UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Leading Teaching and Learning in the Context of Rurality: Learning from the Departmental Heads in Three Secondary Schools of Zululand District

By

Buyani Mcabangiseni Mnyandu

210 549 925

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in Educational, Leadership, Management and Policy

University of KwaZulu-Natal

College of Humanities

School of Education

Pietermaritzburg campus, South Africa

June 2024

Supervisor: Professor Phumlani Myende

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I **Buyani Mcabangiseni Mnyandu** solemnly declare that:

i. This research report title: *Leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality: Learning from the Departmental Heads in three secondary schools of Zululand District*, is my original work, except where otherwise indicated.

ii. This dissertation has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university or institution of higher learning.

iii. This dissertation does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

iv. This dissertation does not contain other persons' writing, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other researchers. Where other sources have been quoted, then:

   a. Their words have been re-written, but the general information attributed to them has been referenced.

   b. Where their exact words have been used, their writing has been placed inside quotation marks and referenced.

This dissertation does not contain text, graphics, or tables copies and pasted from the Internet, unless specifically acknowledged, and the source is detailed in the dissertation and on the Reference list.

Signed:  Date: 14 June 2024

Buyani M Mnyandu

STATEMENT BY SUPERVISOR

This dissertation has been submitted with my approval.

Signed: [redacted] Date: 14 June 2024

Professor P E Myende

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following people;

- My mother, Hawukeleni uMaButhelezi Mnyandu and my late father Msuseni Mnyandu (uSombhenywase) who passed away when I was six years old, for all their inspiration and support that has led me up to this point in my life. My efforts would not be possible without your love and guidance.
- My wife, Siwe uMaHlatshwayo Mnyandu and my two sons, Sinqobile and Nkosenhle and my nephew Mthokozisi Mnyandu who were a constant source of support, encouragement and inspiration. Thank you for your kindness and patience during the long hours that kept me at my studies and away from you.
- My friends, Thulani Seme, Vusi Msibi, Zimisele Duze, Philani Goge and Luyanda Mncube who supported me through difficult times and continued to encourage and inspire me to complete this degree.
- Lastly, to my colleagues at Bhekuzulu Public School, especially Miss Winnie Zwane and Mrs Thembelihle Tsotetsi who gave me the much appreciated encouragement during my studies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God, The Almighty for giving me wisdom, strength and patience to complete this study.

My gratitude goes to the following people for their contribution to the completion of this work;

- Professor PE Myende, my supervisor for his professional support and guidance throughout the journey.
- Departmental Heads who were the participants in this study.
- Principals of selected rural secondary schools who gave megatekeeper permission to conduct my study in their schools.
- My colleagues, Reggie Khuzwayo, Mantombi Maduna, Dumisani Sibisi, Winnie Zwane, Thembelihle Tsotetsi and Andile Xulu for their encouragement and support in during difficult times.
- My family, for their support, encouraging words and for allowing me to take some of their time and invest it in this study.
- Dr Nozipho Khumalo, Dr Nomusa Mlondo and Dr Sikhumbuzo Dhlamini for their encouraging words and guidance in some of the chapters and providing me more articles which assisted me to do and complete this study.

ABSTRACT

The role played by Departmental Heads as leaders in South African schools is crucial due to their indirect impact on learner performance and the school achievement. In this study, I explored the following aspects: the role of secondary school Departmental Heads in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality, the leadership strategies that Departmental Heads use to enhance leadership for teaching and learning, and the various challenges that Departmental Heads face in their leadership role. This study is underpinned by leadership for learning theory. This qualitative study is located within the contours of the interpretivist paradigm. Data was collected using two data collection methods, namely: in-depth face to face interviews and document analysis. To select the participants, purposive sampling and convenience sampling were used to identify and recruit the participants from three secondary schools in Zululand District under Bhekuzulu Circuit Management Cluster. The study purposively selected six Departmental Heads from each of the three participating secondary schools. Data were analysed using thematic analysis.

The findings of the study revealed that Departmental Heads have different roles in leading teaching and learning. These include the monitoring of teaching and learning processes, moderating formal assessment tasks, mentoring newly appointed educators, appraisal and evaluation of educators using the Quality Management System. This study also revealed that Departmental Heads provide support for educators' professional development by motivating them to attend workshops, which are organised by the district office to capacitate educators. Further, Departmental Heads were experiencing numerous challenges in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality.

I recommend that Departmental Heads should always provide support for educators' professional development in the subject meetings and departmental meetings in order to capacitate them. Further, the researcher also recommends that similar studies be conducted in all districts in KwaZulu-Natal to explore what the Departmental Heads do regarding leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. Further research can entail the Departmental Heads of primary schools to understand how they lead teaching and learning in their primary schools.

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACE- Advanced Certificate in Education

ATP- Annual Teaching Plan

B. Ed- Bachelor of Education

DHs - Departmental Heads

DoE- Department of Education

EEA- Employment of Education Act

ESS- East Secondary School

KZN- KwaZulu-Natal

LFL- Leadership for Learning

NPDE- National Professional Diploma in Education

NSS- North Secondary School

PAM- Personal Administrative Measures

PGCE- Postgraduate Certificate in Education

QMS- Quality Management System

SASA- South Africa Schools Act

SMTs- School Management Teams

UKZN- University of KwaZulu-Natal

WSS - West Secondary School

Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE
ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The aim of the study is to explore the role of secondary school Departmental Heads (DHs) in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. DHs are often so overwhelmed by their workload that they eventually fail to adequately perform their supervisory duties (Ngubane & Ramrathan, 2014). These duties include assessing the work of educators and that of learners (PAM, 2016). This challenge is often exacerbated by geographical location. For example, in the context of rurality, some DHs are full time educators with full teaching loads, a challenge that is often precipitated by low learner enrolments in rural schools (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). This is unstainable because when DHs largely concentrate on subject content delivery, they tend to neglect their primary role of being standards controllers. The implications are such that learner performance is negatively affected as a result of the poor quality of teaching and learning emanating from the lack of supervisory input that must be provided by DHs (Leithwood, 2016). This chapter presents the study, by proving a background of the study, and then explains the rationale for the study as well as purpose statement. It further briefly presents the statement of the problem, the significance of the study and key research questions. Furthermore, I present the definition of key terms used in the study. In addition, I conclude the chapter by discussing the layout of the study and chapter conclusion.

1.2 Background to the Study

Leading teaching and learning is one of the most important responsibility for DHs and other school leaders (Bush et al., 2009). The roles that DHs have undergone significant changes especially in terms of the professional development of educators (Adey, 2000). In South Africa, DHs were previously known as Heads of Departments (HoDs). According to Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM, 2016) states that DHs are responsible for guiding and supporting educators moderating the work of educators and learners, developing policy and co-ordinating assessment tasks for all the subjects within the department. In Hong Kong, DHs are called subject co-ordinators and they bear the main responsibility for curriculum leadership through direct connection with educators (Cheung & Yuen, 2017). In the United Kingdom, they are referred to as subject leaders (Southworth, 2010). In Canada, DHs are known as middle managers (Bush, 2005). Leading teaching and learning in rural contexts is a challenge to DHs,

because classrooms in rural schools are often congested, resulting in ineffective teaching and learning especially because of inadequate resources (Gardiner, 2008).

Bambi (2012) conducted a study on the role of DHs as the leaders of teaching and learning. The study suggests that DHs should drive the supervision of teaching and learning in schools. Mestry and Pillay (2013) further assert that leading the process of teaching and learning is the core duty of DHs. According to the PAM, states that DHs must perform the following duties: guiding and supporting educators, controlling the work of learners and educators, co- ordinating the assessment of all subjects within the department and developing policy. In rural secondary schools without DHs, all management duties remain in the hands of principals. The consequences of that is that the curriculum management duties are not effectively done because principals have many responsibilities. In most rural secondary schools, only one DH is appointed due to low learner enrolment, for example, a DH is appointed for the Humanities, but expected to evaluate and support the educators in all the subjects such as Physical Science, Accounting and Mathematics. Hence, the development of those educators will be compromised. The PAM document outlines the schoolbased educators' responsibilities and the time that must be spent on performing those duties. The educators' responsibilities and time allocations differ depending on the post levels. The DH in a secondary school is expected to spend 85 percent of the time on teaching and 15 percent on management duties (Personnel Administrative Measures, 2016). The allocation of management posts to the schools presents even more consequences. The Employment Act (No. 76 of 1998) stipulates that a secondary school with 150 learners qualifies for one DH post. The improvement of the quality of teaching and assessment is the responsibility of the DH (Melnikova & Thorpe, 2014). Thus, the DH should therefore be properly qualified to teach the specific subject in the secondary school sector.

DHs are also required to take the responsibilities of Deputy Principals in rural secondary schools with low learner population as these schools do not qualify for Deputy Principals' posts (PAM, 2016). Senge (2007) recognises that the role of DHs is very significant and strenuous and if it is not done correctly, it compromises the effective quality of teaching and learning in the schools. Bush et al. (2010) aver that DHs lead by example by managing classrooms and listening to the educators. In some rural secondary schools with low learner enrolment, DHs are struggling to lead effective teaching and learning due to the lack of teaching resources or inadequate teaching resources such as updated laboratories, textbooks and office equipment such as photocopying machines. According to Darby and Lang (2019), it is difficult to use different assessment strategies to assess learners because of limited textbooks. For example, it is not fair to give regular homework when learners share textbooks. Darby and Lang (2019)

also argued that as a result of insufficient laboratories and science equipment, it is difficult to conduct practical sessions for science learners. This therefore puts these learners at a disadvantage when it comes to year-end assessment since examinations are rationalised (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Du Plessis (2014) found that in some rural areas schools have no science laboratories although they offer science subjects.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

South African rural communities, like in some developed countries and many developing countries, remain disadvantaged compared to their counterparts in urban areas (Hlalele, 2014). In South Africa, schools that are located in rural settings are classified as no fee schools (Motala et al., 2009). My experience as a DH in rural secondary schools with low learner enrolment exposed me to the reality that DHs face a problem of spending up to 100 percent of the time on teaching. This situation is an outcome of the post provisioning norm (PPN) to the schools, which is determined by the number of learners enrolled in the school. Therefore, rural secondary schools experience various challenges that affect the DHs in leading teaching and learning, and performing their duties as it is expected. These challenges include poverty, learner pregnancy and the lack of resources (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). These factors affect the leadership of teaching and learning in the schools in different ways, because the lack of resources can cause extreme distress on both learners and educators. Not only are learners and educators in distress, but the learners are unable to learn to their fullest potential because of their limited access to the requisite resources to enhance academic performance. In rural settings, school districts struggle to get enough money to spend on resources in their schools. The lack of resources affects learners in different ways, because they do not get quality education. They are just learning parts of topics and lessons, and do not get the full package that they deserve.

Schools that are located in resource-constrained settings struggle to acquire the requisite resources to facilitate teaching and learning. According to Crouch et al. (2021), learners in schools that are characterised by high levels of poverty perform badly in standardised tests. Further, they are highly likely to be chronically absent during the school year and they are often unable to complete their studies on time. This shows that learners in high poverty

settings are affected by poverty and the lack of resources. The learners get lower grades in standardised tests when compared to their counterparts from wealthier areas, because they do not have the means to a better education. Furthermore, a decade ago, South Africa was experiencing an unprecedented number of learner pregnancies, particularly among teenagers aged between 15 and 18 who were at secondary schools (Sibeko, 2012). In South Africa, just over 31.5 percent of teenage girls were giving birth by the age of 18 (Karra & Lee, 2012). Therefore, learner pregnancy also affects the leadership of teaching and learning in rural secondary schools, because pregnant learners are frequently absent from school, perform badly and eventually drop out of schools. Similarly, Malatji et al. (2023) reported that in other resource constrained African countries such as Kenya and Uganda, increases of between 40 percent and 18 percent, respectively. In 2020, girls between the ages of 15 and 19 experienced an upsurge in adolescent pregnancies (Malatji et al., 2023).

In the face of these challenges, DHs in rural secondary schools are still expected to perform at par with their counterparts in urban settings. However, a few of these rural secondary schools are performing at levels comparable to some high achieving urban secondary schools. This resonates with Chikoko et al. (2015) who concur with Koalepe and Badenhorst (2014) in stating that a few deprived schools such as those in the context of rurality are able to rise above their challenges and produce academic results that are comparatively at par with their advantaged counterparts. Since I began teaching in 2007, I have observed that DHs are not performing their duties according to the expected standard. They are expected to monitor and control the work of educators and learners. However, due to their workload, it is difficult for DHs to check every educator and visit each class in their respective departments. Bush et al. (2010) argue that educators manage curriculum implementation in their classes and DHs should make sure that this happens in all the classes under their jurisdiction. It is the responsibility of the DHs to supervise, monitor and lead teaching and learning (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2017). I sought to explore whether the DHs were able to teach and supervise the learning process within the minimal time allocated to them.

In addition, DHs have the responsibility to ensure that teaching and learning occurs across the subjects in different departments. According to the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998, DHs have tasks that they must perform such as supporting and guiding educators, assessing the educators' work and that of the learners, developing policy and co-ordinating assessment of all the subjects within their department (Melnikova & Thorpe, 2014). However, in some schools with low learner enrolment, all the management duties are the responsibility of the principals. The challenge related to this state of being overwhelmed is that curriculum management duties

are not executed effectively, because principals have many responsibilities.

1.4 Rationale for the Study

My interest in conducting this study that seeks to explore how secondary school DHs lead teaching and learning in rural settings emanated from my work experience. Through my experience as a DH in a rural secondary school for seven years, I observed that most DHs in rural secondary schools with low learner enrolment are compelled to perform some management duties while they have a substantial teaching workload. Often, this culminates in them spending close to 100 percent of their time on teaching. This has caused role confusion among DHs as the leaders of teaching and learning (Basset, 2016). Being the only DH for all the subjects in my school, I had to spend more time on teaching and little or no time to supervise and monitor educators' and learners' work. In addition, in my informal conversations with colleagues who were DHs in the context of rurality, they confirmed that the problem relating to inadequate time for performing management responsibilities was a common and serious challenge.

Studies conducted in the United Kingdom (UK), Australia and South Africa (Blandford et al., 2000; Coleman, 2003) established that school-based DHs were grappling with the lack of time to perform management duties. Although the lack of time is noted as a challenge according to extant literature, it was also significant to explore how other secondary schools' DHs lead teaching and learning in schools that are located in rural contexts. The current study seeks to explore the role of DHs in leading teaching and learning in a rural context and to explore the strategies that are adopted by DHs to enhance their leadership for teaching and learning.

1.5 Purpose Statement

The focus of this research is to explore how secondary school DHs in rural settings lead teaching and learning. The study focuses on the leadership strategies they use to enhance leadership for teaching and learning. The study also focuses on the role of secondary schools' Departmental Heads in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality, and the challenges facing the secondary schools' Departmental Heads in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality.

1.6 The Key Research Questions

The study will answer the following questions:

1. What are the roles of secondary school Departmental Heads in leading teaching and learning in rural settings?
2. What leadership strategies do Departmental Heads use to enhance leadership for teaching and learning in rural settings?
3. What are the challenges faced by Departmental Heads in leading teaching and learning in rural settings?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study could be helpful to DHs working in the contexts where they are expected to supervise and monitor post level-one educators while having workloads that are equivalent to those of post level-one educators. This study could also assist the departmental officials at districts and circuit levels in designing suitable programme for school-based DHs. Using the findings generated in this study, various stakeholders such as policymakers and Department of Basic Education (DBE) officials can explore ways of improving the experiences of DHs to help them strike a balance between their management roles and their responsibility to deliver subject content. This is important, given that DHs are subject specialists and learners must benefit from their expertise, yet they are supposed to be active supervisors of teaching and learning processes. How DHs meet the demands of both their management roles and their role as subject specialists is important to improving learners' academic performance.

1.8 Definition of Key Concepts

In this study, there are four key concepts. These concepts are Departmental Head, Teaching and Learning, Instructional Leadership, and Rurality and Rural Schools. The concepts are defined to avoid misconceptions, and to inform the reader in terms of how these are used in the current study. In the next section, they are defined to clarify how they are used in this study.

1.8.1 Departmental Head

This concept refers to the school-based educator employed in terms of the Employment of Educators Act (No. 76 of 1998), occupying post level two with curriculum management as their responsibility in addition to teaching. One of the key aims of the job, according to Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM, 2016) is to ensure that the education of learners is promoted in a proper manner. In the context of South Africa's public education system, the school is

managed at various levels namely principals, deputy principals, departmental heads and school governing bodies (SGBs).

1.8.2 Teaching and Learning

On the one hand, teaching is "a process of verification while learning is explained as results or "end product of teaching" (Smith et al., 2013, p. 174). On the other hand, learning is a behaviour that is initiated by teaching. This implies that the two concepts are interwoven and cannot be separated in the process of promoting quality teaching and learning in schools. This means that DHs must act as agents of change by influencing their teachers to constantly improve teaching and learning in their subjects (Islam et al., 2022). This further suggests that DHs are further burdened with the new roles of managing physical, human and financial resources as well as being accountable to the outcomes of their departments (Kelly et al., 2016). This implies that DHs are now expected to handle a new workload, which will exert more pressure on them.

1.8.3 Instructional Leadership

Instructional leadership is defined as an influential relationship that enables, motivates and supports educators' effort to learn and change their instructional practices (Mestry & Pillay, 2013). Instructional leadership improves pedagogic, teaching and learning and curriculum management, since the study seeks to explore how DHs lead teaching and learning in the context of rurality.

1.8.4 Rurality and Rural Schools

Conceptualising rurality is such a mammoth task (Roberts & Green, 2013). This is so because there are diverse definitions of rurality. Naicker et al. (2013) posit that rurality is a multifaceted concept, which must be understood within a particular context. Similarly, Myende (2014) is of the view that rurality is conceptualised differently by different people in different contexts. In the South African context, Myende and Chikoko (2014) state that a rural area may be understood to be any geographical area that is under the leadership of traditional leaders. In relation to rurality, a rural school is one that is located within the jurisdiction of Amakhosi (traditional leadership) in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa (Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013).

1.9. Outline of the Study

This study is made up of five chapters and they are briefly outlined below.

Chapter One

This chapter provides background, statement of the problem, the rationale for the study and purpose statement. It also outlines the three key research questions that guide the study. The significance of the study and key concepts are also provided. It closes with the chapter conclusion.

Chapter Two

The chapter focuses on the theoretical frameworks which underpinned the study. It also discusses the literature pertaining to the roles of Departmental Heads (DHs) as leaders of teaching and learning, as well as challenges facing Departmental Heads.

Chapter Three

The chapter presents the research design and methodology. It gives an in-depth explanation of research paradigm and research approach used in the study. Moreover, sampling techniques, research participants, data generation and data analysis strategy used are explained in detail.

Chapter Four

This chapter presents and discusses data that was generated through individual interviews from the selected participants. The discussion includes both the presentation and interpretation of data generated.

Chapter Five

This chapter contains full summary of the entire study, summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

1.10. Conclusion

In this introductory chapter, I outlined the different aspects of the study such as introduction, background, problem statement, purpose of the study, rationale, significance of the study and critical research questions. I also presented a section on clarification of key concepts to help the reader to understand how these are used and how they relate to other key aspects of this study. The chapter ends with a clear map of all the chapters that constitutes this dissertation. The next chapter (Chapter Two) deals with the literature review and theoretical framework that underpins this study.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I presented the background of the study, the statement of the problem, rationale for the study, the purpose statement, significance of the study and key research questions. This chapter focuses on the review of literature relating to the role of Departmental Heads (DHs) in secondary schools and the challenges that DHs encounter as instructional leaders. In this chapter, I firstly conceptualise the leadership, instructional leadership and rurality. Secondly, I discuss the role of DHs in schools and the challenges that they encounter. This is followed by the theoretical framework that underpinned the study. From there, I conclude this chapter.

2.1 Leadership

Leadership is about influencing the followers in order to accomplish the desired goals (Bush & Glover, 2003). In a school setting, a DH is part of the leadership, and they have a mandate to influence and communicate the mission statement and school's vision to educators in their department. This is important because all the educators must know the school's mission and the work that they should do. Leadership is a set of behavioural actions and mental strategies which a person can use to achieve and discover motivation of educators (Van Zyl, 2009). Van Rooyen et al. (2009) argue that there are two main factors that influence the quality of education. These factors are leadership and classroom practice.

Drawing from extant literature, I use the concept "leadership" as the way DHs communicate the mission and vision of the school. DHs preside over departmental meetings as they are key to accomplishing set goals (Du Plessis & Eberlein, 2017). They set the focus and purpose of leading and managing teaching and learning. Supervision and communication by DHs help in improving teaching and learning (Ghavifekr & Ibrahim, 2014). Further, workshops and motivation also make a huge difference in managing and providing support to educators(Leithwood, 2016). DHs serve as middle managers because they are leaders of teaching and learning, hence they play a significant leadership role.

Furthermore, leadership involves persuading and encouraging people within an organisation to strive towards achieving a common set of goals or educational objectives that represent the vision and mission of the organisation (Burns, 1998). This means that leaders motivate people in the organisation to do what they would otherwise not do in the absence of influence. In this vein, Wasserberg (2000) claims that the fundamental role of any leader is to rally people

within the organisation around the key organisational values hence, Cuban (1988) links leadership with change. Given the above, DePree (1990) asserts that the signs of outstanding leadership appear primarily among the followers. It is important for leadership to influence people to use their skills, potential and knowledge to achieve the organisation's goal. Bush (2007) acknowledges that although there is an overlap between leadership and management, these two functions must be placed on an equal footing if schools are to fulfil their mandate, effectively. Management involves a set of activities that effectively and efficiently maintain the current systems of the organisation with the intention of achieving organisational goals (Cuban, 1988). Hence, Bolam (1999, p.194) defines management as "an executive function for carrying out agreed policy" Although leadership and management are distinct concepts, in practice, such a distinction may be blurred in the day-to-day leadership practices of school principals.

The concept of leadership has been vastly researched in different contexts. There is nonetheless no universal definition of leadership, but rather some glaring converging perspectives. Several scholars define leadership as the ability to inspire, motivate and influence others based on shared values, norms, beliefs and goals directed to the attainment of a school vision (Glover & Bush, 2016; Gurr, 2014; Klutts et al., 2019; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2010). This commonly shared perspective about leadership prompt certain assumptions about it. Firstly, that leadership may be exercised by individuals as well as groups. Secondly, that leadership is more about influence than authority. Lastly, whoever is exercising influence is doing so for specific intentions.

Some perceive leadership as the efficient application of organisational human, financial and physical resources in a manner that will yield maximum outputs for an organisation (Affum-Osei et al., 2014; Boateng, 2012). In a school setting, this translates to proper staffing, responsible use of finances and maximum utilisation of the school infrastructure to improve the overall school performance. Additionally, and perhaps the simplest definition of leadership is that it is the ability to get things done with and through collaboration with other people within the school system (Shamaki, 2015).

Several scholars define the concept, leadership as the leader's ability to influence and direct people's actions, attitudes and behaviours towards the attainment of the desired goals (Bush, 2007; Daft, 2008; Harris, 2013; Slaski & Cartwright, 2002). For Harris (2003), leadership entails learning together and constructing meaning and knowledge collectively in pursuit of a common vision. According to Kruger (2003), leadership is a process that involves defining and communicating a clear mission, objectives and goals with the staff members. He argues

that leadership includes managing the curriculum, supervising and supporting educators as well as monitoring learners' progress. Leithwood and Jantzi (1999) have conceptualised leadership as a process of giving direction and exercising influence, while Hoerr (2005, p. 5) has stated that "leadership is about relationship". Yukl (2006) defines leadership as persuading followers into working towards a common goal. This implies that leaders affect and they are affected by followers, either positively or negatively (Yukl, 2006). Further, Yukl (2006) also asserts that leadership is a two-way interactive process between leaders and followers, and not a one-way process in which the leader only affects the followers. There are different types of leadership such as transformational, transactional, functional, instructional, and distributed leadership. However, the type of leadership that is closely related to the role of DHs is instructional leadership.

2.2 Instructional Leadership

Bush (2014) suggests that instructional leadership models emphasise that a DH's duty is to promote teaching and learning, a school explaining mission and managing curriculum and instruction. These are the main roles of DHs at schools. There are many researchers that conducted studies in Africa and even abroad on instructional leadership. In Indonesia, Sofo et al. (2012) argued that instructional leadership has developed into many different versions as many people proposed. They also mentioned that existing literature fails to provide explicit descriptions of leadership. Instructional leadership is explained as a multi-tasks leadership approach, which encompasses monitoring, controlling and supervision of educators through curriculum development, organising, planning, facilitating transformation and motivating educators. The study intended to understand the role of DHs in leading educators and managing the curriculum. Sofo et al. (2012) also averred that there is no consensus that the definition of instructional leadership refers to leadership practice.

DHs are subject specialists and subject moderators. Their main task is to ensure that there is proper teaching and learning. DHs should supervise and monitor educators, they should also preside during staff meetings at least twice a month, something which I agree with, because in secondary schools, DHs are subject specialists, unlike in primary schools where they are specialised in either the foundation or intermediate phases. In these phases, DHs supervise educators that are specialised in subjects outside their field of speciality. Mestry and Schmidt (2014) elaborate instructional leadership as an approach to manage the teaching and learning

aspects of school leadership. The instructional leadership based on managing teaching and learning and the behaviour of educators in working with learners (Bush & Glover, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999). These scholars also argued that engaging in activities directly affects the improvement of learner performance. They assume that DHs manage human resources to ensure effective teaching and learning. The strategies they use depend on the availability of resources at the schools to accomplish instructional missions and goals.

Leadership for learning influences educators towards positive change (Ezzaki, 2007). It encourages internal stakeholders such as educators so that they have the same goal and lead them toward achieving the vision for educational reform. He also mentions that there are programmes and actions in place that are implemented to improve learner performance. In this study, I use instructional leadership to explore what is given by DHs to educators and check whether monitoring is done through checking the work of educators and learners.

Nene (2015) postulates that the learners need feeding schemes and other infrastructure, but School Management Teams (SMTs) seem not be willing to assist. One of the significant roles of SMT is to provide adequate resources for their schools. However, this might be a daunting task for some, given that some communities are very poor. This calls for a brilliant SMT, endowed with suitable skills to communicate with both the school community and outside school community to raise funds to run the school.

Instructional leadership is divided into two forms namely direct and indirect leadership (Reitzug & West, 2011). The direct forms of instructional leadership are subdivided into three categories namely linear, organic and prophetic forms. These also have an indirect form, which is subdivided into three categories that is political, relational and empowering. Instructional leadership is grounded on structural functionalism (Reitzug & West, 2011) while linear instructional leadership is about formulating policy to assist in managing the department. Sofo et al. (2012) argue that Indonesia began to experience a fundamental redefining and restructuring of education through the enactment of the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003. Policies were formulated to take control of education in Indonesia by managing schools within their geographic locations. Principals were expected to exercise greater control in developing capacity for reform in their schools and improving academic performance. In this study, DHs as leaders of learning needed to support teachers to achieve their goals of improving teaching and learning in schools. Policies were formulated to assist in supervising teachers to do their best. In South Africa, the PAM document, which is regarded as a policy to guide DHs to do their duties when they manage their departments is an important instrument.

Efforts to improve academic performance must be supported by teachers (Mestry et al., 2009). The fundamental purpose of a school is to improve learners' learning. Sergiovanni and Starratt (2007) argued that the improvement in teaching is triggered by an improvement in the school's instructional capacity and this leads to improvement in learner performance. Hofman (2014) concurred that if the school has a clear policy on supervision, teaching and learning can also improve in the whole school and teachers develop professionally where there are policies in place that must be implemented. Glattorn et al. (2011) also emphasize on supervising the taught curriculum approaches, which are currently used. With linear instructional leadership, principals and DHs can benefit from knowing which of their behaviours or attitudes are the most valued and appropriate when they draft policies that they implement.

The linear instructional leadership model helps principals and DHs to improve their instructional management processes such as reviewing test data, re-teaching, benchmark testing using approaches such as writing common tests set by the department, teaching according to curriculum guidelines, developing curriculum pacing guides, standards and curriculum documents such as Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS) and other policies that the school formulates to improve teaching and learning.

Organic instructional leadership is based on the premise that the instructional dimension of schools is intended to teach the learner in totality. That is a living organism of sorts (West & Reitzug, 2011). Several studies found that principals, through DHs, encourage teachers to meet on a regular basis to discuss issues attached to teaching and learning (Blose, 2013; Ndovela, 2014). Therefore, DHs as leaders of learning are expected to sit down and discuss with teachers about the findings from their observation during classroom visit. Sometimes DHs invite cluster co-ordinators to discuss academic issues with teachers. In terms of organic instructional leadership, teachers should come together and work. They should share their classroom experiences as colleagues. Some experiences may be the same and teachers are then able to share how they overcame them. This is helpful because many ideas are explored by a group of teachers. According to, their findings reveal that DHs planned lessons together with their teachers. This was supported by Steyn and van Niekerk (2010), who postulated that DHs should carefully plan and organise collaborative learning in which teachers were regularly engaged and learners benefited.

Organic instructional leadership started with the exploration of issues which affected school management with regard to teaching and learning (Reitzug & West, 2011). Instructional improvement occurs as a result of the professional development of teachers and other

personnel about their individual practice. Steyn (2011) avers that the continuing professional development of DHs is a crucial element for school improvement. The programme developed school leaders to be able to equip teachers with necessary skills for teaching and learning. Therefore, DHs should be well developed so that they cascade relevant information to the teachers they lead. In a study by Naicker et al. (2013), it emerged that DHs were curriculum managers; therefore by coming together, it assisted others to improve their supervision ability to manage teaching and learning.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are inclusive group of people who work together and share some ideas in order to improve teaching and learning (Harris & Jones, 2010). In South African schools, the cluster is used instead of PLCs, of which the concepts are similar. In organic instructional leadership, PLCs are suitable because the members of each department in the school must come together to share information and learn from one another. Further, teachers must be clustered together to share experiences among themselves. A study conducted by West and Reitzug (2011) cemented the idea that sharing information observed in classroom settings assists others in improving teaching and learning. Building leadership capacity is embedded in professional development and constructivist notions of instructional leadership (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Hord, 1997; Huffman, 2014). Principals' and DHs' instructional leadership roles involve stimulating and facilitating process of learners' learning (Joyce et al., 1999). Dialogue should always take place between DHs and teachers to improve teaching and learning. Sharing views will make a difference in schools. Hence, DHs as leaders of learning encourage the process of communication among teachers.

Van Deventand Kruger (2011) supports the idea of organic instructional leadership because DHs should plan, design and ensure that all in the department are up to date. Communication used to fulfil plans and design information about these aspects cascaded to all teachers in the school. This was suitable in this study because DHs as leaders of learning ensured that tasks were carried out effectively by teachers, thus supervision played a significant role in this regard, and discussion also encouraged organic instructional leadership.

Collaboration has taken on a particular meaning in schools within the context, which involved joint communication and decision-making among educational professionals, to create an optimal learning environment for learners (Clarke et al., 2010). Globler (2013) also supported communicating the school mission effectively to the community through leaders to achieve academic goals. Communication is one of the most important duties of a DH as a leader of learning, to communicate and discuss issues with teachers, thereby assisting them to articulate

the various problems that they encounter in classrooms. Often, solutions emerge from those discussions and they help the departments to achieve their goals.

According to West and Reitzug (2011), prophetic instructional leadership is essential in leading at schools, particularly when it is viewed from a critical moral centre perspective that is grounded in considerations of truly educating a learner. DHs as leaders of learning ensured that their plans looked beyond the school, for example, reflecting what kind of learners they want to produce despite the school having challenges such as few Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM), no laboratory and a functional library (West & Reitzug, 2011). Political pressure and national legislation goals that strive for schools' effectiveness are measured in test score-based outcomes such as Grade 12 results and Annual National Assessment (ANA). DHs as leaders of learning should have a clear picture of where they want to take their departments and that picture should be communicated to their departments through regular meetings. Therefore, all the teachers must know what is expected from them. It is clear that DHs should ensure that teachers provide quality teaching and learning. The DHs must spend time doing classroom observation and they must strive to balance the administrative work within their jurisdiction. They must plan so as to achieve all they set out to achieve in their departments. For DHs to fulfil these responsibilities well, they must have a clear focus of the future interest of the school and keep the vision and mission of the school in mind.

West and Reitzug (2011) assert that a principal and DHs operating from a prophetic conception do not simply dispute political and legislation mandates. They ensure that the school practices embody political or legislative matters. Naicker et al. (2013) support this because they found that despite the socioeconomic challenges that schools faced, particularly those located in resource-constrained settings such as high rate of unemployment, and learners living in the informal settlements, these schools performed extremely-well academically. It was shown that the commitment of DHs can change and improve their departments despite political and legislative challenges that existed. Schools needed to perform well even where there were shortages of learning materials.

The government should provide resources in education (West & Reitzug, 2011). However, the government does not have enough resources. The purpose of schooling is to achieve higher scores and for learners to do well in education. Hence, the principal should engage with the school community through DHs and others to discuss curriculum issues and make decisions that are good for learners, instructional practice that assist teachers to fulfil their mandate and school policies that enhance learner performance and set them to develop, and alternative

policies that assist learners to achieve their goals. This is important because learners must learn in a conducive environment that enhances learner performance (Ramrathan & Ngubane, 2014). This includes DHs who are able to set visions, goals and objects of excellence in teaching and effective learning work with all the stakeholders. Leadership needs to be exercised across all levels of the education system to enhance the quality of learning taking place, DHs should ensure that this happens (Clarke et al., 2010).

In indirect instructional leadership, teaching and learning does not take place through direct involvement by DHs and principals; rather, it takes place through actions and leadership, like motivation etc. Indirect instructional leadership comprises three forms, namely political, relational and empowering. Political instructional leadership is the third indirect form of instructional leadership. In this form or leadership, learning and improvement occur and they increased as a by-product of the resource. The principal is able to use these resources for the betterment of a school (West & Reitzug, 2011). Myende (2011) defines resources as the supporting aids that schools or communities use to perform their activities. He further articulated that resources can be divided into human, financial and natural resources. In schools with adequate resources, it is possible to provide services and opportunities for learners and teachers. In schools with scarce resources, it becomes challenging to improve teaching and learning. For effective use of instructional leadership, both human and physical resources should be available (Kruger, 2003). Physical resources such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries, other relevant infrastructure, stationery and books were important if there was a desire to really improve teaching and learning in schools. Human resources are very important in schools because they deliver the curriculum. The Department of Education (DoE) should provide enough resources to assist teachers to do their work, effectively.

In South Africa, Ramrathan and Ngubane (2014) found that some small schools were not fully supported by the Department of Education. They did not get any funding allocated for school equipment, stationery and other school needs as provided to all schools in the province, but the schools had education management information systems (EMIS) numbers, which means the schools were registered, but when it comes to recognition and support they were receiving very little. Under those circumstances, DHs should devise a way to assist those learners, and they should lead teaching and learning to improve schools. West and Reitzug (2011) described polities as the competition for limited resources. In order to be successful in the competition, you need to include bargaining, negotiating and forming a partnership with companies that assisted the schools to provide resources that the government

cannot provide. Where the principal and DHs embark on this negotiation to acquire resources, it was to help learners to achieve good results. First, the DHs should identify the most needed resources. The principals should build partnership and cultivate a relationship with those companies that can assist in the various areas of need.

In their findings, Naicker et al. (2013) mentioned that during labour unrest, schools experienced very little disruption to their teaching and learning programmes. Some school principals refused to close their schools and would rather take on teacher unions; however, they become unpopular with those unions. The dominant teacher union in South Africa, the South African Democratic Teachers' Union (SADTU) had contributed significantly to the collapse of normal routine school operations through their disruptive activities in township schools and in some rural schools where teachers are actively involved in this union (Mostohi, 2011). Schools which create a good partnership with companies depend on the Grade 12 results and disturbances by labour unions resulted in schools not being supported by companies. The study conducted by Naicker et al. (2013) revealed that the more educators committed to do their work, the more they produced the good results, and companies came in numbers to help.

Contact time is more important in order to improve teaching and learning. This was supported by Murphy (1992) who claimed that instructional time is a direct correlation of learner performance. DHs as leaders of teaching and learning should ensure that learners are not losing out because of counterproductive actions by teacher unions. They must encourage educators to work extra hours to cover the lost time. Schools producing good results in Grade 12 make good partnerships with big companies. Those companies helped in supplying resources that the Department of Education could not provide. They also give bursaries for learners who performed very well in Grade 12. DHs should seek opportunities and expose learners to careers that the learners were not familiar with, and those which are in demand on the job market.

West and Reitzug (2011) argued that learning and improvement can be increased through relational grounding. DHs should be friendly and they must give guidance in a very positive and encouraging atmosphere. Support from the immediate supervisor should be welcomed by teachers in schools. DHs should clearly connect with their teachers to build positive relationships, which filter down to their learners. In his third dimension, Hallinger (2000) reiterated the importance of promoting positive learning. This is related to my study because

DHs must create an environment that is conducive for learning. They should motivate teachers to perform at their best. Once motivation takes place, positive learning occurs.

Instructional leadership is goal oriented, which means leaders should define clear directions for schools and motivate others to join in their achievements, in instructionally effective schools (Hallinger, 2005). This direction is primary in the improvement of learners' academic performance. DHs as leaders of learning should encourage a good relationship among the teachers at all times. West and Reitzug (2011) comment about the care of learners as a key indicator of school performance. However, this does not mean that the learners can do whatever they want to do. DHs in high schools must assist where learners need help. They provide guidance on school work and other aspects that might be a hindrance to their learning. DHs should ensure that teachers in their departments treat all the learners with respect and fairness, and treat them equally, irrespective of their age, gender and religion. West and Reitzug (2011) also claim that to build good relations, management, together with DHs should listen to learners and give counselling to both learners and teachers. Further, they must strive to keep learners in schools, ensuring that teachers are happy so that they are productive in their jobs.

Empowering instructional leadership is a second indirect way of managing teaching and learning. Instructional leadership is important as it helps teachers to develop themselves (West & Reitzug, 2011). Learning is enhanced if teachers are empowered, therefore it improves teaching and learning. Management should ensure that teachers are empowered by attending workshops and seminars organised by the Department of Education and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Since DHs supervise teachers in their departments, they should identify those teachers that need to be developed first. In a study conducted by Mthethwa (2011), the findings suggested that training enables the individual to perform one's duties confidently. White (2003) notes that the lack of training to acquire the relevant leadership and managerial knowledge, expertise and skills required for the role is imperative to the subject leaders and the DHs when performing their duties. DHs as leaders of learning must be skilful to meet the demands of their daily activities as leaders of teachers.

A study conducted by Smith et al. (2013) confirmed that teachers appear to dislike classroom observation. Teacher participants that were interviewed stated that when they were being observed, they felt offended. Since the teacher participants were offended by the observation, teachers must be empowered. They would know what was expected from them if they were being observed. The lack of empowerment by management can trigger fear. That is why DHs should conduct training among the members in their departments. Smith et al. (2013) found

that DHs need to have proper systems that they use to assist them managing teaching and learning. Some DHs conduct informal staff development through subject meetings, informal classroom observation and the informal coaching of individual teachers. It was evident from the DHs that they do not have time for developing teachers because of the huge workloads on their shoulders.

Another study conducted by Hofman (2014) shows that both novice and experienced educators have their own leadership approaches they emulate from leaders such as clinical supervision, peer coaching and professional growth plans. Further, the author postulates that the subject-area instructional supervision had various challenges such as lack of adequate support for new educators, infrequent use of classroom visits and peer coaching by an instructional supervisor. DHs were observed to focus more on administrative duties rather than on managing teaching and learning. The findings indicated that a distributed leadership approach was observed to be dominating. With DHs in South Africa, much of their time is devoted to teaching compared to their counterparts in Ethiopia, hence teachers that they supervise need to be empowered with different skills and methods of teaching. DHs must make the point that teaching and learning should be supervised in schools and teachers must be empowered to enhance the quality of teaching. Kruger (2003) highlighted that the structures and methods of instructional management in schools rely on the involvement and leadership of a member of teachers including DHs, deputy principals and teachers acting as subject heads. This system empowered educators to work together and to take the responsibility of achieving the goals of the schools. Even today, this system is still working in contemporary schools. Such as a system helps in schools because as teachers come together to discuss issues, they become part of the improvement of instructional leadership and they own the system.

The Department of Education has changed the education system by promulgating new policies (Mercer et al., 2010). These policies include changes in curriculum such as Outcomes Based Education (OBE) to National Curriculum Statement (NCS) and Now Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS) all of these designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools. These policies were initiated by the Department of Education and other teacher organisations, aiming to improve the quality of teaching, redirect the attention to the leadership capacity of educational institutions (ELRA, 1995). However, without dedicated DHs who are effective and innovative as instructional leaders, these changes may not happen or bear fruits. Therefore, DHs should drive and make sure that all these implementations are taking place in their schools, and empowering teachers is essential

to deliver in their classrooms. These changes come with new content and without empowering teachers, these curricula will fail.

2.3 The Meaning of Rurality

Conceptualising rurality is challenging (Roberts & Green, 2013). This leads to different definitions of rurality. Rurality is a multifaceted concept, which needs to be understood within a particular context (Chikoko et al., 2008). Similarly, Myende (2014) argues that rurality is conceptualised differently by different people in different contexts. For example, arguing from a South African perspective, Myende (2014) states that a rural area may be understood to be any geographical area that is under the leadership of Amakhosi (traditional leaders). Therefore, rurality refers to the sum total of the prevalent internal and external factors affecting (positive or adversely) the life of the participant schools in the areas under the leadership of traditional leaders (Mthiyane et al., 2022). This does not suggest that such factors are homogenous and neither is the intensity of their impact the same. These factors entail, inter alia, the size of the community, the density of the population, types of economic activities, proximity to urbanised centres, educational levels, average household income, access to service and facilities and in/out migration trends (Yu et al., 2022). Notwithstanding, providing a rich description of context in any instance of rural education research does not translate to a consensual definition of rurality, but it accentuates the rationale for providing adequate information about the context within which the research was conducted (Yu et al., 2022). To this end, how rurality is defined may differ from one study to another.

2.4 Rurality and Instructional Leadership

One of the simplest, but clearest definition of rurality is the one that defines rurality as "a condition of place-based homeliness shared by people with common ancestry or heritage and who inhabit traditional, culturally defined areas or places statutorily recognized to be rural" (Cloke, 1977, p. 27). The characteristics of rural regions are as follows: communities are smaller in size and they are sparsely populated, that is the density of population is less, the population shows homogeneity of culture, customs and language, the main occupation is agriculture and many people work on farms for their survival, people live in close contact with nature and slower means of communication are available. In rural areas, there are fewer people and their homes and businesses are located far away from one another. Agriculture is the primary industry in most rural areas, whereas instructional leadership has to do with

management of teaching and learning, including defining the school mission, managing the instructional programmes and promoting a positive learning climate (Hallinger, 2003; Webber, 1989).

Instructional leadership is about leading and managing teaching and learning as a school's core activities (Mestry et al., 2013). Instructional leadership should be developed to include school governance matters because an ideal school should have strong management and governance capacity. School governance ensures that there are good policies in place and management and administration ensures that such policies are well implemented to have operative schools and accomplish improved learner outcomes. The creation of a positive learning climate that Hallinger (2003) and Webber (1989) are advocating can succeed in an environment where there are strong governance and supervision structures that promote and support teaching and learning. Given how instructional leadership is defined in the literature, I define instructional leadership in this study as a tool that is used to ensure the success of teaching and learning in a school.

2.5 The Role of Departmental Heads in Secondary Schools

Extant literature shows that departmental heads (DHs) have different roles in leading teaching and learning in their respective schools. The different roles are leadership, administrative, managerial, and academic in nature.

2.5.1 The Leadership role of the DH

DHs have a bigger impact on learners and learning than leaders in senior management positions, due to the fact that DHs are the bridge between the principal, educators and learners (Hoon et al., 2014; Leithwood, 2016). They have the power to influence the performance within the department (Melnikova & Thorpe, 2014). The crucial part of the leadership role of the DH is to take educators and learners to a better future (Hoon et al., 2014) by working collaboratively with the senior management team. The leadership role of the DH also entails serving as mentor, advisor, motivator and counsellor (Saul, 2019). Leaders should be able to lead a team, to reach collective vision and take responsibility for successes and failures within their departments (Melnikova & Thorpe, 2014). Leadership can be seen as a joint social process of guiding the behaviour of others towards the attainment of goals, like reaching the vision of a school (Sandman & Liang, 2015; Triegaardt & Botha, 2014). The responsibility of a DH is to ensure that every role player in the school is on the same page in terms of the goals set by the school

regarding curriculum delivery (teaching, learning and assessment). This can be accomplished by DHs collaborating and liaising with educators to maintain good and attainable teaching standards and practices (RSA, 2016). In addition, DHs should form part of the performance appraisal process of educators (RSA, 2016). This helps to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

DHs have formal accountabilities and responsibilities that they can wield horizontally and vertically and they are responsible for cooperating with teachers in supervising and leading their departments and staff in such a way that the vision and mission of the school are achieved in the process (Eberlein & Du Plessis, 2018). Kelly et al. (2016) also state that DHs should horizontally and vertically exert their influence on such aspects as budgets, strategic planning and developing departmental vision. The DHs play a significant role in a school as they are central in the leadership hierarchy and can therefore mediate between educators and senior management (Kelly et al., 2016). The DHs should provide guidance regarding subject methodology, remedial work, and the welfare of learners and staff. The role of DHs in schools is increasingly being recognised as a powerful force that influences school effectiveness (Javadi, 2014).

2.5.2 The Administrative role of the Departmental Head

The Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM, 2016) state that South African DHs are responsible for the effective functioning of a department and this includes various functions (SOURCE). These functions include coordinating and managing work schemes, responsibilities regarding budgets and regulating and provision of stock such as subject specific equipment and textbooks (RSA, 2016). As administrators, DHs are accountable for the effective functioning of their respective departments (Marishane, 2016). Hence, some of the departments are more effective than others because they pay close attention to the administration within the department (Martensson & Roxa, 2016). Regular activities such as acting as secretary during staff meetings, timetabling, managing staff welfare issues as well as being the key person in coordination and planning of fire drills also form part of the administrative roles of a DH in South Africa (RSA, 2016).

DHs must ensure that all policies and relevant procedures are followed and executed by educators in their departments (Leask, 2013). The other duties performed by DHs as administrators include controlling and checking mark sheets, moderating formal assessment tasks or examination papers (Kelly et al., 2016). DHs are expected to be experts in both record keeping and book keeping (Saul, 2019). Further, they are the link between senior management

and educators and therefore the only ones able to translate policy adopted by senior management to feasible and practical practice within a classroom (Kelly et al., 2016). DHs are also expected to act on behalf of the principal in his or her absence and should therefore be knowledgeable regarding policy matters and the operational management of a school (RSA, 2016).

2.5.3 The Managerial role of a Departmental Head

It is the responsibility of any manager to ensure that a department is functioning smoothly. For DHs, it is no different. Hence, they should coordinate and structure their department to maximise productivity and ensure that all staff members are working towards the same collective goals (Saul, 2019). Further, they remain accountable for overseeing the activities in their departments. These entail behavioural management of educators and learners, performance management of staff members, as well as classroom observation and mentoring of educators (Kelly et al., 2016). To be effective managers, DHs should be capable of bringing order within their departments and resolving conflict in a manner that advocates teamwork by raising staff morale (Saul, 2019). The daily activities expected of a DH differ from being a financial manager, problem solver, performance manager and time manager to being an agent of change and manage the diversity of a department (Saul, 2019). Effective delegation of tasks by a DH will also have a positive influence on academic performance (Saul, 2019).

2.5.4 The Academic role of the Departmental Head

The core business of schools is teaching and learning (Bush et al., 2009), which makes the academic role of a DH an integral part of their job description. In essence, DHs are responsible for everything related to teaching and learning outcomes (Marishane, 2016). Being responsible for teaching classes themselves, the DH serves as an ideal departmental representative (Saul, 2019). According to Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM, 2016), DHs in South African schools should engage in class teaching as it is required by the school. This includes assessing and recording learners' marks. In order for DHs to fulfil this requirement, they must be subject specialists and in charge of monitoring and supervising teaching and learning of their departments' subject teachers to ensure consistency in respect

of curriculum interpretation and implementation and the effectiveness thereof (Javadi, 2014), as well as the completion of learner assessment.

The consistent management of the curriculum to ensure that it adheres to current policies set by

the Department of Basic Education (DBE) is another big responsibility of the DH (Marishane, 2016). For this is reason, a DH must be a subject specialist. DHs are a source of support and reliance for educators when problems arise in respect of teaching and learning (Ghavifekr & Ibrahim, 2014). According to PAM (2016), DHs are also responsible for promoting the proper education of all learners. DHs should not only take the responsibilities for the induction of novice educators, but they are also largely responsible for the professional development of the educators in their departments (Saul, 2019). DHs are in the position to make an important contribution to the professional development of the educators in their departments to improve the competences of educators on a continuous basis as their role is also developmental (Eberlein & Du Plessis, 2018). The academic role of DHs is also to improve the teaching environment to enhance teaching and learning in the school (Ibrahim & Ghavifekr, 2014). Thus, DHs are responsible for liaising with educators to coordinate intervention strategies for learners (Marishane, 2016). This can be accomplished through DHs coordinating assessment, taking charge of and responsibility for phase or department and guiding staff regarding the latest techniques and approaches in terms of teaching methodology (RSA, 2016).

2.6 Strategies used by Departmental Heads to promote teaching and learning

The literature review indicates that globally (Blase & Blasé, 1999; Southworth, 2002) and locally (Bush et al., 2009; Du Plessis & Conley, 2009), when DHs seek the strategies that will promote effective teaching and learning environments in their schools, they adopt strategies that are consistent with instructional leadership. Du Plessis et al. (2007) argued that effective teaching and learning is a process whereby the school through its educators, creates an opportunity for learning to take place by helping learners to acquire new knowledge or skills through an integration of activities.

Furthermore, Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) suggest that effective teaching and learning only takes place in schools, which are led by effective instructional leaders. In explaining how these strategies work at the school level, Bush et al. (2009) propose several activities that empirical research has found to be useful. Some of these activities entail principals increasing the role they play in leading and managing teaching and learning. Empirical research has shown that principals only have a limited role in managing teaching and learning. According to Bush et al. (2009), principals can make a clear distinction between the work of individual DHs and the collection work of school management teams as a whole in curriculum leadership. The other underlying factors that support improved learner achievement include the availability of committed and experienced teaching staff, extra lessons when necessary, good learning and

support methods as well as any relevant interventions that may be internally or externally initiated.

Southworth (2002) expounded on the major strategies to enhance the efficacy of teaching and learning namely modelling, monitoring and professional dialogue. Modelling is about the power of examples, whereby, a leader demonstrates by doing what she or he expects from others. Southworth (2002) suggests that principals and School Management Teams (SMTs) should use their pedagogical practices as a template for others to follow, work in close proximity with educators in the classroom, coach staff, and use assemblies to promote core values and practices. Monitoring is an approach whereby, the leaders look at the educators' daily or weekly plan, visiting classrooms, controlling learners' work, observing lessons, implementing school policies and analysing the best results of the school and giving feedback on different teaching and learning issues (Southworth, 2002). All these approaches assist in promoting effective curriculum delivery. Professional dialogue is where the leader (principal, deputy principal, and DH) gives opportunities for educators to communicate with the SMT and their colleagues regarding teaching and learning (Southworth, 2002).

Professional dialogue is propagated by means of, for example, staff meetings, developing curricular programme, joint planning sessions and overall teamwork (Southworth, 2002). The School Management Team members such as DHs may also conduct classroom visits and engage in informal conferences with staff, use probes to understand educator assumptions and promote strategies to proceed. Blasé and Blasé (1999) also refer to professional dialogue and emphasises the issue of the significance of educator reflections on their teaching. They further note the importance of educators subsequently communicating their views to their colleagues (Blase & Blasé, 1999). Their views are similar to those expressed by Southworth (2002).

2.7 Challenges facing Departmental Heads in secondary schools

Clearly, the role of the DH is evolving and over time has become more complex with bigger responsibilities, a larger workload and higher performance of expectations (Thorpe & Melnikova, 2014). The challenges that DHs may be confronted with have been identified.

These include, but are not limited to role ambiguity, workloads, lack of time, complicated roles, and resistance from educators.

2.7.1 Role Ambiguity

The constant transformation in the role of the DH in a school has created many challenges, including the aspect of role ambiguity (Kelly et al., 2016). Many DHs can simply not perform their expected duties, because they do not understand their role and are not aware of all their responsibilities (Kosgei, 2012). The leadership role of the DH is not clearly stipulated to both newly appointed and experienced DHs (Martensson & Roxa, 2016). There are discrepancies between the anticipated competencies and the daily practices of DHs, because the role of DHs is not clearly defined (Kosgei, 2015). Most DHs lack clarity about their role (Javadi, 2014). The constant transformation in expectations from DHs will also lead to them accepting responsibility for all issues that arise without having the required competencies, which can be a very taxing task in a school environment (Basset, 2016).

2.7.2 Workloads

The role of DHs has changed a lot in the previous decades. Hence, the workload of a DH has become more challenging, because DHs are continually given new responsibilities and tasks, whilst simultaneously being expected to provide chances to improve and develop their departments (Kelly et al., 2016). DHs are in charge and responsible for multiple aspects of their departments in their schools, and they have demands to continuously improve and raise standards of teaching and learning (Melnikova & Thorpe, 2014). Leask (2013) argued that change in education is unavoidable, which leads to the workload of a DH constantly changing, making it even more complicated for a DH to fully execute and understand the expectations of their role. Further, Kelly et al. (2016) argued that the workload of DHs have expanded to such a way that the increase in workload has moved way past what is manageable by one individual.

2.7.3 Time Constraints

Another challenge that burdens DHs is that of time constraints. This relates to the lack of time for DHs to do all that is expected of them, including activities such as reflecting on experiences and practices, observing lessons doing planning related to teaching and departmental functioning (Javadi, 2014). Further, this includes inadequate non-contact time to

execute these duties (Kelly et al., 2016). The Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) stipulate that a DH should spend 85-90% of their time teaching classes (RSA, 2016), which leaves little time to execute their other responsibilities. Basset (2016) states that DHs are overburdened with compliance tasks to such an extent that they are left with a shortage of energy and time to fulfil their duties as both classroom teachers and departmental leaders. The effectiveness of DH leadership depends on having enough time available in a day to execute both teaching and leadership duties simultaneously (Leithwood, 2016). Javadi (2014) argues that a lack of time will surely obstruct the success and efficiency of a DH.

2.7.4 Complicated Role

The 21st century expectations that are placed on DHs are not only complicated, but also varied and demanding (Kelly et al., 2016). The role of DHs demands them to constantly manage and face changes within the curriculum, including changes regarding instructional methods whilst keeping up with advances in technology, policies, regulations and procedures as well as the individual learning needs of learners (Marishane, 2016). As discussed earlier, DHs have a duality of functions that entails being a leader and manager (Kelly et al., 2016) which can lead to a DH becoming very isolated (Melnikova & Thorpe, 2014). DHs do not necessarily form part of the senior management team, but they are also educators and this fact puts them in the middle of the school hierarchy. They have a pivotal role to play, but do not completely fit in with either the educators or top management.

The challenging part of DHs' roles is that they must defend and attend to their department's welfare and interests without damaging others (Leask, 2013), and still foster healthy relationships with colleagues. When making decisions, DHs must first consider group dynamics and interrelationships with others, for example other departments, by focusing on enhancing ownership within their team and to be able to empower personnel instead of controlling them (Leask, 2013). The role of a DH is thus subject to pressure from top management and the classroom below (Leask, 2013). Managing both upwards and downwards need different behaviours from an individual and can be challenging for a DH, especially when they are newly appointed (Leask, 2013). Working with people, DHs will also face challenges regarding the aspirations and hopes of staff members, the raw underlying emotions of all the stakeholders involved in a school's system and moral dispositions (Saul, 2019).

2.7.5 Resistance from Educators

DHs may be confronted by resistance from educators within their departments. Most of the educators will not necessarily support a DH but oppose them in tasks such as the supervision of educators, observation and the appointment of new departmental members (Leithwood, 2016). According to Leithwood (2016), some educators prefer the school principal to execute these tasks that are closely related to teaching, hence, their reluctancy to support the DH. Maintaining good human relations between DHs and educators will remain a major challenge throughout a DH's career (Ching et al., 2014). DHs should not be discouraged to work with educators (Marishane, 2016), because a well-functioning department can serve as a powerful centre of improvement of learner results (Leithwood, 2016). However, it is a challenge to get a group of academics to work together successfully and the resistance from educators is one of the aspects of the role of a DH that must be pro-actively managed (Roxa & Martensson, 2016).

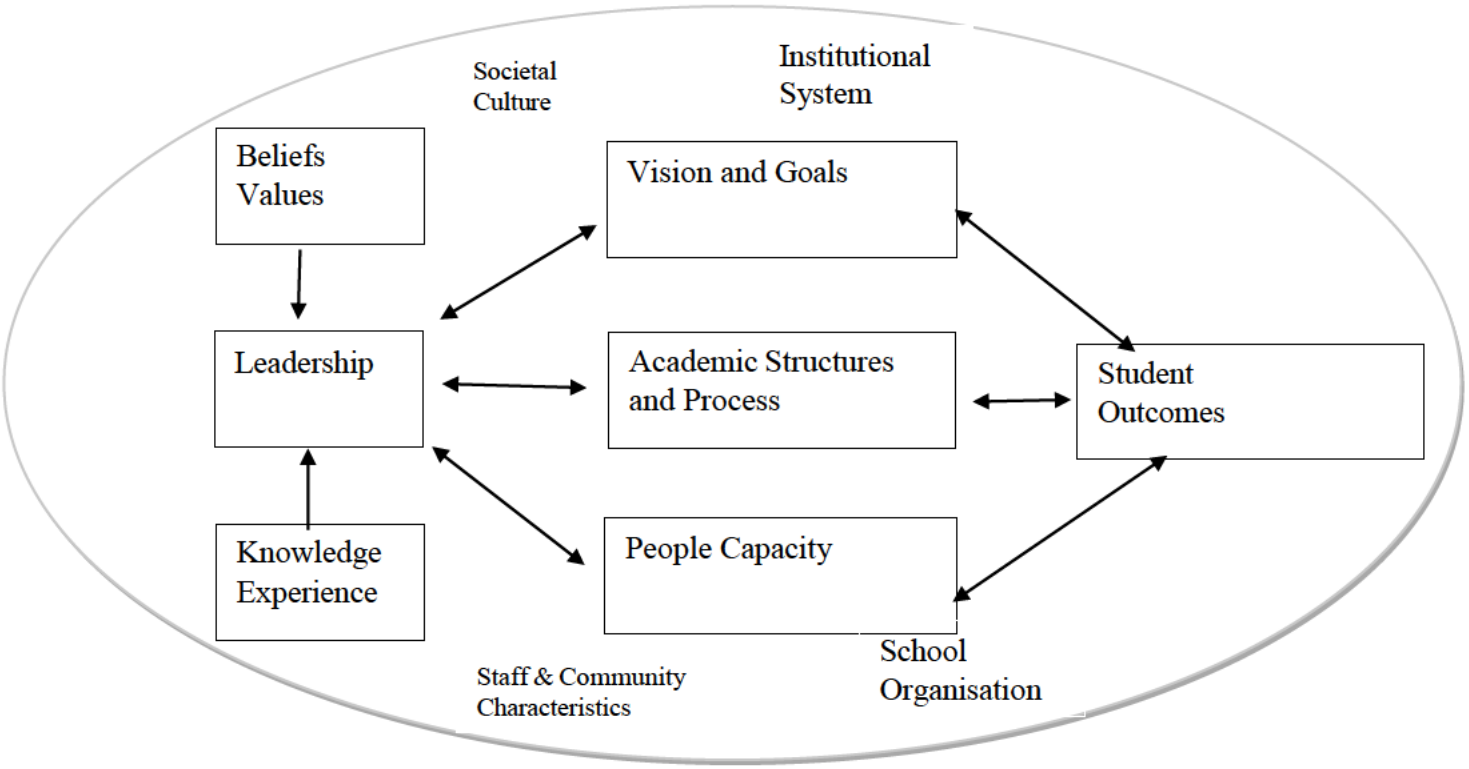
2.8 Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by the leadership for learning model as pioneered by Hallinger (2011).

2.8.1 Leadership for Learning model

The Leadership for Learning theory has gained international acknowledgement (Hallinger, 2011). According to Hallinger (2011), this leadership approach is a combination of three concepts namely instructional, transformational and shared leadership styles. In the Leadership for Learning, the school leaders play a significant role, which entails creating and sustaining a school-wide focus (Hallinger, 2011). This approach further, highlights emphasis on the significance of learning for both school and outside school communities, unlike the instructional leadership, which focuses on learner learning only (Hallinger, 2011). Further, Hallinger (2011) avers that leadership is influenced by the school and environment context. The values, beliefs, knowledge and experience of leaders are important (Hallinger, 2011). This means that the personal characteristics of a leader moderate the exercise of leadership of a leader on a daily basis. School-level conditions such as vision and goals, academic structures and processes and people capacity mediate leadership to learner and school outcomes. (Hallinger, 2011).

Figure 4.1: A synthesised model of Leadership for Learning



Leadership for learning s an approach that South African Schools are attempting to employ to achieve important schools learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2011).

Hallinger (2011) emphasises that the leadership for learning approach encompasses shared vision and goals of schools, understanding of the need for change, relationship based on mutual respect and trust and engagement strategies. Similarly, I can conceptualise leadership for learning as a democratic approach thus it is the suitable approach towards the achievement of learner outcomes. Instructional leadership emphasises on what the school administrators and teachers need to do to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes by a school. Instructional leadership theory has its roots in the 1980s (Hallinger, 2011). Hallinger (2011) also maintains that a lot of emphasis was put on the role of a principal as the key instructor in a school. This belief prevails even today (Hallinger, 2011). It is critical that this theory sees the value of the principal as more significant than other SMT members. The principal has all the power and authority to him or herself, however there has been power shifts in South African schools since the birth of democracy in 1994. Teachers have also become their own classroom instructors, with the support and motivation from the SMTs, although this is not fully practised in some schools (Bush et al., 2010).

The aim of this research is to address the issue of the exclusion of other stakeholders from decision-making and policy formulation and implementation in schools and SMT members have to lead learning towards the attainment of quality curriculum delivery (Bush et al., 2010). Further, these school leaders must be hands on in the identification of problems and solving them thereafter (Hallinger, 2011).

DHs should have good communication skills and rapport with fellow teachers. A horizontal communication strategy, as well as bottom up communication channels must be encouraged among the staff members and school leaders. Moreover, school leaders need to focus on self and whole school development (Bush et al., 2010). I concur with what Bush et.al (2010) state when they affirm that there is no best theory to be used by a particular school for it to become successful in leading learning. If the SMTs can acknowledge teachers as co-leaders by sharing their powers, though with the principal being the over-seer of the achievement of the school goals, there can be marked improvement in schools in terms of the quality of teaching and learning. A learning culture can be instilled in the school if everybody works as a team. The type of leadership to be used by school leaders depends on the context of the school, hence it is situational (Hallinger, 2011). In addition, Hallinger (2011) argues that school leadership has an indirect impact on learners' learning outcomes. The current research makes attempts towards attaining optimal understanding of how learners' learning outcomes may be achieved (Hallinger, 2011).

2.9. Chapter summary

The review of relevant literature provided a clear conceptualisation of leadership, instructional leadership, rurality and instructional leadership. In this chapter, I also discussed the different roles of Departmental Heads and the challenges that they face in leading teaching and learning. Lastly, I concluded this chapter by highlighting the Leadership for Learning, which was used to frame this study. The next chapter is the methodology.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the review of relevant literature and the theoretical framework framing the study. In the current chapter, I discuss the various aspects of research methodology. The chapter starts with the research paradigm, research approach and research design within which the study is anchored which is followed by a description of selection of participants (sampling). Thereafter, a description of data generation methods used and data analysis is discussed and presented. The latter part of the chapter highlights how issues of trustworthiness and ethical consideration were ensured in the study, followed by an explanation of what was perceived as limitations of the study and the conclusion of the chapter.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm is a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research practice in the field (Willis, 2007). Paradigms are preferred ways of understanding reality, building knowledge, and gathering information about the world (Tracy, 2013). Clarke and Braun (2013) describe a paradigm as beliefs, values and practices held by a researcher. The research paradigm represents a particular world view that defines, for the researchers who hold this view, what is acceptable by fellow researchers and how this should be conducted (Christiansen & Bertram, 2014). Christiansen and Bertram (2014) believe that the paradigm makes sense in that the way in which we see the world influences the way in which we research the world.

A paradigm is the commitments, and sets of beliefs, values and methods held by the researcher (Ramrathan et al., 2017). A paradigm is the search for truth, which is dependent upon the positionality a researcher takes in constructing knowledge (Ramrathan et al., 2017). However, Tracy (2013) insists that a researcher's paradigm can differ on the basis of ontology (the nature of reality) and epistemology (the nature of knowledge). According to Clarke and Braun (2013), epistemology is about the nature of knowledge. It addresses the question of what is possible to know, and what counts as knowledge, which determines how meaningful knowledge can be generated. Clarke and Braun (2013) further state that qualitative research is underpinned by epistemological assumptions. Ontology is concerned with the nature of reality, and what there is to know about the world.

A paradigm is a worldview or set of assumptions about the nature of what is being studied, how it can be understood, and what the purpose of an enquiry is (Cohen et al., 2018). In this study, I adopted the interpretivist paradigm as its epistemological and ontological foundation. According to the interpretive paradigm, knowledge is socially constructed and emerges from people's social practices and interactions based on their interpretation of what they understand about the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Merriam, 2009). The proponents of the interpretive paradigm such as Creswell (2014) further postulate that the truth and reality about an inquiry is varied, multiple and context-dependent. Moreover, the purpose of interpretivist research is not only to acquire insight and develop an understanding of the participants' views about a social phenomenon, but also to change people by allowing them to take ownership of the process (Cohen et al., 2018). This study sought to understand how secondary school Departmental Heads (DHs) lead teaching and learning in the context of rurality.

3.3 Research Approach

A qualitative research approach was used in this study. This approach uses a naturalistic inquiry, allowing the researcher to become involved in the research thereby enabling them to understand the phenomenon under investigation in all its complexities and eliminating any manipulation of emerging data (Cohen et al., 2018). Qualitative research is grounded on the philosophy that meaning is socially constructed by individuals through interacting with the real-world settings of the phenomenon (Patton, 2001). This approach is thus discovery- oriented where the findings are not predetermined, but the researcher is particularly interested in understanding 'what', 'how' and 'why' things occur the way they do (Creswell, 2014).

Similarly, this study's research questions were:

- What are the role of secondary schools' Departmental Heads in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality?
- What leadership strategies do Departmental Heads use to enhance leadership for teaching and learning in the context of rurality?
- What are the challenges facing Departmental Heads in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality?

Qualitative research scholars have identified what they consider to be the key characteristics of qualitative research and assert that these characteristics are 'interconnected' and 'mutually reinforcing' (Creswell, 2014b). One of the key characteristics of qualitative research is that the focus is on meaning and understanding, which includes the critical concern of this approach; to gain understanding and meaning of the studied phenomenon from the participants' perspectives, not the researcher's (Merriam et al., 2013). This study aimed to explore how DHs lead teaching and learning in the context of rurality. As a result, this approach is considered to be more suitable for the study than its quantitative counterpart. The aim was to understand how the participants viewed their role as secondary school DHs in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality.

Another prominent feature of qualitative research is the focus on the process that is inductive in nature. This means the research process is grounded on the generation of data, which is subsequently used to build themes, theories or hypothesis rather than deductively imposed theories (Merriam et al., 2013). Through the use of semi-structured interviews and document analysis, I was able to generate extensive data on the inquiry. The data was then presented according to themes that emerged from the analysis. In addition, in a qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument of data generation as well as data analysis (Merriam et al., 2013). To do this, the researcher must among other things, develop the level of skill appropriate for the generation and interpretation of data and prepare a research design that uses accepted strategies for naturalistic inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1989). In this study, I was the key instrument in the processes of data generation, interpretation, and analysis using semi- structured interviews and document analysis to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. This gave me the opportunity to produce extensively descriptive data, which is also one of the key features of qualitative research (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.4 Research Design

Case study research design was adopted for this study. The case study involved three secondary schools, focusing on the role of DHs in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. Cohen et al. (2000) define a case study as a methodology in the field of research that seeks to give a unique example of a real situation and it further enables readers to understand how ideas and practices can be incorporated to make meaningful. Extending on the nature of the case studies, Creswell (2013) describes case studies as constituting an in-depth exploration of a bounded system, process or an individual. According to Creswell (2012),

boundedness refers to the fact that the case study is separated out for research in terms of time, place or some physical boundaries. In describing a case study, Bell (1993) refers to it as an umbrella term for a family of research methods having a decision to focus on inquiry around an instance. Bell (1993) further suggests that a case study design may be particularly appropriate for certain individual researchers, hence, it gives an opportunity for one aspect to be studied in some depth. In this case, the common issue is the leadership role of DHs in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality.

Several scholars have contributed immensely on the use of a case study as a research design (Creswell, 2014; Crowe et al., 2011). In their conceptualisation of a case study, there are notable areas where they diverge, converge and complement one another on what constitutes a case study and when to use it in research (Yazin, 2015). A case study is an in-depth, multifaceted exploration and understanding of a complex issue in its real-life settings (Crowe et al., 2011; Dickson et al., 2014). It is a design of inquiry where the researcher investigates a real-life, contemporary bounded system (case) or multiple-bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed in-depth data generation and analysis, involving multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2014a). Furthermore, a case in a study may be a person, a community, an institution or collection of institutions (Cohen et al., 2018). This was a single case study design of one education district in KwaZulu-Natal, one of the nine provinces in South Africa.

Yin (2003) postulates that a case study should be considered in instances where, (i) the focus of the study is to answer "why" and "how" questions, (ii) the researcher cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study and the focus is to cover contextual conditions deemed relevant to the phenomenon and/or the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clear. In this study, the focus was to gain a comprehensive insight about how DHs in rural secondary schools lead teaching and learning. Moreover, case studies seek to explain why things happen the way they do in order to generalise and predict understanding on similar cases from a single example, hence the need for an in-depth investigation to give an extensive description of the phenomenon under study (Cohen et al., 2018). In this study one education district was used. It is evident that a case study as a research design can be defined in different of ways, however the principle is grounded on the need to explore the phenomenon of interest or an event in depth and in its natural context (Starman, 2013).

3.5 Sampling

Sampling is the general research process of identifying and selecting a limited number of participants and/or site(s) required to conduct research (Cohen et al., 2018). There are different strategies that researchers can use in this process. In this study, purposive and convenience sampling strategies were used. Purposive sampling is an eminent feature of qualitative research where the researcher handpicks the cases (individuals) to be included in the sample based on their judgement of their possession or typicality of particular characteristics sought (Cohen et al., 2018). Cohen et al. (2011) describe purposive sampling as a sample chosen for a specific purpose. For instance, a group of DHs was chosen because the researcher sought to study the role played by secondary school DHs in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. Purposive sampling is the sampling procedure in which elements are selected from target population on the basis of their fit with the purposes of the study, and specific inclusion and exclusion criteria (Daniel, 2012).

Purposive sampling refers to purposefully choosing data that fit the parameters of the project's research questions, purposes and goals (Tracy, 2013). Purposive sampling is used in order to access people with in-depth knowledge about issues, may be by virtue of their professional role, power, experience or expertise (Ball, 1990). Thus, in accordance with this specification, the sampled comprised six DHs from three rural secondary schools, all from Zululand district. The participants were purposively selected based on their experience (in years) in their current position, which ranged from 5-12 years. In addition, these participants were selected due to their job description, which in the main involves supporting teaching and learning in the schools in the capacity of DH. The choice of a sample in this study was influenced by the target group. I intentionally selected DHs who were secondary school DHs to provide the required information. Purposive sampling was useful in this study since this study has a specific purpose, which is exploring role played by DHs in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. The strengths of purposive sampling are more appropriate to research focused on particular segments (Daniel, 2012). Further, the findings are more generalisable, less selection-bias likely, and they give more control over who is selected to be included in a sample. The participants I selected were those that were knowledgeable and had experience in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. They also possessed relevant teaching qualifications so that the data generated would give answers to the research questions that

informed this study. I selected those DHs who were willing to participate in the study, voluntarily.

In this study, I also used convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is when the research sites or participants are selected due to their geographic proximity and easy accessibility (Cohen et al., 2018; Shuaib et al., 2014). The research site selected was easily accessible to me, since I reside in the district where the schools in question are located. Moreover, I work in one of the schools in the same district and thus it was feasible both in terms of financial and time-related resources. Lastly, qualitative studies in general are conducted using small sample sizes (Cohen et al., 2018; Dworkin, 2012). In accordance with most qualitative studies, this study had a total of six participants. This was considered an adequate sample because I managed to reach data saturation. Data saturation is a point when views are repeated and no new views emerge, suggesting that the researcher must exercise their discretion and stop sampling (Fusch & Ness, 2015; Namey et al., 2020).

3.6 Data generation methods

Data generation in qualitative research includes activities such as focusing on, searching for, selecting, extracting and capturing data using different methods (Goldkuhl, 2019). In this study, semi-structured face-to-face in-depth interviews and document analysis were used as data generation methods.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

The Study used semi-structured interviews. A semi-structured interview is a type of interview in which the interviewer systematically solicits information from the interviewee in the form of a few predetermined questions and the rest of the questions arise spontaneously as a result of 'prompts' in a free-flowing conversation (Olsen, 2012). Creswell (2018) defines interviews as the most valuable and predominant mode of data generation in qualitative research. Using semi-structured interviews promote a deep and holistic understanding of a phenomenon by both parties, which is in line with the interpretivist paradigm upon which the study was premised (Jupp, 2006). Goldkuhl (2019) avers that interviews are an essential method to access the participants' everyday life reality about a phenomenon. However, in the same vein, Goldkuhl (2019) acknowledges that interviews pose a challenge for researchers in that they have to rely solely on interviewees to give valid knowledge about a phenomenon and to express it appropriately, hence the use of data triangulation in this study using document analysis.

Moreover, Newcomer et al. (2015) caution that semi-structured interviews are time-consuming and costly and thus demand immense planning and preparation from the researcher (interviewer). To mitigate the above challenges, I prepared an interview schedule, which I used with all the participants. An interview schedule is a useful tool to guide the interviewer or researcher in generating data as it facilitates the process of conducting an interview, increases the likelihood of collecting accurate, in-depth and relevant data and minimises time consumption (Olsen, 2012). What I also found to have assisted the flow of the interview was that prior to doing the actual fieldwork, I conducted a mock interview using the same questions with a friend who is also a DH in another district. This allowed me to assess the clarity of the interview questions, check if the responses I was getting were addressing the objectives of the study, think about possible probing questions and to get an estimation of the actual duration the interviews would take. In a way, this mock interview served as some form of pilot study. A pilot study is a preliminary study that is conducted to assess the feasibility of a proposed study (Herfort et al., 2023).

Participants were interviewed at their schools because their schools were convenient to all of them. The duration of each interview was between 45 and 60 minutes. I had to be mindful of the participants' work schedules, which meant that I had to be flexible in terms of the interview times. Therefore, I had to arrange with each participant regarding the most convenient time of the day for them to participate in the interview to minimise interfering with their working hours. All the interviews were audio recorded after the participants gave consent. I also made brief notes during each interview, which in turn informed my probing questions to ensure that I captured as much information as possible on each question. I realised that code switching between isiZulu and English as the interviews were proceeding enhanced the flow of the conversations and more information was shared.

Having been known as a union activist, I felt that it was crucial for me to explain to the participants that my intentions were neither for casting aspersions nor a fault-finding mission but rather to obtain a better understanding of the phenomenon from their perspective. By so doing, I wanted to create a conducive environment for the interviews where the participants would feel at ease to respond to the questions in an honest and open way. One of the essential prerequisites for a successful interview is to establish rapport and trust between the interviewer and the interviewee from the beginning of the interview to ensure that the environment is comfortable for the interviewee (Bolderston, 2012; Ryan et al., 2009).

Out of the six interviews that I conducted, only three started on the schedule time, two were delayed for more than an hour, which meant that I had to wait and the other one had to be

rescheduled for another date. As expected, I was somehow frustrated, irritated and inconvenienced since at times I had to report late for work or requested to depart early from work. To a certain degree, Nonetheless, one of the best life lessons that I learnt from doing fieldwork was patience, which is one the essential principles for success.

Furthermore, conducting fieldwork during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic also presented an element of fear for both the researcher and the participants. I had to confirm with the participants prior to our meeting if they were still comfortable participate in the study. I had to ensure that we observed all the stipulated safety protocols such as wearing a face mask, maintaining social distance and sanitising hands.

3.6.2 Documents analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for evaluating or reviewing documents, both printed or electronic with the ultimate purpose of examining and interpreting data in order to elicit meaning, gain an in-depth understanding and develop empirical knowledge about a phenomenon (Bowen, 2009). Documents that were analysed in this study were official documents such as class visit instrument that DHs use when conducting class visits, either for monitoring or support purposes. These documents included School Based Assessment (SBA) moderation tool (Appendix D), a monitoring tool for learners' written work (Appendix E) and a curriculum coverage tool (Appendix F). The process of interrogating such documents facilitated the corroboration of information solicited from semi-structured interviews and reduced the possibility of the biases that can prevail in a case of a single case study (Bowen, 2009). In addition, such documents were relevant to this study as means of giving background information, context, and historical insight as well as tracking change and development with regard to the phenomenon. What stuck out from the documents that were analysed is that they were user-friendly and easy for anyone to get a gist of the intended objectives for each document.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis involves systematically organising, synthesising and explaining data generated with an intention to understand rather than to predict data in terms of participants' interpretation of the phenomenon in question (Cohen et al., 2018). In this study, I adopted thematic analysis as an approach. Thematic analysis is the process of 'organising, identifying, describing and reporting' themes found within generated data (Nowell et al., 2017, p.49). This

method is useful for breaking down a large quantity of data into manageable nuggets. Moreover, by using thematic analysis, the researcher is able to deduce similarities and differences from the participants' perspectives (Akinyonde & Khan, 2018; Nowell et al., 2017). I began this process by listening to audio recordings of the interviews I conducted with the participants. I then engaged in verbatim transcription which produced a written copy of the interviews. Through this process, I was able to familiarise myself with generated data. Stuckey (2014) posits that transcribing generated data from the spoken text is the first step in analysing data, which gives the researcher an opportunity to make sense of the data. The themes that emerged from the generated data were guided by the research questions with the ultimate objectives of gaining an insight of how DHs in the context of rurality lead teaching and learning. Furthermore, in analysing the documents that DHs used when conducting class visits, either for monitoring or moderating of School Based Assessment (SBA).

3.8. Trustworthiness of the study

Unlike in quantitative research where the researcher depends on instrument construction to address issues of reliability and validity of the study, in a qualitative research, "the researcher is the key instrument" thus the issue of trustworthiness of the latter study is often questioned (Patton, 2002, p.17). Trustworthiness entails how much credible and dependable the results of the study are (Cohen et al., 2011). This relies on the ability of the researcher to avoid researcher bias. It also depends on how far the researcher is being able to remain as neutral as possible during the interview process. Nonetheless, qualitative research should be conducted procedurally and in a transparent and explicit manner like any other form of research (Hammarberg et al., 2016). To address how qualitative researchers establish that the research findings are trustworthy, the terms credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability are used (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The succeeding paragraphs seek to describe how issues of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were addressed in this qualitative study.

3.8.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the truth of the data or the participants' views and the interpretation and representation of them by the researcher (Beck & Polit, 2012). One way of ensuring credibility in qualitative research is through triangulation, which includes using more than one

method of data generation (Shenton, 2004). It is one of the critical provisions that a qualitative researcher may adopt to promote credibility of the study (Hammarberg et al., 2016). In accordance with this provision, I used in-depth interviews and document analysis as data generation methods. Using triangulation in this study ensured comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon for both the researcher and the participants. In addition, semi-structured interviews ensured 'iterative questioning', which involves using probing to obtain detailed data thereby further enhancing credibility of the study (Shenton, 2004). To further buttress the credibility of the study, I audio-recorded interviews to enhance accuracy of the transcripts and took written notes during interviews and when analysing documents. The guidance and recommendations from my supervisor further enhanced the credibility of the study.

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability is the extent to which the findings can be applied to other similar settings or groups (Houghton et al., 2013). A qualitative study that has met this criterion would present findings that resonate with individuals who were not directly involved in the study but are in similar contexts (Beck & Polit, 2012). To ensure the transferability of this study, I provided detailed context information about the research site and therefore, I am of the view that the findings of this study would enable readers to make transferability inferences to any district with similar contextual factors.

3.8.3 Dependability

Several scholars concur that dependability and credibility are closely related (Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Koch, 2006; Patton, 2001; Polit & Beck, 2012; Tobin & Begley, 2004). They argue that dependability refers to the consistency of the data over similar conditions while credibility is the adoption of an appropriate, well-recognised research method (Shenton, 2004). Furthermore, Shenton (2004) asserts that the detailed process of the research design and methodology strengthens the dependability of a qualitative study. In this study, I provided a detailed research design and methodology process. Therefore, I assert that if a similar study would be conducted by another researcher, using similar participants in another district, similar findings would be yielded.

3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the data represent the participants' viewpoints and not the researcher's biases and viewpoints (Cope, 2014). The research findings should thus be objective and neutral. To ensure confirmability, I confirmed

transcriptions from the audio-recordings with the participants. This is called member checking (Shenton, 2004).

3.9. Ethical issues

Ethical issues in research refer to acceptable and unacceptable actions by researchers when conducting research (Nuwagaba & Rule, 2015). At all material costs, any form of research should be conducted rigorously, scrupulously and in an ethical defensible manner (Cohen et al., 2018). Different professional bodies, organisations and institutions prescribe certain principles and guidelines, which researchers ought to adhere to before, during and after the research project or study (Arifin, 2018). This study was conducted in line with the procedures and guidelines prescribed by the University of KwaZulu-Natal's (UKZN) Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC).

The first step was to apply for gatekeeper permission to conduct the study in three secondary schools from KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education (KZNDoE). In my application, I stated the purpose and the nature of the study that I intended to conduct and the objectives thereof. I must hasten to admit that the process of getting permission from KZNDoE went smoothly and faster than I had anticipated, having been informed otherwise. I then applied for ethical clearance from UKZN-HSSREC to conduct the study. Applying for ethical clearance was a tedious and prolonged process, with different technicalities to meet. I also had to seek permission from the principals of schools as gate-keepers for the participants of my study. After receiving permissions from these different schools, I was then in a position to commence the fieldwork, after receiving ethical clearance (Protocol number: 00002971/2021).

Informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity are important ethical concerns that should be taken into consideration when conducting qualitative research as it directly involves people as the main source of data (Arifin, 2018; Cohen et al., 2018; Foman et al., 2014). In ensuring that such issues were addressed in the study, the participants were informed in writing about the nature of the research, its intended objectives and how it was to be conducted. Thereafter, the participants were requested to sign consent letters, which informed them that amongst other things, their participation was purely voluntary throughout the study and that their participation would not result in neither financial gain nor loss (Moosa, 2013). Furthermore, to assure participants of their confidentiality and anonymity, they were informed that pseudonyms will be used to conceal their real identity in terms of names and positions. This

was done to strengthen participants' freedom to speak with ease when responding to the interview questions (Nuwagaba & Rule, 2015).

3.10 Limitations of the study

Scheduled appointments were postponed by some of participants owing to their busy schedules. Transport costs were added owing to the absence of DHs on the sites during pre- scheduled appointments. One participant postponed two appointment dates, which culminated in delays. My relocation to another area prior to conducting data collection was another challenge. I chose participants while I was residing and working in a nearby area. By the time of data collection, I had relocated to another area. However, I managed to cater for transport costs.

3.11 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I discussed and presented the research methodology that I used in this study. I described it in detail, with the aim to ensure that the reader understands why key methodological decisions were made. I chose a qualitative approach and a case study design to understand the role of DHs in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. To enhance data quality, I used triangulation of methods, which entailed in-depth interviews and document analysis. The participants were selected using purposive sampling because I wanted to obtain nuanced perspectives from the participants. The next chapter is the presentation and discussion of findings.

CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I presented the research methodology, sampling method, data generation methods and data analysis procedures. Details of adherence to ethical issues and limitations of the study were also provided. This chapter focuses on the presentation and discussion of findings. The presentation and discussion of findings is organised according to themes generated from semi-structured interviews conducted with the Departmental Heads (DHs). Verbatim quotes are used throughout the presentation to for illustrative purposes. I use pseudonyms to protect participants' identities. According to de Vos (2011), data analysis is a method of categorising, ordering, manipulating and summarising data to attain answers to specific research questions. In addition, I present and discuss findings in the context of literature reviewed and the theoretical framework underpinning this study.

4.2 Profiling the Research Sites and Participants

In this section, I provide the profiles of the research sites and those of the participants. The reason for this is to ensure that the reader and other researchers understand the features of the sites and of the participants to understand whether they can apply the findings to other contexts.

4.2.1 Research Sites

The study was conducted in three secondary schools in Mbizo Circuit Management Centre (pseudonym), in Zululand District, KwaZulu-Natal Province. These three secondary schools are located in deep rural areas. The study focused on Departmental Heads (DHs), their roles in leading teaching and learning, the strategies they use, and the challenges they face in facilitating teaching and learning in the context of rurality.

4.2.2 Profiling the Participants

As indicated in Chapter 3, I used six DHs from three rural secondary schools. They all had a minimum of five years experience in their current positions. These are presented in the table below:

Table 4.1: Participants' Profiles

Participant and school	Gender	Years of service as Departmental Head
Participant 1 East Secondary School	Male	7
Participant 2 East Secondary School	Female	10
Participant 3 West Secondary School	Male	6
Participant 4 West Secondary School	Male	5
Participant 5 North Secondary School	Male	12
Participant 6 North Secondary School	Female	11

This study was guided by the following three research questions:

1. What are the roles of secondary school Departmental Heads in leading teaching and learning in rural settings?
2. What leadership strategies do Departmental Heads use to enhance leadership for teaching and learning in rural settings?
3. What are the challenges faced by Departmental Heads in leading teaching and learning in rural settings?

4.3 Presentation of findings

The themes that emerged after the analysis of data are presented under the following sub-themes in the table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
Departmental Heads' roles in leading teaching and learning	• Monitoring of teaching and learning. • Moderation of formal assessment tasks • Mentoring of newly appointed educators • Appraisal and evaluation educators on QMS
Strategies employed by Departmental Heads to enhance leadership for teaching and learning	• Providing support for educators' professional development • Ensuring proper discipline for both educators and learners • Managing learners' textbooks
Challenges facing Departmental Heads in leading teaching and learning.	• Working in disadvantaged secondary schools. • Dealing with more orphans and vulnerable children. • Compromised mentoring and supervision of educators. • Learner pregnancy • Language of teaching and Learning (LOLT)
Dealing with some challenges that Departmental Heads face in the rural secondary schools.	• Awareness campaign for learner pregnancy • Reading competition, spelling competition and creative writing for improving in LOLT
Socioeconomic challenges of a community affect teaching and learning.	• Poverty and related social issues • Migration from rural to urban areas • Cultural and traditional practices

The five major themes emerged from the findings. Each theme is discussed. Pseudonyms are used to refer to schools and the participants are assigned codes (Participant 1-6).

4.4 Departmental Heads' Roles in Leading Teaching and Learning

In this section, I discuss the findings that emerged from the data generated through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. It became obvious from the findings that the

main role and responsibility of DHs is to manage curriculum delivery (teaching and learning) in the schools so that the schools can improve for the better.

4.4.1 Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

The interviews with DHs revealed that one of the ways that they were using to lead teaching and learning in the context of rurality was to monitor teaching and learning. The data showed that the monitoring of teaching and learning was done for multiple reasons, and these reasons were associated with ensuring that learning and teaching took place according to the school's plan. Participants' views on monitoring were common, even though they presented them differently at times. For example, Participant 1 said, "*I monitor teaching and learning in my department by using the monitoring tools to check the work of educators and learners".* In the same vein, Participants 3; 4; 5 and 6 concurred with Participant 1. For example, "*Every Friday, I monitor the Annual Teaching Plans and lesson plans of all educators who are under my supervision to check that they teach according to the Annual Teaching Plans"* (Participant 3). *"As a Departmental Head at North Secondary School (NSS), I ensure that the monitoring tools are in place so that I can use them when I monitor teaching and learning in my department"* (Participant 6). "*Every Friday, I monitor educators' files to ensure that they arrange them accordingly and check all relevant documents are available in their files"* (Participant 4). "*I also monitor and control the work of learners and educators on a daily basis to ensure that educators are teaching the learners in the classrooms"* (Participant 5). Without using the concept of monitoring, Participant 2 indicated that they used monitoring like all the five participants mentioned above. In explaining this, the participant said "*As Departmental Head, I make sure that I check the educators' files and learners' exercise books so that I can know that the educators are working in the classrooms".*

All the participants did not end at only what they did in this case, but they further provided their reasons for doing what they were doing. On the one hand, it appeared that all the participants wanted to check what was happening in the classroom in order to support teachers in their departments. On the other hand, they monitored teachers, the teaching and learning process to do what I will call 'policing', ensuring that teachers are doing the right thing because the DHs felt that the teachers were not always doing what they were required to do. There was also an element of ensuring that the teaching and learning was in line with the required quality and quantity. In supporting teachers, the following surfaced:

> "To ensure that educators are teaching the learners in the classrooms and develop them on how to present lesson topics in the classroom, especially to newly appointed educators in my department, every Friday I encourage educators to submit their work to me and I check the quality and quantity of work done" (Participant 5).
>
> "I also make sure that the educators teach what is prescribed in the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS) by following the Annual Teaching Plans of every subject" (Participant 6).
>
> "Every day, I ensure that the educators in my department submit lesson plans to my office before they attend to learners in the classroom. I am doing this to ensure that educators are well-prepared before class. I also check learners' exercise books to establish whether the educators are marking class assessments" (Participant 4).
>
> "…it is imperative to check the lesson plans of educators to ensure that they are in line with what is prescribed to be taught during each term" (Participant 3).

Despite that the above participants demonstrated an element of not trusting teachers, Participant 2's voice suggested that she did not have full trust in the teachers and what they were doing in their classrooms. The DH said,

> "I know that sometimes the educators are working in the classrooms, because they sometimes fail to mark learners' exercise books, so as I am checking, it is easy for me to see and make sure that I confront those who are not doing their work and give them support (Participant 2).

Beyond what the DHs did and why they were doing it, they described the various monitoring methods used. The monitoring was done through 'announced' and 'unannounced' visits and the checking of teachers' plans against the prescribed plans and assessment policies. This is how these were articulated,

> "I also make announced and unannounced class visits because it is an essential part of teaching in the school. The approach helps me to check and adjust the educators' performance meaning that learners acquire the most out of their lessons, which contributes to improving the school's academic performance" (Participant 1).
>
> Daily, I ensure that the educators in my department submit lesson plans to my office before they attend to learners in the classroom. I am doing this to ensure that the educators are well-prepared before their classes. I also check learners' exercise books to establish whether educators are marking learners' work (Participant 4).

Though only two participants are captured above, it emerged in all the interviews that the DHs would either request documents or files from teachers or they could visit teachers in their classrooms to have a first-hand experience of what was happening.

Monitoring of teachers' work has been researched in both international and local settings. Bush and Glover (2012) conceptualise monitoring as an ongoing process undertaken in order to establish whether teaching and learning are taking place as expected. For example, in the United Kingdom (UK), Southworth (2004) focused on the various strategies when he posits that monitoring includes visiting classes, providing teachers with feedback and observing teachers at work. The monitoring of teachers' work plays a significant role at school because it helps to improve learner performance. It is necessary for ensuring the achievement of expectations (Bush & Glover, 2012). Du Plessis (2013) claims that monitoring teaching and learning helps assessors to give effective feedback and can lead to specific professional development efforts and improve teachers' performance.

4.4.2 Moderation of Formal Assessment Tasks

Regarding the moderation of formal assessment tasks, DHs explained that their role was also monitoring through conducting moderation of formal assessment tasks. The DHs revealed that moderation of assessment tasks played a significant role in leading teaching and learning at school. The data showed that moderation of formal assessment tasks was regularly (termly) done by DHs. Participants' views on moderation of assessment tasks were common at some stage, even though they presented them differently. For instance, Participant 1 said,

> "I moderate all formal tests before they are administered to check for such barriers as ambiguity of questions and consistency with learners' developmental stage, and to ensure that all assessment tasks are aligned with the CAPS document for the subject". In the same view, the participant said, "I conduct pre-and post-moderation of all formal assessment tasks for all the subjects in the department to ensure that assessment tasks are fair, flexible and reliable" (Participant 2).
>
> "As Departmental Head at East Secondary School (ESS), I moderate learners'scripts to ensure that the educators marked the learners' scripts correctly and according to the marking guidelines" (Participant 3).
>
> "As a DH at West Secondary School (WSS), I moderate the learners' work to make sure that assessment tasks align with the established criteria and standards and are valid, equitable, fair and consistent" (Participant 5).

Further, this participant who was the most experienced DH with 12 years experience emphasised that he moderated the standard of formal assessment tasks. He said,

> As Departmental Head at NSS, when moderating the standard of formal assessment tasks, I firstly check the following: duration of the task, name of examiner and moderator, date which the task will be written and the total mark allocations, and that instructions are clear.

The participants highlighted that they understood their role as that of standards controllers, ensuring that assessments were of the standard requirement. For example, *"As Departmental Head at NSS, I moderate the formal tasks to check that the assessment task consists of variety of questions so that it incorporates different cognitive levels"* (Participant 6). Participant 3 explained that moderating learner's assessments to ensure that there was consistency. This was not unique to this participant, as others also said something in line with this explanation. In explaining this, participant 4 said, "*As DH at WSS, I make sure that I moderate the learners' work so that I can ensure that marks are awarded consistently and appropriately".* All the participants in this study revealed that they conducted pre-and post-moderation of all the subjects in their departments to make sure that all the learners were writing assessments that were in line with the CAPS document and Annual Teaching Plans for each subject. They also emphasised that moderation of formal assessment tasks was an essential part of ensuring integrity in the assessment. On the other hand, the participants indicated that their moderation of assessment tasks and learners' scripts assisted them to establish if the educators did not do justice when setting tasks and if the educators marked the learners' scripts.

In addition, extant literature showed that the role of DHs as administrators include controlling and checking mark sheets as well as moderating formal assessment tasks or examination papers (Kelly et al., 2016). The data showed that moderation of formal assessment tasks at the school level is the core responsibility of the DH who is the curriculum manager. Further, the moderation of school-based assessment tasks has been researched, extensively (Grobler et al., 2012). They emphasise that the DHs are responsible for maintaining the standard of assessment practice in their respective schools to ensure that educators have a good understanding of assessment policies. In conducting written subject assessments, the question paper or task is first submitted to the DH for moderation as a quality assurance measure before it is given to the learners (Department of Basic Education [DBE], 2000).

Maxwell (2006) identified two phases in the moderation process. The first phase is pre-moderation, which involves the moderation of assessment tasks prior to administering them to the learners. The second phase is post-moderation, which involves moderation of learner evidence. The DH moderates a sample of learners' performance in order to ensure accuracy in marking, fair distribution of marks and learner achievement of outcomes. This is aligned with the practice of moderation as required by DBE policies. Based on all the participants' contributions, it emerged that DHs were also checking the different cognitive levels in the formal assessment tasks and ensured that the assessment tool was clear and user friendly, and characterised by fair mark allocations.

4.4.3 Mentoring of Newly Appointed Educators

Interview data revealed that DHs were providing mentorship to the newly appointed educators at their schools to assist them in familiarising with the policies used to manage the school. For example,

> "As Departmental Head at NSS, I do mentor newly appointed educators by focusing on curriculum documents that are known as policy documents, which are aligned to the CAPS document." In the same vein, another participant said, "I ensure that I conduct an induction workshop for newly appointed educators to familiarise them with the current educational policies such as assessment policy, admission policy, CAPS, school policy etc" (Participant 3).
>
> "As Departmental Head at ESS, I orient newly appointed educators on education legislation such as the Employment of Educators Act, South African Schools Act, Labour Relations Act and many more to encourage educators to know departmental policies" (Participant 4).
>
> "As Departmental Head at ESS, I do mentor novice educators in the department by sharing professional skills, knowledge and expertise with them so that they can understand the CAPS document and Annual Teaching Plans of the subject that they are teaching in the classrooms and also demonstrate a positive attitude as a role model to the novice educators" (Participant 5).

Furthermore, extant literature revealed that the leadership role of the DH entails serving as a mentor, advisor, counsellor and motivator (Saul, 2019). From the above, it was evident that DHs as mentors may assist new educators to create an educators' portfolio and learners' portfolios. Furthermore, it emerged from the data that participants (DHs) ensured that they

would show new educators the various ways of dealing with challenges and give them proper guidance to be effective in teaching at school. Participant 5 said,

> "As Departmental Head at WSS, I lead by example because I want to demonstrate professionalism to all the educators and ensure that I give them support in the department so that they can be competent in what they do in the classroom."

The other participants also made reference to their role as mentors for newly appointed educators at their schools. In elaborating this, Participant 2 said,

> "In my role as the DH, I develop educators on classroom management so that they can manage their classes effectively and make them conducive for effective teaching and learning. Further, I conduct induction workshops on leave measures and clarify to the educators that it is their right to take leave, but it is also their responsibility to fill in forms for any leave they wish to taken."
>
> "Part of my responsibility as the DH is to encourage educators to understand the subject policies so that they can teach according to the Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) that are designed by subject advisors. Further, I encourage them to attend orientation workshops to make sure that they are capacitated on how to present their lessons effectively in the classrooms" (Participant 6).

It emerged from the data that DHs mentored newly appointed educators in their departments. The participants also indicated that the mentoring of newly qualified educators constituted a critical component of the induction process for new educators, ushering them into the profession because it enhances the professional and personal growth of beginner educators and nurtures professional development.

The data also showed that DHs as mentors assist educators get to know their learners individually, to provide equitable learning outcomes. They also support new educators by guiding educator self-reflection and providing actionable feedback. It also emerged from the data that the participants (DHs), as mentors engage in opportunities to deepen their knowledge of standards and content. They also assist new educators to adapt to the school climate and culture. DHs guide new educators regarding curriculum issues, teaching strategies and communication skills.

4.4.4 Implementing Quality Management System (QMS)

During the interviews with the participants it came out that appraisal and evaluation of educators through Quality Management System (QMS) is one of the roles of DHs. The data showed that DHs appraise and evaluate educators through use of the Quality Management System (QMS). Participant 2 said,

> "As a DH at NSS, I evaluate the performance levels of educators in order to attain high levels of school performance." Sharing the same views, Participant 5 said, "The QMS incorporates the measuring performance of educators in line with their respective roles and responsibilities, and provides a basis for decisions on rewards, incentives and other salary related benefits for the applicable year."

Participant 4 mentioned the following, *"In my capacity as DH, I conduct performance appraisal for the educators under my supervision, classroom observation and I check records."*

Another participant said,

> "As a DH, I appraise and evaluate educators on QMS to determine the levels of competence of all the educators and ensure that educators perform their duties with integrity and maintain a positive, and vigilant attitude towards all the learning activities" (Participant 3).

According to RSA (2016) states that the DHs should form part of the performance appraisal process for educators to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

In light of the above, Participant 1 said, *"As the Departmental Head at NSS, I ensure that all educators are trained on the procedures and processes of the Quality Management System. I prepare and monitor the management plan for QMS in the school."* The data revealed that DHs appraised and evaluated educators on QMS and ensured that the performance appraisal of every educator was conducted consistently, fairly and accurately using the approved instrument. It also emerged from the data that the participants (DHs) ensured that the appraisals of educators was included in the management plan of the school and they organised workshops on QMS where individuals would get the opportunity to clarify areas of concern. Another participant said,

> "Being the Departmental Head, I ensure that every educator has access to the Quality Management System instrument and any other relevant documents. Further, I ensure that evidence relied upon during the appraisal process is valid" (Participant 5).

Participant 6 explained that the DH was responsible for conducting appraisal and evaluation of educators on QMS at the school like other 5 participants mentioned above. In explaining this, the participant said,

> "I conduct performance appraisal for educators under my supervision, which include classroom observation, keeping records thereof and help the principal to finalise the appraisal scores of educators."

It also emerged from the data that DHs ensured that they gave support to the principal in executing his/ her duties related to the appraisal process. They also motivated educators to participate in pre-appraisal and post-appraisal discussions and kept relevant evidence for the appraisal process.

4.5 Strategies Employed by DHs to Enhance Teaching and Learning

Under this theme, I present three strategies that were employed by DHs (participants) to enhance teaching and learning. DHs indicated that these strategies were assisting them to effectively lead and manage the twin processes of teaching and learning in their schools. The strategies are as follows: providing support for educators' professional development, ensuring proper discipline for both educators and learners, and managing learners.

4.5.1 Providing support for educators' professional development

The findings from the semi-structured interviews with the DHs revealed that empowerment and development of educators were the key aspects of leadership for learning practice, in addition to promoting school effectiveness. The School Management Teams (SMTs) create opportunities for the educators to attend workshops and also disseminate information from the district office (Whitehead et al., 2013). It was evident that by practising leadership for learning, SMTs felt motivated to develop themselves and teachers professionally.

Participant 3 said,

> "Given my position as DH, I support and motivate the educators to attend workshops that are organised by district officials to familiarise with the tremendous changes that are taking place in the education system. The SMT also engages educators in the school-based workshops, which are facilitated by some of the DHs. The educators who attend workshops are given a travel allowance by the school to go to the respective venues. I also encourage them to become life-long learners, by enrolling for

relevant qualifications at the various tertiary institutions in the country. This helps them to develop their teaching skills."

Similarly, Participant 4 shared views adding to what Participant 3 had stated. He said,

> "To promote and manage teaching and learning in my school, I do the following, (i) I promote the empowerment of both educators and learners through developmental programmes, namely professional development. (ii) I invite subject advisors to assist and motivate my educators."

Participant 5 echoed Participant 4's and explained,

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

Another observation made in schools with low learner enrolment such as NSS was the understaffing experienced by the SMT members. The reason for the shortage of adequate staff complement is due to the low learner enrolments (DoE, 2012). Sometimes the DHs who were declared additional or excess educators from smaller schools, like NSS, which does not qualify to have more than two DHs were placed in other schools with high learner enrolments. Consequently, teaching in small schools such as NSS lacked proper monitoring of educators on teaching and learning. Often, these schools were not manned by experienced DHs. Asking the DHs how they coped in such situations, Participant 6 shared his views as follows,

> "I am managing three departments; Science, Humanities and Commerce. So, we have discussed with the Commerce and Humanities departments and we have agreed to identify two educators, one from each department who are subject heads, and who can act like their DHs. These educators are the ones who are assisting me in leading learning as they manage and then come back to me to discuss the work."

Participant 2, who was a DH at ESS echoed the views shared by Participant 6 saying,

> "Some of the educators that are in the Commerce and Humanities departments are newly appointed Fundza-Lushaka bursary holders. We are in the process of grooming them to monitor each other in their departments. What is interesting is that they take turns to monitor one another because they are new from the university. They will monitor one another and then submit to Participant 6 who is the DH."

The educators that were in the Commerce and Humanities departments had less than two years of teaching experience, however, due to the heavy workload on the DH's shoulders, one of the novice educators from each department had to play the supervisory role as the acting DH. Acting as DH was an internal arrangement and therefore could not be remunerated since

that was not authorised by the Department of Education. In the absence of the DH, the SMT members resort to being creative in developing leaders among the educators at the lower level, even though they were still novices in the field of teaching. Such an arrangement tallies with the assertion by Hunzicker (2012) that the approach of grooming educators to assume leadership roles is significant now when socioeconomic and political forces have a major impact in current classrooms.

Further, Clark (2012) argues that leadership is about working with and through other people to achieve the schools' goals. Again, leadership is seen not as a sole preserve of individuals at the top, but instead, it is to be extended to and exercised by anybody within the school (Harris, 2013).

Participant 6 explained,

> "I always remind educators that they have a pastoral role to play. I also provide care and support to the educators, and provide safe spaces where they are seen involved, cared for and respected. In this way, they see the importance of developing themselves. This assists us in creating a positive culture that will promote professional satisfaction, boost morale and enhance effectiveness. It will also ensure that leadership decisions are made collaboratively by all of us, the SMT, and educators. One of my educators is a strategist. When I am faced with challenges, I am not expected to know everything simply because I am the DH. She deals with the challenges and solves them."
>
> "Educators do not see themselves having the capabilities to lead and to guide, apart from the learners and sometimes one must let them know, as part of building and developing them in the school" (Participant 2).

Participant 2's views were shared by Participant 3, who said,

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

The perspectives of Participant 2 and Participant 3 suggested that support is vital to improve learners' performance. Wenzare (2011) posits that principals as instructional leaders are able to fulfill their goals by focusing on learning, encouraging collaboration, providing support to other SMT members, helping the teachers in enlightening curriculum to school context, all to the benefit of learners. Further, Participant 3 added, *"I do class visits with my HODs with the intention of identifying areas where teachers need to be developed."*

Participant 1 who was also a member of the school management team said,

> "We have grown in so many ways. As the SMT, we have engaged educators in leadership activities, in subject, and extra-curricular activities. I am proud to say that we have gone an extra mile in promoting professional growth in our school. I also encourage networking because I believe a lot is learnt through networking programmes since some educators emulate those whom they observe in action. Generally, teachers network for just sharing ideas as subject educators and new methods of teaching the subject."

From the above statements, it was evident that DHs realised that leadership for learning has allowed them to enhance learning by allowing the educators opportunities to see the benefits of learning. This has allowed them to grow, develop confidence to lead, and improve DHs' leadership skills. The impression that I got was that the participants did welcome the inclusion of post level one educators as subject heads in supervisory responsibilities such as monitoring curriculum implementation, although they were circumstantially obliged to do so.

4.5.2 Ensuring Proper Discipline for both Educators and Learners

The SMTs maintain attendance registers for learners and time books for teachers, which indicate arrival and departure times. Further, a code of conduct for both learners and educators is derived from the national constitution. The code of conduct should be reviewed every year to ensure its accuracy and relevance to a particular school.

Good discipline is one of the factors that contribute to learner competency, however, in my observation, DHs seem to be focusing on curriculum coverage, which is done by educators and learners, rather than enforcing discipline. In the cases where learners were problematic at school, the intervention of parents was cited as being of paramount importance, hence an intervention is sought. This has been confirmed by Participant 3 who pointed out that,

> "We communicate with the parents of the learners who always appear on the list of late comers. To facilitate this we, the DHs, with the help of some dedicated educators and the security officer close the gate at 07h30 and instruct the late-comers to go back home to ask their parents to report for the intervention process."

The significance of parents' involvement in school affairs was also underscored by Participant 2 who shared the following,

> "I also visit or invite the parents of those learners who show persistent absenteeism to come to school so we deliberate on causes of the child's persistent absenteeism. It is

our responsibility to make the parents aware of the implications of such to the parent and learner."

Participant 4 said,

> "We formulate and discuss a code of conduct that is in line with the national constitution for our learners and teachers. After we have agreed about the contents of the code of conduct, we read and analyse for the learners' consumption. The parents of learners must read and sign consent letters to agree with the rules and regulations enshrined in the code of conduct. As the SMT, we see to it that the school governing body is in place in order for them to represent the parents in the decision-making process. The SMT, teachers and parents now have a say about how to take joint decisions to allow effective discipline in our school."

Participant 6 commented:

> "We need to apply strategies which are in line with the democratic disciplinary measures, now that corporal punishment is no longer in use, in our school and at the national level. We sometimes find it difficult to control learners without infringing their democratic rights. We are no longer safe at school as some of the learners abuse drugs and carry dangerous weapons such as pocket knives and screw drivers to school. The only thing we do is to call the learners' parents to discuss whatever case a learner might have. We do this with the help of the class-teachers who write letters to invite the parents of the alleged learners to report to our school. Moreover, police officers are called when it is necessary."

Participant 1 shared his views by stating that "There *are things one does to manage and support teaching, and one of them is ensuring that discipline prevails. Hence, there are structures in place to bring about discipline to pave way for effective teaching and learning."* Following the probing, which sought to identify the types of structures in place, this is what the participant added in response,

> "There is a disciplinary committee, which positively contributes to teaching and learning in our school. I also make it a point that I involve all the stakeholders in solving disciplinary problems. If there is discipline in the school, educators find it easy to discharge their duties since they must not focus on peripheral matters of discipline vis-à-vis curricular matters" (Participant 1).

Maintaining discipline was identified as an important strategy for supporting educators, coupled with monitoring and motivation. Most of the participants claimed that when there is discipline, educators have adequate time to focus their attention on their core business, which

is teaching and learning. This is corroborated by Heikka et al. (2012) who posit that learners' achievement must be the focal point. There seemed to be lack of discipline in some schools, such as WSS and NSS. Learners in these schools were considered unruly and rebellious. In my observation, these learners seemed to have listened to their peers who most of the time misled them, more than their educators. Further, disciplinary concerns must be addressed by the SMT members given that corporal punishment is no longer in use. Educators must spend more time with their learners so that they do not lose control.

4.5.3 Managing learners' textbooks

In all the three schools, it was evident that there was tremendous shortage of resources, more specifically textbooks. With other subjects, teachers made copies from one available original copy and had to let learners sit in pairs so that they were able to share. Participant 5 said,

> "We manage and distribute the textbooks in such a way that the learners share them and help to create a 'do care' attitude because they have the power to take care of books, so that at the end of the year, they will return them in good order. This creates an atmosphere in which all the learners feel a sense of ownership. This in turn makes it easier for us, the managers to lead rather than to instruct."

I probed both Participant 4 and Participant 5 by asking them to elaborate on this issue and Participant 4 further commented as follows,

> "When we place an order for the following year, we make sure that every learning area in our departments is checked so that those with enough textbooks do not place a requisition for what they already have. All the teachers indicate the shortages of text books in each learning area so that they will be bought. We believe that effective teamwork is the hallmark of a successful department. This allows us to avoid unnecessary excessive purchases of books."

In addition, Participant 5 stated that,

> "The SMT is responsible for the planning and controlling of the school's stock, textbooks and equipment, however the subject educators are involved in all of this. Actually, the educators constitute what I can characterise as the most important cog in the engine."

According to Nene (2015), SMTs should be able provide and manage necessary resources such as textbooks. They must control the available stock by conducting stock-taking on a yearly basis. Further, they must also encourage educators to do the same. Strategies to make books available are needed to enhance effective teaching and learning (Nene, 2015). Seemingly, the three schools experienced shortages of textbooks, however, the SMTs tried to harness the available stock by encouraging the subject educators to record whatever books they might have issued to learners. In return, learners should look after the books. It is the responsibility of the school principal, in collaboration with the DHs to provide the educators with adequate textbooks (Nene, 2015). The educators make requisitions for their subject textbooks after the DHs have given them the mandate to select these from a catalogue. Normally, the SMTs use money from the norms and standards to buy books, however where there is shortage of funds, SMTs may opt for fund-raising activities.

4.6 Challenges faced by Departmental Heads in Leading Teaching and Learning

In this theme, I present the findings that emerged from data generated through semi-structured interviews. DHs highlighted the challenges that they were facing in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. The challenges are as follows: working in disadvantaged secondary schools, dealing with many orphans and vulnerable children, compromised mentoring and supervision of educators, learner pregnancy and the language of learning and teaching (LoLT).

4.6.1 Working in disadvantaged secondary schools

The interviews with the participants indicated that the participants had challenges related to teaching since the schools were located in disadvantaged areas. Participant 1 said, *"It is not easy to work and teach at this school, mostly because of the lack of facilities."*

Participant 3 said,

> "Working in disadvantaged schools is a big challenge to both educators and Departmental Heads because of the lack of such facilities as school libraries make things difficult. For example, when you teach Creative Arts and you request learners to bring magazines, it becomes a big challenge because it is even hard to get newspapers such as *Ilanga* and *Isolezwe* from the local shop."

Participant 1 indicated that the challenges encountered in disadvantaged secondary schools due to the lack of infrastructure were numerous. Furthermore, Participant 2 also said,

> "In disadvantaged schools, the learners are unable to read independently, sometimes they do not have sufficient textbooks, making it difficult for both educators and the Department to assist the learners."

The findings suggested that the participants encountered numerous problems in disadvantaged secondary schools, because these schools have challenges such as the lack of facilities, for example, school libraries, absence of electricity from the national power and the lack of learners' exposure to the facilities that might assist teaching.

Moreover, Participant 4 mentioned that,

> "Our learners are not exposed to and familiar with the things that make learning easy. For instance, some learners in our school do not even know a train. So our teaching ends with up being difficult for them."

It also emerged from the analysis that participants grieved over the inability to use available audio-visual teaching resources such as television and video cassette recorders due to the absence of electricity in the school, which posed as an impediment to teaching. Participant 5 said, *"It would be easy to utilise the videos as teaching resources if we had electricity in this school."* Similar views were shared by Participant 3, who talked about the complexities of working in disadvantaged secondary schools. In explaining this, the participant said,

> "As the Departmental Head, I have experienced a lot of problems in this school such as inadequate opportunities for the professional development of educators, characterised by learners with low motivation. The two are big challenges in disadvantaged rural schools such as WSS."

The findings are mute on the schools' efforts to provide resources and facilities that would make teaching easier. There is also no proof from the findings on the activities and programmes that were designed by the schools aimed at extending the opportunities for the learners to learn. Educational excursions and field trips could assist expose learners to cities and improve the schools could give teaching resources, like magazines and newspapers in order to help the learners to improve in areas such as reading.

Participant 6 said,

> "I am the Departmental Head. I experienced numerous challenges emanating from working in disadvantaged schools. The challenges include lack of proper resources for

effective teaching and learning and the lack of parental involvement in efforts to improve learner performance, and in matters related to learner discipline."

4.6.2 Dealing with Orphans and Vulnerable Children

During the interviews with the participants, they indicated that they had a huge challenge of dealing with orphans and vulnerable children. The findings revealed that DHs in disadvantaged secondary schools had the responsibility of providing care and support to orphans and vulnerable children. Participant 1 said, *"In disadvantaged secondary schools, there are social problems so I end up playing the role of the social worker, because some learners need special attention and give them time to talk about their social problems."*

The findings also revealed that the learners' social problems mentioned by the participants related to starvation among the orphans and vulnerable children and lack of money to pay for school excursions. It is in these conditions that the participants found themselves organising food for the learners and sometimes paying for them when there were excursions to be taken by all learners. According to the Department of Education (2005), school-based educators at all levels of the school hierarchy are expected to be community members, pastors and citizens at the same time.

Participants 2 said,

> "The large number of orphans and vulnerable children in schools is increasing the burden on the shoulders of the DHs, because they must ensure that these children get more counselling".

Participant 3 said,

> "There is a need for more cooperation between the schools and the Department of Social Development so that learners who are classified as orphans and vulnerable children can be helped in applying for foster care grants for which they qualify but cannot access without support from the schools."

Another perspective was shared by Participant 4, who stated that the provision of care and support to orphans and vulnerable children was also a challenge to the DH participants. One of the biggest problems facing educators in addressing the various issues related to orphans and vulnerable children was the stigma attached to this group of learners.

Participant 4 said,

> "I have a learner who is HIV positive, however, the attitude I get from colleagues is that the year was too long for them to see this learner pass onto the new class, for they regard it as a burden and an added responsibility to help these learners."

Adding his voice to this matter, Participant 5 revealed that dealing with orphans and vulnerable children in disadvantaged rural secondary schools is a big challenge. In explaining this, the participant said, *"It is difficult to deal with orphans and vulnerable children, because they have anxiety and anger issues. The orphans and vulnerable children lack financial, emotional and material support to care for themselves."*

The findings indicated that the participants had a huge problem in dealing with orphans and vulnerable children at school. It also emerged that orphans and vulnerable children would sometimes bunk classes because they would often lack support from the families. Participant 6 said, *"Dealing with orphans and vulnerable children also increased poor learner performance at this school because they don't attended classes regularly."*

4.6.3 Compromised mentoring and supervision of educators

The interview with the participants revealed that DHs struggled to perform their management duties as a result of the heavy workload allocated to them. The data also indicated that the heavy workloads for these participants came as a result of a low number of educators employed in all participating secondary schools. It was clear from the data that teaching took much more than the stipulated time. The participants mentioned that they spent almost one hundred percent of the time on teaching. The time spent on the DHs' two core responsibilities of curriculum management and teaching was not consistant with the regulations stipulated in the PAM document.

Participant 3 said,

> "In my role as the Departmental Head, I teach some subjects but it is very heavy because my workload allocation compels me to have a load that is tantamount to that of post level-one educator due to our low-learner enrolment. This is problem because I also have a critical role to play in curriculum management."

Coinciding with Participant 3's sentiments Participant 4 had this to say, *"My heavy workload makes me not to have time to supervise and monitor educators. I struggle to balance teaching with supervision of educators in my department."* As a result of the above-mentioned status-quo regarding mentoring, novice educators in these schools were disadvantaged because they

were expected to teach with no guidance from the DHs who serve as the subject leaders of teaching and learning in the schools. Participant 5 at WSS said, *"The high percentage of time spent on teaching therefore denied DHs a chance to develop and mentor educators in their subject or departments."*

Apart from that, Participant 1 also faced the challenge of being the only Accounting and Economics educator in the school. Due to the remote location of the school and the absence of direct public transport linking the school to the world, both the school and district office failed to recruit qualified educators for Accounting and Economics. As the only educator for these subjects, Participant 1 ended up shouldering a heavy workload. He complained, "*I only have one free period per week, which makes it difficult for me to supervise and mentor any educator in my department."*

It is clear from the findings that DHs struggled with time constraints to the point of failing to perform their management duties. However, Participant 2 spent her teaching time in line with the guidelines set out in the PAM document. She said, *"Teaching takes more time, let me say eighty five percent of the time"* while Participant 5 reiterated that, *"It is even difficult for me to conduct a classroom visit to support the educators in my department."* Participant 6 said, *"The learner enrolment at my school hinders me to mentor and supervise the educators effectively, because I spend more time on teaching than on management duties."*

The findings demonstrated that there is lack of time for DHs to mentor educators and plan for leading teaching and learning. This is a barrier to leadership for learning. Hallinger (2011) attests that leadership for learning is influenced by context, because some DHs spend more time on teaching that hinders them to mentor and perform leadership and management duties, most seemed to struggle to find time to plan for leading teaching and learning effectively.

4.6.4 Learner Pregnancy

The participants alluded to learner pregnancy as a big challenge across rural secondary schools because most of the learners hail from disadvantaged families. As such, they do whatever they can do to get food for survival. For example, Participant 2 said,

> "In my view, the rate of learner pregnancy is very high these days because learners cannot accept any advice from their parents or guardians, given that they are often influenced by their peers. So, men attract poor young girls with attractive things such as money to buy basic items for survival, fancy clothes, mobile phones etc, then

sexual relations start from there. In those relations, the adult male dominates, dictating how sex is done. This often culminates in unprotected sex and unintended pregnancy."

Learner pregnancy and its complications often predispose drop outs, school non-attendance and permanent leaving of school (Kearney, 2008; Ngcobo & Shumba, 2023). Learner parents are more likely to drop out of school and proceed to have non-marital pregnancies, change jobs more frequently, and have physical and mental health problems (Malhotra, 2008).

Participants linked the challenge of learner pregnancy to poverty and abuse of policy. Participant 1 said, *"The child support grant also increases the rate of learner pregnancy at schools, because some of the learners want to have babies because of this money from government."*

Furthermore, Participant 4 said,

> "Learner pregnancy at school has become a serious and worrying problem, because this does not only affect the concerned learners physically but it also affects their academic performance at school. This is because they undergo hormonal change, which affect their concentration process the way they communicate with others and it is not easy to manage this change."

It also emerged from the findings that the participants had a challenge of learner pregnancy at rural secondary schools. Learner pregnancy is associated with significant health, social and emotional difficulties, which affects their ability to concentrate and learn (Grant & Hallman, 2006; Klein, 2005; Miller, 2001). Participant 3 said,

"Learner pregnancy in rural secondary school is a multifaceted problem with many contributing factors like unemployment, poverty, gender based violence and substance abuse."

The findings revealed that some of the learners were not living with their parents and most of them were orphans and were being raised by grandparents. Therefore, learners were becoming vulnerable and would date old men for survival, to get money for food. Participant 5 also emphasised that,

> "Learners who come from disadvantaged families tend to depend on men who use them for sexual pleasures and most of these learners fall pregnant at an early age, because they do not have food to feed their siblings at home so they depend on old men for food and money."

Further, Participant 5 linked the problem of learner pregnancy to the role played by the media,

> "The media has a large influence on learners falling pregnant at school, because of shows such as "Teen Mom" and "16 and Pregnant". These shows increase the rate of

learner pregnancy and hide the hardships associated with pregnancy, which encourages these learners to become pregnant at an early age."

Participant 6 said, *"Learners are forced by old male partners to engage in sexual activity out of fear they may feel forced to engage in sexual activity, because these men paid lobolo to their parents."*

4.6.5 Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT)

The participants in this study revealed that the language of learning and teaching (LoLT) was also a big challenge in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. The findings showed that the learners were struggling to understand the lessons in the classroom due to English as the language of learning and teaching in their schools. For example, Participant 4 said,

> "The language of learning and teaching is a challenge because most subjects are taught in one language, which is English and different racial groups are also taught in one language, while learners are supposed to be taught in the language they understand."

Participants 3 expressed the same view as the one above, when he said, *"Many learners suffer from shyness when asked to speak in English, because they lack ability to communicate in English."* Participant 2 said,

> "English as the language of learning and teaching is a challenge in schools, because most learners are not confident, their vocabulary is poor and they are often overwhelmed by the fear of making mistakes when they speak English."

It also emerged from the findings that the participants experienced challenges with the language of learning and teaching, English, the medium of instruction in secondary schools.

Similarly, Participant 6 also said,

> "Learners are struggling to understand lessons conducted by the educators in their classrooms, because they do not understand English as a medium of instruction, especially those learners in grade eight and grade nine, these are worse!"

The findings of the study revealed that the participants also experienced challenges related to the language of learning and teaching in the context of rurality. In explaining this, Participant 1 said, *"Most educators encounter challenges in teaching English language, because of lack of proper and adequate teaching materials and this negatively impacts teaching and learning."*

4.7 Dealing with Challenges faced by DHs in the Context of Rurality

During the interviews with the participants, I asked DHs about how they dealt with some of the challenges that they were facing in the context of rurality. They highlighted that learner pregnancy and the language of learning and teaching as some of the challenges. It also emerged from the data that the participants organised awareness campaigns for learner pregnancy, reading competitions and creative writing competitions to improve the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). For instance, Participant 3 said, *"The only way to combat learner pregnancy is to raise awareness on this issue and that is where we discuss with the learners on how to avoid it."* The findings of the study revealed that DHs work collaboratively with other stakeholders such as social workers and professional nurses from local clinics so that they can be able to get assistance easily. Participant 5 said,

> "The awareness that we give learners is that we invite social workers and professional nurses to come to our school so that they can caution the learners about the dangers of getting into relationships with old people to get financial support."

Apart from that, HDs work with the educators to establish the school health and safety committee. This committee also assists the learners in the school by talking to them directly about what they should do to avoid pregnancy. Participant 2 indicated that *"Learners are encouraged to use condoms to avoid pregnancy and they are also encouraged to abstain if they are not ready to have sex."* The findings also showed that the School Health and Safety Committee was encouraging learners to choose friends carefully, be aware of friends who influence them to have sex. All the learners were also encouraged to use various contraceptives that work in different ways to prevent pregnancy. This committee was also supporting and providing counselling to the learners that fall pregnant at school.

Moreover, participants also revealed that reading competitions and creative writing competitions help learners to understand the language of learning and teaching. Participant 6 said,

> "I encourage educators in schools to organise reading competitions, spelling competitions and creative writing competitions so that learners will improve in their reading skills and fluency."

In addition to the above, Participant 4 also emphasised that, *"The learners will also understand English better in the classroom if they participate in these competitions and also co-operate in all lessons that are conducted in class."* Participant 1's response indicated that reading and spelling competitions play an important role in improving the learners'

performance because when the learners write spellings correctly and excel in reading, their confidence is boosted, which assists them to understand the language of learning and teaching in class. For example, Participant 1 said, *"Reading and creative writing competitions assist learners to improve their focus, memory and communication skills."*

4.8 Socioeconomic Challenges of the Community affect Teaching and Learning

The analysis of data reflected on several socioeconomic challenges that DHs identified as influencing their work. These socioeconomic challenges range from poverty and related social issues, migration from rural to urban areas, cultural and traditional practices. These socioeconomic challenges are discussed below.

4.8.1 Poverty and Related Social Issues

The analysis of data suggests that the role of DHs in supporting teaching and learning in the context of rurality is influenced by poverty and related social issues. All the participants who participated in this study mentioned poverty as one of the challenges that make teaching and learning difficult, particularly their role of supporting it. They agreed and reported that in their communities, there were high levels of starvation, child-headed homes, learner pregnancy and drop outs, absent parents, unemployment, drug and substance abuse, all which are attributed to high levels of poverty. These challenges were further compounded by the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in these communities.

Participant 3, who highlighted that in some of the families, there were high levels of starvation. He stated that poverty and other social challenges such as high levels of child- headed families created a fertile ground for teenage pregnancy, and drug and substance abuse. This is how he explained it,

> "Poverty is another one; people are hungry and there is starvation. There are many child-headed families, leading to teenage pregnancy due to the absence of an adult voice to exercise authority over young people. Teenage pregnancy also goes hand-in- hand with drug abuse" (Participant 3).

Concurring with the views shared by Participant 3 above, Participant 1 highlighted that poverty, coupled with unemployment are common in the community in which they were working. He raised his concerns about the living conditions of the learners where their

families lived in shacks and in two-room houses. *"Poverty and unemployment are very high amongst the people who live in shacks or two-room houses"* (Participant 1). Participant 2, acknowledged that in her school, poverty existed, but she was quick to clarify that such poverty was not wide spread. *"I also observed that in some of the school communities, poverty is very high. It is not widespread, but I do come across it especially in rural communities"* (Participant 2).

On the contrary, other participants observed that a very high level of poverty prevailed in rural communities from which their learners hailed. *"The school community or those outside of the school has its own set of challenges: the rurality of the area, and abject poverty"* (Participant 4).

According to Participant 1, poverty made it difficult for educators and learners in his school to focus on learning outcomes. There were some necessities that households required to possess to support their children's education. For example, poor households were unable to access necessities such as running water and electricity or any convenient sources of energy such as gas for cooking and solar lights for lighting purposes. These necessities were critical in supporting learning at home. In some schools in these rural areas, learners found it difficult to do their homework and other school projects as they lived in shacks or two room-houses. It is common to find these homes populated by extended family members because unemployment is often high. Participant 1 also indicated that the poverty situation in the community where his school was located was compounded by diseases such as sexual transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV/AIDS. Tuberculosis (TB) was also common in these communities. It emerged that sometimes, the learners would miss school while looking after their sick parents. Participant 1 explained this phenomenon as follows,

> "The poverty levels are stinking, since most homes are poor. Where there are no or limited facilities to manage a child's education, no electricity or alternative sources of energy, no running water, you give the child homework and you find him/her being unable to complete their homework. Some families are child-headed homes. The HIV and AIDS pandemic, TB and other ailments all cause the child to lag in school work as they stay at home looking after sick relatives."

The findings suggest that poverty and other social issues have an impact on DHs' attempts to improve the quality of teaching and learning in their schools, especially since some of these schools were classified as under-performing schools. This emerged from what DHs explained about the extra classes they were co-ordinating to improve learner attainment. DHs

and other educators worked hard to improve learners' academic achievement. Amongst the initiatives they undertook was to encourage educators to conduct extra classes. These classes were taken after school, to provide learners with opportunities to study and do their homework as some did not have a conducive home environments from which to study.

According to the participants, most initiatives to help improve learners' performance were also affected by poverty. Participant 5 indicated that some of their learners could not stay at school for extra classes because their families could not afford to provide them with enough food that would make it possible for them to extend the school day. The extra classes were conducted in the afternoon after the completion of the normal school day. Some learners could not attend because they did not have an extra set of school uniform. Arriving home late after participating in extra classes made it difficult for them to wash their school uniform in readiness for the next day. Poor school attendance emerged as another challenge that DHs identified. Some learners stayed far from schools and paying for transport to school posed a problem. When money was not available, they had to ether walk for long distances or not attend school at all. The rate of absenteeism was is high. One participant explained,

> "Sometimes, you'll find that learners cannot stay for afternoon classes because at home, they do not have a way of giving him/her lunch on the limited food that they have. Learners do not go to school if they do not have money for transport or they must walk long distances. When it is raining, they do not go to school. You find that a learner cannot attend extra-classes as he has one pair of trousers that must be washed for use on the next day" (Participant 5).

Commenting about the impact of poverty related issues on her work as a DH, Participant 6 highlighted that, as a result of the challenges related to poverty and other social issues, she ended up assuming a parental role by buying some necessities for some learners for them to be able to attend extra classes that they were otherwise unable to attend, because they did not have adequate school uniforms and food.

> "As a result, I end up donating money or buying some of school uniforms from my pocket and some teachers end up making sandwiches just to make sure that learners remain at school for extra lessons. You go and buy two pairs of trousers and maybe three shirts" (Participant 6).

Drawing from the comments made by DHs above, it is clear that poverty and related social issues make supporting teaching and learning challenging, greatly affecting the work of DHs. Schools in the context of rurality tend to have poor learner achievement. The DHs must work

with other stakeholders to mitigate the manifestations of poverty and other social issues to ensure that their schools deliver on quality teaching and learning. In pursuit of better learner attainment, they are compelled to deal with many issues, which are not directly linked to teaching and learning. It is apparent from the views of DHs above that they have integrated a social worker role into their jobs.

4.8.2 Migration from Rural to Urban Areas

The migration of learners from poor areas to affluent and developing areas impacted the work of DHs. In some schools, especially those that are in rural settings, as a way of escaping the poverty, people leave these areas and move to urban areas, hoping to find jobs and start a better life. This results in the numbers of learners leaving rural schools increasing. Participant 1 explained that, if many learners leave a particular school, such a school is allocated fewer educators and other resources by the Department of Education. He observed that some schools in rural areas were finally characterised by low learner enrolment.

> "As a result of several factors including poverty, people move from rural areas looking for greener pastures in urban areas, leaving their homes behind. This results in dropping learner enrolments in those areas. The more learners that move and leave the school, the less the number of educators that are allocated in that school because of low learner enrolments" (Participant 1).

In line with the above view regarding the rural-urban drift, Participant 2, who was also working in a rural secondary school said that the people were leaving the area where her school was located and were going to developing areas. She added that,

> "While some people are moving, they cannot take the school with them. There are those that cannot move. For instance, a school with low learner enrolment was affected by the Post Provisioning Norm (PPN) problem as it was allocated less educators and so teaching and learning becomes a problem. So, you can see that teaching and learning are compromised" (Participant 2).

Participant 4, another DH in a rural secondary school articulated his views about rural-urban migration and its impact on the support of teaching and learning. He emphasised that because of migration, which impacted educator allocation through PPN, there was no proper teaching in some of the schools. He further linked this to the prevalence of extra classes in Grade 12 where educators were working very hard because learners reach Grade 12 without having

mastered the work from lower grades. He concluded that extra classes were intended to ameliorate some of these challenges.

> "In Grade 8, there are nine subjects and in Grade 10, there are subject choices, how many educators are there? It tells you how the quality of teaching and learning is affected in those areas, because of the low learner enrolment and feweducators. This is because of the movement of people from disadvantaged contexts looking for greener pastures in the city" (Participant 4).

Participant 3 brought another dimension to the discussion on, that of non-viable schools, school closures and school mergers as a result of the rapid drop in learner population, as parents migrate to other areas. He reported that some of the schools were being closed the following year after they are first referred to as non-viable schools. Participant 3 described the non-viable schools as schools where there is a very small number of learners and allocation of resources is considered a wasteful expenditure. He argued that this creates a physical resource dilemma when school buildings become a white elephant (not used) as they are vacated, whereas the human resource dilemma emanates when we as DHs must be placed in other schools. The following was said,

> "The migration of learners from rural to urban areas causes a lot of problems to us as Departmental Heads as well as educators, because the PPN (Post Provisioning Norm) decreases and that make us to be placed in other schools or else having heavy workload due to low learner enrolment" (Participant 3).

4.8.3 Cultural and Traditional Practices

Cultural and traditional practices emerged as having a major influence on the manner in which some DHs were supporting teaching and learning. According to Participant 4, the effect of cultural and traditional practices in his school was illustrated by the practice in which parents were encouraging the girlchild to get married because they wanted to receive *ilobol*o (bride prize) in the form of cattle, money, and gifts. During parents' visits or parents' meetings, he would receive reports from concerned parents about this problem. He explained that the houses in some rural areas was characterised by rondavels (huts). Boys who would have reached a particular age must use their own rondavel. Such living traditions seem to create an environment where young girls and boys date (*ukuqoma nokuqonywa*) and there is no way for parent to supervise them. Participant 2 stated that parents had become match makers especially the head of the families (*obaba*) for their children; they would be the

ones to tell their girls when the boyfriend had arrived. As a DH, he had tried to talk to parents about this tradition as it created an environment where learners would fail to focus on their school work.

> "I call parents and tell them that the issue of marrying young girls, and boys and girls dating (*ukuqoma nokuqonywa*) while staying in their own rondavels (*ilawu*) is wrong. It makes learners not to focus on their school work. You have a girl who is 16 or 17 years old who is told that the boyfriend (*isoka*) has arrived… Where do you start? Do you start by addressing the elders?" (Participant 2)

Another cultural practice which is common in the area where Participant 3 and Participant 1's schools were located is called *icece* or the Raising of Doek ceremony. Participant 1 tried to explain it by stating that according to this tradition, once a boy and a girl agree to date, the young boy must put up a white handkerchief indicating that he has a girlfriend. Both sets of parents are informed about this. Participant 1 further explained that the boy and the girl are not expected to have sex until they are married and if they do, and the girl gets pregnant, it becomes easy for the parents to establish who is responsible. The boy will now acquire a certain status in the community. Unfortunately, for some boys, this status may have a negative effect on their schooling. Participant 1 added that these boys tend to attend school as they please or they end up dropping out of school and look for work because they may impregnate their girl partners. The young girl may also attend school on the decision of the boyfriend, get pregnant, and/or drop out as well.

> "In this area, there is a tradition called *icece*, where children go to choose their partners (*ziyoqomisana*). That is where they raise white cloth or handkerchief (a traditional ritual of showing that a person has a girlfriend), *useqonyiwe*. The parents have no problem but only the teacher seems to have problems as once this happens, learner school attendance is affected. They want the learner to be in class, but they are often reported absent because of such traditions" (Participant 3).

Such traditions tend to immensely affect DHs' efforts to improve matric results. In schools, DHs working with educators, principals and district officials organise vacation classes for matric students. These classes are unlike the extra classes discussed above in Section 4.7.1 that take place after school, as vacation classes take place from the first to the third terms' holidays. Explaining this, Participant 1 highlighted that in these vacation classes, highly qualified educators called 'lead educators' are brought to schools to help with teaching. One DH, Participant 1 expressed her frustration with these traditions, arguing that it is very

discouraging after she had done so much work in organising these classes and then receive reports that many learners do not attend classes as they went to *icece*. The participant said,

> "You find that educators want learners in schools and they are not there because they had to attend *icece*. These are the kind of challenges we face when we monitor these classes. It is frustrating because I spend a lot of time coordinating these classes" (Participant 1).

Participant 4 and Participant 5 also explained that the community they worked with held traditional and cultural views about boys and girls. These views tended to cause a lot of tension and conflict amongst parents and learners, which resulted in them having to intervene. According to Participant 4, he intervened at his school because the learners and parents were fighting over the introduction of tracksuits at school. Learners wanted tracksuits with pants for girls and the parents were not happy with that because, in their traditions, girls were not allowed to wear pants. The principal and Participant 4 had to intervene because learners were starting to boycott classes and threatening to stage violent protests.

> "The proposal that the school was going to buy track suits ignited a problem that the authorities had not imagined. The parents argued that in this area, they do not want women to wear pants. The parents declared that no girl was going to wear pants, while the learners wanted the tracksuit to be introduced" (Participant 4).

On the same issue, Participant 5 reported that parents treated boy and children differently. The boys were given certain roles and more opportunities than girls. Parents seemed not to be bothered by their under 16 girls getting pregnant. They did not view this as rape because the child was under 16. Once the principal would raise the matter with the social worker, the parents would chase him from their school as they viewed his action as an interference and a source of conflict, which meant that the circuit manager's intervention was required to help resolve the impasse.

> "Parents are still conservative here. They are very respectful, but they are some traditions that they still want to maintain. For example, they instil certain values, assign roles and hold expectations for boys and girls. The girls in the community I serve are not given more opportunities like their male counterparts. When learners go to school and educators tell them that a boy and a girl are equal, this causes tension; some community members even try to chase away educators from the school when the educator learns that a learner who is under 16 years is pregnant and intervenes by involving social workers. These are issues of tradition and there is lot of secrecy about

them. We as educators view this as rape because a child under 16 years of age cannot consent to marriage. The principal had to intervene to protect this educator" (Participant 5).

The cultural tradition practised by communities served by these DHs impacted the education of their children, which is also the responsibility of the DHs. The manner in which girls and boys were treated by communities was very conservative and it impacted the learners' education. Marrying of young girls, *icece*, raising doek and ignoring the abuse girls when they are impregnated at a young age are some of the issues that emerged. As a result, DHs struggled to focus on issues of teaching and learning.

4.9 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I dealt with the presentation and discussion of the findings. These findings emanated from data, which was generated from the participants, through in-depth interviews bout leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. In the next chapter, I present the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the presentation and discussion of findings. The findings were categorised into five themes that arose from interviews. This chapter summarises the study as well as the findings based on the research questions. Thereafter, I present the conclusions of what emerged from the study in response to each research question. Finally, based on the findings, I present recommendations for practice and for further research.

5.2 Summary of the Study

This study aimed to explore how Departmental Heads (DHs) in secondary schools located in rural areas lead teaching and learning. The study also sought to explore the strategies that were employed by DHs to enhance leadership for teaching and learning and the challenges they faced in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality.

In chapter one, I introduced the study and outlined the background, statement of the problem and the rationale of the study. I also indicated that in South Africa, the DH is expected to monitor and supervise teaching and learning. I also raised the following as the research questions of the study: (i) What are the roles of secondary schools' Departmental Heads in leading teaching and learning in the rural settings?; (ii) What leadership strategies do DHs use to enhance leadership for teaching and learning in the rural settings?; (iii) What are the challenges faced by the DHs in leading teaching and learning in the rural settings? I also argued that this study was significant because it could be helpful and useful to other DHs working in the same contexts where they were expected to monitor and supervise the post level one-educators and could also tell the principals about both delegation and management of duties to the DHs. The study can also assist the Department of Education officials at the district and circuit level in designing relevant training programmes for DHs.

In Chapter Two, I discussed and presented the local and international review of literature relating to the role of DHs in secondary schools, the challenges facing that DHs faced as instructional leaders. Thereafter, the literature review was followed by an exposition of the theoretical frameworks that underpinned this study namely Hallinger's (2011) leadership for learning model and instructional leadership. Hallinger's (2011) leadership for learning model stipulates that leadership is influenced by the school and environmental context. The values,

beliefs, knowledge and experience of leaders are important (Hallinger et al., 2011). This means that the personal characteristics of a leader moderate the exercise of leadership by a leader on daily basis. School-level conditions such as vision and goals, academic structures and processes and people's capacity mediate leadership to learner and school outcomes, which makes the leadership to be indirectly connected to the learning outcomes (Hallinger, 2011).

The instructional leadership emphasises on what the school administrators need to do in order to make teachers become good instructors in the classroom to ensure the achievement of learning outcomes by a school. This theory sees the value of the principal as being more significant than other school management team (SMT) members. The principal has all the power and authority to him or herself, however, there has been power shift since the birth of democracy in 1994 in South African schools. The SMTs have also become instructors to the teachers, which has resulted in the teachers becoming good instructors in the classroom, because he SMTs support and motivate them. This is not fully practised in some schools, though (Bush et al., 2010). I then moved to Chapter Three where I presented a detailed discussion of the methodology that was used to generate data from three participating secondary schools and six participants. This study adopted the interpretivist paradigm as its epistemological foundation. This allowed me to understand the role of secondary school DHs in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. To ensure that the study selected the participants who had relevant information on the phenomenon in question, I used purposive and convenience sampling. Face to face semi-structured in-depth interviews with the participants were used for generating data. The summary of chapter four and five is captured in the summary of findings presented below.

5.3 Summary of the findings

In this section, I summarise the findings of the study. In summarising the findings of the study, I revisit all the research questions and give the summary of the findings under each question.

5.3.1 What are the roles of secondary schools' Departmental Heads in leading teaching and learning in the rural settings?

This study revealed that the Departmental Heads have different roles in leading teaching and learning in the school. These include monitoring of teaching and learning, moderating of

formal assessment tasks, mentoring newly appointed educators and appraising and evaluation of educators on Quality Management System (QMS).

5.3.1.1 Monitoring of Teaching and Learning

The Departmental Heads (DHs) in the study revealed that they monitor teaching and learning in the schools by conducting announced and unannounced class visits to check whether effective teaching and learning was taking place in the classrooms. This study also indicated that DHs supervise and monitor whether the educators give feedback to the learners at all times. The participants (DHs) in this study also emphasised that the class visits assisted educators to be ready and always prepared because they did not know when the DHs would visit to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom.

5.3.1.2 Moderation of Formal Assessment Tasks

The study showed that the Departmental Heads manage teaching and learning by conducting pre-and post-moderation of the formal assessment tasks to ensure that assessment tasks of all subjects are fair, flexible, valid and reliable. All the DHs in the study indicated that that they were conducting pre-and post-moderation of all subjects in their departments to ensure that that all learners were writing the assessment tasks which were in line with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) document and Annual Teaching Plans of each subject. The DHs in this study also emphasised that moderation of formal assessment tasks is an essential part of ensuring integrity in the assessment.

5.3.1.3 Mentoring **of Newly Appointed Educators**

In the study, DHs revealed that they were mentoring newly appointed educators by sharing knowledge and expertise with them so that the educators (novice educators) could understand the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) and Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) of all the subjects that they were teaching in the schools. The study also indicated that the DHs demonstrate a positive attitude as role models to the novice educators. The findings of the study showed that DHs develop novice educators on classroom management so that they can manage the classes effectively. The study showed that all DHs conduct induction workshops to all newly appointed educators in order to familiarise them with departmental

policies such as admission policy, assessment policy, code of conduct for educators, leave measures and many more.

5.3.1.4 Implementing Quality Management System (QMS)

The findings of the study also revealed that all participants appraise and evaluate educators through QMS to determine levels of competence of all educators and ensure that educators perform their duties with integrity and maintain a positive attitude towards all learning activities. All DHs in the study indicated that they appraised and evaluated all educators on Quality Management System (QMS) to ensure that the performance appraisal of every educator is fairly and accurately using the approved instrument. The DHs emphasised that they conduct performance appraisal for educators and keep records thereof and assist the principal in finalising educators' appraisal scores.

5.3.2 What leadership strategies do Departmental Heads use to enhance leadership for teaching and learning in the rural settings?

In this research question, the purpose was to explore the strategies used by DHs to enhance leadership for teaching and learning in the context of rurality. This study revealed that DHs used different strategies to enhance leadership for teaching and learning. These strategies are as follows: providing support for educators' professional development, ensuring proper discipline for both educators and learners and managing learners' textbooks.

5.3.2.1. Providing support for educators' professional development

The findings of the study also revealed that all participants provide support for educators' educators' professional development by motivating the educators to attend workshops, which are organised by district officials, to capacitate them with the tremendous changes that are taking place in the education system. These workshops were helpful and useful as they provided much required assistance to the educators on various issues that they face in schools.

5.3.2.2. Ensuring proper discipline for both educators and learners

In this study, DHs revealed that they also ensure proper discipline for both educators and learners by formulating and discussing a code of conduct which is in line with the National Constitution for our learners and educators.

5.3.2.3. Managing learners' textbooks

This study also showed that DHs manage the distribution of learners' textbooks in such a way that the learners share them and help to create a 'do care' attitude among themselves because

they have the ability to take good care of books, so that at the end of the year, they will return them.

5.3.3. What are the challenges faced by the Departmental Heads in leading teaching and learning in the rural settings?

The findings revealed that the participants (DHs) were experiencing numerous challenges in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. These challenges were as follows.

5.3.3.1. Working in disadvantaged secondary schools

The study showed that DHs had a challenge in working in disadvantaged secondary schools, due to the lack of facilities such as school libraries, absence of electricity from national power and lack of learners' exposure to the facilities that might assist teaching in the schools.

5.3.3.2. Dealing with more orphans and vulnerable children

In this study, DHs revealed that the high number of orphans and vulnerable children in their schools was found to be increasing the burden on the shoulders of DHs. It also found that learners' social problems and all related matters were dealt with in an ad-hoc and unstructured way. There was a need for more cooperation between the schools and the Department of Social Development so that learners who are orphans and vulnerable children can be assisted in applying for foster care for which they qualify but cannot access without support.

5.3.3.3. Compromised mentoring and supervision of educators

The participants revealed that they struggled to perform their management duties as a result of the heavy workloads allocated to them. The heavy workloads for the participants came as a result of a low number of educators employed in all participating secondary schools.

5.3.3.4. Learner pregnancy

All participants in this study identified learner pregnancy as a huge challenge in rural secondary schools, because most of the learners hail from disadvantaged families so they do whatever they can in order for them to get food and money for their survival. The findings revealed that the child support grant also contributed to the increase in the rate of learner pregnancy in rural secondary schools.

5.3.3.5. Language of learning and teaching (LoLT)

Lastly, the study showed that the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is also a huge challenge in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality, because the learners were struggling to understand the lessons in the

classrooms due to English as the LoLT.

5.4. Conclusion

Having summarised the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn from the study: The Departmental Heads demonstrated a sound and relevant understanding of the leadership of teaching and learning in the schools. Leadership is understood as a facilitation of the learning process in the schools by acknowledging that learners understand and give meaning to the lesson through their own reality. Moreover, beyond what is generally known about leadership of teaching and learning, there is another element to this phenomenon especially the challenges facing the DHs in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. DHs who participated in the study highlighted that it was not easy to work and teach in disadvantaged secondary schools, because there was a shortage of facilities such as school libraries, electricity and lack of learners' exposure to the facilities that might improve teaching and learning in the schools.

5.5. Recommendations

In this section, I present the recommendations of this study. These recommendations are offered for practice and further research as presented below.

5.5.1 Recommendations for Practice

Based on the finding it was evident that DHs in this study understood their roles in leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. Therefore given the context of the school I used Leadership for learning theory and instructional leadership theory, which recommended that the school should be in line with the departmental policies by implementing them accordingly. DHs monitor teaching and learning by conducting unannounced and announced class visits to check whether teaching and learning was taking place at the school. The moderation of formal assessment tasks is one of the important role of DHs to make sure that the assessment tasks are in line with the ATP and CAPS document of the subject. DHs mentor newly appointed educators by focusing on the Curriculum Assessment and Policy Statement (CAPS) and Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) to ensure that all educators teach what is prescribed in the ATPs for each subject and every subject they teach in the schools.

DHs should play an important role in leading teaching and learning in the schools and create positive learning relationships between educators and learners. DHs should also understand policies such as assessment policy, promotion and progression requirement policy for learners and education legislation such as EEA, SASA and many more to enable them to perform their duties effectively, and be responsible for the daily management of activities in the schools. This study also recommends that DHs should always provide support for educators' professional development in the subject meetings and departmental meetings. Appraisal and evaluation of educators through QMS assists DHs to determine the levels of competence of all the educators and ensure that educators perform their duties with integrity and maintain a positive attitude towards all learning activities.

5.6 Recommendations for Further Research

This study was conducted in one education district in KwaZulu-Natal with six participants. I therefore recommend that a similar study be conducted in all districts in KwaZulu-Natal to explore what DHs do regarding leading teaching and learning in the context of rurality. That study can further entail the DHs of primary schools on how they lead teaching and learning in their schools.

5.7 Final Word

This study revealed that DHs monitor and control the work of educators and learners in terms of quality and quantity in the school and be able to conduct announced and unannounced class visits to check whether teaching and learning was taking place in the classrooms at the school. In line with what extant literature suggests, this study therefore emerges that DHs are experiencing numerous challenges in leading teaching and learning in the school. These challenges include the following: role ambiguity, workloads, resistance from educators and many more that make limit DHs from performing their expected duties, because they do not understand their role and are not aware of all their responsibilities (Kosgei, 2015). The work of DHs has become more challenging, because they are continually provided new responsibilities and tasks, whilst simultaneously being expected to provide chances to develop and improve their departments (Kelly et al., 2016). A key observation is that most of educators do not support DHs but opposing them in tasks such as supervision of educators.

References

Adey, K. (2000). Professional development priorities: the views of middle managers in secondary schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 28(4): 419 - 431.

Affum-Osei, E., Asante, E., Josephine, B. & Forkouh, S. (2014). Achievement motivation, academic self-concept and academic achievement among high school students. *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences.* ISSN 2056-5852. 2.

Arifin, S. R. M. (2018). Ethical considerations in qualitative study. *International journal of care scholars*, *1*(2), 30-33.

(DoE), K.-N. (2012). *Final Educator Pst Establishment 2015*. Pietermaritzburg: Government Printer

Badenhorst, Jo & Koalepe, James. (2014). How Do We Manage? Determinants of Effective Leadership in High-Poverty Schools. *Journal of the Social Sciences*. 39. 243-256. 10.1080/09718923.2014.11893287.

Ball, D. L. (1990). Prospective elementary and secondary teachers' understanding of division. *Journal for research in mathematics education*, *21*(2), 132-144.

Bambi, A. (2012). The role of heads of departments as instructional leaders in secondary school: Implications of teaching learning.

Bell, J. (1993). Doing Your Research Project: A Guide for First-Time Researchers in Education and Social Sciences. Open University Press.

Bertram, C. and Christiansen, I. (2014) Understanding Research: An Introduction to Reading Research. Van Schaik, Pretoria.

Bhengu, T. T., & Mkhize, B. N. (2013). Principals' instructional leadership practices in improving learner achievement: case studies of five secondary schools in the Umbumbulu area. *Education As Change*, *17*(1), 33-47.

Bird, A., Mendenhall, M., Stevens, M.J. and Oddou, G. (2010), "Defining the content domain of intercultural competence for global leaders", *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, Vol. 25 No. 8, pp. 810-828. https://doi.org/10.1108/02683941011089107

Blase, J., & Blase, J. (1999). Principals' Instructional Leadership and Teacher Development: Teachers' Perspectives. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 35(3), 349-378. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X99353003

Blose, S. B. (2013). Exploring the experiences of three secondary school principals in developing a collaborative learning culture among teachers.

Boateng, C. (2012). Leadership Styles and Effectiveness of Principals of Vocational Technical Institutions in Ghana.

Boix, Roser & Champollion, Pierre & Duarte, António. (2015). Teaching and Learning in Rural Contexts. *Sisyphus*. 3. 28-47. 10.25749/sis.7883.

Bolam, R. (1999) 'Educational administration, leadership and management: towards a research agenda', in Bush, T., Bell, L., Bolam, R., Glatter, R. and Ribbins, P. (eds), *Educational Management: Redefining Theory, Policy and Practice*, London, Paul Chapman Publishing

Bolderston, A. (2012). Conducting a research interview. *Journal of medical imaging and radiation sciences*, *43*(1), 66-76.

Botha, R. J. & Triegaardt, P. K. (2014) Distributed Leadership Towards' School Improvement: Case Study in South African Schools. *International Journal of Educational Sciences*, 7:2, 309-317, DOI: 10.1080/09751122.2014.11890193

Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative research journal*, *9*(2), 27-40.

Brittenham, G. M., Andersson, M., Egli, I., Foman, J. T., Zeder, C., Westerman, M. E., & Hurrell, R. F. (2014). Circulating non–transferrin-bound iron after oral administration of supplemental and fortification doses of iron to healthy women: a randomized study. *The American journal of clinical nutrition*, *100*(3), 813-820.

Burns, J.M. 1998. Leadership. New York: Harper and Row.

Bush, T. & Glover, D. (2016). School leadership and management in South Africa: findings from a systematic literature review. *International Journal of Educational Management.* 30.

Bush, H. (2005). Being a Middle Leader: Exploring professional identities. *School Leadership and Management*, *25*(2).

Bush, T. (2007). Educational Leadership and Management: theory, policy and practice. *South African Journal of Education*, *27*(3), 391-406.

Bush, T. (2014). Instructional leadership for learning: global and South African perspectives. *Education As Change*, *17*(1), 5-20.

Bush, T., & Glover, D. (2003). Leadership development: A literature review. *Nottingham National College for School leadership.*

Bush, T., Joubert, R., Kiggundu, R., & Van Rooyen, J. (2009). Managing teaching and learning in South Africa. *International Journal of Educational Development*.

Bush, T., Joubert, R., Kiggundu, R., & Van Rooyen, J. (2010). Managing teaching in South African Schools. *International Journal of Educational Development 30*(2), 162-168.

Cheung, R. S. H., Hui, A. N. N., & Cheung, A. C. K. (2020). Gifted Education in Hong Kong: A School-Based Support Program Catering to Learner Diversity. *ECNU Review of Education*, 3(4), 632-658. https://doi.org/10.1177/2096531120967447

Chikoko, V., Naicker, I., & Mthiyane, S. (2015). School leadership practices that work in areas of multiple deprivation in South Africa. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *43*(3), 452-467. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143215570186

Ching, T., Huang, S., & Garmire, L. X. (2014). Power analysis and sample size estimation for RNA-Seq differential expression. *RNA. 20*(11), 1684–1696. https://doi.org/10.1261/rna.046011.114

Clarke, P. J., Snowling, M. J., Truelove, E., & Hulme, C. (2010). Ameliorating Children's Reading-Comprehension Difficulties: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Psychological Science*, 21(8), 1106-1116. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797610375449

Clarke, V. & Braun, V. (2013). Successful Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide for Beginners.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2000) Research Methods in Education. 5th Edition, Routledge Falmer, London. http://dx.doi.org/10.4324/9780203224342

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education.*

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research Methods in Education*. Routledge publishers. **Article citations**More>>

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2018). Research Methods in Education (8th ed.). London: Routledge.https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315456539

Cope, D. G. (2014). Methods and meanings: credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research. In *Oncology nursing forum* (Vol. 41, No. 1).

Creswell. J.W. and Creswell, J.D. (2017) Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. Sage, Newbury Park.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry and research design:choosing among five approaches*. SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. (2014a). *Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative and mixed method approaches* (4 ed.). SAGE Publishers.

Creswell, J. W. (2014b). *Research design: Qualitative, Quantitative and mixed method*

Crowe, S., Cresswell, K., Robertson, A., Huby, G., Avery, A., & Sheikh, A. (2011). The case study approach. *BMC medical research methodology*, *11*, 100. https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2288-11-100

Crouch, L., Rolleston, C., & Gustafsson, M. (2021). Eliminating global learning poverty: The importance of equalities and equity. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *82*, 102250.

Cuban, L. (1988). Managerial Imperative and the Practice of Leadership in Schools. Albany. State University of New York Press.

Daft, R.L. (2008) The Leadership Experience. 4th Edition, Thomson Corporation, Stamford.

Daniel, J. (2012). Making sense of MOOCs: Musings in a maze of myth, paradox and possibility. *Journal of interactive Media in education*, *2012*(3).

Darby, F., & Lang, J. M. (2019). Small teaching online: Applying learning science in online classes. John Wiley & Sons.

DePree, Max. (2006). The Leadership Quest: Three Things Necessary. *Business Strategy Review*. 4. 69 - 74. 10.1111/j.1467-8616.1993.tb00045.x.

De Vos, A. S., Delport, C. S. L., Fouche, C., & Strydom, H. (2011). *Research at grass roots: A primer for the social science and human professions*. Van Schaik Publishers.

Dickson, C. J., Madej, B. D., Skjevik, Å. A., Betz, R. M., Teigen, K., Gould, I. R., & Walker, R. C. (2014). Lipid14: the amber lipid force field. *Journal of chemical theory and computation*, *10*(2), 865-879.

Dufour, R. & Eaker, R. (1998). Professional learning communities at work: Best practices for enhancing student achievement. Bloomington: Alexanda. Employment Equity Act no. 76 of (1996).

Du Plessis, A. & Eberlein, E. (2017). The Role of Heads of Department in the Professional Development of Educators: A Distributed Leadership Perspective. *Africa Education Review*. 15. 1-19. 10.1080/18146627.2016.1224583.

Du Plessis, E., Conley, L. & Plessis, Pierre. (2007). Teaching and Learning in South African schools.

du Plessis, P. & Mestry, R. (2019). Teachers for rural schools - a challenge for South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, *39*(Suppl. 1), s1- s9. https://dx.doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39ns1a1774

Dworkin, S. L. (2012). Sample size policy for qualitative studies using in-depth interviews. *Archives of sexual behavior*, *41*, 1319-1320.

Ghavifekr, S., & Ibrahim, M. S. (2014). Head of Departments' Instructional Supervisory Role and Teachers' Job Performance: Teachers' Perceptions. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Management Studies*, *1*(2), 45–56. Retrieved from https://www.asianonlinejournals.com/index.php/AJSSMS/article/view/434

Glatthorn, A., Boschee, F. & Whitehead, B. (2011). Curriculum leadership. Strategies for development and implementation, (2nded). Califonia: Sage Inc.

Gurr, D. (2017). A Model of Successful School Leadership from the International Successful School Principalship Project. 10.1007/978-3-319-50980-8_2.

Ezzaki, B. (2007). Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Fusch Ph D, P. I., & Ness, L. R. (2015). Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research.

Goldkuhl, G. (2019). The generation of qualitative data in information systems research: the diversity of empirical research methods. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems*, *44*, 572-599.

Grant, M. J., & Hallman, K. (2006). Pregnancy-related school dropout and prior school performance in South Africa.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. (1989). Fourth generation evaluation. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Hallinger, P. (2000). Review of two decades of research on the Principalship using Principal as instructional Management Scale, Paper presented at the annual meeting in America educational Research association Seattle. Washington.

Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: reflections on the instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, *33*(3).

Hallinger, P., Bickman, L., & Davis, K. (2011). School context, principal leadership and student achievement. *Elementary School Journal*, *96*(5), 498-518.

Hallinger, P. V. I. p. (2011). Leadership for learning: Lessons from 40 years of Imperial Research Journal of Educational Administration *49*(2), 125-142. https://doi.org/doi.org/10.1108/09572311111116699

Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M., & de Lacey, S. (2016). Qualitative research methods: when to use them and how to judge them. *Human reproduction*, *31*(3), 498-501.

Harris, A. (2013). Distributed leadership: Friend or foe? Education Management Administration & Leadership. *41*(5). https://doi.org/doi: 10.1177/17411432349763

Harris, A. (2003). Teacher Leadership as Distributed Leadership: Heresy, fantasy or possibility?. *School Leadership & Management*. 23. 313-324. 10.1080/1363243032000112801.

Harris, A. & Jones, M. (2010). Professional learning communities and system improvement. *Improving Schools.* 13. 172-181. 10.1177/1365480210376487.

Heikka, J., & Hujala, E. (2012). Distribution of leadership among ECE Leaders and Members of Municipal Committees in Finland. *Southeast Asia Early Childhood Journal*, *1*, 15-29.

Herfort, B., Lautenbach, S., Porto de Albuquerque, J., Anderson, J., & Zipf, A. (2023). A spatio-temporal analysis investigating completeness and inequalities of global urban building data in OpenStreetMap. *Nature Communications*, *14*(1), 3985.

Hlalele, D. (2014). Creating sustainable rural learning ecologies in South Africa: Realities, lessons and prospects. *Journal of Human Ecology*, *45*(2), 101-110.

Hofman,R. (2014). Relationship between instructional supervision and professional development. *The international Education Journal: Comparative Perspective*, 1(13), 82-99

Hoon, M. W., Jones, A. M., Johnson, N. A., Blackwell, J. R., Broad, E. M., Lundy, B., Rice, A. J., & Burke, L. M. (2014). The effect of variable doses of inorganic nitrate-rich beetroot juice on simulated 2,000-m rowing performance in trained athletes. *International journal of sports physiology and performance*, *9*(4), 615–620. https://doi.org/10.1123/ijspp.2013-0207

Houghton, C., Casey, D., Shaw, D., & Murphy, K. (2013). Rigour in qualitative case-study research. *Nurse researcher*, *20*(4).

Hord, S. (2004). Learning together, leading together: Changing schools through professional learning communities. New York: Teachers College Press.

Huffman, J. (2014). Global Perspectives on Professional Learning Communities Development in High School. 2*7th Annual Paper presented in January 2014, International Conference for School Effectiveness and Improvement.* Yagyakarta, Indonesia

Hunzicker, J. (2012). Professional Development and Job-embedded Collaboration: How teachers learn to exercise leadership. *Professional Development in Education*, *38*(2), 267-289.

Islam, M. A., Haji Mat Said, S. B., Umarlebbe, J. H., Sobhani, F. A., & Afrin, S. (2022). Conceptualization of head-heart-hands model for developing an effective 21st century teacher. *Frontiers in psychology*, *13*, 968723. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.968723

Javadi, V. (2014). The Role of Middle Managers: Lessons from an International Secondary School. 10.13140/2.1.3199.1365.

Jupp, V. (2006). The Sage dictionary of social research methods. *The SAGE Dictionary of Social Research Methods*, 1-352.

Karra, M. & Lee, M., 2012, Human capital, consequences of teenage child bearing in South Africa. *Population Research Bureau.* www.prb.org.

Kelley, D. R., Snoek, J., & Rinn, J. L. (2016). Basset: learning the regulatory code of the accessible genome with deep convolutional neural networks. *Genome research*, *26*(7), 990–999. https://doi.org/10.1101/gr.200535.115

Klein, D. (2005). *T*he unsupervised learning of natural language structure. Stanford University.

Koch, C. C. (2006). Nanostructured materials: processing, properties and applications. William Andrew.

Kosgei, A. (2012). A Study on Teacher Characteristics and Students' Academic Achievement: Case of Biology subject in Selected Secondary Schools in Nandi South District, Kenya. *Paripex - Indian Journal Of Research*. 2. 66-67. 10.15373/22501991/MAR2013/24.

Kruger, A. (2003). Instructional leadership: The impact on the culture of teaching and learning in effective secondary schools. *South African Journal of Education, 23*(3), 206-211.

Leask, Anna. (2013). Exploring the Relationship between visitor attractions and events: definitions and management factors. *Current Issues in Tourism*. 16. 10.1080/13683500.2012.702736.

Leithwood, K. (2016) Department-Head Leadership for School Improvement, Leadership and Policy in Schools, 15:2, 117-140, DOI: 10.1080/15700763.2015.1044538

Leithwood, K., & Jantzi, D. (1999). The relatives Effects of Principal and Teacher Sources of Leadership on Student Engagement with School. *Educational Administration Quarteterly*,, *35*, 679-706.

Leithwood, K., Patten, S. & Jantzi, Doris. (2010). Testing a Conception of How School Leadership Influences Student Learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly - EDUC ADMIN QUART*. 46. 671-706. 10.1177/0013161X10377347.

Mårtensson, K., & Roxå, T. (2016). Leadership at a local level – Enhancing educational development. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 44(2), 247-262. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143214549977

Maxwell, G. (2006). Quality management of school-based assessments: moderation of teacher judgments. *Paper presented at the 32nd IAEA Conference, Singapore*. http://www.iaea.info/documents/paper_1162a1e108.pdf

Mercer, J., Barker, B. & Bird, R. (2010). Human resource management in education. Contexts times and impact. New York: Routledge.

Merriam, S. B. (2009). Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, I. M. (2013). Learning in adulthood: a comprehensive guide. Jossey-Bass Inc.

Mestry, R., & Pillay, J. (2013). School instructional leadership. Education as change. *17*(1).

Mestry, R., Hendricks, I. & Bisschoff, T. (2009). Perceptions of teachers on the benefits of teacher development programmes in one province of South Africa. *South African Journal of Education*, *29*(4), 475-490. Retrieved January 28, 2024, from http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0256-01002009000400004&lng=en&tlng=en.

Miller, D. T. (2001). Disrespect and the experience of injustice. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *52*(1), 527-553.

Motala, S., Dieltiens, V., & Sayed, Y. (2009). Physical access to schooling in South Africa: mapping dropout, repetition and age-grade progression in two districts. *Comparative education*, *45*(2), 251-263.

Mostohi,T. (2011). The corrosive influence of unions on SA schools. *Mail and Guardian, 18 August, 2011.*

Mthethwa, F. (2011). Challenges facing heads of departments in rural schools.

Mthiyane, D.B., Wissink, H. & Chiwawa, N., 2022, 'The impact of rural–urban migration in South Africa: A case of KwaDukuza municipality', *Journal of Local Government Research and Innovation* 3(0), a56. **https://doi.org/10.4102/jolgri.v3i0.5**

Murphy, J. (1992). Instructional leadership: Focus on time to learn. *NASSP Bulletin 76*(1), 19-26.

Shuaib, F., Gunnala, R., Musa, E. O., Mahoney, F. J., Oguntimehin, O., Nguku, P. M., ... & Vertefeuille, J. F. (2014). Ebola virus disease outbreak—Nigeria, July–September 2014. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, *63*(39), 867.

Myende, P. E. (2011). Sustaining school-community partnership through effective communication, . *18*(1), 76-94.

Myende, P. E. (2014). *Improving academic performance in rural school through the use of asset-based approach as management strategy* University of Free State].

Naicker, I., Chikoko, V., & Mthiyane, S. E. (2013). Instructional leadership practices in challenging school contexts. *Education As Change, 1*(17), 137-150.

Namey, E., Guest, G., O'Regan, A., Godwin, C. L., Taylor, J., & Martinez, A. (2020). How does mode of qualitative data collection affect data and cost? Findings from a quasi-experimental study. *Field methods, 32*(1), 58-74.

Nowell, L. S., Norris, J. M., White, D. E., & Moules, N. J. (2017). Thematic analysis: Striving to meet the trustworthiness criteria. *International journal of qualitative methods, 16*(1), 1609406917733847.

Ndovela, S. (2014). The role of principals in promoting teacher collaborative learning within school. Case study of two secondary schools at Ugu district.

Nene, N. (2015). 2015 Budget Speech. http://www. Treasury.gov.za./documents/national%20budget/2015/.

Olsen, B. (2012). Archaeology: The discipline of things. University of California Press.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). Two decades of developments in qualitative inquiry: A personal, experiential perspective. *Qualitative social work, 1*(3), 261-283.

Patton, M. Q. (2001). Qualitative research and evaluation and methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Polit, D. F., & Beck, C. T. (2013). Is there still gender bias in nursing research? An update. *Research in Nursing & Health, 36*(1), 75-83.

Ramrathan, L. & Ngubane, T. (2014). Instructional leadership in multi-grade classrooms: What can mono-grade teachers learn from their resilience? *Education as Change*, 17(1), S93-S105.

Ramrathan, L., Le Grange, L. & Higgs, P. (2017). Education Studies for Initial Teacher Development.

Reed, B. N., Klutts, A. M., & Mattingly, T. J., 2nd (2019). A Systematic Review of Leadership Definitions, Competencies, and Assessment Methods in Pharmacy Education. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 83*(9), 7520. https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe7520

Republic of South Africa. (2006). Design and Implementation Evaluation of the Integrated Residential Development Programme. *Evaluation Report. Department of Human Settlements and Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation.* Pretoria: Government Printer.

Reitzug, U., & West, D.L. (2011). A Developmental Framework for Instructional Leadership.

Roberts, P., & Green, B. (2013). Researching Rural Places: On Social Justice and Rural Education. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 19(10), 765-774. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800413503795

Ryan, F., Coughlan, M., & Cronin, P. (2009). Interviewing in qualitative research: The one- to-one interview. *International journal of therapy and rehabilitation*, *16*(6), 309-314.

Senge, P. (2007) Collaborating for systemic change. *Sloan Management Review,* 48(2):44–53

Sergiovanni, T. J. & Starratt, R.J. (2007). Supervision: A redefinition. Boston: McGraw-Hill.

Shamaki, T.A. (2015). Influence of Learning Environment on Students' Academic Achievement in Mathematics: A Case Study of Some Selected Secondary Schools in Yobe State – Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice, 6,* 40-44.

Shenton, A. K. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for information*, *22*(2), 63-75.

Sibeko, P. G. (2012). The effect of pregnancy on a schoolgirl's education (*Doctoral dissertation,* University of Zululand).

Slaski, M. & Cartwright, S. (2002). Health, Performance and Emotional Intelligence: An Exploratory Study of Retail Managers. *Stress and Health*. 18. 63 - 68. 10.1002/smi.926.

Smith, C., Mestry, R., & Bambi, A. (2013). Role players and perceptions of departments' instructional leadership role in secondary schools. *Education As Change*, *1*(17), 163-174.

Sofo, F., Fitzgerald, R. & Jawas, U. (2012). Instructional leadership in Indonesian school reform: overcoming the problems to move forward, School Leadership & Management: *Formally School Organisational*, 32(5), 503-522.

Southworth, G. (2002). Instructional Leadership in Schools: Reflections and empirical evidence, School Leadership and Management.

Southworth, G. (2010). Primary school leadership today and tomorrow. *School Leadership & Management*, *28*(5), 413-434.

Starman, A. B. (2013). The case study as a type of qualitative research. *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies/Sodobna Pedagogika*, *64*(1).

Steyn, G. M., & van Niekerk, E. J. (2010). *Organisational behaviour in education and educational law*. UNISA. 87

Stuckey, H. L. (2014). The first step in data analysis: Transcribing and managing qualitative research data. *Journal of Social Health and Diabetes*, *2*(01), 006-008.

Thorpe, A. & Melnikova, J. (2014). The system of middle leadership in secondary schools in England and its implications for the Lithuanian educational system. *ATEE Spring University: Changing Education in a Changing Society*, *1*, 33-39.

Tobin, G. A., & Begley, C. M. (2004). Methodological rigour within a qualitative framework. *Journal of advanced nursing*, *48*(4), 388-396.

Tracy, S.J. (2013) Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact. Wiley-Blackwell, West Sussex.

Van Deventer, I., & Kruger, A. G. (2012). *An educator's guide to school management skills*. Van Schaik.

Van Zyl, A. (2009). The Impact of Social Networking 2.0 on Organisations. *The Electronic Library*. 27. 906-918. 10.1108/02640470911004020.

Wasserberg, M. (2000), Creating the vision and making it happen, in Tomlinson, H., Gunter, H. and Smith, P. (Eds.), Living Headship: Voices, Values and Vision, London, Paul Chapman.

Webber, C. F. (1989) "Mandatory Summary Jury Trial: Playing by the Rules?," *University of Chicago Law Review*: Vol. 56: Iss. 4, Article 11.

Wenzare, Z. (2011). Instructional Supervision in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, *40*(2), 188-261.

West, D. & Reitzug, U. (2011). A Developmental Framework for Instructional Leadership: *International Handbook of Leadership for Learning*, 165-185.

White, C. J. (2003). *Research methods and techniques*. Technikon Pretoria.

Whitehead, B. M., Boschee, F., & Decker, R. H. (2013). *The principal: Leadership for a global society*. SAGE.

Willis, J. W. (2007). World views, paradigms, and the practice of social science research. In Foundations of Qualitative Research: Interpretive and Critical Approaches. SAGE Publications, Inc., https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452230108

Yu, Z., Zhang, H., Sun, P., & Guo, Y. (2022). The Pattern and Local Push Factors of Rural Depopulation in Less-Developed Areas: A Case Study in the Mountains of North Hebei Province, China. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, *19*(10), 5909. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19105909

Yin, R. K. (2003). Designing case studies. *Qualitative research methods*, *5*(14), 359-386. Yukl, G. (2006). Leadership in organizations. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

APPENDIX A: DECLARATION FORM

DECLARATION OF CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

I _____(Full names of the participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the study that Mr Buyani Mnyandu is conducting with the school which is aimed at investigating how Secondary school's Departmental Heads in the context of rurality lead teaching and learning.

As the Departmental Head, I give consent to Mr Buyani Mnyandu to interview me. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study as explained in this letter by the researcher. I have been an opportunity to answer questions about the research and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this research is entirely voluntary and that the school can be withdrawn at any time without negative consequences.

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:	**YES**	**NO**
Audio-record my interview		
Further, I understand that:		
No financial rewards or costs will be incurred for my participation		
My identity will not be disclosed during and post the study		
My participation will be voluntary throughout the study		
Information given cannot be used against me during and post the study		

[redacted] :1/ ·- OS - 10.2.£

Signature of Participant **Date**

For any queries and further information, you may consult my supervisor, Prof Phumlani Myende on 031-260 2052 or myendep@ukzn.ac.za. You can also contact me (Mr Buyani Mnyandu using the details provided in the letter requesting permission).

APPENDIX A: DECLARATION FORM

DECLARATION OF CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

I _____ (Full names of the participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the study that Mr Buyani Mnyandu is conducting with the school which is aimed at investigating how Secondary school's Departmental Heads in the context of rurality lead teaching and learning.

As the Departmental Head, I give consent to Mr Buyani Mnyandu to interview me. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study as explained in this letter by the researcher. I have been an opportunity to answer questions about the research and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this research is entirely voluntary and that the school can be withdrawn at any time without negative consequences.

Additional consent, where applicable

I **hereby provide consent to:**	**YES**	**NO**
Audio-record my interview		
Further, I understand that:		
No financial rewards or costs will be incurred for my participation		
My identity will not be disclosed during and post the study		
My participation will be voluntary throughout the study		
Information given cannot be used against me during and post the study		

[redacted] 21/05/2021

Signature of Participant **Date**

For any queries and further information, you may consult my supervisor, Prof Phumlani Myende on 031-260 2052 or myendep@ukzn.ac.za. You can also contact me (Mr Buyani Mnyandu using the details provided in the letter requesting permission).

APPENDIX A: DECLARATION FORM

DECLARATION OF CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

I _____ (Full names of the participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the study that Mr Buyani Mnyandu is conducting with the school which is aimed at investigating how Secondary school's Departmental Heads in the context of rurality lead teaching and learning.

As the Departmental Head, I give consent to Mr Buyani Mnyandu to interview me. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study as explained in this letter by the researcher. I have been an opportunity to answer questions about the research and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this research is entirely voluntary and that the school can be withdrawn at any time without negative consequences.

Additional consent, where applicable

I **hereby provide consent to:**	**YES**	**NO**
Audio-record my interview		
Further, I understand that:		
No financial rewards or costs will be incurred for my participation		
My identity will not be disclosed during and post the study		
My participation will be voluntary throughout the study		
Information given cannot be used against me during and post the study		

[redacted] 21-05-2021

Signature of Participant **Date**

For any queries and further information, you may consult my supervisor, Prof Phumlani Myende on 031-260 2052 or myendep@ukzn.ac.za. You can also contact me (Mr Buyani Mnyandu using the details provided in the letter requesting permission).

APPENDIX A: DECLARATION FORM

DECLARATION OF CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

I _____(Full names of the participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the study that Mr Buyani Mnyandu is conducting with the school which is aimed at investigating how Secondary school's Departmental Heads in the context of rurality lead teaching and learning.

As the Departmental Head, I give consent to Mr Buyani Mnyandu to interview me. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study as explained in this letter by the researcher. I have been an opportunity to answer questions about the research and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this research is entirely voluntary and that the school can be withdrawn at any time without negative consequences.

Additional consent, where applicable

I **hereby provide consent to:**	**YES**	**NO**
Audio-record my interview		
Further, I **understand that:**		
No financial rewards or costs will be incurred for my participation		
My identity will not be disclosed during and post the study		
My participation will be voluntary throughout the study		
Information given cannot be used against me during and post the study		

[redacted] :J.. - OS - 202.1

Signature of Participant **Date**

For any queries and further information, you may consult my supervisor, Prof Phumlani Myende on 031-260 2052 or myendep@ukzn.ac.za. You can also contact me (Mr Buyani Mnyandu using the details provided in the letter requesting permission).

APPENDIX A: DECLARATION FORM

DECLARATION OF CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

I _____ (Full names of the participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the study that Mr Buyani Mnyandu is conducting with the school which is aimed at investigating how Secondary school's Departmental Heads in the context of rurality lead teaching and learning.

As the Departmental Head, I give consent to Mr Buyani Mnyandu to interview me. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study as explained in this letter by the researcher. I have been an opportunity to answer questions about the research and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this research is entirely voluntary and that the school can be withdrawn at any time without negative consequences.

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:	**YES**	**NO**
Audio-record my interview		
Further, I understand that:		
No financial rewards or costs will be incurred for my participation		
My identity will not be disclosed during and post the study		
My participation will be voluntary throughout the study		
Information given cannot be used against me during and post the study		

[redacted] 21/05/2021

Signature of Participant **Date**

For any queries and further information, you may consult my supervisor, Prof Phumlani Myende on 031-260 2052 or myendep@ukzn.ac.za. You can also contact me (Mr Buyani Mnyandu using the details provided in the letter requesting permission).

APPENDIX A: DECLARATION FORM

DECLARATION OF CONSENT FOR PARTICIPANTS

I _____ (Full names of the participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the study that Mr Buyani Mnyandu is conducting with the school which is aimed at investigating how Secondary school's Departmental Heads in the context of rurality lead teaching and learning.

As the Departmental Head, I give consent to Mr Buyani Mnyandu to interview me. I understand the purpose and procedures of the study as explained in this letter by the researcher. I have been an opportunity to answer questions about the research and have had answers to my satisfaction.

I declare that my participation in this research is entirely voluntary and that the school can be withdrawn at any time without negative consequences.

Additional consent, where applicable

I hereby provide consent to:	**YES**	**NO**
Audio-record my interview		
Further, I understand that:		
No financial rewards or costs will be incurred for my participation		
My identity will not be disclosed during and post the study		
My participation will be voluntary throughout the study		
Information given cannot be used against me during and post the study		

[redacted] _____ J.I- C r- J. C L

Signature of Participant **Date**

For any queries and further information, you may consult my supervisor, Prof Phumlani Myende on 031-260 2052 or myendep@ukzn.ac.za. You can also contact me (Mr Buyani Mnyandu using the details provided in the letter requesting permission).

Appendix B: Ethical Clearance

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
INYUVESI YAKWAZULU-NATALI

26 August 2021

Mr Buyani Mcabangiseni Mnyandu (210549925)
School Of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Mnyandu,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002971/2021
Project title: Leading Teaching and Learning in the context of rurality: Learning from Departmental Heads in Secondary schools of Zululand District
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 15 June 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

This approval is valid until 26 August 2022.
To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa
Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 **Email:** hssrec@ukzn.ac.za **Website:** http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics
Founding Campuses: Edgewood, Howard College, Medical School, Pietermaritzburg, Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

• DLX I ·ni..R\'1.1£.l · . CUED U:.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE GUIDE FOR DEPARTMENTAL HEADS (DHs)

be lie '111!'.IHD:h qut!'.lliioM

il1r,:: study te 8fl5\1i\::F lbc ilir,lhwi□g !\::Si:;8J1:.h ,qo::st:io:ms::

I. !Nm! re the: ro ,o. secondary- !B:til!lo Dcepartim1Mll11, Heads i1 lead.wig ch', :om. 1eanm:1g ii lbc c:ooo:n or naatit;-?

2. !Nilral strnlc ' s d.o HJ;,p.!tl"IJm:mtal Heads use- o i::Llhanc,:: lead..-: inf' t,::.a:c:hing 81-.d learnii.1 ·im*the* oDllk1;l! o rurality

l. !Nilra1 :m: c:hat m.cil the: Dqi,artm:nta1 He-ads n leadiig • h' • am binmg n 11.-.e c: of nmail;f/'

I. Dll?pamni!mal. I:fuiul!ii' ml.4! ia1I ailia te-a hia arnil I aliilia .

I.IJNm1rol:: do D::pn11m:w.al He-ads play im bi.d' • te:,mlms :om.leamm

1.2_ Ho do D.-:JilSTim:Llil'l 1-lmllh nlOOltoli mchimg a1llli birn:iag'!

I..lJ-low do I Hi::.a:ds del.-ebp ators in li::.a:di.1 tcaclmg am learnm

i. ·**1ra.tegi . emplo_ ed** by D,e-;p1utment.'II H a:dli t **e,nha.** I • d' **l'!lihip lfor tea** bin • arnil lE **aming...**

2.1. What stmm,gi,::s do D.-:p-amnc:□131 Heads, 1ay rocrih!in,e leadi:: ftw- tea :om. leami.1' .

2.2_Ho **tfr.sc** smt hc:,\l Oc:pannx:Llil'l 1-lmds lo ,i:mhtooc ti:eaclmg aoi hmm .

J. 'haU og . e:?1:peliM!, • d mo·pamni!ntal. He-am.

l.l.!Nilra1sre,c'Jrah cs m.c'1 I Heads: ·i:mbi.dling teaclm and li::-an1i:m .

l.2. Ho do D.-:pmm::□131 1-1 ah de-al wih ,**clral::n** s 1ml In! c i1 1Lie scb::io .

l..l. Ho so .io cc:oooni:: dnllen . of the,r:oliJ.'IIU1ii.l;• 21iml"t teachii mil bu:mng?

APPENDIX D: SCHOOL BASED ASSESSMENT MODERATION TOOL

DISTRICT:			
SUBJECT:			
GRADE:			
NAME OF SCHOOL:			
NAME OF EDUCATOR (S)			
NAME OF SUPERVISOR			
DATE			
TASK MODERATED			

PRE-ASSESSMENT MODERATION			
STANDARD OF ASSESSMENT TASK	**YES**	**NO**	**COMMENT**
Does the task/test correspond with the programme of assessment?			
Is the **duration** of the paper/task indicated?			
Are the **instruction** clear and unambiguous?			
Is the **mark allocation** for the task/test in accordance with CAPS?			
Does the paper/test cater for a **variety of questions**?			
Does the task/test incorporate the different **cognitive levels** (blooms Taxonomy)? (refer to the weighting grid of the test)			
Is the assessment task pitched at the appropriate cognitive level?			
Is there a correct distribution of marks according to the norms?			
Is there time allocation on the assessment, name of subject and instructions to candidates clearly indicated?			
Is language and terminology used appropriate and relevant?			
Is there mark allocation on the assessment task the same as that on the memo?			
Is the time allocated for the completion of the task, adequate?			
Is the quality of the illustrations, graphs, and tables clear, relevant and user-friendly?			
Does the assessment task have the correct numbering?			
ASSESSMENT TOOLS			
Are the **assessment tools** for every assessment task included in the teachers file e.g. rubric, memorandum – etc.?			
Is the marking tool relevant and appropriate for marking of the set task?			
Does the marking tool allow for alternative responses?			
Is the marking tool clear and user friendly?			
Is the marking tool complete with mark allocations?			
Does the mark distribution on the marking tool correspond with the question paper?			
Is the mark allocation commensurate with the level of difficulty and time allocated for completion of the task			

AREAS OF GOOD PRACTICE
CHALLENGES
RECOMMENDATIONS/FOLLOW UP

EDUCATOR…….SIGNATURE……DATE…….

SUPERVISOR…….SIGNATURE……..DATE…….

APPENDIX E: MONITORING TOOL FOR LEARNERS WRITTEN WORK

Cl:OCfflnif: srnoot: MONm:

UBmCT. EDUCATOR s AME: GllfflE:

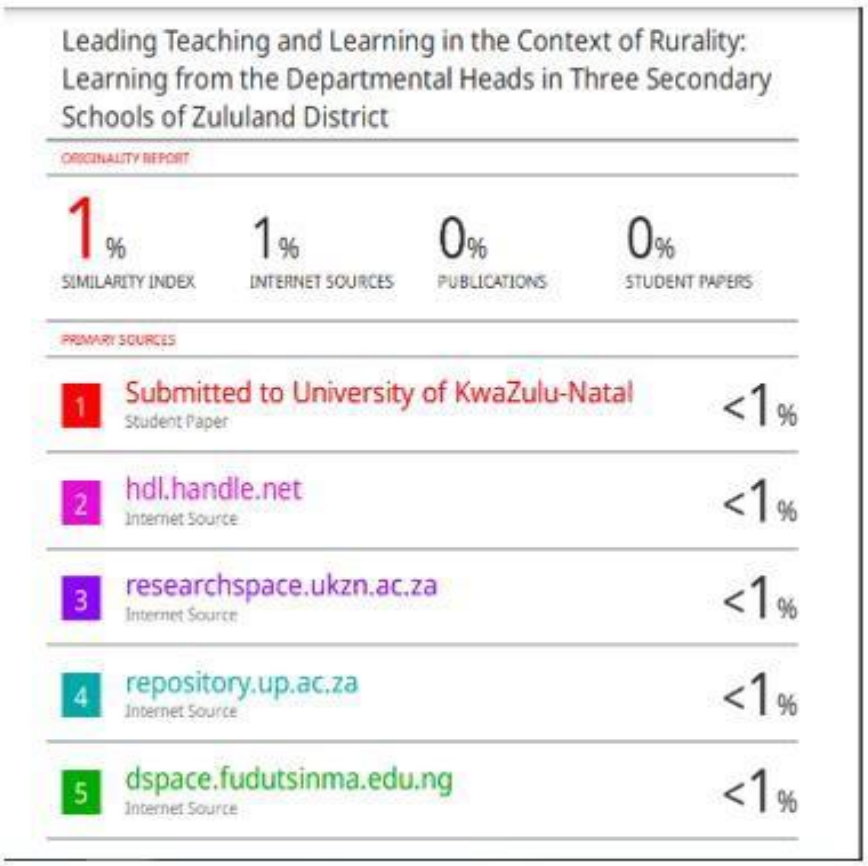
	WEEK 1		WEEK 2		WEEK3		WEEK 5	
	Expected no Of ta.. ,ifi	No of tasks/activitie !: admmntered	Expected no of task/ac. s ;i,iin. e	No of tasks /I ¨\IJ¨!!: admmme d	Expected no of task/activitie s	No of tasks/activiti es admmmere d	Expected no of faik /ni\itie	No of tasks/activi tit! admmi:der ed.
Class work								
Homework								
Tests								
Chalkboard summary/notes								
Comment on C?D:rlirol.and mumgof MH'!"Ork								
Comment on the quality of task/activity								
Are the t85tlaC?foifi in line ii h he ATP?								
	Educator's signatu irl_ D:m:_ Sl1Jlmri'5or'll UDffi_ D:m:_		Educator's signature__ Dm:__ SllJlmiw'11 UD'1f!_ Dm:__		Edu C:ll!IF SSl.fli!lm_ D'-Jill::_ S11J1 1[e:m1t11re_ D'-Jill::_		C:ll!IF S Slfli!lm_ D:m:_ Sl1Jlmi5or'll[e:mltn'1f! D:m:	

APPENDIX F: CURRICULUM COVERAGE TOOL

C:URRICULUMCOVERAGE							
SUBJECT:				GRADE::			
NAME OF EDUCATOR:				NAME OF SUPERVISOR::		DATE::	
PACING YEAR PLANNER LESSON PREPARATION				'IH) PROJECTION COVERED As per Annual Testing		OUTSTANDING PICS,	
Ahead		Behind		Not available	V		
% curriculum coverage(if lt hind):				Notas per Annual eaching IP			
How is he lo st c1n tad f me ta be catered!				Non;e			
Are u, af fom,;11 tasks in lin ew ill PO!A?				NO			
If No 11 whia t is tbe catcb•up plin?				Non;e			
Noof periods per w ere!k				T ofal lm mers in tbe grad	115	Targe for lliis y r	10%
	CONTRD LOFLIEAANERS WRITTiENwo RJKfQUAJLIT'fANDQUANTITY)						
	NAMES,OFLIEAANERS SAMPI!.ED			COMMENT.SJREMARKS			
1							
2,							
3,							
4							
5,							
FINDINGS :							

SLpervii51r' Signatu"e: Teaclher'si S:ignia tL1re::

APPENDIX G: TURNITIN REPORT



Leading Teaching and Learning in the Context of Rurality: Learning from the Departmental Heads in Three Secondary Schools of Zululand District

ORIGINALITY REPORT

1%	1%	0%	0%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Paper	<1%
2	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	<1%
3	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
4	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
5	dspace.fudutsinma.edu.ng Internet Source	<1%

KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Tel: 033 3921062 / 033-3921051
Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za
Buyi.ntuli@kzndoe.gov.za

Enquiries: Phindile Duma/Buyi Ntuli **Ref.**:2/4/8/7083

Mr Buyani Mcabangiseni Mnyandu
P.O. Box 1533
VRYHEID
3100

Dear Mr Mnyandu

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"LEADING TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE CONTEXT OF RURALITY: LEARNING FROM DEPARTMENTAL HEADS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF ZULULAND DISTRICT":** in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 24 February 2021 to 10TH October 2023.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma/Mrs Buyi Ntuli at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

[redacted]

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 24 February 2021

P.O. Box 1533

Vryheid

3100

24 January 2021

The Principal

_____Secondary School

Vryheid

3100

Dear Sir/Ms

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH AT YOUR SCHOOL

My name is Buyani Mcabangiseni Mnyandu (student no. 210 549 925) currently a deputy principal at Bhekuzulu Public School. In pursuit of my continuing professional development, I have enrolled for a Master of Education Degree in the discipline of Educational Leadership Management and Policy. As part of my degree requirement, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct this research at your school. The study title is: **Leading Teaching and Learning in the context of rurality: Learning from Departmental Heads in secondary schools.** Please be informed that I have sought the necessary permission in advance from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and this has been granted.

This study aims to investigate how departmental heads in the context of rurality lead teaching and learning. Participants will be all DHs in your school. I seek to interview DHs as individuals in all I plan to have one session. Each session is expected to last about one hour.

Please note that there will be neither financial rewards nor costs for participants in the research project, it is purely on a voluntary basis. Arrangements with regards to date, time and venue will be done well in advance with participants to ensure minimal encroachment of their working hours.

For any further questions or concerns that you may have pertaining the study, I have enclosed the contact details of my supervisor.

Yours Faithfully

_____

Mr BM Mnyandu

Cell No: [redacted]

Email address: [redacted]

Supervisor's Details

My supervisor, Prof P.E. Myende

University of KwaZulu-Natal.

School of Education (Edgewood Campus)

Tel No: 031 260 3965/ 031 260 5291

Cell No: [redacted]

Email address: MyendeP@ukzn.ac.za.

UKZN Research Office

Tel. No: 031 260 4557.

Email address: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

KEMIST SHUMBA

LANGUAGE EDITOR

CONTACT

+[redacted]

[redacted]

14 June 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Re: Leading Teaching and Learning in the Context of Rurality: Learning from the Departmental Heads in Three Secondary Schools of Zululand District

I write to confirm that language editing was performed on the above master's dissertation.

Technical changes on spellings, grammatical expression and scientific writing were made. The candidate used APA 7th Edition.

The editor shall not be held liable for errors imported in later versions of the dissertation.

Sincerely,

[redacted]

Kemist Shumba (PhD)

PhD in Health Promotion: University of KwaZulu-Natal [UKZN]
Master of Social Science in Health Promotion (*cum laude*): UKZN
Bachelor of Social Science Honours in Cultural & Media Studies: UKZN
Postgraduate Certificate in Education: Great Zimbabwe University
Bachelor of Arts (English): University of Zimbabwe