. Therefore the principal is likely to assist teachers and avail time to workshop them. Workshops encourage teamwork

among those individuals participating in them. With team work the mandatory tasks of teachers are shared so that their focus may be on teaching and learning.

Through the accommodative leadership style and teamwork adopted by the school principals, problems that may arise can be solved and new strategies initiated towards school improvement may come from this leadership. It would appear that the principal's style of leadership influences school outcomes. This has a bearing on literature. Marks and Nance (2007) findings suggest that the principals' influences in the instructional domain were related to teachers' participating in decision-making highlighting the advantages of distributed/shared leadership.

According to Yukl (2002), leadership is about social influence. The leadership style adopted by the school principal is significant to student achievement as it is used to describe how the principal influences others to achieve the aims of the organisation. Moreover it is mandatory for school principals to influence, direct and support the best quality teaching and learning which would enable learners to attain the highest levels of achievement (*South African Standards for Principals*, Department of Education, 2005).

In summary, this theme heightens the prevalence of school leadership styles of school principals. It indicates that the leadership style displayed by school principals may positively or negatively affect teacher and learner outcomes. Therefore the style of leadership chosen by the school principal should be chosen after careful consideration. The next instructional practice focuses on exemplary leadership.

4.2.2.3 Exemplary leadership

The data suggested that school principals saw themselves as instructional leaders since they are involved in various forms of instructional activities. The theme of the exemplary leadership emerged when participants were asked what instructional activities they (principals) or their school principals engaged in to promote teaching and learning. Participants were firm in their beliefs that principals should be instructional leaders since their principals are already engaged in instructional tasks. The principals themselves held stringent beliefs as to their involvement concerning instructional activities. Various reasons were provided for the participants' beliefs. The principal of Aquamarine Secondary highlighted that the core activity of an instructional leader is being the exemplar, which entails:

You lead by example. You must be a good role model and teach passionately and your teachers need to be able to look up to you. Firstly I teach, that's the best instructional practice that you can do because you cannot stand from the outside and talk, you need to teach in terms of the allocation as well.

(Mr Tanzanite- Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

Similarly Mrs Amber (H.O.D) of Aquamarine Secondary agreed that being the exemplar is the core function of the school principal and therefore, the main instructional activity of the principal. She asserted that her “*principal models behaviour of instruction to his teachers, he himself teaches*”.

Scholars such as Wejr (2010), Naicker, *et al.* (2013) strongly advocate the idea of the principal as a practising teacher. Wejr (2010, p.52) proclaims that ‘Teachers will respect the word of a person who can identify with what they experience and help keep them apprised of current classroom issues’.

However, Mr Ziron, a level one teacher at Aquamarine Secondary School challenged Mr. Tanzanite’s comments that if you are a leader and you teach in terms of the allocation, your educators will look up to you. He said:

I feel, that the principal and the members of management are out of touch with what the teachers are really experiencing in the class, because we have to see forty learners for six periods a day, over five days in a week, whereas maybe the principal sees one class of forty learners for two periods in a week, there is a very big difference with that and we cannot compare apples and oranges.

(Mr Ziron-teacher at Aquamarine Secondary School)

It is quite evident that Mr Ziron was dissatisfied with the teaching load of the school principal and feels that the principal cannot empathise with the educator’s experiences as the principal does not have a fair allocation of classes in comparison to educators. Mr Ziron’s sentiment contrasts literature (Reitzug & West, 2008) and the principal’s assumption that, teachers will look up to you if you (principal) are a practicing teacher regardless of your teaching allocation. Maybe principals as instructional leaders need to explore all characteristics of instructional leadership (participative decision making/professional development) together with teachers in order to determine working practices and teaching allocations. Reitzug and West (2008) are of the opinion that, increased improvement in instruction does not occur as a result of directly working with the instructional programme but occurs as a by-product of

building relationships which create the need for principals to include educators in the establishing of instructional practices. Reitzug and West (2008) claim that there is a connection between building positive relationships with people and student success.

On perusal of the management meetings, there were numerous occasions where the principal demonstrated his ability of being the exemplar and he strongly appealed to his educators that they need to believe in this concept and be the exemplar.

The principal conducted a workshop on *teacher leadership* indicating what being the exemplar or a leader entails. The minutes of the staff meeting dated 15/10/2013 show that *the principal reinforced the importance of being a leader in the classroom*. It further showed that the principal *implored educators to be more responsible and take their jobs seriously*.

On the other hand, Mr Sapphire viewed his instructional role in a different light as compared to Mr Tanzanite. While they both agreed that as principals their instructional leadership role is mandatory, Mr Sapphire underscored that his instructional role makes him more an overseer (programme director) of every component of instructional activities of the school. Taking an alternative standpoint to Mr Tanzanite, he does not view himself as the exemplar, rather that the instructional activities of the school should be managed and conducted through a structured team of individuals and he is at the apex of such a team. His role would be that of monitoring that instructional activities that are being carried out at school to achieve maximum achievement. For instance, Mr Sapphire had this to say regarding the instructional activities that he engages with at school to support teaching and learning:

Sometimes it's done by myself, sometimes it is done in conjunction with my management teams..... That means the whole programme is managed by us as managers, the teachers are the instructional managers of the curriculum deliverance, and we monitor and ensure that everything is done accordingly.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

The minutes of Crystal primary staff meetings reflect that the principal monitors the instructional programmes of the school, indicating his active role in programme directorship. It was minuted that Mr Sapphire:

“alerted staff that monitoring of teaching and learning and classroom visits will be scheduled towards the end of the term”.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

In defining his (Mr Sapphire's) role as an overseer of every component of instructional activities of the school, the principal clearly demonstrates that he assesses the instructional program. Weber's (1996) final domain of instructional leadership is known as the assessing of the instructional program, which is essential for improving the instructional program. In assessing the instructional program, the leader is responsible for initiation and contribution to the plan, design, administration, and evaluation of assessments that assess and strengthen curriculum effectiveness. Continual assessment of the program of instruction allows teachers to efficiently meet the needs of students through the continuous revision and refinement. Both literature (Weber, 1996) and participant responses highlight that there is a link between assessment and learner outcomes. It is assumed that if the instructional programme is well managed and monitored it secures high levels of achievement for students since the principal together with various individuals embark on an ongoing process of checking the instructional programme and processes, thereafter making the necessary refinements so that at all stages of the instructional programmes tasks run smoothly.

Mrs Amemyth, a post level one educator confirms the principal's assertion that all programmes and instructional activities of the school are conducted through a team based approach. This is what was said:

Our principal together with the school management, they work together as a team, they set up goals and standards that the teachers need to meet in their teaching and learning.

(Mrs Amemyth-Teacher at Crystal Primary School)

Team work implies that there is collaboration between team members. Berry (2005) and Bolam (2005) maintain that efforts of collaboration contain tactics that "open" practice for betterment through behaviours that inspire sharing, reflection, and risk taking necessary for change. Marks and Nance (2007) concur that collaboration and teamwork impacts positively on school leadership, indicating that teamwork decreases the seeming burden of state-imposed reforms of accountability on school principals. Naicker, *et al.* (2013) reinforce this statement by claiming that an accountability culture for teaching and learning whereby principals either indirectly (through HoDs) or directly (observations/ classroom visits) monitor teaching and learning prevails in schools that are resilient. According to Berry (2005); Marks and Nance, (2007) and Naicker, *et al.* (2013) principal's account that team

work is a proponent of instructional leadership because it opens practices for betterment which leads to school improvement and it decreases state imposed burdens of school principal which allows principals more time to spend on instructional tasks at the school.

Weber (1996) in his model of instructional leadership also makes reference to working through teams to achieve school outcomes. Team-work according to Weber (1996), is embedded in the domains of promoting a positive learning climate and observing and improving instruction. Weber's (1996) model shows that principals may improve learner achievement through establishing a learning climate of collaboration among teachers and by the principal instituting relationships of trust and respect with teachers. Collaboration and trust among colleagues form the basis of teamwork.

In summary, this theme indicates that leading by example is just as important as developing the programs for learner achievement. Further this theme is indicative of the school principal taking the lead (being the exemplar) in matters concerning curriculum and instruction. Most importantly, this theme highlights that teamwork is paramount to all instructional activities irrelevant of who is conducting the activities. The next instructional practice focuses on the subject, instructional and curriculum leadership of instructional leadership.

4.2.2.4 The subject, instructional and curriculum leadership (SIC's) in instructional leadership

The two participating principals commonly agreed that in maintaining their roles/activities as instructional leaders, they have to possess and display at least one or all of the following i.e. subject leadership, curriculum leadership and instructional leadership. The principal of Aquamarine Secondary maintained that every principal must have a very impressive track record in teaching and be able to demonstrate to their educators their subject leadership, curriculum leadership and instructional leadership. This is what he said:

In my second and third year of teaching I was already writing guides on how to teach, the novel like "Sons and lovers", how to teach Shakespeare's Romeo And Juliet, and that is what endeared me to the term subject advisors / superintendents as we call them academic and that is what I believe is the real leadership that all practitioners should develop, also I attended and hosted many workshops with my teachers on how to use the study guides.

(Mr Tanzanite-Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

The principal's account shows his initiative in demonstrating his instructional leadership qualities to his teachers. Taking a keen interest in writing English guides and workshopping teachers shows his subject leadership, instructional leadership and curriculum leadership. In addition to the principal's accounts, the HOD corroborates that her principal displays subject, curriculum and instructional leadership through various means. As an example she said:

He gave teachers' a copy of a newspaper clipping that he read, with an English exercise for grade ten learners on vocabulary, meaning and understanding, he asked his teachers to conduct a similar exercise in class to establish how learners would fare in the exercise.

(Mrs Diamond -H.O.D at Aquamarine Secondary School)

The HOD's response verified the fact that her principal was involved with matters pertaining to subject, instructional and curriculum leadership but it also showed that teaching and learning is always on her principal's mind in everything that he does.

Moreover, the minutes of the management meeting dated 22/02/2013 at Aquamarine Secondary School affirmed the view that the principal is involved in some form of leadership. According to the roles and responsibilities with regard to curriculum matters outlined in a meeting, the principal informed staff that:

The principal must be the curriculum leader, the HOD must manage and teachers must be able to deliver and learners must be the recipients.

Although the sentiments echoed by Mr Tanzanite were different to those stated by Mr Sapphire, it was still embedded in the SIC's of instructional leadership, The principal of Crystal Primary, concerning his involvement with subject leadership, curriculum leadership and instructional leadership stated that:

Planning is a major part of the job. Planning the time management, (curriculum leadership) making the resources available, all of this logistics regarding the planning of learning is my responsibility (instructional leadership).

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

Mr Sapphire's actions (planning around all aspects of school programme) is described as a linear instructional leader who believe in a cause and effect theory (Reitzug, *et al*, 2008). Underpinning this theory is the assumption that one outcome leads to another desired outcome which leads to the next outcome in a cyclic pattern. Linear leadership is proposed by scholars (Burrell & Morgan, 1997; Reitzug, *et al*. 2008) as it is easy to monitor the system

and constructive feedback can be given so that every aspect of the system is working effectively towards the desired outcome (Reitzug, *et al.* 2008). This is a necessary alignment process as it is a means of monitoring the process of what's working and what is not working. Similarly Grobler (2013) concurs that monitoring of teaching is conducted by leaders to ensure that the prescribed curriculum is adequately covered. Hence Hallinger (2010) adds that the task of monitoring leads to school improvement. The process described by the principal aligns curriculum standards and learning objectives, it also monitors student outcomes against test data. As an instructional leader school performance is of prime importance (Reitzug, *et al.* 2008).

Weber (1996) in his model of instructional leadership has culminated the above mentioned theories of linear instructional leaders, cause and effect theory (Burrell & Morgan, 1997) and monitoring Hallinger (2010) to a single domain of 'observing and improving instruction'. He proposes that observations provide opportunities for professional interactions, which in turn provides development opportunities for the individual that is the observer and the individual being observed. A mutual relationship occurs where both participants gain information of value for professional development purposes. In this domain he has encapsulated the relevance of this domain to instructional leaders which is, in the event of instituting structures e.g. timetabling or processes e.g. workshopping teachers, the leader needs to observe the results of such structures and process in order to gain valuable information on the outcomes of such systems. This would enable the leader to take decisions on what changes to institute to the system so that it leads to high levels of student achievement and fully supports the teacher in this endeavor.

Both the minutes of the staff meeting and teachers views attest to the principals involvement in the SIC's of instructional leadership. The minutes of the staff meeting dated 14/01/2014 at Crystal primary reflect the following:

Mr Sapphire asked educators to check their timetables, to correct any clashes and to bring it to the attention of Mrs Barret.

The planning of how things would be done (timetabling) or the processes involved in carrying out the plans indicates not only the principal's instructional leadership ability but also shows his involvement with matters pertaining to curriculum. Ling, Walker and Chui (2012) assert that leadership practices focusing on instructional management enhances student learning. Mr Sapphire, principal of Crystal primary uses structure, management and

process to conduct his instructional leadership duties. This comes across clearly by Mrs Amemyth, a level one teacher who recognises that her principal:

Is the manager of the curriculum and thus has to oversee the management of curriculum. The principal uses structure, culture and interpersonal linkages to influence teacher's classroom action.

(Mrs Amemyth-Teacher at Crystal Primary School)

These practices displayed by the school principal such as using processes, structure and interpersonal linkages to influence teachers classroom actions resonates in literature. Horng (2010) proposes that a more innovative, hands on and sustainable approach of instructional leadership is required. This approach places primacy on management of the organisation for improving instruction as opposed to day-to-day teaching and learning (Horng, 2010 p.66). There is a wealth of research in South Africa and abroad which proposes that good management is pertinent to the well-functioning of schools (Bush, 2003; Christie, 2010; Roberts & Roach 2006; Taylor, 2007). Drawing on the scholastic argument that a more hands on approach is required of school principals and linking it to the responses of the various research participants *viz* that principals need to involve themselves in some form of subject leadership, instructional leadership and curriculum leadership, it may be suggested that to be a successful leader one has to first be a successful manager and thus able to manage skills effectively to affect positive resultants (Clarke & Wildy, 2010).

Further, this approach locates the school principal differently within the instructional leadership paradigm. The principal in this new paradigm influences learner learning through organisational management which involves warranting teachers with the processes, structures and support they need to be resilient in the classroom. This is attained through the development of systems, allocation of resources, and by fostering a positive work and learning environment. This newer approach is proving to be sustainable (Mestry, *et al.* 2013) and it requires principals to be strategic in the decisions they take. Horng (2010, p.67) states 'strategic principals do the challenge in today's global society; principals are receptive to the context in which they lead within this changing paradigm'.

The understanding that all principals should be involved in some form of leadership activity i.e. subject leadership, instructional leadership and curriculum leadership is also reinforced by scholars such as Bhengu and Mkhize (2013); Chui (2012); Clarke and Wildy (2010); Ling, Walker. These scholars acknowledge that whilst the principal is involved with other

responsibilities (finance, governance, disciplinary issues), focus on managing of teaching and learning forms the core responsibility of the principal. It is evident that principals should be instructional leaders. While principals are involved in performing other tasks, focusing on managing, supporting and leading, teaching and learning forms the core of their responsibility, since schools are tasked with the purpose of teaching and learning. Reitzug (2008) argues that schools are learning centers and the principals' instructional leadership role encompasses facilitation and stimulation of this process.

Weber's (1996) model of instructional leadership in the domains of defining the school's vision and mission, managing curriculum and instruction, promoting a positive learning climate, observing and improving instruction and assessing the instructional programme epitomises the concept (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013; Grobler, 2013 and Reitzug, 2008) that the principal's instructional leadership is key to school achievement. Weber's model clearly distinguishes the principal's instructional role in each domain defining the school's vision and mission, managing curriculum and instruction, promoting a positive learning climate, observing and improving instruction and assessing the instructional programme assigned to school improvement and achievement.

In summary, this theme shows that instructional leadership requires of school principals to be involved in various instructional tasks, through demonstrating their subject, curriculum and instructional leadership. It also shows that involvement of school principals' in instructional tasks leads to positive outcomes as explained in this instructional practice. The next instructional practice focuses on principals supporting teachers.

4.2.2.5 Principals supporting teachers

Participant responses reflected that principals provided support to educators and encouraged professional development. Principals indicated that some form of support was offered to the educators of their respective schools. A more formal type of support was provided to educators through some form of either a structure or processes; however it was also brought to my attention that informal support was also given to teachers.

This was clearly illustrated by Mr Tanzanite who stated that:

Formal support takes place but a lot of support is informal, standing in corridors chatting, or chatting after the breaks or during the breaks.

(Mr Tanzanite-Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

The principal describes his informal support system as corridor chats which centers around his belief that you can deduce more on what is happening with a specific educator through discussions that you have with them, without actually going into classrooms. This form of leadership is effective in assisting principals to become aware of educator needs without actually going to every classroom which may become too time consuming. Letts, Wilkins, Law, Stewart, Bosch and Westmorland (2007) caution, that observations are time consuming if they are to be effective. Hence the need for an informal support mechanism to exist at schools. Since Weber (1996) asserts that observations provide a platform for professional development for the individual observed, it is therefore suggested that informal support must be provided with formal support structures if it is to be beneficial to schools.

The principal of Aquamarine Secondary School mentioned that he supports his teachers; however he spoke more of support in an informal context. Although the formal support offered to educators was not mentioned in the principal's interview the various educators of Aquamarine secondary stated that their principal formally supports his educators in order to enhance teaching and learning. As an example Mrs Amber (HOD) says:

He is a resource provider. He identifies the needs of teachers and tries to allocate the resources required by the teacher to enhance teaching and learning be it a teacher's guide or learning materials for the learners. He also makes the internet accessible to all teachers so that can prepare lessons that are of quality content and innovative.

(Mrs Amber- H.O.D at Aquamarine Secondary School)

From her example, we can see that the principal of Aquamarine Secondary supports his teachers by providing them with the required resources to teach. It was also minuted in a staff meeting dated 17/06/2014 that:

All tools to aid teaching and learning were in place, it makes the environment of Aquamarine conducive to teaching and learning.

This serves to reaffirm the principal's stance that support is offered to educators at school. The principal Mr Sapphire affirmed the position of his involvement in offering support to educators by expressing his view that:

We also have processes such as the Integrated Quality Management System that informs teacher needs, based on that we have a school improvement plan; we have

workshops that address teachers needs as per their requests; HOD's requests on what supports they do require and so we have to plan accordingly.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

It was also minuted in a management meeting dated 28/02/2014 at Crystal primary that:
Educators will be workshopped on an introduction presentation of integrated quality management system.

This verifies the principal's accounts that support mechanisms exist at school to inform and support educator needs. Further verifying the principal's response Mrs Amemyth, a level one teacher stated that:

If resources or support material is required other than what the school possesses, the principal makes provisions to obtain such resources... through fund raising initiatives... outside sources, the department, whoever is willing to sponsor the school in whatever way.

(Mrs Amemyth-Teacher at Crystal Primary School)

Mrs Amemyth further added:

Teachers are also supported in their delivery of curriculum and management of curriculum. When teachers have to attend meetings during school hours, the principal ensures that there is minimal or no disruptions to the teaching and learning programme, by sitting in classes himself and administering the work of the particular teacher left for the students in his/her absence.

(Mrs Amemyth-Teacher at Crystal Primary School)

The above view indicates that the principal of Crystal primary supports his educators through various means. He makes a concerted effort to support his educators by assisting educators himself or through outsourcing (private companies or the department of education) the required support. Such efforts create an environment conducive to teaching since all efforts are directed towards improving the teaching abilities of educators. Robinson (2008) contends that a well-managed environment is a prerequisite to improving schools and principals can turn around schools when they manage instructional activities accordingly. Therefore Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) maintain that, the school principal is responsible for creating an

environment that is receptive and inviting to teachers. Such an environment is created by the school principal executing certain activities. Jenkins (2010) describes these activities as the principal providing resources to teachers. For Muijis (2010) it's about the principal taking "a hands on approach" to the teaching and learning process e.g. informal corridor chats with teachers to decipher what is going on and what is required. According to Jenkins and Pfeifer (2012) the principal is tasked with finding ways to improve student achievement, teacher's skills and knowledge of student learning. However improvement may only begin if teachers are supported in their daily activities (Jenkins, 2010; Jenkins and Pfeifer, 2012). This ideology is also enshrined in policy. According to the South African Standards for Principals (Department of Education, 2005) principals must influence, direct and support the best quality teaching and learning in order to build an effective quality management culture.

With respect to school improvement, Weber (1996) maintains that relationships of trust and respect leads to instructional improvement, that the instructional leader provides guidance and support to educational stakeholders for the attainment of a quality driven school. Given the scholarly debate it may be agreed upon that when teachers are given support at school it creates a school environment that is conducive to teaching and learning, meeting teacher needs contributes to a well-managed environment in which continues quality improvement becomes the norm. When teachers are supported they are able to establish relationships of trust and respect for their leader. The supports offered by the principal shows that he cares about the procurement of his/her teachers. This ultimately leads to teachers willingly striving towards the vision of the school. Essentially this means school achievement considering that the school's vision serves to bind the academic ideals with the staff, students, parents and community (Weber, 1996). Therefore, Weber (1996) emphasises the importance of instructional leaders providing support and guidance to educational stakeholders for the orchestration of the vision of the school.

In summary, the above practice illustrates that it is necessary for the principal to support teachers. It further outlines the different forms of support that may be provided to teachers' *viz.* as formal and informal support. Moreover this theme takes cognisance that informal support may be beneficial to schools and that informal support must be provided with formal support structures if it is to be beneficial to schools. The next instructional practice focuses on encouraging professional development.

4.2.2.6 Encouraging professional development

The two participating principals and educators unanimously maintained that their principals encouraged professional development at school. Principals empowered their educators in performing their duties in an effort to improve the quality of instruction. Principals ensured that all educators attended workshops/seminars and held discussions with educators to disseminate information obtained from the courses attended. Participants described professional development as being vital for educators and school improvement. Both principals spoke of engaging in professional development; however it was interesting to note that only one of the principals spoke of engaging himself in professional development. There was a general consensus among participants that professional development was intended for educators to improve their instruction. Professional development was a priority for school principals. For instance Mr Tanzanite (principal) stated that:

We persuade these teachers to attend as many workshops... We make them aware of the workshops, like I sent out the reminder.

(Mr Tanzanite, Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

Mr Tanzanite viewed professional development as essential for each individual, he sees it as his job to encourage and ensure that his educators are developing themselves professionally. He constantly reminds educators to develop themselves through workshops etc. and he offers motivation to them on this aspect. As per the staff meeting the importance of developing the educator was discussed. Further to this, the principal added that the responsibility for development lies with the educator.

Mr Sapphire reiterated Mr Tanzanite's position that professional development is a top priority in saying that:

We develop teachers through workshops and meetings but we do not do everything. For example the caps programme, is fairly new to us so there is very little guidance that we can give other teachers, so we have to be work shopped on that before we can provide the necessary support to our teachers.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

The above views indicate that the principals prioritise professional development in their schools and that all members of staff are actively engaged in professional development

opportunities. Evidence of this statement is reflected in the minutes of the management meeting which reflect that HOD's will be workshopped on the curriculum and assessment policy statements at Lyndhurst Primary School (dated 12/3/2013). The management minutes dated 13/3/2013 at Crystal primary bears testimonies that all members will attend relevant workshops.

Mr Tanzanite had this to say concerning his involvement in professional development activities:

On my own, I attend workshops, this is the proof and I show it to my teachers that I attend every workshop, which will assist me in my professional development.

(Mr Tanzanite-Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

It is praiseworthy that the principal himself attends workshops and is actively involved in the process of professional development. Miller (2012) recommends that principals themselves participate in the professional learning process in order to develop themselves as leaders as well as to understand how to effectively mentor teachers in the professional learning process. Stoll (2006) maintains that learning for the educational staff is a prerequisite for capacity building and a crucial link to improved student learning.

In confirming the principal's assertions that educators engage in professional development Mrs Amber (HOD) of Aquamarine Secondary said:

The principal is an instructional resource. He provides the teachers with information on current trends and effective instructional practices. He is very knowledgeable in terms of instructional practices and matters pertaining to curriculum, pedagogical strategies and assessment since he himself attends many principal workshops, he passes this down to his teachers through meetings, workshopping them on what he has learnt and the dissemination of information via worksheets, presentations. Professional development meetings are ongoing at this school.

(Mrs Amber-H.O.D at Aquamarine Secondary School)

Mrs Amber's statement clearly illustrates the link between the principal's professional development and its impact on the professional development of educators. This concurs with scholars such as Sparks, (2002); Stoll (2006); and Glanz, (2006), who claim that classroom practice is improved when instructional leaders, keep schools focused on the processes of learning and the required changes to maintain increased levels of learning for learners and

teachers. To that end as an instructional leader, it becomes incumbent upon the principal to play a crucial role in influencing and improving the academic achievement of learners (Glanz, 2006).

Similar sentiments were echoed by educators that their principals encouraged them to attend workshops, share information and to develop one another. They also highlighted that principals encouraged and ensured that educators who have attended workshops, reported back to the HODs and to the educators concerned. Principals also encouraged them to further their studies so as to keep abreast of the demands of constantly changing curriculum. Improved performance by teachers and hence learner achievement, was highlighted by the principals, as the main reason for encouraging professional development. This was clearly stated by the H.O.D who commented as follows:

The principal makes sure that teachers attend workshops. He also encourages educators to further their studies to keep abreast with the curriculum developments so that they themselves can be an instructional resource. He encourages educators to be lifelong learners since curriculum is changing all the time. This makes educators feel comfortable and enjoy going to the classes. The learner-teacher relationship improves drastically and there is improved teaching and learning.

(Mrs Emerald-H.O.D at Crystal Primary School)

The principals' initiatives to improve teachers' abilities in performing their duties efficiently was recognised through supporting and providing teachers' professional development through conducting workshops and making the time available for teachers to attend workshops. Horng and Loeb (2010) add that instructional leaders take all opportunities to support teachers in their work and enhance teachers' pedagogies to improve student learning. According to Miller (2008), skills development, support and student improvement can be maintained through professional development since teacher learning is more productive in a setting, where there is interaction amongst participants. Through participation, teachers can test their ideas and methodologies, challenge their inferences and process new information with each other. Educators are therefore likely to commit themselves to contribute positively and meaningfully to improve and enhance opportunities for quality and effective learning if they are professionally developed (Porter, 2011).

Weber (1996) in his model of instructional leadership specifically identifies the domains of observing and improving instruction and assessing the instructional programme. This indicates that the principal is responsible for identifying areas of development, initiation and contribution to strengthening the instructional programme and curriculum. The principal does this through various means e.g. professional development or observation and assessment. Development invariably leads to school success.

In summary, this practice shows that engagement of professional development results in developing a quality culture and positive results. When principals are developed they become aware of how better to develop their teachers and when teachers are developed they become knowledgeable on how better to deliver the curriculum resulting in positive learner achievement. A noteworthy consideration is that professional development has a reciprocal effect. For maximum benefit, principals themselves need to engage in professional development activities, if they are to influence their teachers in professionally developing themselves. The next practice focuses on developing the novice teachers.

4.2.2.7 Developing the novice teacher

Developing of the novice teacher was a theme that emerged in the interviews. Mr Tanzanite', principal of Aquamarine Secondary School, indicated that his school focuses on development of the novice teacher through himself and his educators of the school. Mr Tanzanite mentioned:

Developing of the novice teacher is my responsibility together with my senior teachers. Upon the assumption of duty at the school, novice teachers are to familiarise themselves with the expectations, duties and procedures to be followed as stated in the school starter pack given to them. After which they will be engaged in a vigorous induction programme conducted by myself and the various heads of department (H.O.D's).

(Mr Tanzanite-Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

After perusing through minutes of management and staff meetings, it became apparent that the principal of Aquamarine Secondary makes developing the novice teacher a prerogative at the school. The minutes dated 14/1/2013 reflect the following:

With regards to developing the novice teacher, the principal discussed the importance of developing the novice teacher. Superiors must help and guide. Novice educators must know how to infuse the talents of seasoned educators without making them uncomfortable.

This view was corroborated by Mrs Amber (HOD) who commented that:

He also has an induction programme for novice educators whereby novice teachers receive a starter pack containing the school vision, mission statement, rules and regulations, policies.

(Mrs Amber-H.O.D at Aquamarine Secondary School)

Developing of the novice teacher appeared to be prioritised by the two schools. Mr Sapphire of Crystal Primary stated that:

We develop teachers especially novice teachers through workshops conducted by senior teachers. Other than the workshops, novice teachers are developed through working closely with their subject heads of department and shadowing them.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

In concurring with her principal Mrs Ammemyth of Crystal Primary asserted:

The management is also responsible for developing teachers. It is expected that all teachers especially newly appointed teachers are to report to the department heads for an induction programme. Management has to also mentor newly appointed teachers.

(Mrs Ammemyth-Teacher at Crystal Primary School)

Pounder (2006) argues that, mentoring and coaching of novice teachers should be tasked by senior teachers who possess the skills necessary for induction, mentoring and professional development. As a result, induction and mentoring requires the expertise of senior teachers in supporting and developing novice teachers to quickly assimilate into the school and achieve their potential. Increasing the capacity for school improvement requires a change in school structures and organisations. This change entails senior teachers being afforded the opportunity to lead and develop novice teachers.

Although the documents reviewed from Crystal Primary School, that I was allowed access to were silent in terms of developing the novice teacher, the principal and the teacher interviews from the respective school alluded to developing the novice teacher as

important. While this is the case of Crystal Primary School, both the participant interviews and documents reviewed at Aquamarine Secondary indicated the prevalence of developing the novice teacher.

An effective induction and mentoring programme for novice teachers are approved by scholars such as Middlewood (2003) and Wong (2004) to have an immediate and long lasting impact on the new teacher. Induction and mentoring is viewed as a process that mitigates teacher isolation and promotes the idea of an educative workplace. Seyfarth (2005) explains that schools become 'educative workplaces' or centres of learning since induction and mentoring programmes are structured programmes designed to develop and enhance the technical knowledge and skills of the novice teacher as well their social ability to perform well in their classroom roles. Further induction, mentoring and developing of the novice teacher benefits the school because an awareness of effective classroom pedagogy is established focusing on content and teaching methods which invariably leads to improvement in learners' experiences (Shaw, 1992).

Teachers are assumed to be the most powerful influences on student learning. Their sense of autonomy and control within the classroom deeply influences learner outcomes (Hattie, 2009). Therefore the development of novice teachers to be able to cope well and exercise positive leadership will lead to positive gains, in terms of learner achievement within the novice teacher classroom is all important to educational reform (Hamilton & Clandinin, 2011).

Weber's (1996) model of instructional leadership in the domain of managing the curriculum and instruction attests to the scholar's (Naicker, *et al*, 2013) call for developing novice teachers. In the domain of managing the curriculum, the leader offers teachers insight on effective practices and teaching strategies to acquire school goals of student achievement. In this way the principal is developing the novice teacher.

Based on the reports of two schools, the literature and theoretical framework provided above, in summary this theme indicates that developing the novice teacher was important and formed part of the professional development activities of the school. The next

practice focuses on “a hands on approach to school work/learner achievement and parental involvement” in performing instructional duties.

4.2.2.8 Hands on approach to school work and learner achievement

Most participants were in broad agreement that principals took a hands-on-approach in performing their instructional duties. This view was illustrated by the following excerpts from the participating principals:

If we need to deploy a resource, if there is a need for an intervention that falls outside of our capacity then we locate the relevant people responsible for it... If we need money we will go to business houses or the department, school governing body so whatever the challenge is we start engagement, and we engage with outside service providers, inside the department, whoever the role players are that are needed to resolve that particular problem and we engage with them.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

Mrs Amemyth a post level one teacher at the same school verified this stating:

If resources or support material are required other than what the school possesses, the principal makes provisions to attain such resources if it is for the betterment of the school.

(Mrs Amemyth-Teacher at Crystal Primary school)

In illustrating the principals ‘hands on approach’ in taking effective steps to support and provide resources to teachers, the minutes of the senior phase meeting dated 2/9/2013 read as follows:

“the principal is busy ordering Life Skills text books for the various grades and will be looking into ordering CAPS textbooks since that is the prescribed curriculum”.

Taking a ‘Hands on approach’ implies the principal being proactive in his duties and taking steps to ensure that he/she provides educators with the necessary support and resources required for them to optimise the schools mission.

The principal of Aquamarine defined “a hands on approach” as being involved in matters of teaching and learning. He stated that it is “*How you constantly, innovatively are involved in the learning programmes of the institution*”.

Commenting on the issue of the principals 'hands on' approach, Mrs Amber of the same school commented that her principal:

Creates a visible presence of an instructional leader by committing himself to the vision of teaching and learning by focusing on learning objectives, modeling behaviors of learning- he himself teachers, designs programmes of instruction.

(Mrs Amber-H.O.D at Aquamarine Secondary School)

Mrs Amber confirmed that her principal was involved (hands on) in school activities such as creating a vision at school and setting the example of what needs to be done. Weber's (1996) first domain of instructional leadership is about defining the school's vision. The first step in any organisation is to set a vision that the school is moving towards. Weber (1996) maintains that setting a vision the academic ideals with the staff, students, parents and community and it provides the direction to what you are working towards.

In evidencing the statements of the principal and participants, the minutes of the staff meeting dated 22/5/2014 reflected that '*the principal issued articles regarding teaching and learning to educators to peruse through*' in his efforts to improve instruction at school. This illustrates the key role played by the principal in designing the programmes of instruction and that the principal is enacting the characteristics of instructional leadership. This resonates with Jenkins (2000) assertion that instructional leaders are resource providers, who possess current knowledge of practices of instruction, curriculum and assessment and use their knowledge to deploy resources in ways that will improve school outcomes.

Scholars such as Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) are of the opinion that the characteristics of instructional leaders are important because they inform the practice. Consequently if the school principals exercises positive characteristics it will lead to positive outcomes likewise the opposite reaction is also true, if the principal exercises negative characteristics it will lead to negative outcomes. Muijs (2010) characterises instructional leaders are those who take a hands on approach to the teaching and learning process, the school principal acts the leader in such a process. According to Grobler (2014), the 'hands on approach' calls for school principal's to monitor teaching tasks to ensure adequate curriculum coverage. The characteristics of instructional leadership are integral to the practice of instructional leadership. As a result, characteristics are the facets that inform the practice. They shape the

principal's activity in terms of their instructional role. It is for this reason one has to explore characteristics of instructional leadership in conjunction to principals' practices.

The first domain of Weber's (1996) model of instructional leadership as discussed in the previous page is concerned with the school's vision. The vision of a school is considered important because it communicates to staff, students, parents and community, the goals that the school is striving towards. It is the school principal's responsibility together with teachers to draw up the school vision and set the goals of the organisation. This enactment of the school principal in establishing the school vision indicates that the principal is involved and therefore "hands on" in performing his instructional tasks as emphasised in his first domain of defining the school's vision. Moreover, Weber (1996) in his domain of assessing the instructional programme clearly defines the role of the school principal as being 'hands on' in matters of curriculum and instruction. In this domain, the principal must be responsible for and involved in the planning, designing, administration, and analysis of assessments that evaluate and strengthen curriculum effectiveness. This is reflective of the principal taking the initiative to get things done. These were described by the research participants as planning the school learning programme, ordering relevant text books, supplying resources and providing support to teachers, duties that promotes the culture of teaching and learning.

In summary, this practice shows that school principals need to be "hands on" in leading and managing their schools. This approach shows that school principals must take the steps necessary for school improvement such as outsourcing and deploying school resources where needed and being directly involved in the learning programmes of the school among others. The next practice focuses on getting the learner back to the classroom.

4.2.2.9. Getting the learner back to the classroom

The documents reviewed and participant interviews indicated that the principals of the two schools recognised the need for parental involvement since they saw this as a means to improving learner learning. It was minuted at Crystal Primary at a management meeting dated 14/03/2014 that, the way forward for getting learners back into the classrooms and responsible for their own learning was for:

More parental support together with greater monitoring by peers and educators and management.

In substantiating the need for parental involvement as a means to school improvement, Mrs Emerald said:

There are a number of things starting from the parental involvement, because we believe that education is not a teacher and a child relationship only it's a partnership. We try by all means to bring parents on board and as for our school, it is an English medium school, so we have those meeting that we always have with the parents to try again to close the gap between the school and the home regarding education and what the child is learning. So it is one of those interventions that we embarked on as a school.

(Mrs Emerald-H.O.D. at Crystal Primary School)

While the teachers of Aquamarine did not mention parental involvement, the minutes of the management meeting dated 13/01/2014 indicates that “*as a strategic plan for 2014, improvement of results more parental involvement will be advocated and encouraged*”. The minutes of Aquamarine suggests that parental involvement is used as a strategy to improve learner performance at the school. The statements above suggest that the principals of the two schools have identified that parents play a pivotal role in their children’s learning and therefore should be a part of the schooling process. Instructional leadership is concerned with supporting the instructional programme at school whilst emphasising quality teaching and learning (Hallinger & Heck, 2009; Murphy, 1990). In respect to the above, parents serve as ‘supports’ in the instructional programme. Presently the concept of instructional leadership has broadened its horizons to include all activities that affect teaching and learning. Heck and Hallinger (2009) support the view that instructional leadership is inclusive of all people teachers, learners, parents and wider community that affect learning and that principals work with other stakeholders that may assist to improve learner performance. In identifying and including the parental component the principals of the two schools demonstrate that they are not only taking a concerted effort to improve instruction, but rather that they are aware of what instructional leadership entails and they are executing their instructional duties accordingly.

Weber (1996), in his first domain of defining the school’s vision and mission, identifies parents as educational stakeholders. He proposes that the principal together with the parents

also considered an educational stakeholder, draw up the schools vision/ mission statement and outline a plan of action for how that vision/mission is to be realised. Weber's (1996) model of instructional leadership in the domain of vision and mission suggests the necessity of the school vision and mission statement, since the vision and mission statements are crucial to the daily functioning of the school. The mission and vision relates to the organisation's purpose. It also communicates the organisational goals and aspirations, more importantly it maps out the values of the organisation and the direction of where the organisation is going. In essence, the vision and mission outlines the plans of the organisation, the route of how to get there and it binds the people of the organisation in achieving its intention. Hence Weber's (1996) proposal for a vision and mission statement in organisations.

In summary, parental involvement is considered a means to school improvement. Parents are identified as educational stakeholders and therefore play an important role in their children's schooling process. The next practice focuses on policy and instructional leadership practices.

4.2.2.10 Policy and instructional leadership practices

The findings from the interviews indicate that policy was a topic discussed by all participants. It was noted that policy is an inescapable practice for school principals since policies are Departmental mandates. An important element of policy was that, it formed the prescripts/blueprint in terms of what needs to be done in education. The two principals had their own opinions with regards to policy.

Mr Sapphire believed that:

Policies are prescripts so there is very little that we can debate on policy. Yes you may have an opinion on this and that regarding curriculum, how we should teach and what we should teach and things like that but policy demands of us certain things.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

In extending his belief in terms of policy and his role in terms of the policy Mr Sapphire explains:

The core business of a school is teaching and learning and as such we are guided by the department's policy. So everything within the prescripts of the policy I will have to

ensure that everything is taken care of. To that end I have to follow to the measures of the law, the need for teachers and their teaching of the curriculum, the resources and everything that would be supportive of that.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

Mr Sapphire goes on to demonstrating how one would go about implementing policy at school. He says:

The CAPS programme is the policy that we employ. So the curriculum that we teach is no different from the prescript of the department. So we are obligated to follow that and we do that, but in terms of support, in terms of resources that is where we have the latitude to make differences. For example whilst the caps programme may be prescriptive, the amount of textbooks, the amount of teachers, the amount of resources, the personnel, we have the latitude to change those to give us the edge or an advantage to do well by providing charts, learning support materials and that sort of thin, whether it is computers, computer programmes be it worksheets, charts, learner support materials that they require then we make plans for them.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

While Mr Sapphire asserts that the policy informs practice and all school activities including teaching and learning have their basis on the mandates of educational policies, Mr Tanzanite of Aquamarine Secondary is of the view that policy mandates are not always simple and the implementation process is sometimes complicated due to many variables. In voicing this he said:

Policies are only as good as the measure of the implementation and implementation alone is not good enough, it's got to be monitoring and the feedback loop is somehow missing.

(Mr Tanzanite-Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

In substantiating his viewpoint, he brought to my attention that whilst he as a principal was following the mandates/policy in terms of curriculum, the support (human resource) that his school should be receiving as per prescripts of policy has not been received including the assistance that should be provided to him. He stated that the school was in dire need of an electrical technology educator, while certain policies state that the department will post a suitable educator, they had failed to deliver. The minutes of the management meeting reveal

that the department was unable to assist the school with regard to staffing and advises the principal that:

Staffing-kindly be advised that the District Task Team (DTT) could not find a suitable educator to match the requirements of the post. The school is therefore advised to find an educator who complies with the relevant requirements for the appointment.

The minutes of the management meeting (23/5/2013) verified the principal's assumption that the feedback loop in terms of the education department is somehow missing. In addition to the issue of the education department being unable to identify a suitable candidate for the available position at Aquamarine Secondary, the principal found a suitable educator but due to policy mandates the educator was not paid timeously. Dissatisfied with the situation, the teacher and learners were left without an electrical technology educator. This is what the principal had to say:

It took us so long to source these individuals, all we are asking the department now is to pay them timeously and it's becoming a long drawn out process.

(Mr Tanzanite-Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

The problem of policy mandates impacting on the culture of teaching and learning was exacerbated by the poor performance of learners in mathematics. The principal stated that his school over the years had been declining in the subject mathematics. The department has not sent a single subject advisor to try and remedy the situation.

In a big district like Pinetown I am supposed to be having subject advisors coming and supporting but in the sixteen years that I have been principal, not a single maths subject advisor has visited the school. Learners performed poorly throughout 2013 and it's reflected in draft schedules.

(Mr Tanzanite-Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) propose that principals are curriculum leaders and therefore have to lead in the domain of schools. This means that they themselves have to be curriculum leaders, policy implementers among other role functions, as well as attend to all matters arising from school. In addition Mestry, Moonsammy-Koopasammy and Schmidt (2013) maintain that this approach is unrealistic and unsustainable because principals alone do not possess curriculum knowledge of all subject areas to handle all subject matters, nor do they

have the time to attend daily to those additional tasks. From the views expressed by the two principals, it can be concluded that policy is mandatory and is not without complexities. Policy implementation requires changes in the whole school. The challenge is for school principals to try and find a balance between what the policy prescribes and how leaders implement policy in their schools. This concurs with Hoadley and Ward (2010) belief that schools are plagued by different contexts and therefore instructional leaders may borrow on literature/ models of successful schools, but they have to adapt it and find what works in their specific context type.

The other participants were definitive about the role that policy played in terms of the principal's instructional leadership. Most participants were in agreement that policy comes from the educational department and therefore principals are obliged to follow the policy prescripts. This is evident from the following excerpts from the educators of the two schools. For instance, Mrs Emerald (HOD) said:

Well, firstly there are no clashes with the policies from the department and the principal's policies. Whatever policies he creates or whatever he does is to develop us for what needs to be done in our classrooms. He uses the caps policy from department and tells teachers to follow that in terms of content and assessment tasks and in terms of teaching our learners.

(Mrs Emerald-H.O.D at Crystal Primary School)

Mrs Emerald's statement affirms her principal's response that all the Education departments' policies with regards to teaching and learning are followed at the school according to the prescripts of the policy. Moreover, she made a very assertive statement that there are no clashes with the policies from the department and the principal's policies, indicating that the principal is accountable for implementation of the policy at the school level and in ensuring that the policy is not only followed but that all the schools policies are in alignment with departmental policies. Minutes of staff/management meetings at Crystal Primary School reflected various accounts of implementation of Departmental policies. In citing a few, it was requested in a management meeting dated 28/01/2013 that educators were to use the Department of Education workbooks with their learners, educators were to strictly work within the framework of the CAPS documents, educators would engage themselves in the integrated quality management system (IQMS) as per department request. They would also

be workshopped according to Departmental documents on management of child abuse, learner diversity, examination and curriculum management.

This is evident that the principal of Crystal Primary in executing his instructional leadership was governed by policies and followed the prescripts of the relevant policies rigidly.

According to Ling, Walker and Chui (2012), policy environments demand of principals increased school accountability. The principal of Crystal primary clearly demonstrated accountability in policy driven environments, by aligning his school policies with Departmental education policies to achieve desired outcomes. Weber (1996) refers to this practice as embedded in defining the schools vision, mission and managing curriculum and instruction. The principal works to formulate a mission and vision of the school with the educational goals (of the school and department). Thereafter he manages school programmes to ensure that it meets the academic ideals as per policy and the vision and mission of the school. The views articulated by the participants of Crystal Primary School indicated that policy informs school practice and their principal successfully aligns school practice with policy. In contrast, the views articulated by participants of Aquamarine secondary seemed to indicate that policy implementation is not a simple process and that they were experiencing some challenges regarding policy. Mr Ziron confirmed his principal's dissatisfaction with policies when he said:

Most of the policies were developed and mapped out by officials sitting in offices, as much as they may have been on the ground teaching in the classroom some years ago, but the quality of learners, the challenges that learners experience on their own is very different nowadays. So they issue these policies without really understanding what exactly is needed on the ground, and while I applaud the policies that come, I feel that sometimes they are very farfetched, and not really applicable to us at our school.

(Mr Ziron-Teacher at Aquamarine Secondary School)

Similarly, the principal and teachers of Aquamarine Secondary were of the opinion that, the policy makers drawing up the education policies might sometimes be out of touch with what was really happening “on the ground” (in the classroom/schools) since they were no longer practicing teachers. As a result, the policies that they implemented for school principals and teachers might sometimes prove to be problematic, as it might lack the knowledge, contextualisation and reflection of what is happening and what is needed from practicing teachers. Educational policies are sometimes flawed. Teachers and school principals have

been inundated with a plethora of education policies, before one is fully comprehended or tested on the ground, the next one is thrown at teachers and management (principal).

Christie (2010) argues that the changing landscapes among other aspects such as teacher attrition and other factors affect school principals/teachers in executing their duties at school. Therefore schools cannot adopt a one dimensional model for school success nor can they pin school success on a single educational policy since the demographics and contexts of schools differ. Further Christie (2010), cautions that rigorous, one dimensional educational policy could have a negative impact on the principals' instructional leadership, since a one-dimensional education policy may not be applicable to all schools because of the varied nature of schools. In such instances principals and teachers may feel that the policy is sometimes constraining the principals/teachers ability to effectively conduct instructional activities at school due to the prescriptive nature of the policy which prescribes certain rules and outcomes that may be challenging to schools of varying contexts. The ability of principals' to influence instructional and supervisory decisions depends on factors both internal and external (policy) to the school (Firestone & Garner, 2002). Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) therefore recommend the restructuring/reculturing of instructional supervision if it is to be beneficial to the school where the environment is constrained or limited.

The above findings, viewed from Weber's (1996) last domain of assessing the instructional programme, refer to the 'reculturing' of school systems, policies and programmes which is essential for improving the instructional programme. In this domain, the principal is responsible for initiation and contribution to the planning, designing, administration, and analysis of assessments that evaluate and strengthen the effectiveness of the curriculum. The continuous assessment of the instructional program allows teachers to effectively meet students' needs through the constant revision and refinement. In this process of assessment the principal will be working closely with school goals and educational policies adopting and adapting them so that it leads to overall school improvement.

In summary, the above have shown that policy impacts on school leaders and is an inescapable concept. The way forward is for school principals to strike a balance between what policy prescribes to them and how he/she implements policy in the school programme.

4.3. Management structures in supporting teaching and learning

All the participants agreed that management structures were in place in their schools to support teaching and learning. Principals held the stringent belief that management structures are an integral part of effective delivery of the curriculum.

Mr Tanzanite outlines the structure of management in his school, in doing this he says:

We have the principal providing the instructional leadership, the HOD's as the curriculum manager... each head of department has got clearly defined learning areas to manage... you have teachers to deliver the curriculum, and most importantly you have to have learners willing to receive the curriculum.

(Mr Tanzanite-Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

Similarly, Mr Sapphire describes his structure of management at school.

Our school structure is not prescribed to us as such but it is there that there is processes and policies at the various and different levels. The principal is the overall CEO, all authority, all accountability resides, in his office. However the office of the principal is just one level, there are other levels, the deputy principals, the heads of department, so that structure itself, has definite usage to address the goals of the school.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

The two extracts highlight that for effective delivery of curriculum there needs to be a 'management structure' a channel of distribution from one individual to the next. In confirming the management structure of the school, the various teachers said:

It's himself at the top, then he has two deputies, then there is five heads of department for the five learning areas and last it is the educators. This is the line of structure that must be followed at school.

(Mrs Amber-Teacher at Aquamarine Secondary School)

Likewise Mrs Topaz alluded to there being a specific structure of management in place at her school. This structure comprises of:

The teachers, who discuss matters with their managers (H.O.D's), who then report to the deputy principal who takes the matter to the principal.

(Mrs Granite-Teacher at Crystal Primary School)

Further to the teachers' descriptions of the management structures of the two schools, the organogram of both schools showed the management structure from the principal, deputy principal, the HOD's and lastly the teachers. The presence of the school organogram in the offices of the two school principals suggests the line of reporting. It also outlines the function of management indicating that they are strategically placed to show that they are in that position to guide and assist teachers.

Hallinger (2011, 2013) proposes that in order for schools to be resilient and meet the demands of challenging contexts, instructional leaders need to focus on organisation, individuals and how they can assist them (by creating management support structures). Mendels (2012) and Mestry's (2013) study show that school effectiveness requires strong leadership and good management. According to Clarke and Wildy (2010), being a good leader requires first being a good manager and being able to manage skills effectively to affect positive resultants (Clarke & Wildy, 2010).

Weber's (1996) model shows that positive learning manifests from learning climates where there are clear instructions and expectations from the leader/management, this also increases teacher commitment in school and arguing for the need of management structures in school. In summary, it is essential for every school to have some form of a management structure. The management structure must be representative of the different individual's, example the principal, the deputy principal, the HOD's and teachers. The next theme focuses on the importance of management structures in schools.

4.4. Importance of management structures in schools

Further to the findings on the value of structures to support teaching and learning, participants also outlined the importance of management structures in schools. Mr Tanzanite strongly advocates management structures in schools and says that:

Management has a positive effective. Their job is to work with and support teachers so that there is effective delivery of curriculum.

(Mr Tanzanite-Principal of Aquamarine Secondary School)

Similarly, Mr Sapphire of indicated that management structures:

Enhances teaching and learning because if teachers are well equipped in terms of the curriculum knowledge, teaching pedagogies, and relevant support systems then they are in a position to give off their best in terms of their teaching skills and content knowledge to their learners.

(Mr Sapphire-Principal of Crystal Primary School)

The two principals shared the common understanding that management structures were invaluable to well-functioning schools because management structures support teachers by providing them with the necessary skills, teaching pedagogies and support needed for success. The teachers' of the two schools express their opinions with regards to the importance of the management structures at school. Mrs Amber commented that:

There has to be a control, supervision and monitoring of teachers and their work, so this may impact positively because if teachers know they are monitored they will ensure that they are on par with their work, tests, marking and analysis is done timorously, this will benefit learners because they will be learning at the correct pace, good content coverage and remedial measures in place that will be determined by the class analysis which will lead to improved learner results.

(Amber-H.O.D at Aquamarine Secondary School)

Mrs Amemyth corroborated her principal's assumption that the function of management was:

To ensure effective delivery of curriculum by supervision and monitoring of teachers management can identify areas of weakness and assist in strengthening those weak areas.

(Mrs Amemyth-Teacher at Crystal Primary School)

In addition, Mrs Amemyth believed that:

The teacher always knows and understands that if he or she has a problem the heads of department is there as the first person to go to. Educators are constantly aware of what is expected and needs to be carried out in terms of teaching and learning since this is the message communicated to them through their H.O.D's.

(Mrs Amemyth-Teacher at Crystal Primary School)

Mrs Amemyth's statement creates the impression that if teachers are experiencing difficulties at school they should report the matter to their HOD's, herein lies the line of control or management structure that is available to teachers when needed. This fully supports her principal's opinions that if teachers are fully supported in their teaching pedagogies, they can give off their best to the learners. Hence the importance of a management structure at school. The relevance of having some form of a management structure at school was also made known to me through perusal of various documents. The minutes of the staff meeting at Aquamarine Secondary School reflect that the function of a management structure is to ensure school achievement and greater empowerment. The minutes state that "*Dr Tanzanite appealed for the school management team to work together harmoniously to take the school forward*".

Similarly the minutes of the staff meeting dated 6/2/2014 of Crystal Primary School on numerous occasions indicates that:

All relevant matters with regard to curriculum, ground duty, relief duty, discipline must be discussed by departmental heads with educators.

From the above mentioned, one can see that management structures are important to schools because they offer the support mechanism for both the teachers and for the school as a whole. Horng and Loeb (2010), explain that principals create and develop management structures for improving instruction as opposed to constantly being present in the classroom, observing teachers practice their craft or being coaches to struggling teachers. According to Horng and Loeb (2010), the management of personnel is a key responsibility of school principals.

According to Weber's (1996) domain of managing curriculum and instruction, the principal is responsible for curriculum management, supervision of teachers and provision for teachers to succeed. Since the magnitude of the task is too strenuous for principals' this necessitates the need for a management structure to assist the principal in performing such tasks. In summary management structures are important because assist the principal to monitor curriculum and provide teachers with support in ensuring effective delivery of curriculum.

To summarise this theme management structures are crucial and indispensable to schools since they contribute to school efficiency. Management structures hold a specific role in

schools, e.g. they serve as the intermediaries between the principal and teachers, exercise supervision, monitor and support to develop teachers for greater school achievement.

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter presented and discussed the findings generated through semi-structured interviews and documents that were reviewed with the key research questions in mind. This was accomplished by closely examining the common themes that emerged during data analysis. Directed by the key research questions and informed by the reviewed literature and theoretical framework, the findings and discussions were presented. The next chapter presents the study summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dispensed with data presentation, analysis and discussion of the findings gleaned from interviews and documents reviewed. Subsequent to a careful

consideration of the data, strong conclusions emerged in relation to the key questions asked in the first chapter. Based on the study findings drawn in Chapter Four and the conclusions of this research, recommendations are offered.

5.2 Summary of the study

Chapter One provided the introduction, background, focus, motivation and rationale of the study. The aims, objectives and key research questions informing the study were outlined, followed by a clarification of key concepts engaged in this study. A brief methodology employed in this study was outlined concluding the chapter.

Chapter Two's Reviewed literature and theoretical frameworks were examined and discussed underpinning this study. Literature on instructional leadership of school principals was viewed from different perspectives. Different aspects pertaining to the school principal as instructional leaders such as the significance, characteristics and benefits of instructional leaders, the role of professional learning communities and instructional leadership in schools was explored. Further links between instructional leadership and management was clearly defined. The changing landscapes of schools were studied in terms of the impact it has on school principals as instructional leaders. Moreover an identification of the challenges facing instructional leaders were discussed. Lastly, the Theoretical Framework underpinning this study was identified and discussed drawing the chapter to a close with the chapter summary.

Chapter Three Provided information on the research design and methodology utilised in this research and expounded on the suitability of the qualitative research approach. It explained further how data was to be generated, analysed and how design limitation and ethical issues were sought. It also discussed issues of trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability.

Chapter Four presented data and discussed the findings from the field. This chapter discussed principals' perceptions of instructional leadership which could assist school principals in understanding what an 'instructional leader implies. Expanding on the instructional leadership terminology, this chapter also presented various instructional leadership practices that school principals engaged in their roles as instructional leaders. Such practices may assist school principals in conducting their instructional activities at schools.

Furthermore, the presence and influence of educational policies were examined in relation to its impact on school principals in executing their instructional roles. Lastly, the importance of management structures in supporting teaching and learning in schools were discussed.

Chapter Five provides a concise summary of the entire study. Conclusions that emanated from the findings of the study were drawn and recommendations that would assist school principals in effectively performing their roles as instructional leaders in schools in the Pinetown District were offered.

5.3 Conclusions

According to Cohen, *et al.* (2011), conclusions serve to summarise and bring together the main ideas covered in the writing. Further, they give a final comment or judgement about a particular study. This study sought to explore school principals' instructional leadership practices as they support teaching and learning in schools.

This section concludes the research study by drawing conclusions established from the findings of the previous chapter concerning the instructional leadership activities and strategies of school principals in promoting teaching and learning in their respective schools.

Based on the first finding, school instructional leadership was viewed as a “must” by the school principals of the two schools. The study concluded that school principals need to create their own understandings/perceptions of instructional leadership. Instructional leadership was understood as a leadership style or approach executed by the school principal to promote quality teaching and learning. When they begin to understand the concept of instructional leadership, they will act in ways that promote instructional leadership.

Regarding the principals instructional leadership practices, the study found that the principal was involved in all practices that promote teaching and learning i.e. being the cog in the wheel of teaching and learning, styles of leadership, exemplary leadership, the subject,

curriculum, instructional leadership in instructional leadership (SCI's), principals supporting teachers, encouraging professional development, developing the novice teacher, hands on approach and parental involvement, getting the learner back to the classroom, policy and instructional leadership practices. When principals concerned themselves with instructional practices from the point of how instruction is developed (policies/procedure), harnessed (procurement i.e. professional development, teacher resources and support) to how it is implemented (teachers instructing) then instruction is effective in schools and learner achievement is easily met.

The main idea generated was that the principal in attempts to ensure continuity of effective instructional leadership needed to demonstrate a leadership style that stakeholders (parents especially teacher) could learn from (the principal is the exemplar) and emulate. Further there is a need for teachers to be supported (resource allocation) and developed (professional development and workshops) in becoming models of instructional leadership. If the principal is not actively involved in instructional leadership (cog in the wheel of teaching and learning, being the exemplar e.t.c.) they will not be aware of how to effect instructional change.

The study showed that support is necessary to every school. One of the researched schools exposed teachers to formal and informal support systems. In this school the principal had a maintained a better idea of what was happening in the school. Informal support allows one to keep abreast of what is happening in a school without being reliant on formal support systems. The study concluded that formal and informal support is beneficial to school improvement.

It was illustrated that support alone cannot improve learner outcomes/ instruction. Development needs to take place if improvement is to be realised. One may possess the support (physical and emotional) if not developed on how to use support, they do not possess the ability to be resilient in the classrooms or make any significant contributions to the instructional domain. All stakeholders (principal and teachers) need to undergo forms of development in order to equip them to the task of instructional leaders. The study therefore concludes that development is key to instructional enhancement.

The study also concluded that 'instructional practices' were not synonymous to the school principal. It was the responsibility of all educational stakeholders i.e. teachers, learners, parents. When all stakeholders are actively involved and concerned with their role in instructional leadership then barriers to instructional leadership is alleviated. Advancing this

argument the study has shown and concluded that instructional leadership is not a standalone task. Teamwork secures instructional outcomes since it has shown to bring a sharing and distribution of instructional tasks, ideas and responsibilities. Moreover teamwork frees time for the principal to focus on other schooling matters.

Teamwork creates the sense of a partnership. The study has shown that a mix of individuals (principal, teacher, parent, learner) comprise the school system, when all individuals are involved in school matters then learning thrives. Hence the call for all schools to call on parents in the struggle for school improvement/achievement. The study demonstrated the contribution of parental involvement to school achievement. Parents bridge the gap between the home and school in terms of reinforcing teaching and learning within the home. Thus the study concludes that parental involvement is key to learner achievement.

Lastly the study drew conclusions on the aspect of policy and management. Policy permeates every aspect of schooling. Principals have to follow the prescripts of the policy in all of their activities however the study has shown that principals while following the prescripts of the policy possess the ability to provide the means of achieving policy. As a way of illustration the principals of the two schools provided the means for teachers to professionally develop themselves within workshops at school, this allows them to meet the learning objectives of the policy. Hence the study concludes that principals need to be guided by the prescript of the policy, but they may take initiatives (workshopping, staff development, resource allocation) that may be not prescribed in the policy but are in the interest of meeting policy objectives i.e. teaching and learning to thrive in schools.

In terms of the management aspect the study has shown that management structures play a multidisciplinary role. They serve to guide, mentor, and monitor and instruct teachers. They are the intermediaries between the principal and teachers. This structure exists to improve instruction at school. The study concludes that every school needs to have a structure if management at school which will provide the mechanisms of supervision and support to aid teaching and learning.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings discussed at length in Chapter Four and the conclusions above, the following recommendations are made:

Recommendation One

The study seems to indicate that there is a wealth of information conceptualising instructional leadership and what it entails for school principals'. Despite these conceptualisations the study recommends that school principals need to establish their own perceptions of instructional leadership in relation to their school types, because the way in which school principals perceive their instructional leadership role and the context of his/her school will affect the way he/she leads his/her school. All schools are different with different needs and contexts. Hence the school principal should have his own understanding of instructional leadership. It is also recommended that school principals become knowledgeable in terms of their understandings of instructional leaders as prescribed in educational policies and legislation. According to section 16(3) of SASA, the professional management of a public school must be undertaken by the principal, under the authority of the Head of Department. The professional management must furthermore be undertaken subject to SASA itself and any applicable provincial law. In terms of SASA, the principal as an instructional leader is seen as the manager of the school, however although the decisions taken by the school principal are assumed to be autonomous (principal is the manager of school), it has to be in compliance to the Head of Department and any applicable provincial law. From the above mentioned, the study recommends that school principals draw their own perceptions of instructional leadership. This entails that the school principal should create his/her own understanding of what it is to be an instructional leader other than merely following the prescripts of legislator/policy. Being an instructional leader requires being knowledgeable in terms of your roles and responsibilities with regards to educational policies on instructional leaders, it further requires having your own understanding of your instructional role in order to best enact your instructional role. There needs to be a balance between the two since diligently following the policy does not account for differences in school types, contexts, learner diversity, and resources e.t.c. This understanding of what it is to be an instructional leader may be informed through scholastic debate, shadowing other instructional leaders, trial and error in one's own practice. When school principals develop their own understanding of what being an instructional leader encompasses, they will be able to best take on the role of an instructional leader, since they will be highly knowledgeable, informed and more importantly they will have their own perceptions of their instructional roles, which will make their instructional tasks more clear.

Recommendation Two

Since school principals are known as the main role-players in leading and managing of the school curriculum, they are required to be part of both the ‘teaching’ that occurs in school i.e. being the exemplar and in the management of the school i.e. through deployment of resources, exposure of professional development activities e.t.c and in formulating the policies, procedures and programmes that affect teaching. These instructional tasks should never be in isolation. The study argues that in order to formulate policies and learning programmes which affect change positively, one first needs to be involved in the profession. It is against this backdrop that the study recommends that school principals be actively involved in teaching and learning in an effort to improve the quality of education.

Recommendation Three

If schools are to succeed and teachers to be resilient in their instructional duties support mechanisms are a necessary function. The study has shown that all forms of support be it formal or informal are beneficial to an organisation. When teachers are supported in their tasks it creates a sense of well-being and an environment conducive to teaching and learning since the support required to aid teaching and learning is provided. The support provided may be formal and informal. However most schools concentrate on a formal structure of support and the informal support is often neglected or forgotten altogether. As such, this study recommends that schools have in place both formal and informal support systems since the study has recognised the benefits of an informal support system in school achievement. A further recommendation is that the Department of Education and educational researchers be more vocal on the contribution of an informal support system to school effectiveness, and to make school principals aware of how informal support systems impact on the culture of teaching and learning.

Recommendation Four

Development of oneself opens the door for self-reflection and self-improvement. The study has shown that when an individual (e.g. teacher) is developed they better perform in their professional duties and obligations since they are better and more aware of how best to handle a task or duty (i.e. teaching and learning). The study has shown that development is a necessary facet for all individuals. Hence the study recommends that the principal, teachers,

parents all be exposed to forms of professional development in order to enhance the individual roles and pedagogies they display in terms of their contribution to assuring effective teaching and learning at schools.

Recommendation Five

Throughout the study it has been demonstrated that sound instructional leadership rests on various individuals and is not only the principal's prerogative. All stakeholders of education i.e. principal, teachers, learners and parents need come on board and familiarise themselves with the roles and responsibilities they need to display to attain learner achievement. The study recommends that school principals recognise the role that all stakeholders play in education and call upon them to enhance teaching and learning at schools, with special attention and focus on the role that parent's play in their children's learning. It was identified in the study that parental involvement was used as a contingency plan to improve learner achievement. Various educational policies such as the South African Schools Act have identified and acknowledged parents as stakeholders in education. Noting the importance of parental involvement and its contribution to learner improvement, the study makes the recommendation that all schools draw upon parents for improving learner outcomes.

Recommendation Six

School principals are tasked with the responsibility of following the prescripts of educational policies when executing their instructional obligations. While this is considered the norm my study makes the recommendation that school principals follow the prescripts of policy but, it should not be done in blind faith. By that I mean school principals should not stringently follow the educational policies. Instead they should rather analyse and interpret the policy in relation to the policy aims and intensions. Thereafter school principals should adapt the policy in light of the prevailing situation and context of their schools so that the policy is effective. All schools vary in terms of contexts so applicability and suitability may be problematic since educational policies are drawn from more general contexts.

Moreover educational policies also identify the relevant role-players involved in assisting school principals in attaining school outcomes such as subject advisors. Educational policies also stipulate the responsibilities of these subject advisors in terms of their role function in

schools. Whilst educational policies are quite clear in terms of the relevant role-players (subject advisors, policy-makers) and their function in education, the study has shown that a lack or absence of these core role-players impacts negatively on the school principal in conducting his/her instructional duties as he/she is not receiving the necessary support from the role-players (subject advisors) to enhance learning outcomes. On the basis of this, the study concludes that lack of assistance from relevant role-players in education impact negatively on the school principal in performing his/her instructional duties. Therefore the study recommends that the Department of Education periodically workshop relevant role-players of their core functions and responsibilities and that they train these role-players in their respective capacities. Further it is recommended that more role-players (subject advisors) be employed by the education department so that the education department has the man power necessary to assist schools with their challenges. Also there needs to be a higher authority checking on the relevant role-players that they are conducting their duties accordingly. In this way the “feedback loop” between school principals and role-players will be ongoing and the dissatisfaction of the relevant role-players such as the subject advisors and policy-makers may be prevented as the aspect of accountability is introduced.

Recommendation Seven

While teacher development is important, developing of the novice teacher is far more important. This is the case because developing of the novice teacher means preparing the novice teacher and assimilating them into the culture, ethos and expectations of the school. It is recommended that all schools pay close attention to developing the novice teacher. Greater effort and time is devoted to developing novice teachers.

Recommendation Eight

Throughout the study, the school principal has been highlighted as the prime agent of school change and effectiveness. It is through this finding that the study recommends that the school principal should be active in all aspects of schooling and not only in the instructional domain.

Recommendation Nine

It was identified in the study that parental involvement was used as a contingency plan to improve learner achievement. Various educational policies such as the South African Schools Act have identified and acknowledged parents as stakeholders in education. Noting the importance of parental involvement and its contribution to learner improvement, the study makes the recommendation that all schools draw upon parents for improving learner outcomes.

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Recommendation Eleven

The structure of management is important to every school because it provides a clear indication of the hierarchy of individuals. With this hierarchy, comes certain duties and responsibilities. The management is tasked with the responsibilities of providing the means of support to teachers in fulfilling their professional obligations. It is therefore necessary that every school has a structure of management. It is further recommended that the Education Department train people in positions of management on a more regular basis. Schools should have induction ceremonies so that when new and old teachers are recruited into the new school, they are groomed to enact their role functions.

5.5 Implications of the study

This case study explored the instructional leadership role of school principals in supporting and managing teaching and learning in schools. It is noteworthy that while the case studied was only one education district in KwaZulu-Natal and the generalisability of the findings of the case is limited to other districts, the findings provide greater insight into the roles and responsibilities of school principals as instructional leaders and their challenges thereof. Hence the need for a larger scale research on the topic studied in attempts to gain more insight into what school principals do to support teaching and learning, as well as the challenges they experience. Further, educational policy formulators have gained insight into how educational policies impact on learning outcomes and affect those implementing prescribed policies. The knowledge gained from this may assist educational policy formulators when designing educational policies to develop educational policies that are more adaptable to school principals and teachers and more suitable to the prevailing school contexts. The researcher is of the opinion that greater research would assist curriculum policy

formulators and school principals to be better equipped for improving instructional programmes.

5.6 Chapter summary

Instructional leadership is concerned with the culture of teaching and learning. The success of an instructional leader (school principal) is measured in terms of how well the learning outcomes of the school are achieved. Since the principals' success is dependent on teacher and learner performance, the principals' approach as an instructional leader is crucial to promoting learner achievement. This approach requires the principal to understand what his/her instructional role entails, become conversant with innovative teaching pedagogy, to model them in the classroom and to encourage teachers to participate in professional development. The principal's approach also requires the principal being hands on in matters affecting teaching and learning and being actively involved in this process. The principal yields the power to influence learner-learning by interpreting educational policies, designing curriculum and thereafter setting the school's goals to communicate school effectiveness. Learner-learning is also enhanced when teachers are supported in their instructional tasks through management and support structures established by the school principal. The job description of school principals as the current legislator should be reviewed to include a detailed description of what the instructional leadership role entails and the leadership qualities that school principals should possess as instructional leaders.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

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APPENDIX A

PERMISSION LETTER TO THE KZN DEPARTMENT OF BASIC EDUCATION

25 Heron Street

Kharwastan

Chatsworth

Durban

4092

Attention: The Head of Department (Dr. N.S.P. Sishi)

Department of Basic Education

Province of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X9137

Pietermaritzburg

3201

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am Miss Yachna Gowpall, a M.Ed. student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research on the phenomena of the instructional leadership practices of school principals in the Pinetown District. In this regard, I request permission to conduct research in the following district/s/ schools:

The schools where the research shall be conducted: *New Germany Primary School, and Wyebank Secondary.*

The title of the research project is: *Schools principals' instructional leadership practices: A case of two schools in the Pinetown District*

This study aims to explore the instructional leadership practices of school principals in the Pinetown district, and will focus on school principals to solicit their views and experiences on the phenomena of instructional leadership. This study will use semi-structured interviews and documents review to generate data. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 20-35 minutes at the time and place convenient to them.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.

Participants' identities will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.

All responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Fictitious names will be used to represent participants' names.

Participation is voluntary which means participants are free to withdraw at any time they so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on their part.

The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interview.

Participants will be contacted on time about the interviews dates and times.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact me using the ff. contact details:

Miss Y. Gowpall; Tel: 031 4034819; E-mail: yachnagowpall@gmail.com; Cell: 0835373441.

Mr S. E. Mthiyane; Tel: 031 2601870; E-mail: Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za; Cell: 073 377 4672.

The HSSREC Research Office (Ms P. Ximba, Tel. 031 2603587, and E-mail: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za)

The interview schedule is attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Miss Y. Gowpall

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION LETTER TO THE PRINCIPAL

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

25 Heron Street

Kharwastan

Chatsworth

Durban

4092

28 October 2014

Attention: The Principal

2 East Street

New Germany

3610

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am Yachna Gowpall, a student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my M.Ed degree requirements, I am conducting research on instructional leadership practices of school principals in the Pinetown District. In this regard, I request permission to conduct research in your school. Please be informed that I have already sought and are awaiting the necessary permission from the Research Office of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education to conduct this research.

(See copy of letter attached).

The title of the research project is: **School principals' instructional leadership practices: A case of two schools in the Pinetown District.**

This study aims to explore the instructional leadership practices of school principals in the Pinetown District, and will focus on school principals to solicit their views and experiences on the phenomena of instructional leadership. This study will use semi-structured interviews and documents review to generate data. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 20-35 minutes at the time and place convenient to them.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.

Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.

All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Fictitious names will be used to represent your names.

Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.

The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist the researchers in concentrating on the actual interview rather than focusing on writing voluminous notes.

You will be contacted in time about the interviews.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact me using the ff. contact details:

Miss Y. Gowpall; Tel: 031 4034819; E-mail: yachnagowpall@gmail.com; Cell: 0835373441.

Dr S. E. Mthiyane; Tel: 031 2601870; E-mail: Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za; Cell: 073 377 4672.

The HSSREC Research Office (Ms P. Ximba, Tel. 031 2603587, and E-mail: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za)

The interview schedule is attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Miss Y. Gowpall

Declaration / Consent Form

I (Full name & surname of participant) hereby confirm that I have been fully informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **School principals' instructional leadership practices: A case of two schools in the Pinetown District.**

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

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

Finally, I (consent / do not consent) to this interview being voice-recorded.

Signature of Participant: Date:
.....

Signature of Witness / Research Assistant:Date:
.....

Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully

Miss Y. Gowpall

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT MY SCHOOL

I _____ Principal of
_____ grant permission to Miss Y. Gowpall to
conduct research at my school.

Principal Signature

Date

School stamp

APPENDIX D

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO BE A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

25 Heron Street

Kharwastan

Chatsworth

Durban

4092

28 October 2014

Attention: Mr/Miss

REQUEST TO BE A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT AT YOUR SCHOOL

I am Yachna Gowpall, an M.Ed. student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research on instructional leadership practices of school principals in the Pinetown District. In this regard, I request permission for you to be a participant in my research project at your school. Please be informed that I have already sought and are awaiting the necessary permission from the Research Office of the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education to conduct this research.

(See copy of letter attached).

The title of the research project is: **School principals' instructional leadership practices: A case of two schools in the Pinetown District.**

This study aims to explore the instructional leadership practices of school principals in the Pinetown District, and will focus on school principals to solicit their views and experiences on the phenomena of instructional leadership. This study will use semi-structured interviews and documents review to generate data. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 20-35 minutes at the time and place convenient to them.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.

Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.

All your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Fictitious names will be used to represent your names.

Participation is voluntary; therefore, you are free to withdraw at any time you so wish without incurring any negative or undesirable consequences/penalty on your part.

The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist the researchers in concentrating on the actual interview rather than focusing on writing voluminous notes.

You will be contacted in time about the interviews.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact me using the ff. contact details:

Miss Y. Gowpall; Tel: 031 4034819; E-mail: yachnagowpall@gmail.com; Cell: 0835373441.

Dr S. E. Mthiyane; Tel: 031 2601870; E-mail: Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za; Cell: 073 377 4672.

The HSSREC Research Office (Ms P. Ximba, Tel. 031 2603587, and E-mail: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za)

The interview schedule is attached herewith for your perusal.

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance.

Yours sincerely

Miss Y. Gowpall

Declaration / Consent Form

I (Full name & surname of participant)

hereby confirm that I have been fully informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **School principals' instructional leadership practices: A case of two schools in the Pinetown District.**

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

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

Finally, I (consent / do not consent) to this interview being voice-recorded.

Signature of Participant: Date:
.....

Signature of Witness / Research Assistant:Date:
.....

Thanking you in advance.

Yours faithfully

Miss Y. Gowpall

APPENDIX E

Interview schedule: Principal

1. Biographical information

1.1. Age group

25-35	35-45	45-55	55-65
-------	-------	-------	-------

1.2. Gender

Male	Female
------	--------

1.3. Qualification/s:

1.4. Years of experience

1.5. Positions held

2. What do you understand your role function to be in supporting teaching and learning?

2.1. What instructional leadership practices do school principals engage in, in supporting teaching and learning?

2.2. How do you ensure that all teachers are supported at schools? Please explain

3. How do educational policies influence instructional leadership practices? Elaborate

3.1. How do educational policies impact on the instructional leadership practices of school principals?

3.2. What changes have you made in your school since becoming a principal in terms of educational policies and instructional leadership?

4. What management structures do principals have in place at schools in order to effectively promote teaching and learning?

4.1. What effect does management structures have if any in promoting teaching and learning?

4.2. If problems were to arise with management structures what support services would the school provide?

4.3. Is there a link between management structures and instructional leadership practice?

5. Is there anything you would like to add which you have not shared with me concerning the phenomenon of instructional leadership (teaching and learning) at your school?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX F

Interview schedule: Teachers

2. Biographical information

2.1. Age group

25-35	35-45	45-55	55-65
-------	-------	-------	-------

2.2. Gender

Male	Female
------	--------

2.3. Qualification/s:

2.4. Years of experience

2.5. Positions held

2. What do you understand the principal's role function to be in supporting teaching and learning?

2.1. What instructional leadership practices do school principals engage in, in supporting teaching and learning?

2.2. How does your principal ensure that all teachers are supported at schools? Please Explain.

3. How do educational policies influence instructional leadership practices? Elaborate

3.1. How do educational policies impact on the instructional leadership practices of school principals?

3.2. What changes have your principal made in your school since becoming a principal in terms of educational policies and instructional leadership?

4. What management structures does your school principal have in place at schools in order to effectively promote teaching and learning?

4.1. What effect does management structures have if any in promoting teaching and learning?

4.2. If problems were to arise with management structures what support services would the school provide?

4.3. Is there a link between management structures and instructional leadership practice?

5. Is there anything you would like to add which you have not shared with me concerning the phenomenon of instructional leadership (teaching and learning) at your school?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX G

DOCUMENTS REVIEW SCHEDULE

The documents that will be reviewed will not be older than five years and will be:

1. Subject policies, results improvement plan for the subject, minutes of the meetings with the principals, HODs and subject teachers. These will be discussed and the deliberations recorded. These official documents will be used to corroborate the interviews thus improving the trustworthiness of the findings. The documents may reveal aspects that were not found through the interviews.