Instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations in Umlazi District: A multiple case study

By

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Submitted to the School of Education, University of KwaZulu-Natal in fulfilment of the academic requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

March 2017

Durban, South Africa

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Declaration

I, Bongani Nhlanhla Mkhize, declare that

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This thesis has been submitted with/ without our approval.

Supervisor: Dr T.T. Bhengu _____ Date _____

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

30 October 2014

Mr Bongani Nhlanhla Cyril Kenneth Mkhize (991240104)
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Mkhize,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1434/014D
Project title: Instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations in Umlazi District: A multiple case study

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on **22** October 2014, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted **FULL APPROVAL.**

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

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

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

Yours faithfully

.....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)

/ms

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mother, Nomawonga (MaMsingapantsi) Mkhize, and my late father, u-Julius, kaNkasa, kaTilongo, kaNgunezi, kaSingele, kaZihlandlo Mkhize, for your passion about education and inspiration you instilled in me to achieve in the field of education. I also extend my gratitude to my wife, Lungi, and my daughter, Mpilenhle, for giving me the time to complete this study and giving me encouragement when I needed it most. Without your support and love I would never have succeeded.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Of all the people who contributed, formally or informally, to making this study a reality, my profound indebtedness goes:

- To God, the Almighty, for His unfailing love, support and protection. To Him all the glory.
- To my supervisors, **Dr T.T. Bhengu and Dr S.E. Mthiyane.** Your patience, guidance and continued support have contributed immensely towards the success of this study.
- To the Department of Education for allowing me to conduct research in the schools I selected for my study.
- My sincere thanks to all the principals, HODs and educators of the participating schools for giving me time and sharing information with me to make this study possible.
- I must also extend my sincere gratitude to my family and friends for supporting me. Thank you for understanding my situation when my study commitments opened up a gap between us.
- Thanks to my friends and colleagues Ndwandwe Mduduzi, Khulekani Zulu, Zwane Pinkie for their support and spiritual motivation.
- Special thanks to my colleagues for understanding and support.

Abstract

The study reported in this document was conceptualised and conducted as a research project towards a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. The study focused on exploring instructional leadership practices of six secondary school principals (three from rural and three from township secondary schools) in the context of multiple deprivations in Umlazi District, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Furthermore, it aimed at exploring how the enactments of the generally successful instructional leadership practices were adapted by school principals to multiple deprived contexts. Adaptive leadership and instructional leadership theories underpinned this research study. Methodologically, the study was underpinned by interpretivist paradigm and adopted a qualitative multiple case design. Semi-structured interviews, documents reviews and observations were used to generate data which was thematically analysed.

The findings of the study suggest that multiple deprivation contexts impacted on the ways principals understood and enacted instructional leadership in their schools. The schools were overwhelmed by different technical and adaptive challenges emanating from different forms of deprivations. Values, beliefs, knowledge and experiences that leaders possessed, in varying degrees, shaped their understandings of instructional leadership and their practices. These findings affirm the notion that instructional leadership, more specifically in multiple deprived contexts, is a complex and dynamic construct containing plurality of factors and perspectives that shape its nature. The findings also affirm the appropriateness of viewing personal characteristics of principals and contextual factors as significant to understanding how principals exercise educational leadership. The study has shown that the principals were practicing *Ubuntu inclined instructional leadership*.

ABBREVIATIONS

HOD	Head of Department
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
MEC	Member of Executive Council
NSC	National Senior Certificate
PL1	Post Level One
SMT	School Management Team
SGB	School Governing Body
SAIMDC	South African Index of Multiple Deprivation for Children

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CHAPTER ONE
AN ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

The study reported in this document was conceptualised and conducted as a qualitative research project towards a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree. The study focused on exploring instructional leadership practices of six secondary school principals (three from rural and three from township secondary schools) in the context of multiple deprivations in Umlazi District, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Furthermore, it aimed at exploring how the enactments of the generally successful instructional leadership practices were adapted by school principals to the contexts of multiple deprivations. The assumption underpinning that focus was that such instructional leadership practices could have positive effects on improved teaching and learning conditions in these challenging school contexts. Anecdotal evidence based on my informal observations and empirical evidence from literature indicate that there are various and also varying challenges facing today's learners which impact on the leadership practices of school principals. This study draws on empirical evidence from the perspectives of principals, heads of departments (HODs) and post level one (PL1) educators.

The term instructional leadership evokes various and diverse understanding, debates and emphases from various scholars of educational leadership and management. According to Bush (2013), instructional leadership is the term that has been used for quite some time to correlate leadership and teaching and learning. There are several other terms that are used to define this correlation between leadership on one hand and teaching and learning on the other. These terms also show varying emphasis on teaching and learning. For example, some of the terms that are used include 'pedagogic leadership', 'curriculum leadership'. Bush (2013) notes that in the United Kingdom (UK), the preferred term is 'leadership for learning', while in South Africa, 'Managing teaching and learning' is preferred. What seems to be common among all the conceptualisations highlighted above is the notion of leading teaching and learning at school level. Therefore, the term Instructional leadership is preferred in this study due to the fact that it brings to the fore the centrality on both teaching and learning as the primary focus of an instructional leader in an effort of improving learner achievement.

This chapter is an orientation to the study, and therefore, it sets the scene for the discussion of key issues undergirding the study. It provides the background to the study and makes a formal statement of the problem. Other important items such as the purpose and the rationale for the study; the significance of the study; the three research aims and three research questions that guided the study are also provided. Furthermore, this chapter provides the clarification of key terms, demarcation and limitations of the study. The chapter concludes by outlining the layout of the study which spells out what each chapter of the thesis entails.

1.2 Background to the study

The issue of access to education is a profoundly important talking point in South Africa and elsewhere in the world. Such an issue has dominated the discourse in education for a number of decades prior to South Africa becoming a democratic state in April 1994. Therefore, it did not become a surprise when the new democratically elected government, post-1994 elections focused on this important issue. Section 29 (1) (a) of the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a) declares education as a basic human right. There is, however, a growing concern that there are many South African schools that are not performing as expected (Fleisch, 2008; Bloch, 2009; DoBE, 2011; Maringe & Moletsane, 2015) and this is depriving a majority of learners their basic right to education and specific skills that are particularly relevant for the globalised economy (Taylor, 2006). The majority of such learners are learners in communities faced with multiple deprivations. This further exacerbates the inequalities of the past. The schooling system needs to continuously make a conscious effort to improve the basic education outcomes in order to rectify the mistakes done by apartheid government of South Africa, rebuild a sense of belonging for all South Africans and more so, provide quality education for all to break the injustices of the past that still permeate South African Society (DoBE, 2011). This, in part, is the work of the principal as an instructional leader. Hence, the principal is at the core for the realisation of this vision.

The principal in a school is mandated by the South African Schools Act of 1996, particularly section 16A and its amendments (RSA, 2007) to provide professional management and leadership of the school. This law further stipulates that the principal of a government school has to prepare a plan, implement and report on progress on how academic performance of the school will be improved (RSA, 2007). Furthermore, *the Action Plan to 2014 – Towards the*

realisation of schooling 2025 (Action Plan) (RSA 2011, p.47) states that by 2025, a principal must be a person who is able to ensure that "teaching in the school takes place as it should, according to the national curriculum, and understands his or her role as a leader whose responsibility is to promote harmony, creativity and a sound work ethic within the school community and beyond". The schooling system is however too large and complex for everything to be captured within one plan. Mcbeath and Myers (1999, p. 67) argue that there is unlikely to be a "golden rule-book or recipe for effective leadership". Furthermore, these mandates do not take into consideration the complexities of the schooling system and hence pose challenges to some school principals. School principals, for example, are faced with dilemmas of exercising control, ethical issues, and contradictory beliefs of stakeholders while still keeping up with internal and external demands.

Furthermore, Section 28 of the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996) provides that every child – that is a person under the age of 18 years, has the right to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment; to basic nutrition, shelter, basic healthcare services and social services; and to be protected from maltreatment, neglect, abuse, or degradation. The Children's Act, Act 38 of 2005 (Republic of South Africa, 2005) and the associated Children's Amendment Bill, 19 of 2006, further supplement these rights. These rights are adding to the rights that are entitled to all South Africans and are meant for all children, irrespective of background. It is common that although these rights are assured by the Constitution and other pieces of legislations of the Republic of South Africa, these rights are not always realised in practice. Schools have to deal with a number of children who are heading families or children who live with caregivers; a number of learners who suffer physically (due to hunger, sickness or absence of suitable clothing) and emotionally (as a result of lack of self-esteem and no vision for the future); parents with very low self-esteem and who dislike the schools, owing to their bad school experiences; battles for survival (in an environment with a lot of people abusing drugs and filled with violence); parents who are not interested in school affairs; lack of adequate amenities and infrastructure. These complexities have an implication on the leadership practices of school principals and the effectiveness of the schools in providing quality education.

The issue of poverty, more than twenty years into democracy was of concern to me and other scholars in the field of Educational Leadership and Management. Some of these scholars

include Bush (2013); Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015); Lumby (2015) and Maringe and Moletsane (2015) to mention a few. Poverty is multifaceted (Hall, 2007), multidimensional (Woolard, 2002), leading to multiple deprivations (Barnes, Wrights, Noble & Dawes, 2007). Multiple deprivations are of particular concern because of their extent, depth and many forms that they take and which impact on education. Children are more likely than adults to suffer multiple deprivations in their living environment due to lack of access to adequate basic services, clean water and adequate sanitation which are necessary for health; unemployment which is associated with food insecurity and fragmented families resulting in larger percentage of children not living with their parents; inadequate housing or overcrowded homes (Woolard, 2002; Hall, 2007). These deprivations can have long-term consequences such as poor health or low levels of education, which may in turn perpetuate the poverty cycle. A larger population of learners with multiple deprivations live in areas that are underserviced and underdeveloped with more African, rural residents; families headed by single parents, especially by women (Woolard, 2002). The range of deprivations suggests the need for an integrated response in which income support is complemented by other interventions, including delivery of services and effective education (Hall, 2007). Woolard (2002) posits that there link between educational achievement and the acceptable living condition. Woolard (2002) further provides a profile which clearly indicates that the rates of poverty decreases considerably with the completion of 'matric' and advanced qualifications. The schooling system therefore has a major role to play. How school principals, more particularly, as instructional leaders, navigate around the impact of multiple deprivations and still meet these demands of decreasing poverty by ensuring that the majority of learners complete 'matric' was a concern for this study.

There are scholars (e.g. Morrison, 2002; Fullan, 2008; West-Burnham, 2009; Marishane & Botha, 2011) who share similar views that principals' leadership entails non-linear, complex and multidirectional processes. School principals have to ensure that the learners are equipped with specific skills that are particularly relevant for the globalised economy irrespective of the background they are coming from. These skills include information literacy and communication skills, creative thinking skills global awareness and cross-cultural skills (Lee, 2005; Bybee & Starkweather, 2006). This new imperative requires that school leaders need to rethink how best to exercise their instructional leadership so as to equip the teachers with the capability to facilitate learners' acquisition of these skills effectively and efficiently, given the complexities of their job which is further compounded by contextual factors like multiple deprivations.

Educational studies broadly acknowledge and support the view that principals as instructional leaders are key figures to the success of their schools (Hoadley, Christie, Jacklin & Ward, 2007; Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013; Bush, 2013; Grobler & Conley, 2013; Naicker, Chikoko, & Mthiyane, 2013). These projects collectively provide strong evidence that instructional leadership makes a significant difference to learning. Hence, this study contends that the most effective means towards achieving learning goals as set out in the Action Plan to 2014 is for school principals to be instructional leaders as this involves them directly in the teaching and learning processes. The question which arises is how they practicalised this role, given the dynamics and complexities of our schooling system, especially in multiple deprived contexts.

My review of literature has indicated that instructional leaders are needed if schools have to improve their effectiveness, particularly in relation to the learner academic achievement. The literature I have read has also indicated and described the conditions that constitute multiple deprivations. This body of knowledge has also indicated that there is a relationship between the conditions of multiple deprivations and learner academic achievement. Evidently, the two important aspects, namely, the context of multiple deprivations and instructional leadership contribute towards improved learner academic achievement. However, what seems to be missing in this literature I have reviewed thus far is the intersection between instructional leadership role of school principals and the context of multiple deprivations. The study that is reported in this thesis focuses on this issue. The figure that is presented below illustrates the missing link I am talking about here and attempts to capture these dynamics as early as the first chapter. In a nutshell, the figure below is my creation but it indicates the main narratives drawn from literature as well as my anecdotal analysis of my informal observations working in schools with multiple deprivations.

Principals act in accordance with and in response to what they perceive to be unique needs of their school contexts as well as in response to the specific needs of their educators, learners and parents whilst keeping with their own beliefs and values (Lazaridou, 2007). Therefore, successful leadership should be seen in relation to the contextual and social conditions as well as values underpinning the schools (Dimmock, & Walker, 2000; Mestry & Pillay, 2013). This study examined instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations. It sought to understand and theorise instructional leadership as enacted by secondary school principals in those challenging contexts.

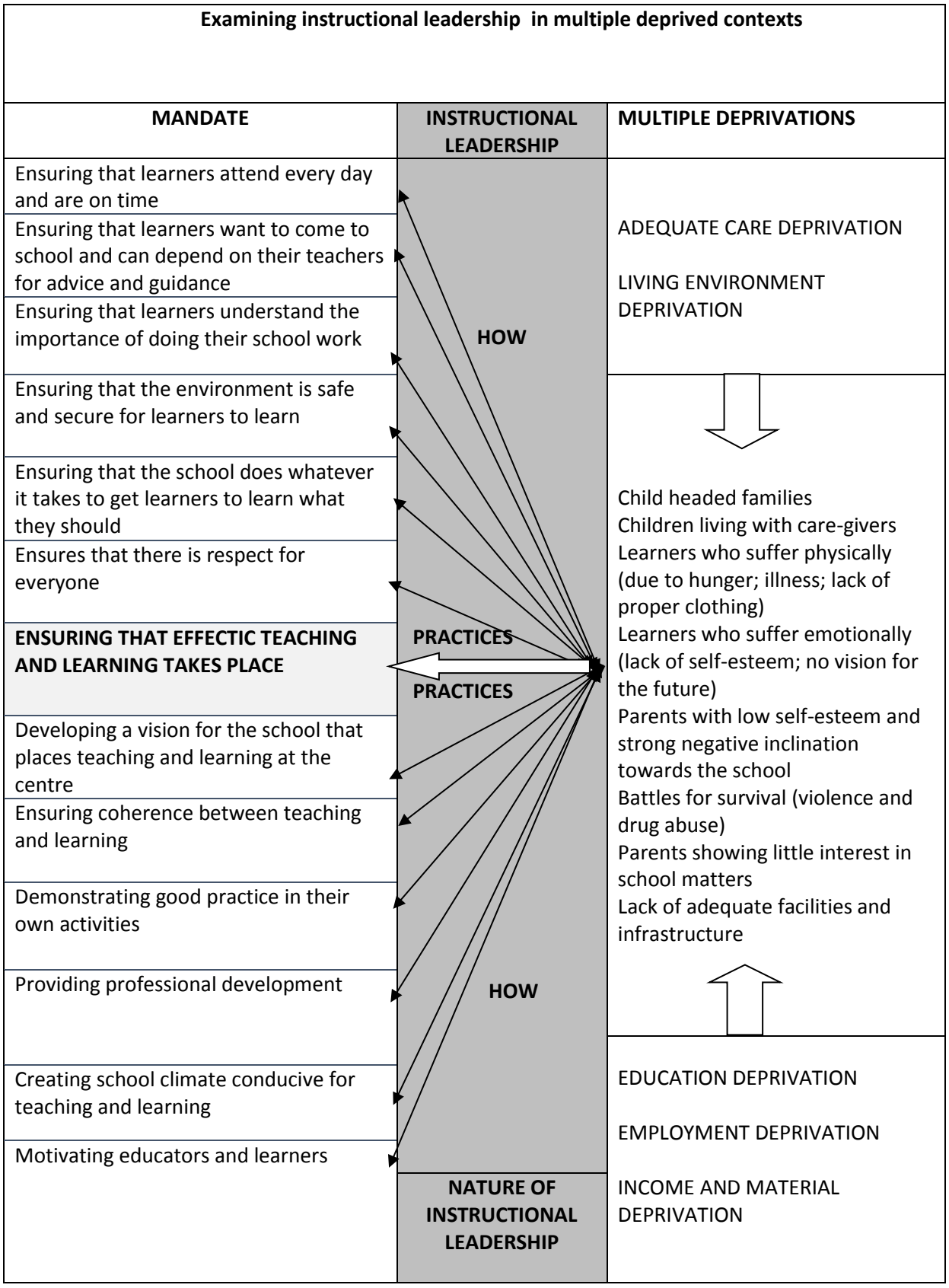

Figure 1: Linking deprivations and mandates for instructional leaders

1.3 Statement of the problem

While there is a considerable number of researchers in the field of educational leadership who emphasise the significance of instructional leadership on learner performance (Taylor, 2007; Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008; Sim, 2011), there are studies which reveal that instructional leadership is seldom used or practicalised. For example, Mulkeen, Chapman, DeJaeghere and Leu (2007) assert that supervision of teaching and learning is not regarded by the principals in the majority of African countries as part of their day-to-day duties. Similarly, Phillips (2009, p.1) argues that instructional leadership is seldom used or practicalised owing to the " lack of in-depth training of principals for their role as instructional leaders, lack of time to execute instructional activities, increased paper work, and the community's expectation that the principal's role is that of a manager." The empirical study of the management of curriculum and instruction in South African secondary schools done by Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2009) found that many principals did not allocate sufficient time for themselves to supervise teaching and learning. The study also found that only 17% of the principals in their sample identified supervision of teaching and learning as their main duty. Bush and Joubert (2004) also show in their research that a large sample of principals in Gauteng did not regard management of curriculum and instruction as their main task. It is worrisome when people who are tasked with the supervision of teaching and learning indicate unawareness of their responsibilities. This indicates that there is a discrepancy between espoused theory and practice where scholars indicate that instructional leadership is significant for learner achievement and yet, a considerable number of principals do not regard this role as theirs.

On the issues highlighted above, Southworth (2002) argues that there is no clear definition and understanding of what is entailed in instructional leadership. This is putting pressure on the principals as they have to construct their own models of instructional leadership. Hence, Davis, Darling-Hammond, LaPointe and Meyerson (2005, p.20) point out that, "Little is known about how to help principals develop the capabilities to influence how schools function." Furthermore, expectations for the role of principals as instructional leaders have undergone significant changes in recent years resulting in the need and interest in re-examining instructional leadership as it is presently enacted in schools.

Schools have an essential role to play in an effort to narrow the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and their peers elsewhere. Furthermore, schools have to meet the needs

of every child irrespective of the background. Mthiyane (2013) quotes national and international literature to emphasise that it is common for the schools to inherit learners who come from poor backgrounds where multiple deprivation is rife. Linked to multiple deprivations are phenomena of child headed families, food insecurity, illness due to inadequate living environments, inadequate or overcrowded homes and fragmented families which all impact on how these children learn **(**Woolard, 2002; Hall, 2007; Kamper, 2008; Maringe & Moletsane, 2015**)**. Further to these problems is that schools are not happy or safe havens for many learners as they suffer maltreatment; are discriminated against and are abused in front of and at the hands of their peers and educators (Mthiyane, 2013). These complexities have implications on the practices of school principals and the effectiveness of the schools in providing quality education. How school principals, more particularly, as instructional leaders, navigate around the impact of multiple deprivations on their instructional leadership practices and still meet the demands of the department is still not known and it was the main focus of this study.

1.4 Purpose and rationale for the study

The rationale for undertaking this study has personal (experiential), professional (practical) and academic (theoretical) dimensions. As I reflect on my journey as a child growing up and learning in deep rural, multiply-deprived environment to a level where I could register for PhD, I felt sorry for the large proportion of learners I started with in what was called at that time, Sub-Standard A (Grade 1). The majority of those learners did not make it to what until 1996 was known as Standard 10 (Grade 12 in today's language). My mind is kept reminded of one girl who used to achieve Position 3 in the class during examinations, but was expelled by the principal because she did not want to take corporal punishment for having been absent from school the previous day. She would frequently come late to school; with untidy uniform; and dodged classes because she had to take care of her two siblings and her dying mother. As I reflect on it now, I realise that there are many other learners who might have fallen victims of the contexts of multiple deprivations and leadership practices of the principals.

This still bothers me now because there are many other learners who might have fallen victims of my practices as a teacher, a head of department (HOD) and Deputy Principal in both rural and township schools with multiply deprived learners. We would unilaterally punish learners for late coming, absenteeism, failing to wear school uniform and for their books that were in

poor state, tasks not done, sleepiness in classes and learners who often want to go to toilets without taking into consideration their explanations. Other learners would be punished for not attending extra classes even though they explained that it would be impossible for them to attend these classes. The principals would say that if we start listening to learner stories, we would have dysfunctional schools. Hence, the higher number of learners who dropped out of schools is on an increase despite the policies that say children must be at school at least to the age of fifteen years. The question this raises is that school leaders are perhaps pushing multiple deprived learners out of the schooling system and hence perpetuating poverty. This question motivates me to examine leadership of secondary school principals, more particularly, how multiple deprivation contexts impact on their instructional leadership practices.

Instructional leadership is by no means, a new concept. Ruffin (2007) and Hallinger (2008) maintain that there was an increased focus on instructional leadership in the 1980s This appeared to decline over years as researchers turned their interests to other aspects of the principal's (Mitchell & Castle, 2005). This view is echoed by Hallinger (2008) who posits that between 1992 and 2002, scholars shifted their interest on instructional leadership as people had developed interest in transformational leadership, distributive leadership and teacher leadership. Consequently, as Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2009) in their review of South African studies on leadership assert, there is very limited South African leadership research base. Hence there is a limited South African knowledge base of how school principals manage teaching and learning, more especially in deprived contexts.

Expectations for the role of principals as instructional leaders have undergone significant changes in recent years resulting in gaps in scholarly literature. In South Africa and African continent at large, limited literature exists specifically about successful instructional leadership practices at schools in the context of multiple deprivations (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Heystek, Niemann, Van Rooyen, Mosoge & Bipath, 2008; Kamper, 2008; Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009; Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Van Rooyen, 2010; Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011; Naicker, Chikoko & Mthiyane, 2013). As a result, the complexities and intricacies around instructional leadership practices in trying school contexts is not fully understood (Naicker, Chikoko, & Mthiyane, 2013). Furthermore, Mestry, Moonsammy-Koopasammy and Schmidt (2013) point out that in South Africa, the function instructional leadership plays in the principals' organisational management of the school, the daily work lives of principals, how the principals practice instructional leadership, and towards what instructional outcomes they

work, remains unclear. This motivates interest in me to re-examine instructional leadership as it is enacted in today's schools in multiple deprived contexts.

Instructional leadership is a complex, socially constructed phenomenon used by leaders and practitioners in their specific educational contexts (Mestry & Pillay, 2013; Tan, 2012). The proponents of this paradigm argue for the creation of contextualised knowledge that impact teaching and learning for the unique student population they are serving (Wanger, 1998; Fandimo, 2010; Tan, 2012). Furthermore, the importance of instructional leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon suggests that it will differ from site to site. Southworth (2002) suggests a pluralistic approach to explain the variegated nature of leadership instead of searching for a theory that is over-arching. Hence, this study examines instructional leadership as it is enacted in a multiple deprivation context to elicit this variegated nature of leadership. It seeks to understand how secondary school principals deal with the dynamics of contextual factors in their instructional leadership practices. The study seeks to identify those facets of instructional leadership that transcend context and shine a new light on our understanding of instructional leadership.

1.5 Significance of the study

It is important that a study carves a niche where it can clearly demonstrate its contribution in terms of knowledge. In this section I make a case for the need to conduct a study such as this one which attempts to understand how school principals enact instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations in rural and township settings. Instructional leadership involves diverse practices and processes that are essential for the schools to succeed (Bush, 2013; Mestry & Pillay, 2013). It is therefore vital for researchers to pay particular attention to this phenomenon and to describe how it is played out in different settings. This study was deemed necessary because of various reasons including the view that the existing literature is more prescriptive in terms of instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Weber, 1996; Marks & Printy, 2003; Hallinger, 2005; Taylor & Prinsloo, 2005). My view is that when scholarship prescribes what a phenomenon should look like, there is a likelihood that such an approach miss out in terms of providing descriptions about how the phenomenon looks (Rietzug, West & Angel, 2008; Tan, 2012; Bush, 2013; Grobler & Conley, 2013; Naicker, Chikoko & Mthiyane, 2013). Hence, this study comes with an open minded approach by

focusing on understand how it feels to be a school principal in challenging multiply-deprived contexts. That is said against the backdrop of all principals being guided by the same policy frameworks and expectations as other schools that are situated in well to do environments. Therefore, descriptions of what they do and also the understanding of what informs their choices may provide useful, contextual insights about the enactment of instructional leadership. Such insights may contribute to both the national and the international scholarship relating to instructional leadership in action.

Leadership demands are continuously changing and this necessitates continuous research to improve current understandings of the phenomenon. The demand is increasing for school principals to adapt their leadership strategies to address the needs of their learners by improving quality of teaching and learning in their schools. Tan (2012) argues that the current literature is more prescriptive, rendering it inadequate for understanding the changing educational policy and contextual imperatives. These new imperatives require school leaders to rethink how best to exercise their instructional leadership so as to equip teachers with the capability to facilitate student acquisition of these skills efficiently and effectively (Tan, 2012). It was hoped that this study would also be able to theorise instructional leadership practices in multiply deprived school contexts. Given the above mentioned scenarios, it was hoped that this study would contribute to a better understanding of how principals as instructional leaders face and/or overcome the challenges of multiple deprivations and thrive. Strategies that appear to work in these South African schools are important in order to reach improved quality of basic education.

Instructional leadership focuses on leadership of teaching and learning. As it has been alluded to earlier, the complexities and intricacies surrounding instructional leadership practices in trying school contexts is not fully understood (Hoadley, Christie, Jacklin & Ward, 2007; Naicker, Chikoko, & Mthiyane, 2013). Therefore, it was hoped that the study would contribute profoundly in producing contemporary knowledge about the complex interplay between the context of multiple deprivations and the leadership practices of secondary school principals as instructional leaders. It was also hoped that it might fill the gaps of the existing knowledge with regards to instructional leadership theory and practice in unique settings of multiple deprivations. It was further hoped that it could help to address a need for more differentiated interpretations of leaders working in diverse contexts. This can assist principals who find themselves in similar situations as in the current study.

1.6 Research aims and questions

In examining the instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations in Umlazi District, the study aims to:

- Explore secondary school principals' understandings of their roles as instructional leaders in the context of multiple deprivations.
- Examine how secondary school principals practice instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations.
- Examine the nature of instructional leadership practiced by secondary school principal in multiple deprived contexts.

Based on the aforementioned research aims, this study sought to generate answers to the following research questions:

- How do school principals understand their role to be as instructional leaders in the context of multiple deprivations?
- How do secondary school principals practise instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations?
- What is the nature of instructional leadership practiced by secondary school principals in multiple deprived contexts?

1.7 Clarification of key concepts

This study is underpinned by two key concepts, namely instructional leadership and multiple deprivations. This section briefly describes these two concepts, particularly in relation to their application in this study.

1.7.1 Conceptualising instructional leadership

There are several definitions of instructional leadership which all speak to the focus on teaching and learning, with some favouring learning more than teaching. Sim (2011) for example, defines instructional leadership as leadership that is directly focused on guiding teachers on curriculum and pedagogy. This definition is focused on the teaching process with minimal or no reference to learning. A different view is given by Southworth (2009) who defines instructional leadership as a learning centred leadership. His emphasis is on learning which he believes, should be the focus of leadership responsibilities. In this case leadership focuses on ensuring that learners are learning, and also that the teachers are learners as well. Such a conceptualisation is very useful in that it debunks the whole notion of just one section in the school scenario (teachers) as the possessors of knowledge and another section (learners) as not knowing. I regard Southworth's (2009) conceptualisation as helpful because I believe that learning occurs among learners and also among the teachers.

Budhal's (2000) definition of instructional leadership emphasises both teaching and learning when asserting that instructional leadership is a process whereby the school principals are directly involved in the actual teaching and learning programmes of the schools. The school principal is immersed in teaching and learning processes in an effort to experience directly, general problems faced by the educators and the learners in the classrooms. Another set of definitions include the outcome of instructional leadership which is improved performance. In other words, adherents of this conceptualisation argue that leadership is useless if it does not have any positive effect on learner outcomes. For example, Keefe and Jenkins (2002) refer to instructional leadership as directing, supporting and giving directions to educators and learners in order to enhance the teaching and learning in schools. Sim (2011) and Budhal (2000) emphasise guidance that is provided by the principal in identifying and analysing instructional problems, whilst Keefe and Jenkins (2002) emphasise actions that the principal takes in order to improve the teaching and learning in schools. According to Mestry and Pillay (2013), these actions include influential relationships that motivate, enable and support educators' efforts to learn and change their instructional practices. Bush (2013) emphasises that the influence is targeted on learners learning. Hallinger and Heck (1996) argue that the influence can be by personal interventions (directly); by their work alongside other educators (reciprocally); and via other staff (indirectly).

The centrality of these definitions is the strong concern and focus by principals on teaching and learning. This lands them to criticisms for their over emphasis on the principals, ignoring the roles of other leaders and also that they put more emphasis on teaching at the expense of learning (Bush, 2013). Such criticisms led to alternate conceptualisations of the relationship between leadership, and teaching and learning, including 'shared instructional leadership' (Marks & Printy, 2003); 'leadership for learning' (Hallinger, 2009; MacBeath & Dempter, 2009; Mestry & Pillay, 2013); 'Management of teaching and learning' (Bush, 2013) and pedagogic leadership. In this study, instructional leadership is the preferred term and is conceptualised as encompassing all the actions and activities that the principal engages in so that there is effective teaching and learning in the schools. It is leadership that is focused on both teaching and learning. Whilst I acknowledge that instructional leadership can be distributed and done by other leaders, the focus of this study is on school principals. It is the principals providing direction, guidance, support, resources in an effort to ensure that teaching and learning takes place despite challenging multiple deprivation contexts. The next section focuses on the discussion of multiple deprivations.

1.7.2 Conceptualising multiple deprivations

I view the word deprived or deprivation as mainly characterised by deficit thinking in the sense that it focuses on what is not available in the situation being discussed. For instance, Townsend (1987, p. 131) defines people as deprived if "they lack the type of diet, clothing, housing, household facilities and fuel and environmental, educational, working and social conditions, activities and facilities which are customary' and multiple deprivation as an accumulation of single deprivations". Barnes, Wrights, Noble and Dawes (2007, p.3) refer to deprivation as "peoples' unmet needs; poverty to the lack of resources required to meet those needs and multiple deprivation is conceptualised as the amalgamation of different dimensions or domains of deprivation." Noble, Wright and Cluver (2006) define child poverty as head count of children who live in households where basic human needs fall below the minimum survival level or comparable poverty depth measure. Therefore, multiple deprivations can be said to entail conditions where individuals experience a confluence of unmet human needs. Such arguments clearly suggest deficit way of viewing people's deprivations.

The South African Index of Multiple Deprivation for Children (SAIMDC) 2001 (Barnes, et al., 2007) provides a child-focused index which specifically considers deprivations experienced by the children. The model was conceptualised from the premise that children are the ones who suffer the most from socio-economic deprivations highlighted in the sections above. The SAIMDC foregrounded deprivations from the perspectives of the children. The SAIMDC measure the proportion of children who experience deprivations in the major domains of deprivations. These domains include Income and material Deprivation (children living in households with low income and/or no refrigerator or television); Employment Deprivation (children living in households where adults are unemployed); Education Deprivation (children living with adults who did not receive formal education); Adequate Care Deprivation (children who do not live with parents); and Living Environment Deprivation (children living in poor quality environments). Children are referred to living within the conditions of multiple deprivations when they experience more than one of the domains outlined above.

1.8 Demarcation of the study

According to Horberg (1999), demarcating the problem means establishing the boundaries of the problem area within which the research progresses. Demarcating the problem helped me to make the study manageable. In the context of this study, the research focused on instructional leadership practices of six secondary school principals in three township and three rural schools, noting also that they did not represent the whole population of secondary school principals. The research was only confined to secondary school the principals who were deemed to be practising instructional leadership where multiple deprivations were rife. The research was limited to Umlazi District schools because I was familiar with the locality as I lived and worked in the area.

1.9 Limitations of the study

Good quality and responsible research includes a declaration regarding the limitations of the study (Rule & John, 2011). As such, the main limitations of this study arose from its qualitative and interpretive nature. Qualitative case studies do not lead to statistical generalisations because of small samples that can lead to misleading results (Bailey, 2007). The sites sampled were chosen because of availability, convenience and distance. This created limitations as these sites were not a perfect representative of schools experiencing multiple deprivations. This study

however, does not aim to generalise findings but to provide deeper insights about the manner in which some principals find new trails as they engaged with challenging educational leadership and management landscape. Furthermore, case studies are not easily open to cross-checking (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Hence, this study may be selective, biased, personal and subjective. Case studies are prone to problems of observer bias, despite attempts made to address reflexivity (Cohen, *et al.,* 2011). Nevertheless, qualitative research has its ways of ensuring that conclusions reached after the analysis had been completed, were credible and trustworthy. That is why a number of techniques were used in order to ensure that whatever finding was made, it will remain trustworthy in the eyes of the research community. Trustworthiness was enhanced by utilising multiple-case sites and various other participants to generate, validate and cross-check the soundness and provide confidence in my findings.

1.10 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis is organised into nine chapters in order to interpret the findings adequately and answer the research questions.

1.10.1 Chapter One

This chapter introduced the thesis by providing background information about the study and highlighted key components of the study. These components include the statement of the problem, purpose and rationale, significance and key research questions of the study. The chapter also clarified some of the key concepts underpinning the study; the demarcation and limitation of the study and it set out the research questions that needed to be addressed by the research.

1.10.2 Chapter Two

This chapter explored the key concepts related to the study and also highlighted key debates and trends in instructional leadership research.

1.10.3 Chapter Three

This chapter presents and discusses the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that underpinned the study. These are Hallinger' (2011) synthesised model of leadership for learning and Adaptive leadership theory.

1.10.4 Chapter Four

This chapter discusses the research design and methodology that was used in gathering evidence that would answer the research questions. The research paradigm, research design and research approach used were examined and motivations for their choices were also explained. The research sites were also described and the data generation and data analysis strategies are outlined.

1.10.5 Chapter Five

This chapter presents and discusses the data that was produced from the school principals. Therefore, this chapter presents findings from the perspectives of school principals about how they understood and enacted instructional leadership in their multiply deprived contexts. This chapter is guided by the key questions that informed the study and hence the interviews with the principals. Key issues that emerged from the semi-structured interviews are discussed descriptively, triangulating them with what emerged from observations and documents reviews. Literature reviewed in Chapter Two, conceptual and theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter Three are intertwined in the analysis to support or refute findings from the data.

1.10.6 Chapter Six

This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the perspectives of the HODs on how their principals enacted instructional leadership. All other techniques described in the previous section above are applicable here; the only difference is that the findings that are presented in this chapter come from the HODs and depict their perspectives.

1.10.7 Chapter Seven

This chapter presents and discusses the findings from the perspectives of Post-Level One educators about the instructional leadership practices of their principals. The techniques explained in Chapter Five were also used in this chapter.

1.10.8 Chapter Eight

This chapter moves from descriptive analysis to evaluative analysis of the findings. It identified, discussed and appraised the findings from the previous three chapters. The purpose was to identify key themes that emerged from the analysis of the findings from the three categories of the participants. In my attempts to generate patterns in the data, I first tried to elicit some similarities and differences among the participants and the communities in which the schools were located.

1.10.9 Chapter Nine

This chapter presents the conclusions that were reached after the findings from the different participants were analysed. The chapter begins by presenting a synthesis of the whole study and then moves on to discuss the conclusions using the research questions as a technique to bring order to the presentation. The chapter concludes by bringing to the fore the lessons learned from undertaking this study.

1.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, Chapter One, I presented an orientation to the whole thesis. This was done to give the reader a general overview of the whole study. I briefly discussed major components of the thesis, starting by providing background information about the study. I presented the statement of the problem and discussed the purpose and rationale that influenced me to do this study. I presented research aims and questions underpinning the study. I discussed briefly key terms to clarify to the reader how they are used in this study. A summary of the general organisation of the thesis was given. In the next chapter I provide the review of the literature on instructional leadership to give a theoretical insight into the phenomenon.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEWING LITERATURE ON INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION CONCEPT

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented an orientation to the study and, amongst other things, an overview of the whole thesis was presented. In this chapter I examine research that informs instructional leadership. I attempt to clarify the construct of instructional leadership and the actual practices that impact learner success. I start by locating the review conceptually. I analyse leadership literature to assess competing conceptualisations of the leadership construct leading to instructional leadership. I orientate the reader by explaining how the concept has evolved. Next, I interrogate instructional leadership practices. This is developed by paying particular attention to multiple deprivations in rural and township schools. The idea is to understand through reviewing literature contextual realities encountered by instructional leaders elsewhere. I discuss literature linking instructional leadership and the context of multiple deprivations. Ethical dilemmas faced by principals in enacting instructional leadership in these contexts are discussed. Throughout this review, research findings on instructional leadership are used to illuminate trends and developments.

2.2 Conceptualising school leadership

The literature on leadership is abundant leading to the myriad definitions of what leadership entails. Different groups of scholars focus on different aspects that signify their focus. For example, there is a group of scholars (e.g. trait theorists) that locate leadership in the person. Other group of scholars (e.g. situational theorists) locate leadership in the situation. Other groups of scholars (e.g. contingency theorists) focus on both the person and the situation. These different groups interpret and contest what count as suitable way of leading, resulting in the horde ways of conceptualising leadership. The dominant components identifiable in these horde conceptualisations include viewing leadership as a process involving influence, groups of people and working towards common goals.

Northhouse (2013, p.5) for example, contends that influence is the "s*in qua non"* of leadership and defines leadership as a process in which an individual is influencing a group of individuals to realise common goals. This definition is similar to the one given by Yukl (2013) who also define the phenomenon of leadership as the process in which an individual influence the activities, behaviour and attitudes of other people towards the accomplishment of goals. Yukl (2013) further contends that defining leadership as a process indicates that leaders affect and are affected by followers in interactive and non-linear events. The significance of defining leadership in this way is that it occurs over time and is not limited to a leader who is formally appointed. Supovitz, Sirinides and May (2009) add that leadership is not entirely linked to a position. They argue that it is grounded in the actual act of instituting influence on others. In this regards leadership entails a process whereby intentional influence is exercised over other people to direct, structure and guide their individual or group activities.

Adding to the horde ways of conceptualising leadership as a process of influencing others towards common goals, Male and Palaiologou (2015) define leadership as a process that encompasses understandings and applications in making actions as humans and how these actions are focussed at other human beings. Yukl (2013) adds that the leader influence others to understand and agree about essential activities that need to be carried out and in the process, facilitates individual and group efforts to accomplish shared objectives. Bush (2007) add the creation of a vision for the organisation to the definition of leadership. The vision guides and directs work of other people toward the goals of the organisation. The leader works with followers towards common goals. Spillane (2005) sees this as working with others and through others while Leithwood, Strauss and Anderson (2007) view it as ensuring that other are empowered to work towards achieving the goals of the organisation. A clear focus on common goals provides leadership with ethical overtone since it stresses the need for leaders to work with followers to achieve selected goals.

School leadership is no different but the focus is on educational activities and settings. The school principal is tasked with the responsibility to influence stakeholders to collaboratively work towards the realisation of the objectives of the school as an organisation. The ultimate goal in schools is that leaners achieve. The principal cannot achieve this alone. He or she works with other groups of people which include educators, learners, parents and other stakeholders who have interest in learners learning. The principal intentionally influence these groups of people to understand and agree about essential activities of the school. They create shared

school vision and facilitate individual and group efforts to implement shared objectives. As indicated earlier, scholars focus on different aspects of leaders to theorise who the leaders are, what leaders do, how they do it and why leaders do it the way they do. The following section reviews these leadership theories.

2.3 Leadership theories

Grint (2000), in his book, *the art of leadership* discusses trait, contingency, situational and constitutive approaches to leadership to indicate that emanates from scholars focusing on individual or context as significant contributors to leadership. For Grint (2000), trait approaches focus on the leader and do not pay particular attention to the context. With these theorists, a leader is a leader irrespective of the context. Another category entails scholars who focus on both the leader and the context. The theorists argue that to understand leadership, the individual, together with the context, are important and should be understood. Situational approaches seek to understand the context in which leadership is practiced. For these theorists, leaders act in accordance with the contexts they find themselves in. Understanding context, not the leader is essential for them. The fourth category for Grint is constitutive approaches. These theorists contest both the meaning of the leader and context. In these categories, what is appropriate for leadership is subjective to different interpretations. I use Grint's framework to explore briefly scholarly literature on leadership.

2.3.1 Trait approaches to leadership

The trait approach to understanding and explaining leadership has been around for some time and it views leaders as individuals with specific set of capabilities. Scholars in this category believe that leadership is the exercise of specific sets of behaviours that are regarded as effective. The trait approach focusses on the attributes of the individual as critical and general facets of leadership notwithstanding varied contexts (Grint, 2000). Leadership is viewed from a personality point of view and assumes that it cannot therefore be taught or improved. Transformational leadership traits, for example, have been linked to creativity (Vera & Crossan, 2004). There are other studies (e.g. Javidan & Waldman, 2003), who examine charisma as important trait for leaders. One of the strengths of the trait perspectives is their ability to categorise observable behaviours. Researchers have found that examining the aggregate behaviours of individuals provides a strong correlation with traits; in other words,

observing the behaviours of an individual over time and in varying circumstances provides evidence for the personality traits categorised in trait theories. Although a number of studies are increasing in this field, there is still limited evidence mainly because they downplay the significance of leaders' interdependence (Bass, 2008; Yukl, 2010). Leadership effectiveness cannot only be explained in terms of character as there are many other dynamic social and contextual factors that influence leadership.

2.3.2 Contingency leadership approaches

Most contingency theories of leadership acknowledge context as the moderator of leader behaviour. This makes them to be more advantageous than trait approaches. They describe how the facets of the situation impacts on the leadership behaviour of an individual or a group (Bass, 2008; Yukl, 2010). Contingency theories offer understandings about how to identify the situation and identify likely forms of behaviour that could be effective for a leader. They seek to match the right leader for each circumstance or contingency rather than secure his or her adaptation to the environment. Leadership is seen as a display of combined and common interpretations of fitting behaviour in specific contexts (Grint, 2000). Yukl and Mushud (2010) identify task characteristics (e.g., complexity, stress), subordinate characteristics (e.g., skills, experience, motivation), and leader-subordinate relations (e.g., shared goals, mutual trust) as forms of situational variables that were used in the early contingency theories. Fiedler (1967) is one of the proponents of contingency theory who came up with the most influential model. This model accentuate that leadership style chosen is determined by the relevant features of the given situation. Multiple-Linkage Model is another comprehensive contingency model is given by Yukl (1989). It combines ideas from some earlier contingency theories. The model comprises long-term leader actions and short-term leader actions that seek to establish a more favourable situation. Contingency approaches are critiqued for their dualistic framing of leadership between the individual and the system, thus implying a mechanistic relationship between leadership styles and contexts (Fairhurst, 2001). In reality, this poses difficulty in application as contexts are dynamic and different leaders react and act differently to different situations.

2.3.3 Situational leadership approaches

The situational approach perceives the context as essential but the qualities of the individual leader is less relevant (Grint, 2000). The proponents believe that there are no universal styles of leadership as leadership styles would change depending on the situations or context. Once the situation is well-defined, leaders can be taught suitable skills essential to lead in specific contexts. Particular leaders could grow into the job assuming a competent analysis that discloses the essence of the situation. They propose that effective leadership requires a cogent understanding of the situation and suitable response, rather than a charismatic leader with a large group of dedicated followers (Grint, 2011). Bass (2008) assert that situational leadership theory developed from a task-oriented versus people-oriented leadership continuum. The continuum represented the extent that the leader focuses on the required tasks or focuses on their relations with their followers. Vroom and Yetton (1973) and Hersey and Blanchard (1988) are the most influential situational leadership theories. Vroom and Yetton (1973) identify five leader decision-making styles, and Hersey and Blanchard (1988) suggest that leaders adapt their styles to suit the readiness of their followers to perform. In both models, the context determines which style is appropriate. Situational leadership approaches have an advantage over trait approach in that context is acknowledged as an important factor in leadership. They are however critiqued (Bass, 2008; Glynn & DeJordy, 2010) by their overlook on the ways in which leader and context may be inter-dependent.

2.3.4 Constitutive approaches to leadership

The constitutive approach to leadership challenges the impartiality of the concepts 'leader' and 'context'. These approaches emphasise the role of interpretation and the way in which these concepts are interconnected (Denis, Lamothe & Langley, 2001). Grint (2000) further states that constitutive approach avoids any sense of indispensable characteristics or contexts in favour of understanding interpretation to be at the core of practical leadership. In other words, leaders and leadership should be approached as socio-material assemblages (Grint, 2005). In this way, Grint (2005) claims that there would be no possibility for an uncontested, once-and-for-all time definition of 'leader' or 'leadership'. The argument is that conceptions of leaders and leadership should rather be advanced as a consequence of historical and present social circumstances. Constitutive approach enables people to explore leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon (Heifetz, 1994; Grint, 2000). Grint (2000) argue that instead of generating a rational science of leadership, it would be necessary to apply a series of questions

relating to the 'who', 'what', 'how', and 'why' of the phenomenon. The following section endeavours to discuss the 'who' (principal), 'what' (focus on teaching and learning), 'how' (practices) and 'why' (learners success) of instructional leadership. I begin by discussing how the concept has evolved over time.

2.4 Morphology of instructional leadership

Instructional leadership is not a new concept. It has evolved over time since its conception. This section brings to the fore its origins and how it has evolved to its current state. This is done to clarify the contested views and debates about the concept. Contestations arise on who should be an instructional leader, what is the focus of instructional leaders, how and why do instructional leaders do what they do. Salo, Nylund and Stjernstrom (2014) attest that the origin of instructional leadership is Anglo-American, developed intensely in the early 1980s mainly by school effective movement. Since its inception, it has evolved overtime as scholars contest its rigidity and trying to broaden its configuration.

Critics argue that instructional leadership as a concept mirrors an outdated view on leadership, reflecting directive, authoritative position of the principal supervising instruction in the classrooms (Hallinger, 2003; Sebastian & Allenswoth, 2012). Critics (Goddard, 2003) further argue that it position principal as a curriculum expert and supervisor of instruction. Another criticism laid by scholars is that principals could not have capabilities of being curriculum experts in all learning areas (Hallinger, 2003). The argument is that in secondary schools for example, specialisation in particular subjects is required, which principals would not have for all subjects. Furthermore, the principal would not have time to effectively engage with his or her role as an instructional leader as there are many other activities that require his attention. Subsequently, research has significantly stretched in light of the contestations and debates about the nature and influence of instructional leadership.

Pedagogical leadership emerged and is a preferred term in in Nordic literature. It is believed that it incorporates a number of leadership practices including those aiming at improving schools as professional communities and those where principals pursue educators to act in accordance with curriculum goals (Salo, Nylund & Stjernstrom, 2014). Sebastian and Allensworth, (2012) contend that instructional leaders focus on mediating school processes instead of just supervising instruction. Southworth (2003) preferred to use 'learning centred

leadership' over instructional leadership arguing that instruction is "no longer our guiding star; rather it is learning" Other scholars (Robinson et al., 2008) view the concept having evolved to include various collaborative practices by which the principal support teaching and learning.

Hallinger and Heck (2010) observe that in the twenty-first century, instructional leadership has been 'reincarnated' as 'leadership for learning', with the primary focus on school leaders directing and influencing activities aimed at learners learning with the help of educators. Similarly, Hallinger (2011) contends that leadership for learning is used more recently to encompass the approaches that are employed by school to achieve essential school outcomes by focusing on learners learning. This includes a wide range of leadership sources and foci aimed at improving learner success (MacBeath & Dempster, 2009). Robinson (2011) assert that student centred leadership is used to label similar practices.

Interest in transformative, distributed and shared leadership seems to have transformed the conceptualisation of instructional leadership. Supervision has been replaced by open-ended, collaborative professional dialogue and reciprocal reflection on the prerequisites of, methods for and outcomes of teaching practices (Marks & Printy, 2003). In a four-year longitudinal study of 192 elementary schools in one state in the United States of America (USA), Hallinger and Heck (2010) found evidence to describe instructional leadership as collaborative or distributed leadership. Hence, instructional leadership has also been defined by the presence of styles or modes of leadership. Adjectives such as collective, shared, transformational, and distributed are used with instructional leadership and frequent the research describing what or who is involved (Marks & Printy, 2003; Muijs, 2011; Anderson, 2012; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2012; Louis & Wahlstrom, 2012).

While the term is not conclusively and consistently defined, the characteristics and expectations of the work have been highlighted. Engaging in instructional leadership practices require time, skills and knowledge, and attention to the interaction between people and their context (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2012).This new paradigm of instructional leadership emphasise the relationship between school leadership, system-wide context and learning at all levels. In this regards, Hallinger (2010) asserts that school leaders have to focus on the nature and needs of the schools' particular contexts. Instructional leadership is said to rely on trust-building and the integration of its knowledge and practices in specific contexts (Robinson, 2011). Instructional

leadership is a multifaceted construct (Lee, Hallinger & Walker, 2012), consisting of a number of leadership practices.

The discussion above reflects the outcomes of diversified views and debates about instructional leadership as a concept. The main issue is on focus on principals, underplaying other leaders and educators. Secondly, the issue is on its focus on teaching (instruction) and not emphasising learning. Other debates include the role of the principals on learners learning. Some scholars have found no direct correlation between principals and learners learning. Consequently, concepts that have since emerged in efforts to challenge the biases seen in the original concept include educational leadership, pedagogical leadership, educational leadership, curriculum leadership, facilitative, shared and distributive instructional leadership; learner centred leadership, as well as leadership for learning (Southworth, 2003; Hallinger, 2011; Bush, 2013). I argue in this study that a focus on both teaching and learning is still relevant to uplift multiple deprived schools. Emerging research in such challenging context increasingly connects enhanced learner outcomes to principal's engagement with classroom practices. Instructional leadership is used to encapsulate both teaching and learning as significant foci of principals as instructional leaders. In the next section I describe instructional leadership as a multidimensional construct.

2.5 Instructional leadership as a multidimensional construct

The international literature (e.g. Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Marzano, Waters & McNulty, 2005; Zepeda, 2007; Supovitz, Sirinides & May, 2010; Robinson, 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2012) and national literature (e.g Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009; Bush, 2013; Grobler & Conley, 2013; Marishane & Botha, 2013; Mestry *et al*., 2013;) provide a variety of models on instructional leadership. A review of these models indicates a general agreement that instructional leadership is multidimensional. It embraces bundles of multiple professional practices that are executed concurrently (Salo, *et al*., 2014). There are three general dimensions that cut across these models upon which instructional leaders focus their time, attention, and behaviour. They are: setting direction; focus on teaching and learning; and creating conditions for improved teaching and learning. I discuss these dimensions below.

2.5.1 Setting direction

This section focuses on the discussion about the need to set the direction the aspects of Instructional leadership. Setting the direction is a broad but important dimension of practice for instructional leaders which includes identifying goals, vision, mission, purpose, expectations and direction for the school (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2012; Marzano, *et al*., 2005; Robinson, 2011; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Supovitz, Sirinides & May, 2010). Defining the school's mission is the first dimension of instructional leadership in Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) model. It represents a broad picture of the direction in which the school anticipates to realise specific goals (Hallinger, 2011). Instructional leaders develop clear, common goals and purpose, and direct the work of teachers, creating motivation and efficacy, which allows distractions to be minimised (Robinson, 2011). Establishing such aspects as goals, purpose, and expectations collaboratively facilitates deeper understanding and collective ownership (Wahlstrom *et al*., 2010). Collective vision in schools serves as a value that defines how teachers intend to operate on a daily basis, and fosters a shared responsibility for student learning (Gruenert, 2005). The direction is always directed towards effective teaching and learning (Bush, 2013).

A well-defined vision provides direction for teacher's improvement efforts, allows principals to measure implementation of instructional reforms, and can serve as a foundation for the discussion about the school's instructional programme (Supovitz & Poglinco, 2001). Establishing a collective vision in which the student is the focus, builds trust among an otherwise autonomous teaching staff, as every decision and conversation centres on what is best for the student learning, and not what is best for the egos of the individuals (Carreau, 2008).

Research shows the association between clear goals and improved instruction (e.g. Hallinger & Heck, 1998, Robinson, 2007; Robinson, *et al*., 2008). Robinson's (2007) comparative study of transformational and instructional leadership identified establishing school goals and expectations as one of the five leadership dimensions that had a significant impact on students. Robinson (2007, p.14) define establishing goals as "the setting, communicating and monitoring of learning goals, standards, and expectations, and the involvement of staff and others in the

process so that there is clarity and consensus about goals". Further, in their review of social psychology research, Robinson, Lloyd, and Rowe (2008), find that goals allow the individuals to prioritise when there is a number of tasks that are equally significant and which are overwhelming. . From this perspective, an effective leader, more than simply prioritising tasks, allows the organisation members to envision the completed task as it may be in the future (Katterfeld, 2011).

Hallinger and Heck's (1998) meta-analysis of the associations between principal leadership and learner success, finds that the principal's work in setting, communicating, and sustaining the school's mission and goals, has the most consistent influence on student outcomes. They describe this area of the principal's work as influencing the faculty's academic expectations for student and influencing the school's mission and vision; they find that this work has an indirect effect on school outcomes. Leithwood, *et al.* (2004) cited two essential objectives for organisational effectiveness: helping the organisation establish a strong set of objectives and influencing members to change in that direction. Those leadership practices that are involved in setting directions are found to have the greatest proportion of a leader's effect. These specific leadership practices require a leader to identify and articulate a vision, foster the approval of group goals, and create expectations that are high.

Research, according to Katterfeld (2011), has emphasised that, as important as school-wide goals are, their existence is not enough as the content of the goals is also critical. Leithwood and Jantzi (2012) assert that the effectiveness of leadership in enhancing learner success hinges on the particular classroom practices that are stimulated, encouraged and promoted by the leader. The principal as an instructional leader has a significant role in assisting educators to incorporate what has been agreed upon as objectives of the school in their practices in the classrooms. The principal as an instructional leader has a duty to ensure that the instructional programmes including school processes like budgeting and monitoring support the attainment of the set goals. In other words, the principal should reduce activities that seem to derail the school from its academic mission.

There are other researches that have established that leadership practices that focus around setting school goals and building shared vision are suggestively connected with academic success. The Wallace Foundation (2013) found that effective principals shape a vision of academic success for all students. Furthermore, OECD research (2009) based on the TALIS

data supports the view that successful instructional leaders are actively involved in ensuring that schools goals are achieved. Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004) also identified setting directions as one of the three critical components of school leaders. Setting directions includes building a shared vision, setting high expectations and communicating direction. Communication is essential as goals are established, monitored and assessed providing for current and timely feedback on progress (Marzano, *et al*., 2005; Leithwood & Jantzi 2012). The literature above highlights and advocates that instructional leaders must engage actively in the formulation of school goals. It indicates the importance not only of formulating it but also to involve other stakeholders in its development. The value of involving other stakeholders is said to be essential for the development of effective and learning as stakeholders own the process and commit themselves to the achievement of stated goals.

2.5.2 Focusing on instruction

Focusing on instruction is the second dimension of practice evident in the instructional leadership literature. It pertains to main tasks of coordinating the curriculum, supervising instruction and monitoring assessment and learner progress (Blasé & Blasé, 2000; Hallinger, 2003; Elmore, 2005; Robinson, 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2012; Levin, 2012). In this regard, Sim's (2011) perspective of the principals as instructional leaders is that they are to provide guidance to teachers on curriculum and pedagogy, encourage students to analyse weaknesses and guide teachers and students. In addition, instructional leaders work with the limitations of existing school resources and improve the quality of teaching. The literature on effective schools also shows that effective principals are more powerful over making decisions regarding curriculum and instruction than those in ineffective schools (Robinson, 2011). Studies conducted in the United States show that strong district involvement in curriculum and instruction that supports principals' instructional goals is yet another aspect of an effective school (Leithwood, Strauss, & Anderson, 2007). The following section discusses the main components proposed by scholars about the instructional focus as a dimension of practice for instructional leaders.

2.5.3 Coordinating curriculum

It is emerging from a number of studies that coordinating the curriculum is one of the major practices that the principal as an instructional leader should engage in. The perspectives shared

by these scholars indicate the variances in how the principals engage in this activity. Katterfeld (2011) assert that effective instructional leaders focus the attention on instruction, creating an academic press to ensure each student's educational experiences are aligned with the school's vision. Similarly, Sim (2011) posit that the principals enthuse and inspire the educators to plan and engage in classroom teaching in a way that is aligned with school vision. The principal does not necessarily have to teach and may not have an in-depth knowledge of various subjects offered in his/her school. However, as the chief administrator of the individual school, the principal has the authority and responsibility of the decisions within the autonomous sphere of the school. He or she facilitates curriculum delivery and ensures that he or she guides educators to teach as expected.

The study that was conducted by Marzano, *et al*. (2005) identified several principals' responsibilities that fell under the function of managing the instructional programme. The first responsibility the involvement in curriculum, instruction and assessment was characterised by being directly involved in curricular design activity and assisting the teachers in addressing assessment and instructional issues. The concept of involvement in these instructional areas is also noted as a crucial instructional leadership dimension by Robinson (2007). The second responsibility, the knowledge of curriculum, instruction and assessment is described as possessing knowledge of instructional, curricular, assessment, and classroom practices (Marzano, *et al*., 2005).The meta-analysis by Robinson, Lloyd and Rowe (2008, p.663) found that when "leaders work directly with teachers to plan, coordinate, and evaluate teachers and teaching," student outcomes are significantly higher. Furthermore, effective instructional leaders tend to discuss instructional strategies with the teachers, provide evaluations that help the teachers improve their practice, encourage the use of different instructional strategies and observe classroom instruction frequently. This demands that the principals as instructional leaders arrange their schedules to allow themselves time to focus on instructional matters and when they visit classrooms.

Attending to the instructional programme also includes effective procurement and use of resources, both material and human (Marzano, *et al*., 2005, Robinson, 2011). For example, effective principals recruit effective teachers and provide for professional development that focuses on influencing teacher practice to improve student achievement. Professional development is a powerful tool in developing individuals and organisations and in bringing about educational improvement (Moore & Kearsley, 2011). It also allows instructional leaders

to provide educators with opportunities to become intellectually engaged with their subject matter, thus ensuring deeper understanding of key concepts and having a chance to try new approaches in environments that support diversity (Sullivan & Glanz, 2005). Ensuring that the teachers understand current effective practices and theories is crucial for their being able to enact them towards attending to the goals and directions (Marzano, *et al*., 2005; Levin, 2012).

Hargreaves and Harris (2015) assert that leaders in organisations that perform beyond expectations establish creative learning teams that "turn one's greatest weaknesses into significant triumph". Accordingly, the educators are likely to commit themselves to contribute positively and meaningfully to improve and enhance opportunities for quality and effective learning if they are professionally developed. Mulford and Silins (2011) contend that successful principals involve others in the leadership process to increase and build capacity.

2.5.4 Monitoring learner progress

The literature indicates that the principals as instructional leaders monitor progress of the learners in their schools. In some cases, the principals identify and award outstanding performances. The findings of Sim (2011) showed that Malaysian principals were excellently performing two roles which included identification and awarding outstanding learners who were excelling academically. These principals awarded these learners with incentives or certificates to motivate them. Assemblies were used to announce these achievements and to motivate other learners. In this regard, the principal directly or indirectly monitors and evaluates learner's progress.

Monitoring learner progress is realised through analysing and acting on learners' achievement using formative and summative assessment, and through direct knowledge of teaching practices, learning standards and classroom dynamics (Bush, 2013). According to Taylor and Prinsloo (2005), the quality assurance of tests and the monitoring of results have been shown to be significant in terms of management variables in relation to improved student outcomes. These results are used to provide support to both the teachers and the learners to improve, as well as, to help the parents understand how their children are performing (Kruger, 2003). Instructional leaders focus on students' work and student explanations to ascertain students' level of understanding, and they build systems for teacher accountability (Katterfeld, 2011, p. 10). Instructional principals give support and guidance to the learners who are not achieving as

well so as to meet schools' academic goals. The assumption here is that the core mission of formal education in not simply to ensure that students are taught, but to ensure that all learners are progressing.

Grobler and Conley (2013) argue that the construct of instructional leadership entails the process of ensuring that there is coherence between teaching by the teachers and the learning by the learners. Successful instructional leaders are directly involved in the instructional programme, assessment, and dialoguing with teachers about their practice (City, *et al*., 2009; Robinson, 2011). The model taken from Seng (2013) indicates that managing teaching and learning is regarded as one of the key issues that need to be developed in order to obtain the final outcome of student achievement. This is the duty of every school principal and instructional leaders have to ensure that they too focus on the supervision of teaching.

2.5.5 Creating and sustaining conditions for improved learning

The third dimension of instructional leadership practice that emerges from the literature is about creating and sustaining conditions for improved learning (Hallinger, 2003; MacBeath & Dempster, 2009; Supovitz, Sirinides & May, 2010; Robinson, 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2012; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012; Mkhize & Bhengu, 2015). These conditions refer to both the environmental and the relational aspects of the work. In other words, physical environment is important and forms part of preparing the environment for effective teaching. Similarly, the issue of relationships is also important because people work well when they have feelings of job satisfaction and are also motivated. Therefore, a combination of these factors is important for leadership in the school to pay attention to.

Scholars such as Sindhvad (2009) have argued that principals of successful schools demonstrate a greater support for human relations. These principals recognise the needs of the educators and support their endeavours to succeed. The principals inspire and recognise educators' good work, impact on educators' morale leading to amplified educator effort to increase learner performance (Sindhvad, 2009). Leaders who have the ability to impact on working conditions for the educators and the school climate or culture (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2012; Marzano, *et al*., 2005) enhance and support focussed instruction impacting on learner success.

In Carreau's (2008) study, the principals voiced that they made it a priority to get to know their staff and students. The principals believed that knowing their teachers helped them to see changes in their behaviours, teaching styles and/or communication. They attempted to do this by using an open door policy, making themselves visible in the hallways, and getting to school early so that they may be able to share collegial talking time with the staff. They expressed the view that school leaders need to be humanistic by demonstrating interest in the teachers' personal lives, realising that the stages in their lives dictate the amount of time they can dedicate to their profession. The instructional leader needs to build staff cohesion by recognising the teachers' efforts, observing and valuing the teachers' generational viewpoints, and facilitating the sharing of teachers' tacit knowledge and teaching experience. They believed that by nurturing the teacher directly impacts on their efforts on their students and their learning. Levin (2008) for instance, highlights the importance of building a strong team that requires knowing and understanding the strengths and abilities of the existing members.

Chapman, Snyder & Burchfield (1993) advanced the view that it is important for the instructional leaders to support their educators and enhance learner success by ensuring that they provide materials necessary for instructional materials. They maintained that the availability of instructional materials act a direct and indirect motivation to the educators and the learners. As a direct motivation, good instructional resources help the educators to organise and pace the presentations of their contents with less anxiety. Chapman, *et al*. (1993) further argue that good materials assist the educators to prepare effective presentations even for the weaker educators. Sindhvad (2009) assert that instructional materials indirectly motivate the educators. They assist them to prepare and present lessons effectively, resulting in improved learner performance. Professional efficacy increases when the learner performance increases (Sindhvad, 2009). Through his or her leadership, the principal can improve the instructional climate of the school by creating a humane environment for both the teachers and the learners.

Since the school climate affects all classrooms and is not dependent upon individual subjects, leaders have an opportunity for a significant impact by focusing on this aspect (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). Leadership that organises the school to support a culture of learning reduces the impact of distractions and maintains the focus on common goals for student achievement and contributes to the conditions required for success (Levin, 2012). Aligning the work and structures helps create the culture and conditions (Hallinger, 2003). This means that principals need to organise the school and the teachers in ways that enable them to work in

ways that pursue common goals. Hence, principals must not ignore their time in focusing on teaching and learning because teaching and learning is the linchpin of the existence of a school (Sim, 2011).

The learning environment is supported by creating the conditions for the development of safe and orderly schools (Marzano, *et al*., 2005; Robinson, 2011). The practice of creating a climate that is trusting and collaborative and where the leadership practice is de-privatised is considered as a falling within this leadership dimension (Mulford & Silins, 2003). Furthermore, leader visibility and developing relationships through the work impact the school learning climate (Hallinger, 2003; Elmore, 2008).

The findings of Maringe, Masinire and Nkambule (2015) highlight the notion that a welcoming school environment for the parents can act as a supporting point and can be the cause of pride for the whole school, and thus can lead to improved culture of teaching and learning. Further, a finding from the work of Gordon and Louis (2012) conveyed the connection between increased student achievement and democratic practices that include opportunities for the parent participation. When the principals attend to and are committed to this practice, communities tend to respond positively, thus providing further opportunities for education and communication. This, in turn, enhances the ownership of educational practices addressing the requests for principals to explain and support the instructional strategies of teachers.

It is evident from the discussion above that instructional leadership involves a number of activities than just supervising teaching. None of these activities contributes independently to effective instructional leadership impacting on student success (Robinson, 2011). These dimensions work in conjunction with each other. Actions aimed at one dimension impact on other dimensions in a continuous manner. It is the interaction and interrelationship of the practices within and between these dimensions that create the conditions that allow schools to be successful at improving results of learner achievement and success. In the following theme I discuss debates about influence of instructional leadership on school improvement.

2.6 Impact of instructional leadership on school improvement

This section presents scholarship which establishes a connection between instructional leadership and school improvement. Whilst other scholars view instructional leadership as the panacea for improving schools, especially learner performance, other scholars do not see a direct link between the two phenomena. A group of scholars including Leithwood and Jantzi (2000); Harris (2004); Leithwood and Mascall (2008); Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2010) acknowledge the connection between instructional leadership and the achievement of learners. They view this connection as powerful for successful leaders. However, the same scholars have expressed ambivalence about such connections; they ask questions about whether or not instructional leadership has direct or indirect influence on the quality of educational provision and the achievement of learners. The review of literature conducted by Hallinger and Heck (1998) on instructional leadership literature published between 1980 and 1995 suggests that school principals who employ an instructional leadership style to some extent influenced learner outcomes in most cases through others. It also emerged that most of the principals did not teach and hence, they did not have direct influence through teaching. Their influence was on educators who are directly involved with teaching the learners and through other processes that support teaching and learning.

Other studies (Louis, *et al*., 2010; Sebastian & Allansworth, 2012) have shown more indirect effects, co-variation with shared leadership, and multiple pathways by which principals affect instruction and learning outcomes. For instance, Hallinger and Heck (1996) found that a principal's instructional leadership had an indirect effect on student reading achievement and direct effects on school climate variables in elementary schools. The connection between instructional leadership and learner attainment was found to be mediated by processes at the school level. Factors at the classroom level included educator efficacy and job satisfaction. It should be noted at this stage that school principals can play a role in ensuring teacher efficiency and efficacy as well as the teacher's job satisfaction. Van de Grift and Houtveen (1999) examined instructional leadership in elementary schools and found that leadership had a small but significant effect on student achievement scores. In a study in which O'Donnell and White (2005) surveyed 250 middle-level educators, perceptions of principal instructional leadership behaviours that focused on improving school learning climate were identified as predictors of student achievement.

According to Glatthorn, *et al*. (2012), principals as instructional leaders engage with developing educators, build professional relationships and a sense of community. Additionally, Spiro (2013) affirms that instructional leaders establish clear goals, provide educators with direction and sense of mission. Furthermore, they motivate educators to enhance their performance. Teacher motivation was also highlighted as having an impetus that leads to improved educational outcomes. For instance, according to Spiro (2013, p. 28), principals as instructional leaders "create synergy across relevant variables" which have an indirect impact on learner achievement. Supovitz, *et al*. (2009) also found that principal as instructional leaders had an indirect, positive effect on learners learning.

Salo, Nyland and Stjernsrom (2014) address instructional leadership in the Scandinavian context. Drawing on more than 100 narratives from school leaders in Norway, Finland and Sweden, they concluded that principals did not involve themselves directly in the guidance of teaching and learning in the classroom but rather that they built an educational infrastructure for professional resilience, distance and respect. Horng and Loeb (2010) also found an indirect relationship between instructional leadership and learner performance. They contend that school results and organisational climate improve when principals devote added time on aspects of organisational management, including the educators and the parents. In contrast, they argue that time spent on day-to-day instructional activities – such as classroom observations – are marginally or not at all related to improvements in learner performance and are even impacting negatively on school climate.

Robinson (2007) had a different view about the involvement of instructional leaders on activities that impact on learner achievements. Her meta-analysis of published research indicated a significant role of the nature of the leader on learner outcomes. She found that direct leader involvement in curriculum planning and professional development was associated with moderate or large leadership effects. This suggests that "the closer leaders are to the core business of teaching and learning, the more likely they are to make a difference to students" (Robinson, 2007, p. 21). Indeed, the other literature presented above suggests that leaders do impact on learner outcomes. The debate seems to be on the extent and the areas of engagement that they argue indirectly impact on the learners' academic achievement.

Leithwood, *et al*. (2006, p.5) conclude that "there is not a single documented case of a school successfully turning around its pupil achievement trajectory in the absence of talented

leadership." This conclusion offers the prevailing support for the significant role school leaders on improving learner achievement. They contend that leadership is second only to classroom teaching in its potential to generate school improvement. This statement suggests that educators teaching in the classrooms are the ones that have the direct and significant impact on learner outcomes than leadership.

It is evident from the literature reviewed in this section that instructional leadership impacts on school improvement and learner outcomes. The literature reviewed indicates that the connection of instructional leadership to learner outcomes is significant but does not have a direct impact. It is instead moderating variables that have direct impact on learner outcomes. Borrowing from the words of Spiro (2013, p. 28), school principals as instructional leaders "create synergy across relevant variables" that significantly impact on learner outcomes. These variables include commitment to what is happening in the learning process (Bush & Glover, 2012). The assumption carried in this study was that the commitment, engagement and leadership of what happens in the teaching and learning process is moderated by context. The next section discusses context as it was believed was a significant field for instructional leadership.

2.7 Understanding the context and impact of multiple deprivations on instructional leadership

In this section I discuss different contextual features that shape the practices within and across whose boundaries the principals function. This is done to gain insight into the circumstances that enable and constrain the principals' instructional leadership practices. The contention is in line with the theory of practice architectures which contends that practices are shaped and fashioned by the "complex dynamics of cultural-discursive, material-economic and social-political mediating preconditions" (Kemmis, 2009, p.466). The assumption is therefore that the actual meaning of instructional leadership is subjective to numerous prevailing school contexts.

2.7.1 Leadership and context

Much of the academic literature and related empirical data regarding school leadership focuses on normative features of leader centric traits, attributes, and behaviours, devoid of context sensitivity. Few researchers have argued that leadership effectiveness is dependent, in part, on various contextual factors (Bloch, 2009; Mulford & Silins, 2009; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2012; Tan, 2012). Contingency theories, for example reveal that the effect of organisational context on leadership effectiveness is essential (Hallinger, 2003). These outcomes strengthen the idea that appropriate leadership is embedded in its context. For example, contextual variables like subject area specialisation, departmentalisation, and development stages of students, differ in rural and township schools. In this regard May and Supovitz (2011) argue that there are variances in rural and township settings which impact on the way instructional leaders perform their duties.

Another difference is seen between secondary schools and primary schools in organisational complexity, age and characteristics of students, size, curricular organisation and delivery and structure (Murphy, 1988; Crum & Sherman, 2008; Hallinger, 2005; Levin, 2012; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). Due to these structural and organisational differences, secondary school principals for example, appear to be less actively involved in instructional leadership practices than those in primary schools. Attesting to this, Wahlstrom (2012) found that in comparing instructional leadership practices between secondary school and elementary school principals, high school principals did not engage or participate to the degree enacted by their elementary counterparts. Hence, Male and Palaiologou (2015) contend that instead of viewing leadership as model dependent, it should rather be seen as a context dependent. In this way, leadership is seen to be related both with theoretical and practical engagements of activities around teaching and learning in context. Leithwood and Jantzi (2012) thus contend that successful leadership is the result of the interaction between people and their context.

Hallinger (2003 & 2005) is also a proponent who believes that leadership behaviours are shaped by and change in response to contextual factors. As such, Hallinger (2005) contends that leaders ought to be sensitive to their context and adjust their performance in response to the needs and requirements of the setting within which they work. School settings vary across communities due to socio-economic levels and diversity. Leadership behaviour therefore

changes in response to contextual factors such as socio-economic levels (O'Donnell & White, 2005).

Reviews of studies on instructional leadership indicate an apparent uneven representation of school context in that a disproportionate number of studies utilise elementary settings alone (Southworth, 2002; Printy, 2010; Robinson, 2011). Original research on effective schools, which involved only elementary schools, created the foundation for further study regarding instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2003). Findings from instructional leadership research, conducted in elementary settings, are often generalised across all settings including high schools (Heck & Marcoulides, 1993). Yet, due to structural and organisational differences, high school principals ought to substantially adapt their instructional leadership practices more than those at the elementary level (Hallinger, 2005, p. 231). The scope, (frequency and magnitude) of instructional leadership activities has been observed to vary across contexts as well (May & Supovitz, 2011). Further, other formal leadership positions in secondary schools, such as department heads, that are often given the responsibility for instruction, were not seen as substitutes for instructional leaders (Wahlstrom, 2012). Conversely, 34 others indicate that instructional leadership at the high school level includes all formal leadership positions (Robinson, 2011). Those studies that do include high schools appear to identify a greater leadership deficit than schools at other levels (Wahlstrom, *et al.*, 2010).

Drawing from a wide range of studies and evidence, Leithwood, *et al*. (2007) identify seven powerful claims about leadership that is regarded as working in schools. These claims include the understanding that the ways in which successful school leaders apply basic leadership practices – not the practices themselves – demonstrate responsiveness to, rather than dictation by the contexts in which they work. Furthermore, it is argued that successful school leaders indirectly improve teaching and learning through their powerful influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions. Leithwood, *et al*. (2007) also indicate that some personal traits account for the variations in leadership effectiveness. These claims suggest that there will be variations in which leadership is applied within and between schools. Muijs (2011) questions the applicability of claims about successful leadership across all contexts. The question for this study is therefore how are contextual factors of multiple deprivations impacting on instructional leadership in rural and township South African schools? The

following section presents the South African Schooling context to illuminate variations in schools that are out there and which impact on instructional leadership practices.

2.7.2 The South African schooling context

Twenty two years into democracy, South Africa still endures scars of apartheid. Education continues to be unequal despite government efforts to alleviate the problem of inequalities. The impression is still in existence of two education systems as the rift between advantaged and disadvantaged school is remarkable and too wide. The first group of schools has learners who receive high quality education and the second group on the other hand has learners who receive low or limited quality education. The problem is that the second group of schools has the majority of learners which makes education system in South Africa to be generally of low quality (Fleisch, 2008; Bloch, 2009; Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). Bloch (2009) for example indicated that only 20% of the schools in South Africa produced learners who pass the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations and qualify to further their studies in the universities. The implication of this assertion is that more than half of the learners who enrol in Grade One do not make it to the universities. The majority of such learners are Black Africans and mainly from townships and rural schools.

In South Africa, township and rural areas are mainly inhabited by Black African societies. These societies suffer from multiple forms of deprivations due to various forms of marginalisation (Thomson, 2009). Geographic distance of rural areas to amenities makes it difficult for people who live in these areas to access basic services like health, schools and other services, sometimes also due to poor road conditions and transport. Thomson (2009) points out that many rural communities also suffer from ideological distance and emotional distance. She asserts that there are colonial and apartheid legacies, and also globalisation that tend to distance and marginalise rural communities. With emotional distance, Thomson (2009) points out that in many rural communities, women and girls are marginalised by cultural and traditional beliefs and practices. Women and girls tend to bear heaviest load of work in rural communities where for example they have to fetch water from the rivers, search and fetch fire-woods, cook, clean and do many other house chores. Furthermore, Thomson (2009) speaks of linguistic distance which marginalises people more often from rural communities. She points out that fluency in English, which is inadequate in most rural communities in South Africa, determines access or lack thereof, to resources and services in many of the institutions in the

country. Finally, Thomson (2009) identifies epistemological distance, where, in knowledge production and other decision-making processes, the voices of the rural people and in particular, the rural women and children are often silenced. These marginalisation are the indicators that the context of rural and township schools is different from those in urban areas.

It is apparent that a dichotomy still exists in the South African schooling system. Rural schools endure the greatest forms multiple deprivations. As highlighted above, different forms of marginalisation, poor infrastructure, limited and lack of access to resources, poor service delivery and many other forma of deprivations are more pronounced in rural areas than in urban areas (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Bhengu, 2005; Bloch, 2009; Thomson, 2009; Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). Leadership has to be responsive to such factors and to adapt their leadership strategies to suit environment. In the next section I discuss multiple deprivations in school.

2.8 Understanding multiple-deprivations in schools

It would be vital for the school leaders to understand the context in which they lead. This study focuses on instructional leadership in multiple deprived contexts. It is therefore necessary to illuminate how it is perceived by various scholars. Deprivation is regarded as an observable lack of all or most of the basic needs and conditions of life (Townsend, 1993). Townsend (1987) asserts that people can be rich in terms of material resources but find may themselves deprived of certain life-defining characteristics indicating that it is different from poverty. People can be deprived but not necessarily poor. For example, some children may have all the food they want, money to buy things they like, but lack parental love and care (if both parents are dead or not staying with them for whatever reasons). Poverty on the other hand indicates lack of resources needed to escape deprivation (Townsend, 1987). Multiple deprivations indicate a confluence of unmet basic human needs (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). In most cases in South Africa, township and rural communities tend to experience multiple forms of deprivations including poor resources, poor or lack of basic services such as transport, water, electricity, health, safety and security. Environments are most likely to be challenging, making it difficult to live in the area. Learners are most likely to face multiple forms of deprivations which impact on their schooling and hence those of their school principals.

Children who suffer multiple forms of deprivations are likely to attend local schools which are themselves in multiple deprivation scenario. Townsend (1987) defines schools facing multiple deprivations as those schools which do not have access to resources that can help them escape poverty. Such schools tend to be subjected to a wide range of poverty-inducing deprivations, not just one or two. Schools could be simultaneously exposed to poverty, lack of educationally stimulating environments (inadequate resources and poor infrastructure), cultural and social dissonance which require them to constantly adapt in an effort to cope and perform their tasks appropriately (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015).

The extent of deprivations in the schools varies drastically. Curriculum offered in some of these schools is limited, disadvantaging those learners from their counterparts in privileged schools who are exposed to a variety of subject choices, giving them upper-hand in future life. Townsend (1987) alludes that schools operating in most deprived environments in England have resources far exceeding those of the schools in South Africa. This indicates that the schooling system is itself creating a rift between the privileged and the deprived schools. The big challenge is that there are many deprived schools in South Africa serving Black South African population. Learners from these schools sit and write common examinations written by their privileged counterparts. It is clear that the outcomes favour those learners with effective resources which in most cases are former Model C schools. The bottom line is that social inequalities will continue to exist if school leaders do not adapt and rise to the occasion. The following section discusses the impact of multiple deprivations on the school processes.

2.9 How contextual factors influence the dynamics of schools and school processes

There are many factors that instructional leaders have to consider in leading multiply deprived schools if they are to improve learner outcomes. For example, previous studies carried out within the UK and globally have concluded that there is a positive correlation between deprivation and educational underachievement (McNally & Blanden, 2006; Cassen & Kingdon, 2007; Raffo, *et al.*, 2007; Welsh Assembly, 2009; INTO, 2011). Findings from these studies suggest that these learners have lower chances of meeting people who would inspire them, give relevant information and further opportunities to enhance their lives. Furthermore, the findings from the studies cited above suggest that even if the learners from multiply deprived communities have high inspirations, they tend not to be aware of what to do. In a nutshell, the learners who grow up in such environments tend to be negatively affected by the

environment. The learners in the studies cited above had different schooling experiences than their peers in other contexts not characterised by multiple deprivations; did not experience supportive interactions with educators and other adults. They felt less in control of their learning at school than other learners, through being put under pressure to perform tasks in which they lacked confidence. One lesson to draw from the situation cited in the studies above is that schools have to do more to counter the effects of deprived situations from which the learners suffer within their home and community environments. It is therefore important that schools do not entrench the learners' unfavourable home environment, but instead, they need to reverse by providing enriching learning environment. I am therefore not convinced that schools can be able to provide effective service to the learners if they do not make an effort to understand the learners' home environment. For the schools to be able to do what I am talking about, leadership in the schools needs to take more interest in the learners' environment and it needs to do more in that respect.

Other studies show that secondary school learners who experience multiple deprivations are more likely to be absent from schools than other learner (Fleisch, 2008; Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). The consequence of this is high level of dropouts among these learners, further exacerbating deprivations. Further studies show that multiply deprived learners are likely to have special educational needs and lower attainment levels than their counterparts in privileged schools (Fleisch, 2008; Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). The opposite is true to schools situated in affluent environments which will always provide high quality education because of good and contemporary resources that assist the implementation of curriculum. These schools are capable to inspire and motivate even the weaker learners to carry out their dreams of improving their social standards or conditions through education (Amuka, Asogwa & Agu, 2013). The challenge for this study is the extent to which principals as instructional leaders in multiply deprived contexts were adaptively pushing in this direction.

There are leadership and managerial issues that have been identified by researchers such as Jansen (2005), Moletsane, Jaun, Prinsloo and Reddy (2015) that tend to impact negatively on the quality of education offered to rural schools. These researchers have identified, amongst others, high rate of time loss in the school day, high rate of educator and learner absenteeism; insufficient teaching and learning resources, inefficient utilisation of available resources, out-of-field educators and under-preparedness of educators, to name just a few. Vayrynen (2005) for example did an ethnographic study of a deprived rural school. Her findings indicated that

learners were walking long distances to school sometimes in bad weather conditions, only to find that they were not attended to. Educators would be absent or not come into classes to teach. She also reported that a lot of time was wasted where educators would not promptly respond to period changes and stayed longer periods in the staff room. Where educators went to the classes, very little teaching occurred. The sad part of her finding is that the principal was aware of these inappropriate behaviours but was ignoring or not acting on them. These were inappropriate behaviours by both the educators and the principal which were further depriving the learners to get quality education in the hands of the authorities. Muthukrishna, Ramsuran, Pennefather, Naidoo and Jugmohan (2007) found that educators were not acting on significant ethical issues to safeguard the vulnerable and multiply deprived learners. Therefore, the issue of deprivations was perpetuated even further through the actions or non-actions of leadership in the schools.

Another leadership and management issue regarding managing deprived schools is evident in the study of Moletsane, Juan, Prinsloo and Reddy (2015). Findings of this study indicate that educators in school contexts experiencing multiple deprivations were frequently taking leave of absence from work because of high stress and frustration about their work compared their counterparts in less deprived environments. Some of the types of leave that these educators were taking were not official, more of informal reporting to the principals. Principals were seen to be turning blind eye on this issue and yet it was compromising learners quality teaching and learning time.

There are other studies **(**Ronfeldt, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2013; Mbokazi, 2014; Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2015; Bhengu & Myende, 2016) which show that some schools facing multiple deprivations showed resilience, where against all the odds, they were seen to be coping with issues of multiple deprivations and were succeeding in producing high quality education to the deprived learners. Though small in number, these schools bring hope and lessons could be learnt on how they navigate around issues of multiple deprivations and succeed. For example, the findings from the study of Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015) suggest that the schools they studied took ownership of their path to success. They did that by actively strategising and finding solutions from within the school communities that worked for their context. This included nurturing commitment and accountability from all stakeholders and ensuring that time was used effectively and efficiently. They concluded that schools facing multiple deprivations

should not perceive themselves as victims and think negatively, but instead, they should strive for self-reliance, involving asset-based approaches.

Ronfeldt, *et al*. (2013) found that successful schools were harnessing parental involvement in the school activities and also by being responsive and accommodative to community conditions. They adjusted their school programmes in such as a way that they accommodated expectations and situations in the community. The sensitivity and accommodativeness to the community created a greater sense of belonging, making parents feel valued. This enabled them to participate freely in the activities of the school, taking the responsibility to work towards improving the school. There were gardening and conservation projects that the school was involved in which seemed to generate school-wide focus and enthusiasm from the community. These findings are similar to those made by Bhengu and Mkhize (2013); and Bhengu and Myende (2016) in the context of rurality and multiply deprived schools contexts respectively. Furthermore, Ronfeldt, *et al*. (2013) found that staff was willing to work outside normal times. This was done to get more time with learners to assist them with school work, which was lacking at their homes. This was found to significantly enhance the conditions for improved learner outcomes. These findings attest to the fact that principals in some deprived schools find creative and strategic ways to navigate around their contextual issues to improve learner outcomes.

Other studies such as that conducted by Mbokazi (2014) made similar findings to the ones described above. In his study of schools working in deprived contexts, he found that principals created collaborative networks with their communities and other stakeholders. Principals worked beyond the call of duty and had to spend time to focus on reducing poverty from their learners. They focused strongly on ensuring that teaching and learning was not compromised and was of good quality. The discussion above indicates that the learners that experienced multiple deprivations are vulnerable to many negative socio-economic challenges that impede their potential academic success. These factors are further compounded by leadership and management weaknesses which compromise the quality education of these deprived learners. There are many other factors which suggest that instructional leadership in multiple deprived contexts is complex and require principals to be aware, interpret the situation and act accordingly. Success, particularly in terms of the learners' academic achievement can be observed in schools whose leadership immerse itself into their contextual realities and creatively develop strategies that work for their contexts. In any leadership and management

situation, there are many challenges and dilemmas that persons entrusted with leadership responsibilities have to contend with. The following section discusses ethical dilemmas faced by principals in multiple deprived contexts.

2.10 Ethical dilemmas faced by principals in multiple deprived contexts

Multiple deprivations concept suggests a combination of various factors which weaken learning and have distinctive challenges on leadership (Maringe & Moletsane, 2015). As a result, principals leading these schools are often faced with dilemmas of exercising leadership and management tasks in ethical ways as they endeavour to make complex decisions in the best interest of teaching and learning in these increasingly complex contexts in which they work. Stakeholders have expectations that principals should act in a just way that demonstrate moral and professional accountability. They have a moral duty to act in way that promotes wellness and the best interest of all the learners.

Cranston, Ehrich and Kimber (2006) assert that the issue of ethics is about relationships and requires a judgement about a given situation or circumstance. Perplexing situations often occur in schools which necessitate that principals choose from competing sets of values or beliefs. Principals have to make ethically defensible decisions when for example there is a conflict between the school values and those of the parents or communities. For example, parents sometimes would instruct the principals to administer corporal punishment to their children knowing very well that it is against the law. The principal would be in the dilemma to uphold the law or to listen to the parents. Similar cases were identified in the study conducted by Begley (2005) in United States of America and Canada. Principals in that study identified ethical dilemmas that were regarded to be in the best interest of the learners and on conflict with the parents. The dilemmas that the principals reported often were connected to conflicts between organisational policies (i.e. punitive and rigid policies) and their own sense of professional autonomy/discretion. Other tensions emerged from the conflicts between their moral position, those of the profession and that of the school community. Accountability to the system and accountability to the others appeared to be a major concern for principals as they struggled to make ethically defensible decisions.

The findings from the study of Moletsane, Juan, Prinsloo and Reddy (2015) in South Africa suggested that principals often had to make decisions that compromised the provision of quality

education for the learner safety and to maintain order in the school. These principals sometimes asked either the parents or other teachers to babysit classes that did not have educators due to absenteeism. While the right to take leave by the educators was ensured, quality teaching and learning was often compromised. Other studies highlighted the existence of tensions emerging from competing accountabilities such as those between the students, the teaching staff, and ensuring equity on the one hand and the education department for meeting performance targets on the other hand (Cranston, Ehrich & Kimber, 2006). Cranston, Ehrich and Kimber (2006) in their study of seven Heads of independent schools in Australia found that the Heads had a great deal in promoting the welfare of students, particularly when the students were in the home situations that were detrimental, and dealing with misbehaviour from one or more students, especially where expulsion may be necessary. Most of the Heads in that study were keenly aware of the consequences of their decisions and tensions between what was in the best interests of individuals versus what was in the best interests of the rest of the school.

2.11 Conclusion

In this chapter, I traversed through leadership and instructional leadership literature to illuminate what has been done in the field. Leadership literature is enormous, making it hard to define the phenomenon. For this study, the literature used to define leadership converged on defining it as a process of influencing the behaviours of individuals for the attainment of institutional goals. In the case of instructional leadership, the influence is on all the activities that are aimed at ensuring that effective teaching and learning takes place. I have reviewed literature on practices that describe how instructional leadership is enacted nationally and elsewhere in the world. There have been difficulties in terms of getting one model that works across all contexts. In this regards scholars like Maringe, Masinire and Nkambule (2015) advocate for a 'cocktail' of leadership theory that does not focus on one aspect of leadership. This could prove helpful to understand the multifaceted nature of instructional leadership within challenging multiple deprivation contexts of schools in South Africa. The following chapter endeavours to discuss theoretical and conceptual frameworks that I used as lens to explore instructional leadership of secondary school principals in multiple deprived context.

CHAPTER THREE

CHOOSING AND POSITIONING THE STUDY INTO THE THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature (not exhaustively) to highlight knowledge that scholars in the field have generated. In this Chapter, I propose and discuss the framework for instructional leadership that guided me to explore, interpret and explain instructional leadership practices of principals in this study.

3.2 Choosing and positioning the study into the theoretical and conceptual frameworks

I indicated in the previous chapter that the phenomenon of leadership is broad and that scholars use different perspectives or approaches to study it. Scholars (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Imenda, 2014) opine that it is imperative of every researcher to identify and describe fitting and applicable theoretical and/or conceptual framework for his or her study. Imenda (2014) accentuates that framework is used in research as a guide that helps the researcher to direct his or her search for data and to determine how the findings speak to the framework. The researcher checks if the findings support or dispute the framework used and also to check if the findings can be explained using the framework. In a nutshell, it guides the researcher in giving meaning to every stage and related aspects of the study. It acts as road maps toward understanding what is observed and assist in formulating informed decisions about those observations (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Imenda, 2014).

Imenda (2014) further differentiates between a theoretical framework and conceptual framework. She explains that a theoretical framework is the application of a theory, or a set of concepts drawn from one and the same theory, to offer an explanation of an event, or shed some light on a particular phenomenon or research problem. On the other hand, she explains that a conceptual framework is an end result of bringing together a number of related concepts to explain or predict a given event, or give a broader understanding of the phenomenon of interest. It is useful where theories fall short of explaining meaningfully the phenomenon under

study. Using these conceptualisations of theoretical and conceptual frameworks, I also had to identify and choose a suitable framework for my study.

Instructional leadership, which is the focus of this study, is influenced by many factors including contextual differences; social and economic changes; political systems; skills and knowledge. It is thus not surprising, as exclaimed by Dinh, Lord, Gardner, Meuser, Liden, and Hu (2014, p. 56) that "leadership involves 66 different theoretical domains and a wide variety of methodological approaches". To mention a few identified by Dinh, *et al*. (2014, pp. 56-58), contextual leadership theories address leadership in specific arenas and how leadership practices are inhibited by contextual factors. Complexity and systems leadership theories incorporate complexity theory with the notion of complex adaptive systems. These theories are useful to explain how leaders can be effective and successful in raging conditions. This thematic category also includes social network and integrative perspectives of leadership. Ethical/moral leadership theories encompass leadership theories that focus on philanthropic behaviours as the common core. They pay particular attention to explaining moral priorities of leaders. These include explaining the development of ethical positioning towards leadership, the importance of ethical attitudes to leadership, the effects of ethical leadership and how it can be sustained. Spiritual leadership and authentic servant leadership theories fall in this thematic category. Behavioural thematic theories focus on research using the leadership behaviour frameworks, nature and consequences of participative, shared leadership, delegation empowerment of leadership, studies on task-oriented behaviour, and people or relations-oriented and individualised consideration behaviour.

Hargreaves, Fink and Southworth (2003) argue that one problem with thinking in the modern era is that issues are seen in atomised ways and discussed and debated using binary logic. They argue that atomisation and binary thinking are no longer appropriate in our post-modern world. They argue for a synthesis of leadership theory to understand a holistic picture of practice. One of the ironies of leading teaching and learning is that teachers are faced with the daily unpredictability of the classroom and of the learning process. Learning presses for multi-dimensionality and simultaneity (Hargreaves, Fink & Southworth, 2003) in exploring how leadership is enacted in varying contexts.

The study was based on assumptions that it is important to learn about the how of instructional leadership; the context is not merely a backdrop for activity and thought, but it is constitutive

of leadership practice as leadership can be enabled or constrained by the context. Practice occurs in the interactions between leaders and followers in particular contexts around particular tasks. Furthermore, the study acknowledges that leadership is supported by a network of people engaging in leadership practices throughout the education system and as such, schools need to encourage spontaneous collaboration and support people working together to introduce new initiatives. So leadership needs to be understood in terms of leadership practices and organisational interventions and not just in terms of leader attributes and leader-follower relationships. This approach emphasises considering leaders in interaction with one another, in particular contexts, and working toward improving teaching and learning.

Against this background, I chose Adaptive Leadership Theory proposed by Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) and Hallinger's (2011) synthesised leadership for learning model. Theoretical and conceptual frameworks chosen in this study present a preferred approach in exploring instructional leadership practices of principals in the context of multiple deprivations. They acted as a map to provide coherence for this empirical inquiry to enable the reader understands how I conceptually grounded my approach. The frameworks represented the inherent contextual diversities faced by instructional leaders. I discuss these frameworks below, focusing on the development, claims and application of the framework to the study.

3.2.1 Adaptive leadership theory

I chose Adaptive leadership theory to frame this study. Nastanski (2002) describes how adaptive leadership as a style of leadership evolved from other theories such as situational, transformational, contingency, and complexity theories. The proponents of Adaptive leadership are Ronald Heifetz, Alexander Grashow and Marty Linsky in an effort to understand components of successful leadership. In their book, *The Practices of Adaptive Leadership: Tools for Changing Your Organisation and the World* published in 2009, Hefetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009, p.14), define adaptive leadership as "the practice of mobilising people to tackle tough challenges through debates and creative thinking, identifying opportunities to thrive." They view thriving as much more than survival to mean growing and prospering in new and challenging environments.

Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) maintain that Adaptive leadership is specifically about change that enables the capacity to thrive. They assert that new environments and new dreams

demand new strategies and abilities, as well as the leadership to mobilise them. As in evolution, they see these new combinations and variations helping organisations to thrive under challenging circumstances rather than to perish or regress. They contend that leadership should wrestle with normative questions of value, purpose, and process as successful adaptations make best the possible use of previous wisdom and knowhow. They maintain that the most effective leadership anchors change in the values, competences, and strategic orientations that should endure in the organisations. This builds a culture that values diverse views and relies less on central planning and genius of the few at the top. Adaptive leadership requires persistence to meet the ongoing stream of adaptive challenges (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009).

According to Heifetz, Kania and Kramer (2004), Adaptive leadership assumes leadership to be a process other than being viewed as individual competencies. The process involves people focusing on specific challenges at hand and modifying the ways that were used in the past. This is done by employing the knowledge of the people with entrusted interest in taking the organisation to a higher level to search and implement solutions to challenges. Adaptive leadership achieves change through provoking debate, encouraging rethinking, and applying processes of social learning. According to Heifetz, *et al*. (2004), Adaptive leadership compels people to work together to find solutions by debating and creatively thinking about works for the organisation in a given context. Since the model advocates for people to work together to find solutions, the model provides a framework for getting commitment from members to actively participate and own the process.

According to Heifetz and Linsky (2002), there are two types of challenges that leaders are confronted with. These are technical and adaptive challenges. Technical challenges, even though they can be very complex, are seen to be easily defined and have known solutions. Heifetz and Linsky (2002) add that with technical challenges, and anyone with suitable knowledge and organisational resources can resolve them. Adaptive problems on the other side refer to problems that are not well defined. They are challenges where there is a gap between aspirations and operational capacity that cannot be closed by the expertise and procedures currently in place (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). This means that these challenges are systemic and do not have readily available answers and hence, they require creativity and learning. Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) assert that adaptive challenges require experimentations, innovations, and changes from several areas in the organisation. Without learning new ways – changing attitudes, values, and deep-seated behaviours, people cannot

make the adaptive leap necessary to thrive in the new environment (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). The sustainability of real change depends on having the people with the problem internalise the change itself.

Kind of challenge	Problem definition	Solution	Locus of work
Technical	Clear	Clear	Authority
Technical and adaptive	Clear	Requires learning	Authority and stakeholders
Adaptive	Requires learning	Requires learning	Stakeholders

Table 1: Distinguishing technical challenges and adaptive challenges (adapted from Hefetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009).

Figure 2 above, adapted from Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) lays out some distinctions between technical problems and adaptive challenges. The figure indicates that challenges do not always come neatly packed as either 'technical' or 'adaptive'. Most of the challenges come mixed with the technical and adaptive elements intertwined, requiring involvement of stakeholders to learn and find solution collaboratively.

Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) identify three unique characteristics of adaptive challenges. First, they indicate that adaptive challenges have non-linear inputs and outputs. As discussed in the previous chapter, schools situated in the contexts of multiple deprivations are frequently plagued with challenges that come from different areas and which are different in nature. In some cases, there are no procedural books other than generic guidelines that assist the principals to deal with these issues. Solutions come from interacting with contextual variables and hence outputs would not be predictable. Heifetz Grashow and Linsky (2009) warn against engaging challenges with comprehensive plans detailing big leap forward. They favour experimentation because adaptive challenges involve complex systems that can easily generate unpredictable responses. They acknowledge that some plans will fail but others will generate important new information.

Secondly, Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) assert that formal authority is insufficient in dealing with adaptive challenges. It requires that leaders involve other stakeholders, mobilising different expertise to tackle challenges at hand and thrive. The challenge, as alluded to by Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) is that different factions each want different outcomes. Whilst working collaboratively with other stakeholders help in solving problems, different people have different perspectives about how things should be done. People have different beliefs, values, skill and knowledge that leaders have to understand. Making progress requires leaders to influence other people to change their priorities, beliefs, habits and loyalties. The leader has to mobilise discovery, shedding certain entrenched ways, tolerating losses and generating new capacity.to change (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). The study conducted by Ronfeldt, *et al*. (2013) indicated that whilst staff members were willing to work outside normal times to boost the levels of their learner performances, not all staff members participated. This indicates that even when benefits are evident some people do not see them the same way.

Another characteristic of adaptive challenge is that previously highly successful protocols seem antiquated (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). Adaptive leadership requires leaders to constantly change their tactics and strategies. The solution that seemed to have worked before may not necessarily work in another challenge. There are many factors that act at a given time. The nature of the problem, people involved, time and space where the problem occurred would factor into the solutions reached. According to Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009), Adaptive leadership is an iterative process involving three key activities: (1) observing events and patterns around you; (2) interpreting what you are observing; and (3) designing interventions based on the observations and interpretations to address the adaptive challenge you have identified. Each of these activities builds on the ones that come before it and the process overall is iterative, you repeatedly refine your observations, interpretations, and interventions. Figure 2 presented as part of the discussion below illustrates this adaptive leadership process. Each activity of the process is also briefly discussed below.

Observing events and patterns

In essence, the leader observes events and patterns, taking in this information as data without forming judgements or making assumptions about the data's meaning. The leader diagnoses the situation in the light of the values at stake, and unbundle the issues involved. It is acknowledged that different people observe the same event or situation differently, depending on their previous experiences and unique perspectives. Further, it is acknowledged that observing is a highly subjective activity. But in exercising Adaptive leadership, the goal is to make observing as objective as possible. Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) note that it is not that easy to watch what is going on but very hard to observe objectively while you are in the middle of the action in an organisation. They recommend that leaders should try to take themselves momentarily out of the action and simply observe the situations.

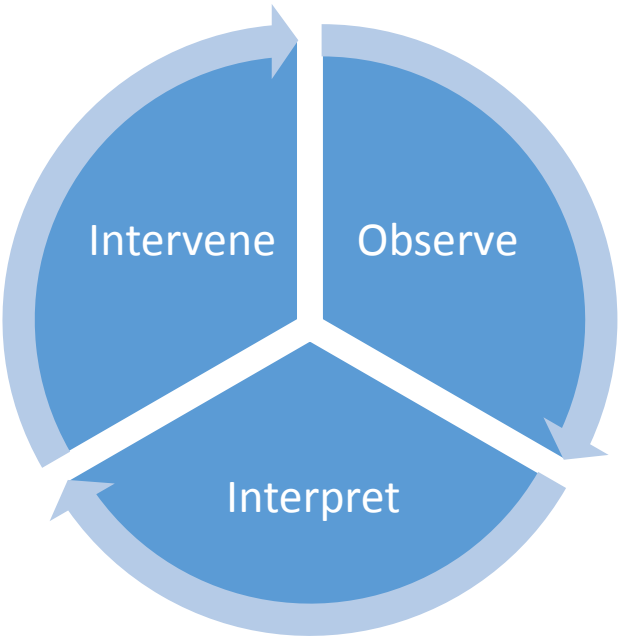

Figure 2. Adaptive leadership process adapted from Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009)

Interpreting observations

Another activity in Adaptive leadership involves interpreting observations. Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) note that interpreting is more challenging than observing. It is making sense of what you are getting from your observations, noting that other people may have formed

different interpretations of the same situation. Tentative interpreting observations is done by developing multiple hypotheses about what is really going on, and at the same time, recognising that hypotheses are simply that –hypotheses. The idea is to make interpretations as accurate as possible by considering the widest possible array of sensory information, engaging with the group's preferred interpretations. The leader identifies the issues that engage the most attention and counteract avoidance mechanisms such as denial, scapegoating, pretending the problem is technical, or attacking individuals rather than issues. It is noted that it may not be possible for an individual to form and evaluate all the possible interpretations that could be made from a single set of observations. The idea is to get leaders to view the same set of data from several different perspectives. Reflection and continuous learning of new ways to interpret what goes on around the institution and new ways to carry out work is entrenched.

Designing interventions

Lastly the adaptive process involves designing interventions based on your observations and interpretations in the service of making progress on the adaptive challenge (Heifetz, *et al*., 2009). The leader should take into account the resources available and context. The leader should influence people to take responsibility for the problem, but at a rate they can handle. The leader keeps the level of distress within tolerable limits for doing adaptive work, protect those who raise hard questions, generate distress, and challenge people to rethink the issues at stake.

The distinctive feature of leading adaptive change is that the leader must connect with the values, beliefs, and anxieties of the people in the organisation. It involves drawing upon all of the resources, skills and wisdom. Furthermore, leadership is necessary when logic is not the answer. Adaptive leadership involves moving people who have not been convinced by logic and facts. This requires the leader to adapt, to use his mental models, to capture the context and make sense of it, to influence others towards well thought activities and process that seek to enhance achievement of organisational goals. I also chose Hallinger's (2011) Model of instructional leadership to connect theory and practice. This model complement the adaptive leadership theory discussed above by focusing on the school practices, leading teaching and learning, which is the focus of this study. The model links personal attributes of the leader, the institutional context, the key processes and the outcomes.

3.2.2 Hallinger's (2011) synthesised leadership for learning model

This study focused on instructional leadership practices of school principals within the context of multiple deprivations. The Adaptive leadership theory discussed above focused on theorising about the leadership. There was then a need for a theory that addressed instructional leadership in particular. I chose Hallinger's (2011) synthesised leadership for learning model to frame the study conceptually. The model highlights the role of values in shaping leadership. Values define both the ends towards which leaders aspire as well as the desirable means by which they will work to achieve them (Hallinger, 2011). Every school has a mix of values that shape the day-to-day behaviour of the principals, the teachers and the learners regardless of whether the leaders are aware of or seek to impact them (Barth, 1990). Values both shape the thinking and the actions of leaders and represent a potentially useful tool for working with and strengthening the school's learning culture.

The model (see Figure 3 below) emphasises that leadership is enacted within an organisational and environmental context. This study explored instructional leadership as it is enacted in the context of multiple deprivations. The model assumes that school leaders operate in an "open system" that consists not only of the community, but also of the institutional system and societal culture (Mulford & Silins, 2009; Louis, *et al*., 2010). Effective leadership is both shaped by and responds to the constraints and opportunities extant in the school organisation and its environment.

Second, the model assumes that the exercise of leadership is also moderated by personal characteristics of leaders themselves. In particular, the model highlights personal values, beliefs, knowledge, and experience of leaders as sources of variation in leadership practice. The other key aspects of the model concern the links connecting the leader and leadership attributes with leadership processes and performance requirements; these are linked, in turn, to individual, unit, and organisational effectiveness. Leadership processes refer to the activities of leaders and followers within organisational contexts as they solve organisational problems (Fleishman, *et al*., 1991). They include the social influence processes that flow through organisational contexts and they include dynamics associated with the management of change. The strong assumption in this model is that such processes have great influence ultimately on organisational effectiveness and success (Zaccaro, *et al*., 1991).

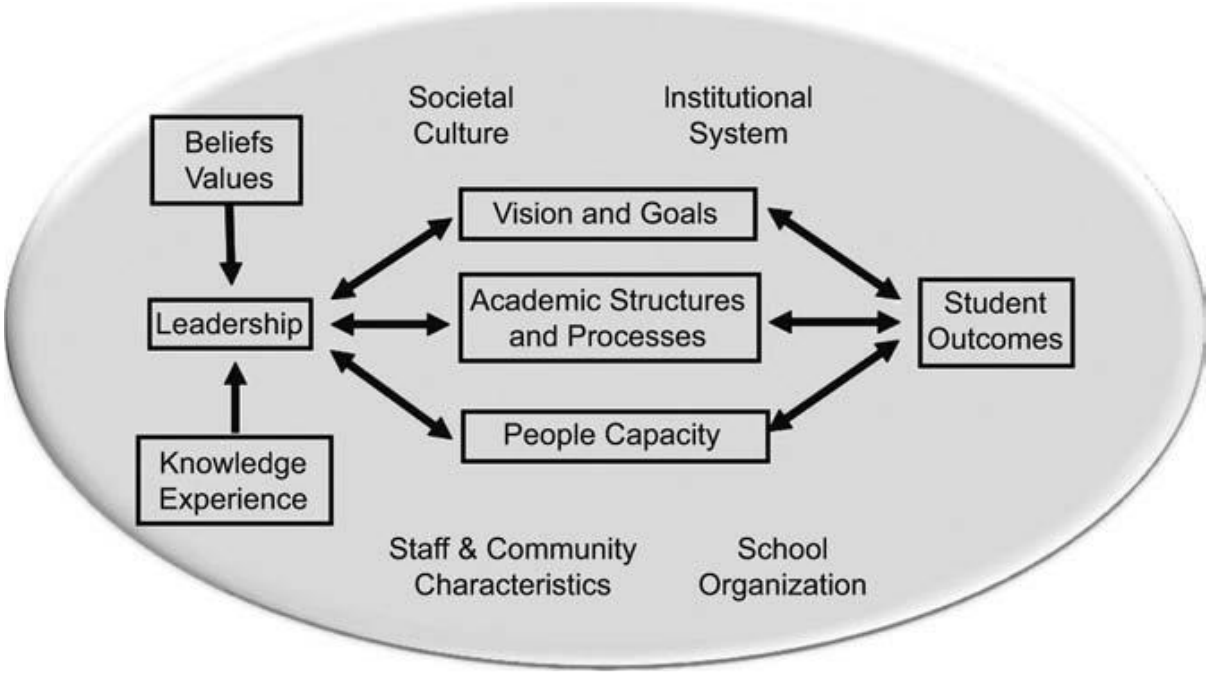

Figure 3: A synthesised model of leadership for learning (Hallinger, 2011, p.127)

Understanding the purpose, the context, and the participants is essential in determining the leadership approach that will enable and support what is required to increase student success. Leadership styles that allow for a focus on learning centred for all are more closely linked to successful achievement of school goals (Rhodes & Brundrett, 2009). Leadership for learning is central to the work required of a school leader (Hallinger, 2010). As the principal is the identified leader, they must not only know their context and environment as well as those contributing to the efforts of increased student success but in addition, be aware of the most relevant and applicable approaches to and styles of instructional leadership. As evidenced in the literature, not all approaches are applicable in all settings. Leaders must know their context and the desired outcomes. It is the school leader who gives permission for others to engage in various leadership roles, and to ensure that those selected approaches or styles provide maximum impact to student success.

Third, the Figure suggests that leadership does not directly impact student learning; rather, its impact is mediated by school-level processes and conditions (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Robinson, *et al*., 2008; Leithwood, *et al*., 2010). Moreover, the double-headed arrows in Figure 3.3 suggest that school leadership both influences and is influenced by these school-level processes and conditions (Hallinger & Heck, 1996 & 2010; Mulford & Silins, 2009). Finally,

it is noted that this conceptualisation frames leadership as directed explicitly, though not solely, towards student growth, particularly learning outcomes.

I chose Hallinger's (2011) synthesised leadership for learning model to frame this study. This model allowed me to deal simultaneously with both the complex collective, interrelated and process-oriented professional practices (Nicolini, 2013), taking place in schools, and the conceptualisation of these practices in research. Instructional leadership has to be understood and made meaning of in relation to and within amalgams of different professional practices. Instructional leadership is not a simple and straightforward 'leadership performance', but, rather, it is a complex process of co-production to be handled in a concrete manner (Salo, Nylund & Stjernstrøm, 2014). Leadership practices related to teaching and learning form part of broader, complex and dynamic educational and organisational practice architecture.

3.2.3 An integrated model used to frame the study

In the previous section I discussed separately Adaptive leadership theory as proposed by Heifetz, Grashow and Linsky (2009) and also Instructional leadership model as proposed by Hallinger (2011). In this section I explain how I integrated the two theories and models respectively in order to provide a framework for the study of instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations. The two frameworks assume that the context is constitutive of leadership. At the base of the integrated model (see Figure 4 below), I put multiple deprivations, the context chosen for this study. The confluence of deprivations brings to the school technical and adaptive challenges (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009). Both the frameworks incorporate the leaders' experiences, knowledge, values and beliefs in the complex contemporary environments that leaders are faced with. In this study, the focus was on the principal, noting that there are other leaders in the school who are engaged with instructional leadership. In the integrated model, I put the principal at the centre of everything that happens in the school. The principal influences and works with others to tackle the technical and adaptive challenges they are faced with to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place in the school. The process involves observing, interpreting and intervening on instructional leadership issues. These issues include vision and goals, people capacity, and academic structures and processes. The ultimate objective is to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place to enhance learner outcomes.

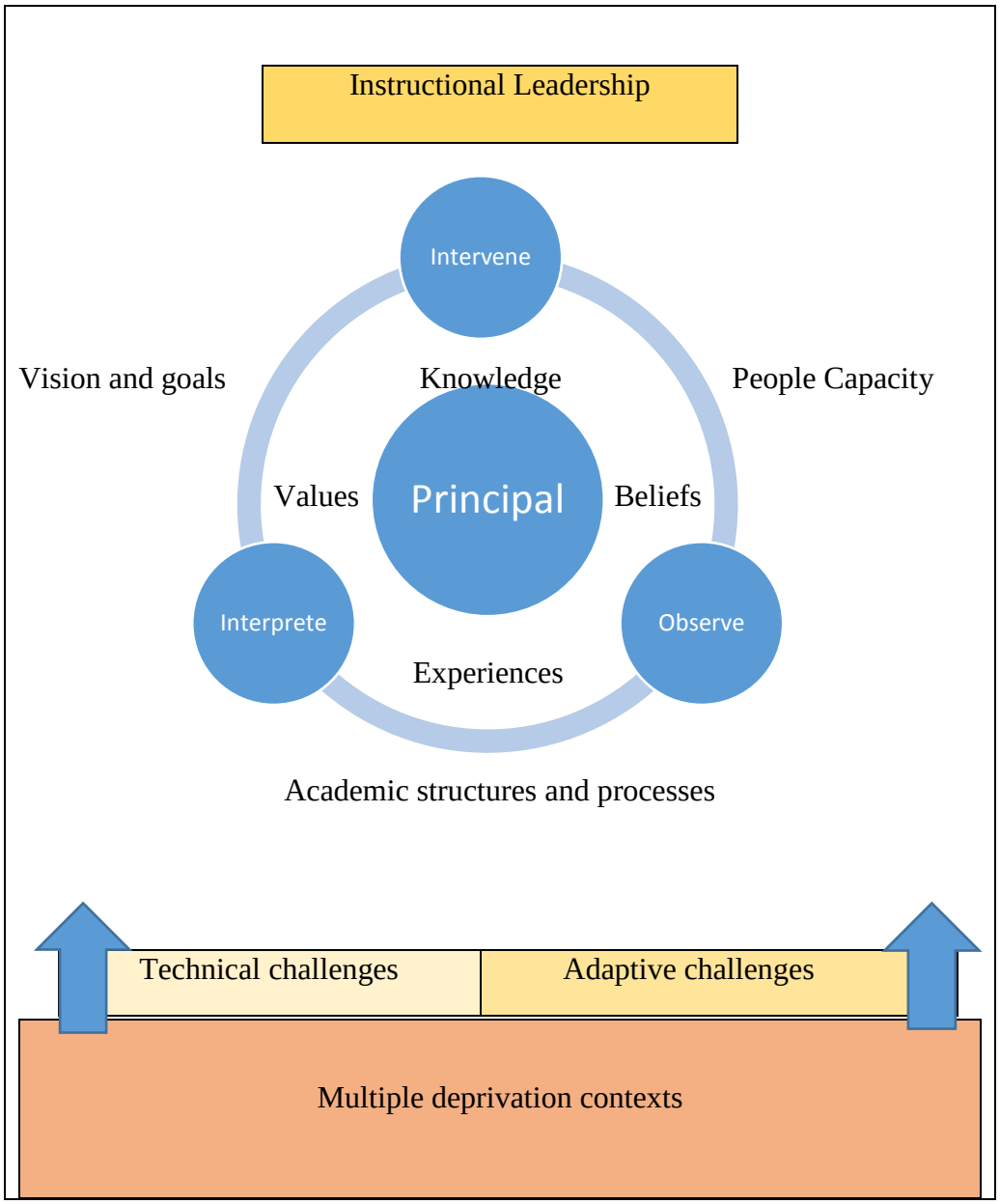

Figure.4: Representation of an integrated model used in this study

The principal was at the centre for this study. This model provided a wide-angle lens for viewing the contribution that leadership in the school makes to school improvement and learners learning. The principals as instructional leaders are paramount in promoting the quality of teacher's instruction, the students' achievement, and the degree of performance in the schools (Chell, 2011). They work with various stakeholders in the improvement of teaching and learning by providing a school culture where all teachers and parents, including school leaders, can work together for the best knowledge about learners learning (Woolfolk & Hoy, 2009). As the school leaders have responsibility for supporting the best instructional practices, they should shape a partnership with teachers with the primary purpose of promoting teaching

and learning (Woolfolk & Hoy, 2009). The integrated model was deemed suitable to study direct and indirect instructional leadership practices that affected teaching and learning in multiple deprived contexts.

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented a number of theories and models that collectively provide framework for analysing data for this study. Adaptive leadership theory was discussed and it highlighted some key components of the theory and these were the technical and adaptive leadership challenges that the leaders are faced with. In this chapter I have also discussed instructional leadership model to conceptually frame the study. I presented and discussed an integrated model to show how I linked the two theoretical constructs in order to have a bigger frame to study instructional leadership practices of school principals in the context of multiple deprivations. I therefore proceed to the next chapter, where I outline and justify the methodological orientation of the study. As part of the discussion of the methodological orientation of the study, I also highlight the paradigm, the research design, the data generation and data analysis strategies that I employed in my study to achieve my study's objectives and to answer the research questions that undergirded the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented and discussed the theories and models that provided a framework that underpinned this research. In this chapter, I present and justify research design and methodology that I adopted for this qualitative, multiple case study which explored school principal's instructional leadership practices in multiple-deprived contexts. I begin by declaring and describing paradigmatic disposition taken about the nature of reality (ontology), the relationship between the knower and the known (epistemology) and assumptions about methodologies (Neuman, 2011). I then present research design and methodology to describe procedures I used to generate and analyse data in order to answer the research questions. I show how the research design of my study unfolded by describing the location of my study as well as the sampling method used. I then present access issues and after that describe the data generation methods. The rationale for using each method is also discussed. Lastly I discuss the issues of trustworthiness and the issues of ethical considerations as well as limitations of this study.

4.2 Research design and methodology

Literature on research design and methodology document a range of approaches and concepts. These approaches and concepts are sometimes used inconsistently and even contradictorily, opposing the very assumptions which underpin the processes of generating and understanding what is worth in the research. Researchers agree that the nature of research is such that different people view things differently and have different perspectives of the same events or issues, different interpretations of the same words or concepts. Furthermore, the close relationship between the terms used often causes some confusion in the research design and methodology literature. For example, I have observed that in some books case studies, ethnography, action research and phenomenology are sometimes referred to as methodologies and sometimes called methods. The use of the terms methods and methodologies as if they were interchangeable adds to the conundrum. Gough (2000, p.1) attributes such conundrum to the "non-universal

agreement about what researchers mean by methodology; how we distinguish methodologies from methods; and how methodologies are related to epistemology."

A research design is defined by McMillan and Schumacher (2001) as techniques used to conduct research which includes responding to the questions: when, from whom and under what conditions data are generated or elicited. Similarly, Babbie and Mouton (2005) define research design as a set of guidelines and instructions to be followed in addressing the research problem, similar to that of a map that assists you to get to your destination. It is a general strategy or plan of how the researcher intends to conduct the research (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). It is the orderly organisation of all the research activities that are linked and in coherence with each other to answer the research question and enhance the validity of the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2013). Blanche, Durrheim and Pointer (2006) posit that research design provides an overview plan of the study. A research design therefore refers to the holistic process of doing the research from the beginning to the end. It details maps out the procedure that the researcher is going to follow to generate and analyse data to answer the research question.

Mouton (1996) notes that the research design is a strategic tool that gives the researcher the ability to foresee what the best research decisions should be so that the results of the study may assume maximum validity. Bailey (2007) suggests that in developing a research design the researcher must decide on the purpose of the research, the paradigm informing the research, the context or situation within which the research is carried out, and the research techniques employed to generate or elicit the data. It involves deciding on the research problem and related questions to be answered, deciding on what kind of data samples need to be accessed, data generation methods and deciding on the most effective strategies of data analysis (McMillan & Schummacher, 2001; Niewenhuis, 2007).

A distinction between methodology and method has been brought forward by Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004, p. 36) who define methodology as a "coherent group of methods that complement one another" and that have the ability "to deliver data and findings that will reflect the research question and suit the research purpose". Methods are defined as a variety of "approaches used in educational research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction" (Cohen *et al*., 2011, p. 47) and methodology is more about the features or nature of the research. Leedy and Ormrod (1985)

share this view and further note that research methods must be comprehensively described so that the reader is able to trace all the steps in the research process and even reproduce the study to yield much the same results. Mouton (1996, p. 36) understands a method as "the means required to execute a certain stage in the research process."

Methodology is concerned with the justification and reasoning behind the chosen methods and paradigms that underpin the study so that readers of the research not only read about the end result of the investigation but also how the process of inquiry unfolded and under what circumstances that occurred (Kaplan, 1973). Creswell (2013) defines methodology as the *process* through which the researcher come to understand the phenomenon being studied. On the other hand, Henning *et al*.(2004) defines methodology as the comprehensible *set of approaches* that complement one another to provide data and findings that respond to the set questions and hence the purpose of the research. McMillan and Schumacher (2001) refer to methodology *as a design* whereby the researcher chooses procedures for data generation and analysis to investigate research problems or questions respectively. Research design and research approach are used in these definitions and yet they mean different aspects of the research methodology.

Research approaches are overarching plans including the proceedings and layout of research. Several decisions have to be reached in order to choose a specific research approach (Creswell, 2014). Harding (1987) equates method with technique whereas some other scholars distinguish between them. They refer to methods as modes or ways of conducting research inquiry whereas techniques imply expertise or the art of performing a particular task. Cohen, *et al.* (2011) suggest that methods encompasses a variety of *approaches* to be wielded to elicit data from which the researcher infers, interprets and explains the problem. Ontological and epistemological assumptions that the researcher holds offer the theoretical underpinning for understanding which procedure or set of procedures that can be applied to a specific case (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). The following section discusses and clarifies my personal assumptions and choices that I made to integrate the different components of the study into a coherent and logical manner.

4.2.1 Locating this study within the Interpretivist Paradigm

Paradigm is a lens by which people make sense of the world. It is defined by Bertram and Christiansen (2014) as framework that represents a particular worldview about what is acceptable to research and how this should be carried out. It is a conventional belief about what we think about reality and addresses fundamental assumptions taken on faith, such as beliefs about the nature of reality (ontology), the relationship between the knower and the known (epistemology) and assumptions about methodologies (Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Creswell, 2014). Researchers (Cohen, *et al*., 2011; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Creswell, 2014) acknowledge that people have different philosophical orientations about the world and nature of research. As such, they identify several paradigms of which some are overlapping. The widely discussed paradigms are positivism; post positivism; constructivism/interpretivism; transformative/critical paradigm and pragmatic paradigms.

Positivist researchers hold a deterministic philosophy in which outcomes or effects are determined by causes and is typically seen as an approach to quantitative research where researchers aim to be objective (Creswell, 2014). Constructivist researchers aim to understand social world, recognising multiple interpretations as equally valid. The fact that I have put both constructivism and interpretivism as if they mean one and the same thing should not be viewed as such. These two are closely related but also distinguishable from each other. They both acknowledge the multiplicity of knowledge; however, interpretivism focuses on meanings that individuals attach to their world, whilst constructivists focus on the construction of the meaning (Neuman, 2011; Cohen, et al., 2011; Creswell, 2014). Transformative paradigm sees reality as shaped by political, social, cultural, economic and other dynamics resulting in unequal power relations (Creswell, 2014). Transformative/Critical researchers therefore aim to critique and transform society to be more equal and fair. For pragmatists, truth is what works at the time. The pragmatist paradigm may encompass more than a single philosophical system. The purpose for highlighting the various worldview is just to emphasise the fact that they exist within human sciences and not to discuss all of them in detail. Since the study was located within interpretivism paradigm, that is the world view that I discuss in greater detail.

Based on the focus of the study which was to explore instructional leadership practices of secondary schools principals in deprived contexts, I positioned this study and was guided by the interpretive paradigm. This paradigm is concerned with meaning making and it seeks to

understand the subjective world of human experience (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004; Bailey, 2007; Cohen, *et al.*, 2011). It is concerned with the people's definition, meaning making and understanding of the situation or phenomenon. Neuman (2011, p.102) conceptualises the interpretive paradigm as "the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds." The interpretive paradigm assumes that human beings create meanings in their worlds and these meanings are constructed as a result of interactions with others. This premise ties in with my ontological assumptions that people see the world and its events through their interpretations and inner subjectivity due to their personal and cultural beliefs. The objective of the study attempts to understand how principals use their personal and cultural beliefs to make meaning of their leadership in multiply-deprived environments.

Ontologically, the interpretive paradigm refutes that objective reality exists and its focus is on discovering the multiple perspectives of all the participants in their natural setting (Henning, *et al*., 2004). The ontological belief in an interpretive paradigm holds that those who are involved in the research process construct knowledge socially and individually, hence there are multiple realities (Henning, *et al.*, 2004; Bailey, 2007). Thus the aim of the interpretive paradigm is to capture peoples' perspectives on their lived experiences, not some objective notion of that experience. Research in the interpretive paradigm is therefore to be able to produce rich descriptive analysis that emphasises a deep, interpretive understanding of the social phenomenon. Therefore the tasks of the researchers in the interpretive paradigm are to understand the construction of meanings in the context being studied because social realities are constituted in these constructions (Neuman, 2011). This paradigm never aims at making predictions about what will happen as a result of human actions or behaviours.

My ontological belief is that multiple realities exist, and that social, economic, political and cultural values influence the construction of such multiple realities. I understood that contextual realities of schools were different. The assumption I made was that participants would perceive and interpret principals' instructional leadership practices differently. Each individual participant would produce his or her own reality which would be equally important to the ones produced by other individuals. I portrayed multiple realities of participants by employing multiple quotes of their own words, which highlighted their diverse perspectives.

In terms of epistemology, I believed that the relationship between me as the researcher and what could be researched - the researcher and participants - was interactive, and that knowledge was located socially (Henning, *et al.*, 2004; Bailey, 2007). Therefore, as the researcher I was aware of power relationships and social contexts which could influence this collaborative relationship. For this reason, I developed close relationships with participants in order to understand the contexts of their lives and work. The assumption was that people make meaning of the world according to their understandings and theories about it. For example, I assumed that there would be religious beliefs or common sense or cultural values or social norms that were overt and sometimes not overt even to the individuals themselves to make meaning of the world. These shaped the methodological approach I adopted to obtain the knowledge and information that I required in an effort to answer my research questions. I discuss the adopted approach below.

4.2.2 Locating this study within the realms of Qualitative Research

There are three research approaches, namely, quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods (Cohen, *et al*., 2011; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Creswell, 2014). In this study I adopted qualitative approach. I did not seek statements of objective facts. I also did not seek to predict, generalise and establish findings that were universal in a closely controlled research environment (Rule & John, 2011), which characterises quantitative approaches and positivist paradigms. In this study, attempts were made to understand instructional leadership as practised by school principals in working the context of multiple deprivations. This resonated well with qualitative research approach. Henning, *et al.* (2004) defines the qualitative approach as a research form, an approach or strategy that allows for different interpretations of the phenomenon that is being studied, and in which the contributors have a more flexible way of giving their views and demonstrating their actions. Furthermore, Cohen, *et al*. (2011) assert that qualitative research provides an in-depth, intricate and detailed understanding of meanings, actions, non-observable as well as observable phenomena, attitudes, intentions and behaviours. These definitions paved the way for my justification to adopt a qualitative approach.

Qualitative approach was deemed suitable for this study because the aim of the study was to gain an in-depth understanding of how the principals in secondary schools enacted instructional leadership, given the education, living environment, adequate care and employment deprivations experienced by their learners. The main task of this study was to explicate the

ways the selected secondary school principals came to understand and managed their day-to-day instructional leadership practices. It further attempted to uncover and to understand the real life setting complexities of leading and managing teaching and learning in multiple deprived contexts. A qualitative methodological approach therefore offered me opportunities to pursue profound understandings and in-depth analysis of instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in multiple deprived contexts. Such an orientation, allowed the participants in this study to share their views and conveyed their actions freely and openly. Additionally, a qualitative approach accentuates the interpretive nature of research and takes into account the social, cultural and political contexts of the researcher and participants (Cohen, *et al*., 2011).

Qualitative research integrates the researcher's philosophical assumptions and worldview with their interpretive or transformative practices. In qualitative researcher people study phenomena or people in their natural surroundings and diverse contexts in order to explore, understand and analyse their subjective meanings (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). They generate data in the form of text or visual images to examine the lived experience and views of participants. It is precisely against this realisation, that I argue that a qualitative approach was most appropriate for my study.

The importance of context is emphasised in a qualitative research as the study should be conducted in the social and real-life setting (Cohen, *et al.,* 2011) where data can be generated on multiple versions of reality. This approach resonates well with this study as my intention is to find meaning within social interactions, and where context is foregrounded as a significant factor that influences human behaviour. Therefore, data is generated by interacting with research participants in their natural setting while gathering detailed information through multiple methods. A qualitative study approach was chosen because I believed that it would enable me to explore and gain insight from the perspectives of the participants and my observations of instructional leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon.

Qualitative research is not without its critics. It is often seen as a soft science and unscientific (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Historically, tensions existed between those advocating a quantitative approach and those supporting the use of a qualitative approach to research (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). The debate created a sense of polarity between the two approaches with issues of reliability and validity looming large in the debate. Quantitative researchers question

the ability of qualitative research to provide reliable and valid research while qualitative researchers soften the debate by developing methodologies that attend to issues of trustworthiness. It is evident from the argument above that those who question the integrity of qualitative research argue in terms of reliability and reliability. Such terms are more appropriate for quantitative research that is underpinned by positivist paradigm. These critics seem to be unaware of the terminologies that are used for rigour in qualitative research. The methodologies that I chose for this study are those advocated and considered credible and it used trustworthiness framing as a way of ensuring what quantitative researchers refer to as validity and reliability.

4.2.3 Locating this Qualitative, Interpretivist study within a Case Study Design

To address the research questions identified in Chapter One, this study utilised a qualitative case study design. According to Yin (2009, p.18), a case study is "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in-depth and within a real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident." Nieuwenhuis (2007) explains case study research a systematic inquiry of a problem with an aim of describing and explaining it. It provides a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than by simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). Furthermore, Cohen, *et al.* (2011) assert that case studies investigate and report the real-life, complex, dynamic and unfolding interactions of events, human relationships and other factors in a unique instance as contexts are unique and dynamic. Picciano (2004) points out that a case study can be used to explore, describe, and to explain a phenomenon. This is in accord with Yin (2005) and Rule and John (2011) who distinguish between three forms of case studies in terms of their outcomes, namely: exploratory; explanatory and descriptive. Case studies therefore focus on a specific situation and offer insights and understanding of the cases being studied.

The choice of a case study was influenced by the four dimensions of research design as identified by Durrheim and Wassenaar (2004). These included the purpose of the research; the theoretical paradigm informing the research; the context within which the research was conducted; and the techniques employed to generate and analyse data. In this study, the case study approach provided a strategy which helped me, as a researcher, to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and the meaning for those involved. The utilisation of a case

study design articulated well with the intention and purpose of the study, which was to explore the understandings and complexities of enacting instructional leadership in challenging multiple deprivation contexts. Therefore, my rationale for choosing a case study was based on the phenomenon that was going to be explored, the question it raised and the type of end product desired (Merriam, 2009). In addition, the choice of a case study was motivated by the fact that although a case study presents difficulty of generalising from a single case, its uniqueness and its capacity for understanding complexity in particular contexts constituted an advantage (Babbie & Mouton, 2005). In the context of my study I used multiple cases to compare and contrast the uniqueness of socially constructed, contextualised instructional leadership practices. I did not aim to obtain information that was generalisable, but instead I aimed to portray rich, textured and in-depth accounts of instructional leadership practices in multiple deprived contexts.

I chose an exploratory case study design because I believed it was going to help me probe deeper into the understandings of how and why secondary school principals practise instructional leadership in their schools. It also provided me with a wealth of descriptive materials about the principals in their unique, natural environments which assisted me to explore their interactions, attitudes and characteristics regarding instructional leadership practices. John and Rule (2011) contend that all case studies are likely to include some descriptive contents.

Case study research also raises questions about the boundaries and defining characteristics. Merriam (2009) posits that a case study is an in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system. Similarly, Creswell (2010) supports Merriam's view by adding that a case study is a qualitative research approach in which the researcher explores a bounded system or multiple-bounded systems over time, through detailed, in-depth data generation involving multiple sources of information. The boundaries that defined the cases in my study were secondary school principals and more specifically those who enacted instructional leadership practices in multiple deprived contexts. John and Rule (2011, p.49) contend that case studies that do not pay attention to context "are often superficial; lack the richness of texture afforded by spatial, temporal and depth dimensions of contextualisation". This was taken into consideration when I selected my research sites and participants.

As a research instrument in this case study one of my main responsibilities was to derive data and carry out an intensive, in-depth analysis of each case to give meaning to this study (Merriam, 2002; Leigh, 2013). Undertaking a case study research project allowed me to conduct the research from beginning to end single-handedly, without the help of assistant researchers. Because the sample was not big, I was able concentrate all my energies into understanding and unpacking the complexities and uniqueness of each participant's perspectives and world views in their natural setting. This enabled me to unveil several deeply engrained, in-context realities about what participants consider as their truths and why. Bringing to the fore the participants' innately natural interpretations of reality adds to the richness of data and this is what qualitative case studies pride themselves of (Merriam, 2002; Yin, 2009; John & Rule, 2011; Leigh, 2013). Insights gained may assist the audiences of this case study not only to relate it to their personal circumstances but also to use their own discretion in interpreting, understanding and predicting other similar research situations. As can be deduced from the above discussion, the strengths of case studies are multifaceted and overweigh the deficiencies of the approach. I was therefore motivated to frame this study within a qualitative case study design.

4.2.4 Selection of sites

Creswell (2013) asserts that it is important in qualitative research to select sites and participants that will best assist the researcher to understand the problem and the research question. He believes this could be done through purposive sampling. According to Cohen, *et al* (2011), purposive sampling is the process of selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. Cohen, *et al.* (2011) further suggest that the researcher has to decide on people who display the issue or set of characteristics in their entirety or in a way that is highly significant for their behaviour for which the research questions were appropriate in terms of the contexts which are important for the research, the time periods that would be needed, and the possible artefacts of interest to the investigator. This view is supported by Rule and John (2011) who state that in purposive sampling, the researcher selects research participants deliberately because of their suitability in advancing the purpose of the research. The research problem, the purpose and the design of the research have therefore served to guide me in the selection of the sites for this study (Cohen, *et al*., 2011; Creswell, 2014). Through purposive sampling, I was able to seek information-rich key participants in order to obtain relevant data for the research process.

Miles and Huberman (1994) identified four aspects in order to place the whole study into perspective. These are (1) geographic setting where the research took place; (2) the participants; (3) the events or what the participants would be observed or interviewed doing and (4) the process explicating the nature of events undertaken by participants within the setting. I elaborate on theses aspects in the discussion below.

Through purposive sampling, six secondary schools were selected on the basis of their location and showing characteristics of multiple deprivations. That is, schools that had a proportional number of children living in households where no adults were employed; living in poor quality environments; and children who were at risk of lacking adequate care. Three schools had to be in rural setting and the other three schools in township setting in Umlazi District, KwaZulu-Natal. The concept rurality evokes various meanings and is not simple to define. In the absence of one agreed upon definition of rural areas, I use this term to refer to those areas under the jurisdiction of Amakhosi (Chiefs) as defined in the Traditional Leadership and Governance Framework Act, No. 41 of 2003 (Republic of South Africa, 2003) and the KwaZulu-Natal Traditional Leadership and Governance Act, No. 5 of 2005 (KwaZulu-Natal Legislature, 2005). Therefore, in terms of this conceptualisation, a rural school refers to any school that is located within the jurisdiction of traditional leadership in KwaZulu-Natal province.

I selected rural schools in order to understand if there were patterns of similarities or differences of instructional leadership practices in these settings. Furthermore, these schools were selected for convenience whilst keeping that they all should have principals who were hands-on in many school activities that aimed at enhancing teaching and learning in these schools. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) define convenience sampling as an act by the researcher to choose a sample that is easy for him or her to reach. I knew the area very well and the schools were not too far from where I lived. This afforded me cheaper and easier access to do fieldwork for my study. I knew that these schools were not representative of multiple-deprived schools in the District but nonetheless, they were uniquely representing themselves (Cohen, *et al*., 2011; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Creswell, 2014). The intention of the study was not to generalise the results beyond the group sampled.

4.3 Gaining access to the schools: Personal experiences and reflections

In this section I reflect on my personal experiences of gaining access to the schools. I felt it was necessary to share such experience as it was not a simple activity. It involved some combination of strategic planning, hard work, and dumb luck as stated by Van Maanen and Kolb (1985). It is also pointed out by Shenton and Heyter (2004) that gaining access into organisations is one of the problems facing researchers aiming to carry out in-depth qualitative case study research in organisations. However, the literature does not cover this issue in much depth (Feldman, Bell & Berger 2003) and as stated by Gummesson (2000) the hurdles related to gaining access are often neglected or seen as merely a tactical issue. In addition, most previous studies related to this area are written by well-seasoned scholars who provide a list of suggestions most of which are not always appropriate for every situation and for academics at different stages in their careers (Okumus, Altinay & Roper, 2007).

Laurila (1997) identifies three types of access. The first one is formal access which refers to achieving an agreement between the organisation and the researcher on specific terms including what, when and how the researcher will generate empirical data from the organisation and in return what s/he will provide. The second one is personal access which means that the researcher is getting to know relevant individuals. The third one is fostering individual rapport which refers to developing a good understanding and collaboration between the participants and the researcher. Similarly, Gummesson (2000) also identifies three different access types: physical, continued, and mental. Physical access means the ability of getting close to the object of the study. Continued access refers to maintaining an ongoing physical access to the research setting. Finally, mental access refers to being able to understand what is happening and why in the investigated settings.

I went to the selected schools with the head high up hoping that everything would be smooth, and that all the school principals would agree to participate in the study. The nature of the study required them to participate and tell their stories about how they enacted instructional leadership given the confluence of challenges brought by deprivations. I thought I had all my plans intact about my research. I had a shock of my life when the principal in the second school I visited to request permission to conduct research in the school shut me off. She did not give me a chance to explain myself and the nature of the research I was doing. She claimed that she was too busy and would not have time for me or any other researchers in her school. While I

did not expect to be shut down like that, I was consoled by the fact that potential participants in research have autonomy and rights. Their participation is voluntary and that even if they agree to participate, they can also withdraw from the study if and when they so desire. Therefore, I was guided by the ethical consideration discussed in Section 4.11 below that pervaded the whole process of research. I sadly proceeded to other schools and had to find another school to replace the one I was barred to include in my sample. I eventually had six school principals who agreed to participate in my research.

The sample size of six school principals was appropriate for the study. According to Cohen, *et al.* (2011), sample size is determined by the style of the research and in qualitative research it is more likely that the sample size is small. According to Teddlie and Yu (2007), purposive sampling involves trade-offs; on the one hand it provides greater depth to the study than does probability sampling, while on the other hand it provides lesser breadth to the study than does probability sampling. The purpose of the study was not to generalise the findings but to get a greater depth of how principals enacted instructional leadership practices in their multiple-deprived contexts.

To get an HOD and one teacher or Post-Level One educator from each school, I had to use snowballing sampling. Snowballing is a specialised type of sampling which uses personal contacts to build a sample to be studied (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011). Similarly, Cohen, *et al*. (2011) define snowballing as a valuable sampling method in qualitative research that uses other people or informants to connect researchers with others who qualify for inclusion and these, in turn, identify yet others. The researcher is reliant on the participants' social networks and personal contacts for gaining access to people (Noy, 2008). In this way, participants become gatekeepers to other participants and have control over who else to involve in the study. Furthermore, they become actively involved in recruiting others to participate in the research (Heckathorn, 1997). Snowballing was chosen and deemed suitable for this study because this group of participants (HODs and PL1 Educators) was hard-to-reach group for me (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). I gained access to the schools through the principals and relied on them to identify and recruit possible potential participants who would have sufficient knowledge and willingness to participate in this study. This was easier and convenient method for me to get the participants as it would have been difficult and time-consuming for me to familiarise and understand different staff members in each school. Whereas, people with specific characteristics that were needed for the research were easily found through recommendations

that were given by the principals as the first nominated participants (Merriam, 2009; Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011).

Like any other sampling procedures, snowballing had some disadvantages attached to it. It was prone to biases of the principals which I had no control over it. The HODs and PL1 Educators were to give their perspectives of how principals enacted instructional leadership. They were to supplement self-reported information generated from interviewing principals. The disadvantage was also that the principals could have recommended participants that would give biased information or those colleagues that were closer to them. I could also not rule out the possibilities of power play when identification of participants came from the Head of the school. This was evident from some of the participants who told me that they were just called into the principal's office or some said there was an official who was calling them. One educator was visible disgruntled by this exercise. The principal had to call for her twice before she came into the office. Upon explaining to her what I was doing, she blatantly refused to participate. It was difficult for me to persuade her to participate as I had thoroughly explained that her participation was voluntary and that she could withdraw at any given point if she so wished. I was ethically bound to keep to that promise.

Through purposive sampling intertwined with snowball sampling, I managed to get six principals, six HODs and six PL1 Educators from six schools (three in rural settings and three in township settings). Below I discuss profiles of the research sites (schools) and the profiles of the participants. The purpose is to link the results with the context under which the participants worked. This is also based on the fact that my paradigm (interpretive) dictates that truth is context bound and researchers need to consider the context of the participants in understanding their lived experiences (Creswell, 2014; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014).

4.3.1 Profiling the research sites (schools)

The six secondary schools at which the data was generated were given the following *pseudonyms*: Phatha Secondary, Battery Secondary, Amadada Secondary, Ndali Secondary, Zibonele Secondary and Lwandle Secondary. Their brief profiles are provided below.

Table 2: School profiles

		Phatha	Battery	Amadada	Ndali	Zibonele	Lwande
Location	**Rural/Tship**	Rural	Rural	Rural	T/Ship	T/ship	T/ship
	Approximate distance from Durban CBD	50km	46km	39km	27km	22km	31km
Deprivation levels (Approximate %age of learners facing these deprivations)	**Income and material deprivation**	75%	75%	60%	56%	45%	48%
	Employment deprivation	60%	75%	60%	60%	60%	60%
	Education deprivation	80%	90%	58%	46%	44%	50%
	Adequate care deprivation	70%	78%	40%	50%	53%	60%
	Living environment deprivation	90%	94%	90%	77%	67%	73%
School enrolment	**2015**	321	259	361	1340	1186	982
	2014	334	241	355	1238	1100	993
	2013	372	238	238	1257	1200	918
Teacher learner ratio per class. approximation		1:22	1:20	1:40	1:60	1:50	1:48
School size/	**No. of classes**	12	8	12	24	23	24
	Special classes	0	0	1	4	5	4
School building (A-adequate)	**Condition**	adequate	poor	NA	good	good	good
	Toilets	poor	poor	NA	adequate	adequate	adequate
	Water	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Electricity	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Fencing	Poor	Poor	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair
Physical resources	**Library**	0	0	0	1	1	1
	Laboratory	0	0	0	2	3	1
	Computer lab	0	0	0	1	1	1
	School hall	1	0	0	0	0	1
	Sports grounds	Poor	poor	NA	adequate	adequate	adequate
Staffing	**PPN**	11	7	15	44	40	34
	Princ;DP;HODs;PL1	1,0,2,8	1,0,1,5	1,0,2,12	1,2,5,36	1,2,5,32	1,2,4,27
	SGB paid educators	0	0	0	0	1	0
	Non- teaching staff	0	1	0	3	4	3
School fees per annum	**Amount**	0	0	0	R350	R400	R650
	% learners affording				70%	70%	60%
	% learners exempted				10%	30%	15%
DoBE allocation	**Quintile ranking**	1	1	2	4	4	4

	Special allocations (R)	135000	135000	190000	650000	650000	450000
	Learner transportation	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
	Feeding scheme	yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
NSC Pass rate %age	**2015**	17	96	56	74	72	63
	2014	24	63	53	60	77	81
	2013	88	94	54	79	81	90
	2012	52	67	53	26	76	68

4.3.2 Profiling participants

The table below presents the brief profiles of participants in this study. The participants were given *psedonyms* to protect their identities. In each of the six school, the participants were the principal, HOD and PL1 educator. There was only one school principal who was a female. The other five principals were males. Most of the participants had more than 10 years of teaching experience in the secondary schools and had appropriate teaching qualifications. The principals of Zibonele and Lwandle Secondary Schools had Masters degrees.

Research sites (schools)	**Participants**	**Position**	**Gender**	**Age**	**Teaching experience**	**SMT at current school**	**Highest Qualifications**
Phata High (Rural)	Patrick	Principal	M	53	28 years	15 years	Degree
	Patricia	HOD	F	47	19 years	9 years	Post graduate diploma
	Petronella	PL1 Educator	F	28	7 years		Honours
Battery High (Rural)	Batty	Principal	F	51	28 years	14 years	Degree
	Thandi	HOD	F	36	12 years	4 years	Post graduate diploma
	Thabo	PL1 Educator	M	28	27 years	4 years	Post graduate diploma
	Armando	Principal	M	35	10 years	3 years	Honours

Amadada High (Rural)	Amabili	HOD	M	41	23 years	4years	Post graduate diploma
	Amahle	PL1 Educator	F	32	7 years		Post graduate diploma
Ndali High (T/ship)	Ndawo	Principal	M	38	16 years	4 years	Post graduate diploma
	Nozindaba	HOD	M	45	20 years	7 years	Degree
	Ndanda	PL1 Educator	F	29	5 years		Post graduate diploma
Zibonele High (T/ship)	Banele	Principal	M	43	12 years	4 years	Masters
	Anele	HOD	F	39	11 years	7 years	Honours
	Zanele	PL1 Educator	F	51	19 years		Degree
Lwandle High (T/ship)	Dlaba	Principal	M	49	26 years	17 years	Masters
	Mdluli	HOD	M	44	20 years	9 years	Degree
	Ndlela	PL1 Educator	M	44	19 years		Degree

Table 3: Profiling the participants

4.4 Data generation methods

In this section I identify and discuss methods and instruments I used to generate data. The ontological, epistemological and methodological stance that I took influenced the choice of methods and instruments I used to generate data. Whilst many researchers use the term 'data collection,' I chose to use 'data generation' to signify interpretivist perspective that data was not out there waiting for me to collect. As a research instrument myself (Merriam, 2002; Leigh, 2013), I had to be there in the field to make sense of how the participants made sense of their world; how and why principals enacted instructional leadership in their multiple-deprived contexts the way they did. Whilst qualitative research has a variety of methods that could be used to generate data (Cohen, *et al.*, 2011; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Creswell, 2014), I chose interviews, observations and documents reviews. These data generation methods are discussed below.

4.4.1 Interviews

Cohen, *et al.* (2011, p. 349) define interviews as "an interchange of views between two or more people on a topic of mutual interest, which sees the centrality of human interaction for knowledge production". They further point out that the use of interviews in research represents a move towards regarding knowledge as generated between humans, often through conversation. This view is shared by Merriam (2009) and Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) that interview is a discussion between humans with one individual posing questions prepared in order to elicit information and the other responding to questions on the topic under study. The common thread in these conceptions is the act that takes place between people with one person seeking information from the other person and the other person giving information. The researcher initiates the conversation with the aim of soliciting information relevant to his or her research. With the interviews, there is direct verbal interaction between the person seeking information and the person giving information.

The researcher is an instrument of generating information in an interpersonal environment. The notion of a researcher being a research instrument is derived from the fact that the researcher personally goes to the schools if the study is conducted in the schools and personally interacts with the participants in tier natural setting and thy do not control or manipulate the behaviour of the participants. It is the same rationale that I employed in this study. I believed that interviews would allow for greater depth in that contact with the interviewee occurred in an interpersonal environment. This resonated well with my ontological and epistemological stance that I adopted which suggests that people's knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences and interactions are meaningful properties of social reality (Cohen, *et al*., 2011; Neuman, 2011; Creswell, 2014). In line with the qualitative case study design that I adopted for this research, in-depth interviews allowed the participants to give me comprehensive verbal accounts of their experiences and perspectives, giving me more latitude to explore instructional leadership in details.

There were different types of interviews that I had to choose from: unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. I chose semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. According to Cohen, *et al.* (2011), semi-structured interviews can be regarded as a guide that is prepared, that is sufficiently open-ended to enable the contents to be reordered, digressions and expansions made, where new avenues to be included, and further probing can

be undertaken. In the same line of thought, Merriam (2009) defines semi-structured interviews as guided interviews which allow flexibility within the discussion for the interviewer to probe further.

Semi-structured interviews were suitable for this qualitative case study which sought to understand experiences and lived meanings of the participants about leading schools in multiple-deprived contexts. I had direct interaction individually with selected principals, HODs and PL1 Educators to get first-hand textured data about their thoughts and feelings about the instructional leadership practices of the principals. I interviewed most of the participants for about 30 to 50 minutes each in their respectful schools. The first interview with the principal was tense and did not yield much of the desired information. I had to schedule another appointment to fill up the gaps. The beauty of adopting qualitative, semi-structured interviews is that they are flexible and can be adjusted accordingly as the need arises (Cohen, *et al*., 2011).

I adjusted the interviews that followed to take a mode of an everyday conversation in a more relaxed atmosphere. I wanted the participants to feel comfortable to express their thoughts on the issue. I used my interview guide to introduce a new question but gave the participants leeway to digress. I used probes to guide the conversation to ensure that I was able to gather as much information as required for the study. I reviewed the questions after each interview and changed the styles I was using as I proceeded with the remaining interviews and gaining confidence. I was able to change the ordering of the questions as determined by the responses of the participants and the mood. With one principal, the interview started in his office but took me out of the office to show me things around the school that he was talking about. I continued with the interview in a relaxed mode whilst moving around the school. This gave me opportunity to learn more about his practices and was pointing evidence of what he was saying. I also got to know him as a person, his gestures, values and beliefs.

Semi-structured interviews as data generation method do not go without any limitations and drawbacks levelled against them. It has been pointed-out that they are expensive in time, are open to interviewer bias, and inconvenient to participants and anonymity may be difficult (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were time consuming to arrange and to conduct. Not all participants were equally articulate and insightful (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014), resulting in an unbalanced data. Furthermore, changing styles and questions resulted in a less systematic data that required intense organisation and analysis for

comparability of responses. Combined with the voluminous, textured data generated, it took longer time to sort and analyse data. There are possibilities that direct contact with the participants might have biased responses where participants wanted to please me or concealed other information.

The limitations highlighted above did not deter my determination to get rich, in-depth data that responded to my research questions. I took several steps to limit biases and to strengthen this source of evidence about instructional leadership practices. I took time-off from work and visited each school to gain access and to arrange for the interviews. Though time consuming and expensive, I intentionally arranged to conduct one interview in each school in one day. This gave me opportunity to come back to the school on different days. When people were not honouring their scheduled appointments, it also gave me the opportunity to revisit the school. In the process, I got to observe the school and surroundings in different times, meeting with educators and talking informally with people to understand the school setup and practices.

To minimise biases, I did not take sides. I accepted the data as it was given, constantly probing questions for detailed examples of practice. I tried to open up discussion to get sufficient data that responded to my research question. I gave participants enough time to respond without interjecting them. I used a digital audio recorder to record each interview. The digital recorder afforded me time to listen to the interviewee attentively whilst on jotting down only main issues. This enabled me to analyse the responses and to probe their responses. Moreover, it enabled me to engage fully with the interviewee because I was not writing everything down. More than that, after each interview, all the data captured was transferred to the computer system during the data transcription process.

4.4.2 Observation

I also used observations as one of the secondary means to generate data in this study. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) posit that observations means that the researcher goes into the field and see for himself or herself the context of the site and records first-hand information she or he witnessed. Observations entails going to the research site to observe what is actually taking place there. In agreement with this assertion, Cohen, *et al*. (2011) also note that the distinctive feature of observation as a research technique is that it offers the researcher the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from naturally occurring social situations and thus has the potential to yield

more authentic data. Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p. 85) list some advantages of doing observations. The researcher can generate data about the physical setting of the school; the state of the buildings, equipment and grounds; the interaction between the school staff and the learners and the people in the surrounding community; the educational environment; teacher's classroom practices; the interactions that take place; and the atmosphere or ethos of the school.

These attributes resonated well with this study. I wanted to triangulate data generated from semi-structured interviews with the first-hand information observed in the field. I wanted to understand the context of the school, the interactions that took place, the instructional leadership practices of the principals and how they enacted it. Various scholars (Cohen, *et al*., 2011; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Creswell, 2014) identify a continuum from unstructured to structured types of observations. In highly structured observations the researcher knows in advance what he or she is looking for and will have observation schedules worked in advanced. Unstructured observations on the other hand are far less clear on what the researcher looks for before going into the field. In unstructured observations the researcher goes into the situation and observes what is taking place before deciding on its significance. Semi-structured observations lie in between, where the observer goes into the field with some fluid observation schedule. I chose semi-structured observations. Since school contexts and participants were different, semi-structured interviews allowed me to re-schedule pre-conceived ideas to include ideas observed at the time.

I had a fluid agenda on issues of multiple deprivations and leadership practices that were used to gather data to illuminate these issues in a far less predetermined manner. This enabled me to have access to interactions in a social context and enabled me to see things that might otherwise be unconsciously missed, to discover things that participants might not freely talk about in interview situations. Bailey (2007) affirms that in observation studies, investigators are able to detect on-going behaviour as it occurs and are able to make appropriate notes about its salient features. Observations afforded me to triangulate overt information on the research and add to validity keeping in mind the interpretivist mind-set of knowledge and the relationship of the knower and known.

My extensive observation strategies varied by the opportunities available in each site and included shadowing and meeting observations. I shadowed school principals for about three hours when visiting the school, recording how they spent their time. The technique of

shadowing entails the researcher closely following a member of an organisation over an extended period of time (McDonald, 2005). I was able to observe events in real time that promised to reveal how principals practised instructional leadership and conditions of multiple-deprivations that mediated their work. Some of the observations were opportunistic, and unplanned. I recorded some principals on tape, took pictures of the surroundings and meetings, documented how principals observed classroom practices, and captured dialogs from school based meetings among principals, classroom teachers, and others. *Verbatim* notes were also taken from the staff meetings and that of the HODs where I got opportunity to attend.

As I was using interpretivist paradigm, I did not observe data to answer any specific hypothesis, rather the explanations were deductively derived from the observation field notes and conceptual framework (Lichtman, 2006). My role in field observation was that of a non-participant spectator. I chose this form of observation instead of that of a contributor observer. That was based on the view that it would allow me to closely document the participants without interfering with their businesses. In my capacity as a non-participant observer, I did not offer any advice to the principal. During and immediately after the observations, I took field notes to record not only what I saw and heard, but also reflections on what had occurred (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Below I discuss documents reviews as the third method I used to generate data.

4.4.3 Documents review

Documents are supplemental information and are often used in case studies to supplement data that is generated from interviews and observations (Bailey, 2007; Niewenhuis, 2007). They entail any written proof that gives information about the investigated phenomena and are existent with/without research being conducted (Fitzgerald, 2007). They form part of life and activities in it since they give comments on life activities (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). According to Burke and Christensen (2008), these documents are produced primarily for specific purposes other than research. However, they can be used as they contain details and evidence pertaining to the institutional conditions (Merriam, 2009). I also wanted to tap in these resources to triangulate data generated from interviews and observations (Yin, 2014). The advantage of taping into these resources was that they were created before and for different purposes. Hence,

they could not be distorted or modified to suit stories mentioned in the interviews and what was observed.

I sought out permission from the principals to review log books, Educational Management Information System (EMIS) data on issues of multiple deprivations, for example, learners without parents; unemployed parents; child headed families or learners living with caregivers; education levels of parents; and learners receiving child support grants. Mark schedules; attendance registers; discipline records; and incident reports were also reviewed to enable me to solicit a clearer picture about the phenomenon of multiple deprivations and the enactment of instructional leadership. Minutes of the various stakeholders' meetings were also reviewed.

There were major problems encountered when trying to do documents reviews. In some schools, principals were selective with the documents that I could access. In some schools, some documents were not readily available. The other principal said that the documents were confidential and were not subject to scrutiny for research purposes. In that school, I was only able to review documents that were posted on the notice boards and walls.

4.5 Data analysis

It is important that research has to produce the findings and such findings can only be developed if the data that has been generated can be analysed so that meaning can be developed. Cohen, *et al.* (2011) describe data analysis as a process consisting of organising, accounting for and explaining the data. It entails making sense of data in terms of what the participants comment about the situation at hand, identifying patterns, themes, categories and commonalities in the data (Cohen, *et al*., 2011; Creswell, 2014).The actual process of analysis underlies the whole process as the raw data is broken down by simplifying and abstracting key parts of the text. This data is then reduced and organised into a more accessible and compact form in order to be able to draw clear conclusions in relation to the data (Cohen, *et al*., 2011). Creswell (2014) maintains that in qualitative research, this process of data analysis begins as data is generated.

My data sources for this analysis included semi-structured interviews, observations, and documents reviews conducted mainly during the 2015 academic year. The whole process of converting "raw" data to final patterns of meaning was a critical phase of this research which was also a strenuous process. Creswell (2014) outlines a four step approach that can be

followed to analyse qualitative data. Whilst I did not follow them linearly from the bottom to the top, it guided the process of making meaning of the research data. The details of this process (see Figure 5) are discussed below.

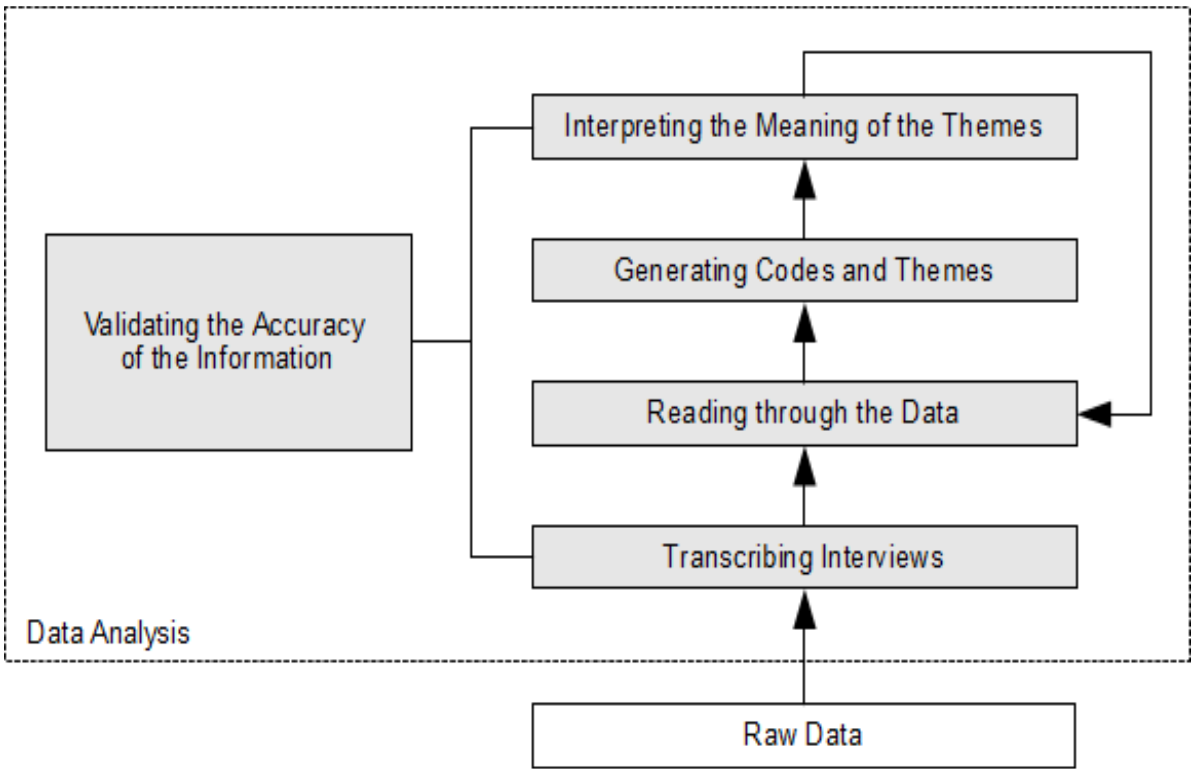

Figure: 5: Steps of qualitative data analysis (adapted from Creswell, 2009, p.185)

The first step began by organising and preparing the data for analysis. This was done by transferring all data generated from interview digital voice recorder to the text format in the computer, optically scanning field notes and sorting and arranging the data into different types (Remler & Van Ryzin, 2011; Creswell, 2014). I preferred to transcribe the data myself because I wanted to familiarise myself with the data and to start making sense of it. This was indeed a lengthy and strenuous process but important as computers are more efficient means for storing and locating data (Creswell, 2014). I checked the transcribed data for correctness against voice recorded data. This helped me get an impression of my data.

The second step which also began as data was generated entailed getting a general picture of the data generated. This entailed reflecting on the ideas that were coming from the participants. Noting the literature reviewed and theoretical frameworks, I was staring to map general thoughts about the data. In the process, I was continually revisiting and reviewing the data. The

third step involved generating codes and writing a word representing a category in the margins. Codes are descriptive tags that are given to pieces or sections of the transcript (Green, 2007). Creswell (2014) defines coding as the process of organising the data by bracketing chunks and writing a word representing it in the margin. Struwig and Stead (2013) argue that coding is not just putting labels to the chunks of transcripts but included another level of abstraction. I used words that resonated with literature and theoretical framework to cut paragraphs or sentences into segments that spoke to these words. I used both predetermined and emerging codes. The process of coding involved a forward and backward movement as trying to make meaning of what I was doing and also forming new codes. This was a messy exercise trying to make meaning and themes of my data. I was cutting and pasting similar codes and disbanding some groups as new patterns developed. This process continued even when I had started writing as new meanings developed.

The fourth step, according to Creswell (2014), entailed using the coding process to generate descriptions of themes for further analysis. At this stage I had a vivid picture of how I was presenting data as themes and sub-themes emerged. Data generated from documents reviews and observations were incorporated into the themes that emerged to ensure that triangulation featured. The process developing new themes and rearranging them did not stop as duplications, overlaps and new interpretations of data were also emerging. The tedious and skilful navigation through the data culminated in the themes and sub-themes that formed the basis of my report. These were crafted with the research questions in mind as the ultimate aim was to ensure that the research questions were adequately answered. The following section discusses precautions I took to ensure that the study was trustworthy.

4.6 Issues of trustworthiness

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) define research as a systematic process of inquiry which draws on empirical evidence to understand the world. The systematic process and empirical evidence are interpreted differently by different people owing to their different philosophical and paradigmatic homes. As argued by different scholars (Cohen, *et al*., 2011; Rule & John, 2011; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, Creswell, 2014,), systematic processes of enquiry and empirical evidence for quantitative researchers are profoundly different from those in qualitative research. As such, different terminology and criteria are used to describe the world. For example, while quantitative researchers require validity and reliability measures,

qualitative researchers seek trustworthiness as of utmost importance to evaluating what is worth in the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Nieuwenhuis, 2007; Cohen, *et al*., 2011; Rule & John, 2011; Creswell, 2014). Cohen, *et al*. (2011) maintain that it is important for the researcher to demonstrate allegiance to his or her philosophical home to abide by the principles of validity and reliability essential to them.

To attain this as a qualitative researcher, I used Lincoln and Guba's (1985) framework of trustworthiness in qualitative research. According to De Vos (2005), trustworthiness implies the researcher's declaration of the manner in which he or she went about ensuring the worthiness and calibre of his or her study. Trustworthiness or rigour is a way to find out whether a study has moral integrity, is honest and worthy of being believable (Ryan, *et al*., 2007, McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Lincoln and Guba (1985) propose four criteria to be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study, and these are credibility; transferability; dependability and confirmability.

4.6.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness where the researcher ensures that what has been reported is truthful and correct. As such, to promote confidence that I have accurately recorded the phenomena under scrutiny, I adopted research method well established in qualitative study. I had a preliminary visit to the sampled schools to familiarise myself with the culture of participating schools before the first data generation dialogues took place and to establish a relationship of trust with the principals. I also interviewed the HODs and the PL1 educators to get their perspectives on how the principals enacted their roles as instructional leaders.

Participants were encouraged to be frank and it was indicated to them that there were no right or wrong answers to the questions that were asked. Participants were encouraged to contribute ideas and talk without fear of losing credibility. Probes to elicit data and iterative questioning were incorporated. Furthermore, credibility was enhanced by member-checking where transcripts, field notes, data analysis and findings were returned to the participants for checking. Mutch (2005) asserts that member-checking allows the participants to check that what they have said is true and accurate account, and allows them to change anything they deem to be incorrect in an effort to ensure the reader that the study is valid and reliable.

4.6.2 Transferability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability refers to the extent to which the results of the research can be applied in similar contexts. Shenton (2004) argues that since the findings of a qualitative project are specific to a small number of particular environments and individuals, it is impossible to demonstrate that the findings and conclusions are applicable to other situations and populations. However, Bassey (1981), Firestone (1993) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that it is important that sufficient thick description of the phenomenon under investigation is provided to allow readers to have a proper understanding of it. In that way the readers are able to compare the instances of the phenomenon described in the research report with those that they have seen emerge in their situations. In this study, transferability was ensured by giving detail information regarding the number of schools taking part in this study and where they were based; the number of participants involved; the data generation methods employed and the number and length of the data generation sessions. This was done so that if readers believe their situations are similar to the one described in this study, they may relate the findings to their own positions. In addition, each and every step that was taken during the research process was explained in details, thus making sure that thick descriptions of these processes were done. It is those descriptions that facilitate better understanding of the context and a clear picture about what was done during the research process.

4.6.3 Dependability

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), there are close ties between credibility and dependability. These scholars argue that, in practice, a demonstration of the former goes some distance in ensuring the latter. In order to address the dependability issue more directly, they argue that the processes within the study should be reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to repeat the work, if not necessarily to gain the same results. For the purpose of this study, the research design and its implementation, the operational detail of data generation addressing what was done in the field, was detailed. This was done so as to enable the readers of this research report to develop a thorough understanding of the methods and their effectiveness.

4.6.4 Confirmability

The concept of confirmability is qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Here, steps must be taken to help ensure as far as possible, that the work's findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). Miles and Huberman (1994) consider that a key criterion for confirmability is the extent to which the researcher admits his or her own predispositions. To enhance confirmability of the findings, a number of techniques were used. For instance, to ensure that I did not impose my personl interpretation of what was emerging from the discussions, I did member-checking. Each participant would confirm or clarify his or her position in instances where misunderstanding had occurred. Another technique involved me giving the transcripts to the participants in order to confirm that what had been captured in the transcripts was the true record of what transpired during the interviews.

4.7 Ethical considerations

In the previous sections I have explained the method of analysing the data and the measures of ensuring trustworthiness of the findings respectively. Throughout the research process, it is important that the study is conducted in an ethical manner. However, the issue of ethics in research is not a simple undertaking as the research sometimes has to face ethical dilemmas and has to make decisions which he or she believes are morally appropriate. Cohen, *et al.* (2011) assert that, in conducting research, it is important to observe ethical principles in order to pre-empt problems that may arise during fieldwork and also to protect the rights and autonomy of the participants. Ethical standards such as the participants' rights, confidentiality, mutual respect and anonymity are imperative in the qualitative research method (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In observance of these principles, I first applied for ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee of the College of Humanities in the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Then I applied for permission by the provincial Department of Education to conduct research in the selected schools.

I negotiated access to conduct research in the schools with the principals. The participants were informed about the content of the questions posed, the recording during the interviews, that it would be treated with strictest confidentiality and that their responses would be anonymous.

However, Cohen, *et al* (2011) warns that in a face-to-face interview, anonymity could not always be fully guaranteed because the interviewer may identify and know the participants. These authors maintain that it is the responsibility of the researcher to provide credible confidentiality and convince the participants that their participation would not compromise their safety and autonomy. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity were explained and guaranteed to participants through the letters of consent that declared that while participation in the research project was appreciated, they still had the right to withdraw from participating anytime they wished to do so. The aim was to create a rapport between the interviewer and the participants taking part in this research study.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented a detailed discussion of the qualitative methodology that I used in this multiple case study examining instructional leadership practices of principals in the context of multiple deprivations. I highlighted the essential research design components that guided me to generate rich data, adhering to the trustworthiness and ethical processes advocated by qualitative research approach. I believe that the choices made about the research design and methodology assisted me in generating and analysing data that fitted the purpose of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE PRINCIPALS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a detailed account of the research design and methodology that underpinned the study. This chapter and the subsequent two chapters present and discuss in-depth the analysis of data generated through interviewing the school principals, the heads of department (HODs) and the PL1 educators. During the interviews, participants were allowed to talk freely using interview schedule to guide the discussion. Probes were made to clarify some issues and to redirect conversation to the focus of the study. Documents reviews and the observations that were made during the visits to the sites gave me opportunity to obtain a clear picture of how the school operates on a daily basis. Specifically, I observed the school principals, teacher interactions, classrooms, and departmental meetings. Field notes from observations and photos taken during site visits provided me with specific documentation of the actual observations, thoughts, and impressions made during each step in the research process.

The research activities described in the paragraph above resulted in a voluminous, rich textual data that aimed at responding to the three key questions of the study. The research questions were the following:

- How do secondary school principals conceptualise instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations?
- How do secondary school principals practice instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations?
- What is the nature of instructional leadership practised by secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations?

Because of the voluminous nature of the data generated, data presentation and discussion was divided into three chapters. This chapter presents the analysis of data from the school principals from the six schools that participated in this study. Chapter Six presents and discusses the perspectives from the heads of departments (HODs) whilst Chapter Seven presents and discusses the perspectives from the PL1 educators also referred to as teachers in this report.

In this chapter, I present and discuss in-depth the analysis of data generated through interviewing six school principals on how they perceived their roles as instructional leaders to be and how they enacted it in deprived conditions. *Pseudonyms* were used in order to protect their identities and that of their schools, and these are: Mr Patrick, Principal of Phatha Secondary School; Mrs Batty, Principal of Battery Secondary School; Mr Armando, Principal of Amadada Secondary School; Mr Ndawo, Principal of Ndali Secondary School; Mr Banele, Principal of Zibonele Secondary School and Mr Dlaba, Principal of Lwandle Secondary School.

In presenting the data, *verbatim* quotations are used to ensure that the 'voices' of the participants remain pristine in the study. The presentation also incorporates data generated through documents' reviews and observations made during visits into the schools. The literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two is infused into the discussion. Two broad themes are used as headings to present and discuss data in this chapter. The first theme is about the principals' understanding of their roles as instructional leaders in the contexts of multiple deprivations. The second theme is about the perspectives of principals on how they practised instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations.

5.2 Principals' conceptualisation of instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations

Prior to discussing instructional leadership practices with the principals, I asked them what they understood about the whole concept of instructional leadership. Various conceptualisations of the term emerged but the most common view was that instructional leadership was not a singular act, but rather a multidimensional, nonlinear actions and decisions involving the groups of people that serve to direct and support teaching and learning. The following excerpts from principals' stories give light to how the discussion above on how principals understood the concept instructional leadership emerged. One of the principals had this to say:

> *Instructional leadership for me is a broad leadership practice focusing on teachers teaching and parents parenting so that learners could learn. It involves various groups of people including the principal, deputy principals and HODs. The*

> *principal is the conductor directing and coordinating these activities. The principal exercises influence that creates conducive conditions for these players to perform their roles* (Mr Patrick, Principal of Phatha Secondary School).

Mr Ndawo, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School affirmed the view that instructional leadership is about influence directed at teaching and learning with the common goal of enhancing learner performance. This is what Mr Ndawo had to say:

> *Leadership is about the process of influencing others towards common goals. Instructional leadership must therefore be encompassing processes of influencing and directing all school resources towards the core business of the school, teaching and learning. Instructional sounds more English and undemocratic for me. I want to prefer teaching because that's what we do. More importantly I think it is about influencing learning and learners' outcomes. That's how we are judged here in secondary schools. Yeah, it is not just a simple process.*

Mr Dlaba, the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School also conceptualised instructional leadership as a process influencing teaching and learning, adding that it encompasses complex, multidirectional tasks of managing curriculum implementation. This is what he had to say:

> *Instructional leadership is a complex, multidirectional task of the principal and to some extent other personnel involved in managing curriculum implementation. As the head of the institution I am the commander in chief. I direct all the activities of the school. There is teaching, there is learning, there are educators and non-educators, there are deprived learners, there are angry parents, there are physical and financial resources, and there are departmental officials. The instructional leader directs all these diverse things towards the academic success of the learners. …it is the ability of the principal to influence educators to work towards that. The whole SMT and other committees are involved.*

Adding to the same view that instructional leadership is a multidirectional task involving a number of participants, Mr Armando, the Principal of Amadada Secondary School had this to say:

> *We are serving difficult communities here. People will not just pull in one direction. They need to be influenced/ coerced to pull in one direction that enables effective*

use of resources to enhance teaching and learning. The muscles of others assist you in pulling together resources that target student success.

The ultimate success of the work of instructional leader is summed up by Mrs Batty's conceptualisation of instructional leadership when she said:

> *The principal as an instructional leader is in the position of influencing stakeholders to work collaboratively towards achieving the core objectives of the school, which is student success* (Mrs Batty, principal of Battery Secondary School).

Mr Banele, the Principal of Zibonele Secondary School introduced the managerial aspects of instructional leadership highlighting the influence that is given by the leaders in planning, organising, controlling and evaluating curriculum issues. The activities described by Mr Banele included the issue of staffing, timetabling and sourcing the LTSM. These are connected to learners learning. This is how Mr Banele put it:

> *Instructional leadership is about curriculum management. It is about planning, organising, controlling and evaluating curriculum. I manage through the HODs the staffing of educators. We do timetabling complying with the norm time. We meet as SMT and with the staff to plan, organise and evaluate curriculum delivery and LTSM. There are many other activities that we organise and decisions that the instructional leader do to ensure that there is teaching and learning in the school* (Mr Banele, Principal of Zibonele Secondary School).

The principals also acknowledged that instructional leadership could not be done by a single person but required multitude of contributions from other stakeholders, especially because of conditions of multiple deprivations. By including others in their work, the principals believed that it was giving them more opportunities to have both direct and indirect influence on all the activities aiming at enhancing teaching and learning. For some principals, their conception of instructional leadership was prominent in their thoughts but was not compelling and propelling them to operate from that stance in their daily work. This is reflected in undirected school activities I observed during school visits that seemed not aimed and leading to learner success. For example, there was minimal to no formal teaching and learning at Phatha Secondary School in three different days that I visited the school. The principal explained that the learners were practising for cultural competitions that would take place within a few weeks. The majority of the learners were wondering around the school and others outside the school gate as early as

9h45 in the morning. Similar pattern was observed at Amadada Secondary School where classes were often left unattended in the presence of the principal. As a result, the learners were often observed wondering outside classes during teaching and learning time. This was not observed in the four other schools.

The conceptualisations depicted by the principals involved in this study are in line and supported by literature. A number of scholars (Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood & Anderson, 2010; Mulford & Silins, 2011; Bush & Glover, 2012; Leithwood, 2012) contend that one critical core function of leadership is that of exercising influence towards the achievement of organisational goals. The focus on students' learning (Hallinger, 2011) and improved learning outcomes (MacBeath & Dempster, 2009; Wahlstrom, Louis, Leithwood & Anderson, 2010; Robinson, 2011) are portrayed as key areas of influence by instructional leaders. Further, literature also attest that principals in secondary schools are involved in a number of complex instructional leadership activities presented by their context and structures, and as such, employ various practices to lead effectively for increased learner success (Wahlstrom, 2012). Leithwood, et al., (2004) situated managerial tasks within instructional leadership indicating that management decisions and actions of the principal support the work required in achieving improved learning outcomes.

Principals were further asked to elaborate on the nature of deprivations in their school contexts and how it impacted on their understanding of their roles as instructional leaders. All the principals explained that their learners, in one way or the other, faced more than one form of deprivations. Common to their responses were living care deprivations; living environment deprivations; education deprivations; income and material deprivations. The extent of these deprivations varied greatly between the township schools and the rural schools. The three principals from rural schools explained that most of their learners faced all these forms of deprivations. The following excerpts from the stories of the three principals from rural schools highlight these deprivations:

> *Let me explain to you like this, more than ninety percent of these learners lack adequate facilities and infrastructure. Many areas do not have electricity or running water. These children walk long distances to schools, health care facilities, and social-welfare offices or to police stations. The topography of the area makes*

everything far. The learner transport only helps those few who are near the road (Mrs Batty, Principal of Battery Secondary School).

Similar views were also shared by Mr Armando, the Principal of Amadada Secondary School who also stated that their learners faced multiple forms of deprivations which impacted on their roles as instructional leaders. This is what he said:

> *Most learners in these secondary schools are heading families. Their parents are dead or in town working or looking for work. Some of these parents are our dropouts who are showing little interest in school matters. They drink a lot and shout at us when they pass the school as you heard them shouting that we are wasting their children's time. They just do not have vision for the future beyond what they are doing. You need to take all this factors into cognisant as an instructional leader.*

A different view of deprivation was raised by Mr Patrick, the Principal of Phatha Secondary School who highlighted the effects of deprived environment on the behaviour of the educators, which he believed it also impacted on his role as an instructional leader. Mr Patrick viewed the environmental factors as impacting on staff recruitment and the importance of keeping those inside happy and wanting to work. In many instances, his role as an instructional leader was characterised by incessant floods of complaints from educators, and these ultimately resulted in increased rates of absenteeism by the teachers. The following comments made by Mr Patrick describe how environmental deprivation impacted on his role as an instructional leader:

> *I am either busy declaring educators in excess or recruiting new educators. There is always a headache of getting right educators here. I am always on this long dirt road to and from the circuit office. Can you imagine what it does to educators? It's complains, complains, complains. Sir this, Sir that. I am not coming to school today, the car is broken, or I am sick or I am attending workshop in town. Look at our time-book, look at our result. I wish I can go underground. Yeah, where does this leave the children you are talking about … a continued cycle of deprivation.*

The following extract from the time-book of Phatha Secondary School corroborates the utterances of Mr Patrick about the severity of teacher absenteeism which he believed negatively impacted on his role as an instructional leader in multiple deprived contexts. A number of educators were recorded as absent from work due to various contextual/environmental factors such as transport problems, attending workshops and or the moderation exercise. In other cases,

the records only show that the educators have reported their absence but no reason were given. The principal was seen moving around the verandas' of the school trying to maintain order. Similar pattern of educator absenteeism was observed at Amadada Secondary School and not in the three township schools.

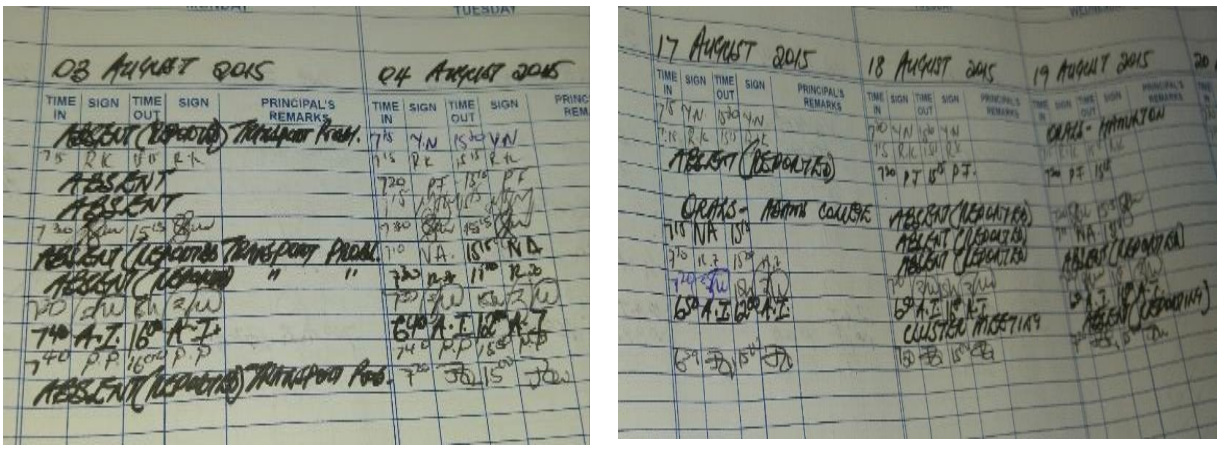

Figure 6: Extract from the time-book of Phatha Secondary School

The stories from the principals who served township schools also showed that the learners faced more than one form of deprivations. Common to the three schools was the fact that they had diverse learners. All the three principals mentioned that about half of their learner population came from the township. The other half of the learner population came from the surrounding informal settlements, some of which were a stone throw away from the schools. There were also other learners who came from the rural outskirts. According to the three principals, they had the whole mix of multiple deprived learners as illustrated by the following excerpts of their utterances:

> *We have a mix of learners here who face different forms of deprivations. Some come from the township, some from informal settlements and some from rural areas. A number of them are very poor. Besides material deprivation, some are ill. These factors impede their personal fulfilment and social accomplishment. We still have to perform just like ex-model schools* (Mr Banele, Principal of Zibonele Secondary School).

Similarly the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School alluded to a number of deprivations that the learners faced which made their work as instructional leaders complex and multidirectional. This is what he said:

> *The environment here is too busy and cramped. It's too busy and cramped to raise a child here, I am sorry to say that. There is noise pollution; drugs and alcohol abuse; sex abuse; violence; theft; battles for survival; illness; you name it. These children come to our schools. We mould them and the context de-moulds them. That's why I say the work of the instructional leader in deprived contexts is complex and multidirectional* (Mr Dlaba, Principal of Lwandle Secondary School).

Mr Ndawo, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School also acknowledged that their learners suffered as a result of various deprivations that they faced. The strategy he used to navigate around the impact of these deprivations on his instructional leadership practices seemed to differ from other principals participating in this study. His strategy was not to look for children who suffered from multiple deprivations but looked for learners who were eager to learn. He did not see deprived children inside his school gate but only saw learners who had to be taught in order for them to overcome deprivations. This is what he had to say in that regard:

> *Look at it this way, the implication of these deprivations is that these learners have no time for learning outside the school gate. That is why I maintain that inside the school gate are learners who must be taught and who must learn. I do not have orphans, drug addicts, deprived children but learners. Outside the school gate, they are multiple deprived children* (Mr Ndawo, Principal of Ndali Secondary School).

It also emerged from the discussion in this theme that the principals conceptualised instructional leadership in schools within the context of multiple deprivations as a multidimensional task. Such a task required them to work beyond their call of duty to ensure that learners were developed intellectually, physically, emotionally and even spiritually. Their roles included among other things ensuring that there was teaching and learning in their schools, offering extra classes, and keeping the schools open after school hours to serve as study centres. Providing food, clothing and health care services was seen as their role to develop the lives of their learners physically. In developing their learners emotionally, the principals assumed counselling roles, guardianships and the development of self-esteem. Providing learner support was seen as the collaborative work which extended beyond the school and surrounding community. Particularly and noteworthy, was the mobilisation of church denominations to provide spiritual guidance and support to the learners as observed in

Phatha and Battery Secondary Schools. The following pictures taken from Phatha and Battery Secondary Schools respectively elicit this observation.

Figure 7: Pastor and parents praying with their learners at Phatha Secondary School

Figure 8: Church group leaving school after providing spiritual guidance to learners at Battery Secondary School

The variations in the principals' conceptualisations of instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations highlighted their personal values, beliefs, knowledge, and their experiences. This is in line with Hallinger' (2011) model which assumes that the exercise of leadership is moderated by personal characteristics of leaders themselves. Understanding the purpose, the context and the participants is essential in exploring the leadership approach that enables and supports what is required in order to increase learner success. As evidenced in the literature review in Chapter Two, not all approaches are applicable in all settings. In line with Adaptive leadership theory (Heifetz, 2004), the principals observe their context, use their knowledge and experiences to interpret and intervene to get to the desired outcomes. This view is further supported by Mestry and Pillay (2013) who aver that school principals as instructional leaders need to adapt to contextual realities while promoting effective teaching. The six principals alluded to the view that the context of multiple deprivations necessitated them to act beyond their call of duties as instructional leaders to adapt their practices in ensuring that the learners learn in a supportive environment that promoted academic success. The following section presents analysis of how the principals enacted instructional leadership in their contexts of multiple deprivations.

5.3 Perspectives of principals on how they enacted instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations

The principals' conceptualisations of instructional leadership seemed to revolve around their position as influencers of all activities that were aimed at enhancing teaching and learning in their respective schools. The areas of influence that emerged strongly from the data were Setting the school vision and goals; Nurturing beliefs and value systems that support well-being of others; Harnessing multi-professional collaboration; Engendering professional dialoguing and development; Management and effective use of resources. The principals acknowledged that these aspects could not be done by a single person but required multitudes of contributions from other stakeholders especially because of conditions of multiple deprivations. By including others in their work, principals believed that it would give them more opportunities to have both direct and indirect influence on all the school activities aiming at enhancing teaching and learning. Each of these practices are discussed below.

5.3.1 Setting the school vision and goals

This theme explored strategies used by the school principals as instructional leaders to develop school vision and expectations. All the principals noted the importance of involving other stakeholders from the beginning of the development of a school vision to ensure that it becomes a shared vision. This was done to cuddle backing and to make sure that the vision was successfully implemented. Most principals in this study found it difficult though to share equally their planning responsibilities and activities with all the relevant stakeholders. Explaining this, Mr Ndawo, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School said that he conceptualised the vision of the school alone before presenting it in the stakeholder meetings. He said that his initial conception of the school vision was crushed in these meetings, refocusing it to the centrality of teaching and learning aimed at producing learners who could compete globally. He was happy though that he brought his ideas onto the table and allowed stakeholders to have inputs which led to the successful development of shared vision for the school. This is what he said:

> *You must influence stakeholders and allow them to influence you. This thing is mutual. The school would not be functioning well had I refused to be influenced by stakeholders. We are in this together. I have been crushed in several*

stakeholder meetings and got new outcomes coming as a result of inputs from others. I use that as a strategy now to get stakeholders to participate effectively in the implementation of decisions taken in stakeholder meetings. Mine is to say it was suggested and agreed in the stakeholder meeting.

Mr Dlaba, the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School also emphasised the importance of sharing the vision with stakeholders in order for the school to perform optimally. Mr Dlaba was also of the view that it is the principal who must first have the vision and then has to share it with the stakeholders. The belief was that it is the responsibility of the principal to give direction and influence others to follow. This is what he said:

For the school to function optimally, it is my responsibility as the principal to share and advocate the vision and mission of the school with educators, parents and learners. That is what I do. It is my duty to give direction and to get people to follow me in taking that direction (Mr Dlaba, Principal of Lwandle Secondary School).

For Mr Armando, the Principal of Amadada Secondary School, the challenge with the vision relates to the act of getting stakeholders to agree and to work towards a common vision of the school. This is what he had to say:

The School Governing Body, with all its components s responsible to develop the vision and mission of the school. It cannot be the responsibility of the principal alone. …The challenge is to get these stakeholders to agree on common goal. Contextual realities, church doctrines, cultural issues differ drastically and impact on decision making. It is often challenging to reach consensus.

Adding to the debate, Mrs Batty, the Principal of Battery Secondary School commented on the nature of their stakeholders, especially the ignorance and the limited exposure of some parents and learners to the outside world. She pointed out that some parents and some learners were in a vulnerable position in terms of genera understanding issues in education and they were heavily dependent on the principal (school) to take a lead and give directions about their future. This principal had this to say:

Some parents do not really understand why their children are in schools. This is also true for some learners. They just say the school must see. When high expectations and goals are set, they look down upon themselves saying we are unrealistic. Since we are coming from different worlds, what is realistic for them sometimes differs drastically from our expectations. For example, you find a very

> *bright student saying he wants to be a taxi driver or a domestic worker and find parents encouraging that appreciating that they will start early getting money and have children. We have to deal with such challenges and try to raise the aspirations of the community by setting high but reachable goals* (Mrs Batty, Principal of Battery Secondary School).

Despite the challenges highlighted in the sections above, Mr Banele, the Principal of Zibonele Secondary School emphasised the value of engaging other people in the activities of the school including setting the vision and goals for the school. In this regard, he emphasised the benefit of establishing a number of sub-committees to deal with specific matters like creating vision for the school. This is what he had to say:

> *We meet as the School Management Team to discuss issues. We then meet with the staff for further discussions. We share ideas with the staff to try and commit them to plans that are developed to take the school forward. …There are some of the committees that are headed by the SGB-members. It is important to share responsibilities. We work with committees* (Mr Banele, Principal of Zibonele Secondary School).

The views that the participants raised about influencing the process of formulating the vision for the schools are supported by literature. For example, Van Deventer and Kruger (2003) assert that the principal needs to establish and communicate the school's vision and mission by engaging all stakeholders in a collaborative and participatory manner. Similarly, Akcaoglu (2013) assert that principals as instructional leaders have the key role to play to improve the environment for learning and the practices of teaching. For Akcaoglu (2013), it is imperative for the principals to create a collaborative culture so that the educators, the learners and the parents could work together to achieve the common goal of educating learners to be competent in the global village. These activities include the support and contribution of all to attain wider ownership of the school's goals. A similar view is also shared by Leithwood & Mascall (2008) who claim that principals need to lead their schools through the process of identifying school improvement goals and objectives; and simultaneously become strategic in setting how these goals and objectives would be achieved.

The general view emerging from this theme is that school principals constructed their roles as instructional leaders through a filter focused on articulating high expectations and the vision for the school. They all seemed to believe and were convinced that to get full support of all the

stakeholders, there is a need to involve them at early stages of crafting the vision and mission for the schools. Two principals alluded to the problem of getting all members on-board. They highlighted difficulties in getting all stakeholders to participate and share a common vision. It was easier to involve the teaching staff in the planning and implementing tasks than with the School Governing Bodies.

5.3.2 Nurturing beliefs and value systems that support well-being of others

The impression that emerged strongly from the responses of the principals about their instructional leadership practices was that they supported each other. The principals highlighted that working in schools that were located within the context of multiple deprivations necessitated them to cultivate beliefs and value systems that support the well-being of the educators, the learners and to some extent, that of the parents. Two sub-themes emerged from analysing data about what principals were saying they were doing about nurturing beliefs and value systems that supported well-being of others. These are knowing the others and organic relationships.

5.3.2.1 Knowing the others

The principals expressed a belief that knowing the others was crucial for the supportive environment that promoted effective teaching and learning. Others included stakeholders such as the educators, the learners and the parents although they emphasised the involvement to the learners more than any other stakeholders. They had different perspectives about what it means to know others in real terms. There were largely two main versions and I call the first one a softer version and the other one is harder/harsher. Among those who gave a softer version was Mrs Batty, the Principal of Battery Secondary School and the harder version was from Mr Banele, the Principal of Zibonele Secondary School. Mrs Batty said:

> *When working with different people, I need to be prepared to wear different hats or shoes. This requires me to know their beliefs, values, capabilities, attitudes; behaviour. I regard knowing others as important for instructional leaders. I always ask myself if I were to wear their shoes, how I would perform tasks. This helps me a lot in understanding what it's like to be in their positions and in planning academic activities.*

A similar view was shared by Mr Armando, the Principal of Amadada Secondary School who also valued knowing the others but was specific to the educators and the learners. This is what he said:

> *You need to know the plight of your educators, their capabilities; weaknesses; potentials; their persona. You need to know your learners, where they come from; the extent of their deprivations. I encourage educators to not only teach learners but also to know their lives outside the school.*

Mr Ndawo, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School explained how he came to know the learners through marking attendance registers and how this made the learners feel valuable and recognised. This is what he said:

> *I know about eighty percent of learners in this school. I call them by their names not by "you". They feel valued. Directly involving myself in marking attendance registers for the entire school has helped me to know them. I do that at least twice a week. They tell you different stories about why they are late or were absent. I get to know their different stories about challenges they face. I stand firm on one thing though, I have to know them as learners not as challenged or deprived children* (Mr Ndawo, Principal of Ndali Secondary School).

Mr Banele, the Principal of Zibonele Secondary School had a similar view with Mr Ndawo about knowing the learners as learners and not deprived children. He strongly believed that there was no need to know the socio-economic situation of the learners; he seemed to be against knowing learners beyond the school gate, claiming that it derails the focus from teaching and learning to social welfare issues. His views were that if they got interested in the learners' home backgrounds was an overload on their part as educators. Such interests and focus is the duty of other departments of the government. This is how he put it:

> *Too much knowing of learners derails teachers from teaching. …You need to be less empathetic and focus on teaching and learning. That is our core business as a school. Inside that closed school gate are learners. That is our term in education. Other departments may call them suspects; criminals; orphans; patients; drug addicts etc. For us, they are learners. That's why there are other departments: social welfare; human settlement; health; police; justice. They are trained for that. You do not want to overload yourself with work from other departments. I developed a thick skin with a clear focus on teaching and learning and not*

> *diversified by learner challenges. When Angie (Minister of Basic Education) announces results, she counts 'learners' and not orphans; abused children; deprived children and so forth because she leads the Department of Basic Education and she was not leading other departments* (Mr Banele, Principal of Zibonele Secondary School).

It was observed when reviewing minute book of staff meetings at Zibonele Secondary School that the principal encouraged educators to view learners just as learners and not to be discriminated against due to the social ills affecting them. His views were that by paying any special focus on certain learners could derail the focus from teaching and learning. The following excerpt from the staff meetings minute book illustrates this observation:

> *The learners we are teaching have multiple problems. I urge you to understand them but refrain from seeing them as orphans or drug addicts. Treat them as equals and prepare your work likewise* (Minutes of the staff meeting at Zibonele Secondary School).

The tendency of the principal to prioritise knowing the learners by their names was also observed at Ndali Secondary School when the principal took me into various classes (during afternoon study) to mark attendance registers. He was calling learners by their names and showed me his best performing learners. He explained that he had one-on-one meetings with Grade 12 learners who were not performing well in their formal tests. Evidence of this was observed in the exercise book he used to record curriculum activities.

The principal knowing of the learners and the parents was also observed at Amadada and Battery Secondary Schools where I attended the parents' meeting. The principals took their time to talk with the parents before and after the meetings. Mrs Batty was heard asking parent the "situation" at home noting that there has been an improvement in the learners' behaviour and academic performance. I noted this learner's academic improvement when I was later reviewing mark schedules for the school. In the minutes of the staff meeting, she was recorded encouraging educators to make efforts to know their learners beyond the classroom:

> *…You stay longer periods with these learners. You must make effort to know them beyond classroom* (Minutes of the staff meeting at Battery Secondary School).

Different views about knowing others, especially the learners, are also expressed by different scholars. For example, Amin (2008) argues that teachers' knowing of learners is dangerous

because it propels the teachers towards actions that can result in disastrous consequences for the learners. Amin (2008) further argues that "not knowing" offers viable possibilities for working with learners whose lives are compromised by multiple deprivations as it allows the teachers to function without succumbing to marginalising the non-traumatised and those learners without challenges at the personal level. Mr Banele, the Principal of Zibonele Secondary School shared a similar belief with Amin (2008) that the teachers should just treat all the learners equally in an academic setting so that learners are driven by academic success instead of focusing on emotionally debilitating distractions that cannot be resolved by teacher knowing, understanding, and empathy.

5.3.2.2 Building positive relationships

Data generated through interviewing the school principals reflected a high degree of concern and support by principals for the overall well-being of colleagues and that of the learners. Four principals acknowledged that building positive relationships with colleagues and the learners was an essential glue to stick them together towards working together to achieve educational goals. They believed that building intellectual and social connections with the educators strengthened interpersonal connections which were tantamount to developing a commitment to shared learning, as suggested by Prawat (1993). In line with this argument, Mrs Batty, the Principal of Battery Secondary School said:

> *I build a relationship of trust, the one where we empathise with each other. We need to be grateful and thankful for life. Our learners, though multiple-deprived, need genuine positive reinforcement and human empathy. Teachers and more especially, our deprived learners must feel loved and taken care of, which may be lacking in their homes. We walk distances to bereaved families of both educators and learners. I try to make the school a supportive environment for everyone. These leaners must see the need to come to school, to find compassionate people who extend their loving hands.*

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mr Patrick, the Principal of Phatha Secondary School who also emphasised the need to be empathetic, supportive and respectful. This is what he had to say:

I learned the importance of having a work-life balance; not only for myself but for those I manage. I also gained a better understanding of the need to be empathetic, supportive, and respectful. I motivate and inspire others through genuine humility as well as care and respect for others (Mr Patrick, the principal of Phatha Secondary School).

Similarly, Mr Dlaba, the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School emphasised the importance of creating a supportive environment so that teaching and learning could be a fulfilling and enjoyable experience despite the challenges that flood the school. This is what Mr Dlaba had to say:

Part of my job as an instructional leader is to help educators make their teaching experience fulfilling and help learners to make their learning experience enjoyable, encourage them to reach their potential and inspire to achieve more despite challenges they face. ...we need to create an environment where positive relationships are upheld.

The impression of being empathetic and compassionate was further expressed by Mr Armando, the Principal of Amadada Secondary School who added that this has a positive impact on teaching and learning. He said:

I am empathetic and compassionate. I encourage that to my colleagues. The environment that we are in calls for us to balance instructional focus and relationship focus. It is important to see the school as your home and the children as your own. In that way, teachers find joy to teach and learners feel acceptable and willing to learn.

The Principal of Battery Secondary School said that she built relationship of trust with the learners by engaging them in book writing where learners could tell stories of their lived experiences. She claimed that because of this relationship of trust, learners were able to write true stories of their successes and hardships they faced because of multiple deprivations. In the process, she helped them to heal and focus on learning. The principal invited me to the book launch of one of their anthologies of stories and poems. The leaners seemed happy to have stories about their personal lives published. The positive relationship with their principal was evident. An excerpt from one of the stories is given below:

... This is hurting me mentally and physically. No one seems to notice that I'm hurt. I tried to live strong but I failed. My tears don't stop rolling down my cheeks.

> *I live in fear. I am scared of what he might do to me because he is a very violent person. I do not want to die at this age. I have dreams that I have to reach rather than dying. I keep having nightmares every night. I feel like the whole world has turned against me. I use to be a fighter but not anymore. My future is crashing right under my nose* ... (Excerpt from: It's 2015 Anthology of poems and stories – Slungile Ngcobo, Grade 10).

Documents reviewed showed evidence that the principals natured the belief and value systems that supported relationship building. There were various instances in the minute book of Battery Secondary School where the staff was contributing for the bereaved families of learners and educators. It was stated in their policy and that there were committees that were overseeing these activities. It was recorded in the logbook of Lwandle Secondary School that the school was closing earlier because the staff was attending team building workshop facilitated and sponsored by an NGO. Building and sustaining positive relationship with each other was stated as one of the outcomes of that workshop. This is indicative of the importance that the school management and the teachers generally attached to nurturing potential capabilities of others.

The views expressed by the principals are also corroborated by literature. For example, Kamper (2008) found that compassion, commitment and support were viewed as essential leadership qualities in deprived schools. Consequently, leaders in high-poverty schools should follow a "*soft approach*". Compassion involves identification with the survival struggle of the poor, respect for human dignity and personal interest in the individual learner, teacher and parent (Kamper, 2008). Further, Louis, Murphy and Smylie (2016) assert that caring leadership has an indirect relationship to student achievement. The principals talked about the importance of building good relationships with the teachers through offering them both professional and personal favours. Those included professional development opportunities, modifying their schedules to accommodate their family obligations and granting them time off when they asked for it.

5.3.3 Harnessing multi-professional collaboration

Promoting an inclusive working culture including strengthening multi-professional collaboration in schools emerged from the data generated as one of the practices that the principals advocated. The principals felt pressure to meet the needs of different families and offer good learning opportunities to all children. However, they expressed their concern that

they had insufficient competencies in facing multiple deprived learners' needs and identifying their problems. Principals alluded to the view that they promoted teachers' cooperation and collaboration with social workers, health-care professionals and safe and security officers. The core idea was that schools, as multi-professional communities, provided a lot of competences and a forum where ideas could be shared. Two principals said that they established an active dialogue with various partners in which ideas and initiatives were shared and discussed. Principals saw the multi-professional collaboration as a joint task that supported teaching and learning through their participation and an interactive dialogical culture. In this regards Mr Dlaba, the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School said:

> *Schools need multi-professional cooperation, networking with partners outside the school*.

Similar views were also echoed by Mr Ndawo, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School when he said:

> *Building teams and working closely with other departments act as a resource for achieving joint aims in the school community. We have agreement with the local clinic to attend our learners first if they are in school uniform and have permission slip. It assists us in reducing time lost by learners going to the clinic for services.*

Mrs Batty, the Principal of Battery Secondary School highlighted that learners in her school faced multiple challenges that were beyond their control. She added that working with other professionals enabled them to focus on teaching and she said:

> *Schools need to communicate with experts from outside the school and forge a cooperative working culture. We cannot do this alone. These learners face multiple challenges that are beyond our control. We have Star for Life, an NGO with psychologists and a team of social workers that work with us to identify and assist challenged learners. The Coach, who is a psychologist, visits the school on Mondays. She works closely with two Generals (teachers who were trained by this NGO) and the SMT. Their activities are included in our year plan. We hold joint meetings with local Counsellor, police officials and policing forum. Load is reduced from teachers making them able to focus on teaching* (Mrs Batty, principal of Battery Secondary School).

The view of working collaboratively and cooperatively with others expressed by the principals is supported by other scholars. For example, Beachum and Dentith (2004) assert that there is a need to develop leadership practices and models that enable the leadership abilities of others to develop and to create collaborative spaces for others to work towards the achievement of school goals. Further, Wing (2013) ascertained that different people with different abilities bring advantages in terms of ideas, creativities, styles, and innovations into the workplace. This approach reduces teacher isolation by bringing to the fore experts with different competencies to the development of the child as a whole. Lumby (2015) maintains it is burdensome for the principal to overcome the effects of multiple deprivations rooted in local communities if he or she works alone and not include others.

The principal as an instructional leader must therefore focus on tactical school-wide activities focused towards improving school improvements that are shared by principal, teachers, administrators, and others (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). The strategic move of increasing professional capacity in the school and communal responsibility for student learning is somehow nurtured and student success also improves (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). It is emerging from the participants and supported by the literature that collaborative work adds value to the schools. Principals harnessed collaboration with different partners and professionals that supported teaching and learning despite deprivations. It eased pressure from the principal and educators.

5.3.4 Promoting professional dialoguing and development

The notion of professional dialoguing and development has to do with developing understanding or insight that can guide and determine professional practice. It is a verbal collaboration where utterances are chained by reciprocal prompting of each speaker by the other (Moffett, 1992). The principal and the educator constantly reverse roles of being sender and receiver. Statements are mixed with questions and commands because speakers are localised together in the same space-time and hence more personally related (Moffett, 1992). Feedback and correction are plentiful and fast.

It was evident from the responses of all the school principals that they promoted professional dialoguing and development in their schools. The principals highlighted that they were spending much of their day being visible, accessible, observing and talking with others within

the schools. Underlying these daily routines of visibility, accessibility, observing and talking with others was a philosophy of stimulating professional dialogues. These dialogues included soliciting opinions on various professional issues, giving feedback and praises. These were done formally in meetings and also informally in day-to-day communications. Three principals expressed the view that they valued talking with educators as they believed it stimulated educators to critically reflect on their learning and professional practices. In this regard, Mr Ndawo, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School had this to say:

> *Lead by inquiry. That's the strategy I use. Feedback and suggestions must come from this exercise. It stimulates people to think of their practices. In the process, people develop. We learn more from each other more than what we were taught in colleges. There is so much that is not in the textbooks.*

Mr Dlaba, the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School highlighted the value of day-to-day interactions to include, amongst other things, relieving stress from educators who sometimes were frustrated by not knowing how to strategically adapt their teaching methods to suit the environment. This is what he had to say in this regard:

> *It is not normal teaching for us. It involves a lot of adaptation in our thinking and methods. Most of the time in our day-to-day interactions, the subject is about how best we can teach these learners. This exercise eases stress from the teachers who are continuously frustrated by the behaviour of their learners* (Mr Dlaba, Principal of Lwandle Secondary School).

Mr Armando, the Principal of Amadada Secondary School shared similar sentiments that he too promoted dialoguing and debates with the teachers. He believed that these dialogues and debates developed the teachers' capacity to handle challenges in their professional practices. This is how he put it:

> *The socialisation of these learners differs drastically from ours (educators). Sometimes what is normal for them, hey, hey, hey is hard to believe. For example, ukugana nokukhulelwa kwezingane zincane (betrothal and teenage pregnancy) are celebrated in the area. Smoking dagga is not regarded as a problem. Our societal norms are against these things. It is through our constant interactions that we discuss and debate such issues and reflect on their impact on our teaching practices* (Mr Armando, Principal of Amadada Secondary School).

Mrs Batty, the Principal of Battery Secondary School spoke of building "culture of inquiry" where purposeful, appropriate, and non-threatening discussions and debates on how to improve teaching and learning despite challenges of multiple-deprivations were promoted. Such debates

were characterised by the sharing of experiences, critiquing policies maintaining a focus on improving teaching and learning in their context.

The school principals in this study indicated that they promoted and motivated their educators to attend workshops that were organised by the Department of Education and cluster meetings for their learning areas. There was a strong belief that attending workshops was important for the learners and for the school. Mr Armando, the Principal of Amadada Secondary School shared his approaches to improve curriculum delivery. This included individual development plans, workshops focused at the curriculum, and the acknowledgement of the educators' determinations by awarding those who do well. This is what he had to say:

> *It is not just the debates in the school. I also encourage educators to attend developmental workshops and cluster meetings organised by the department. I know that it takes teachers away from the core, teaching in the class, but it is useful for them and for the learners. They come with new knowledge or enhanced capabilities to improve their teaching. Educators write their development plans and mine is to encourage them to develop. We reward people for their achievements.*

Similarly, Mr Ndawo, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School said that he encouraged and motivated his staff members to attend workshops and cluster meetings. He indicated that he was also attending workshops not because he had a class that he was teaching but said for his enrichment as well. He claimed that this assisted him in the monitoring of curriculum. This is what he said:

> *As a principal I have Learning Areas that I am also teaching. I have to be developed in that area. I also attend curriculum workshops on other learning areas. It is important that as a principal you are knowledgeable of what is supposed to be happening in the classrooms. I drive those who do not have cars to the workshop venues and I get in and attend. They must know that I am with them in this journey.*

It was also observed during school visits that some educators were marked absent from school because they were attending workshops. At one point I had to wait for an hour for Mr Ndawo who had taken two educators to the workshop venue. The Department of Education (2008, p.109) emphasises that in order to achieve continuity in professional development the schools should also conduct their own professional development programmes. It also indicates that it

is crucial to the principal as instructional leader to view professional development within the school as his/her task.

It is merging from the discussion above that principals were interacting with educators to stimulate dialogues and discussions about their professional practices. In most cases this was done informally sometimes in the corridors to reduce tensions. They believed that it was helping the educators to reflect on their professional practices and was developmental in nature. The principals also supported and encouraged educators to attend developmental workshops organised by the Department of Education.

5.3.5 Management and effective use of resources

Strategic resourcing, management and effective use of resources was one of the themes that came out prominently from the analysis of data from the principals. Strategic resourcing entailed ensuring that quality educators were recruited and staffed accordingly and also ensuring that sufficient and suitable materials for teaching and learning were made available. All the principals mentioned the need for recruiting good quality educators to teach in their schools but they also expressed varying degrees of success in this regard. The principals from township schools seemed to have favourable conditions due to the fact that their schools were easily accessible. The following excerpt from Mr Banele illustrates this point:

> *I get a number of visits and applications from new and old educators who want to come and teach in my school. This is a big school that is easily accessible, with many educators. Some are promoted, resigning, retiring or dying. Every year I have to get two or three new educators. I try to get the best, but sometimes the best is not good enough! They frequently move or get promoted* (Mr Banele, Principal of Zibonele Secondary School).

Similarly, Mr Ndawo, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School expressed the view that he had a problem of frequently recruiting new educators. Whilst it gave him the opportunity to scout for quality educators, he also expressed the view that the process was tiring and devastating to the learners who, sometimes, would be left without a teacher during the course of the year. This is how this participant put it:

> *It impacts on stability, though I get a chance to get the best. Learners are often left stranded and had to adjust to new teaching styles. It impacts on my staffing and*

timetabling. Frequent adjustments have to be made to ensure continuity and minimum disturbances in the teaching and learning processes (Mr Ndawo, Principal of Ndali Secondary School).

The process of recruitment and sustaining the supply of quality educators seemed to be a challenge for the principals in rural schools. Heavy workloads and contextual realities were some of the factors highlighted by the principals that seemed to demotivate new recruits from joining the schools. This is what one of the participants had to say:

…I am not saying that the educators in this school are not good. They are the best because they endure teaching heavy loads and everything given to them. It becomes hard to replace a teacher here. New educators are overwhelmed by these duty loads and contextual realities of the school…. we work with what we get (Mr Patrick, Principal of Phatha Secondary School).

Ensuring that sufficient and suitable materials for effective teaching and learning were available also came out prominently as one of the factors characterising their leadership practices. Township schools had a variety of curriculum streams that required different material to support effective teaching and learning. One participant had the following to say:

Consumer studies subject literally consumes materials and school resources. Educators want this and that. I believe that educators must get teaching and resources they want to aid their teaching. However, I am very strict on the management and use of materials. These things are costly and must therefore be efficiently utilised and managed (Mr Banele, Principal of Zibonele Secondary School).

Mr Dlaba, the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School boasted saying that he had an abundant supply of the resources needed for teaching and learning. However, he mentioned that he had challenges in terms of managing and safekeeping these resources. This is what he said:

We have got much of the resources needed for teaching and learning. Laboratories are fully equipped. We have computers and some fancy stuff. I ensure that a larger budget goes to LTSM. I do not want educators to complain about teaching resources. All the learners get books and stationery. Deprived learners should not be deprived of quality education. My challenge is management and safekeeping of these resources (Mr Dlaba, Principal of Lwandle Secondary School).

The principals from rural schools seemed to be battling with the management and utilisation of resources. These principals mentioned that they were buying basic resources for teaching and learning. The schools were no fee schools and were entirely dependent on the government subsidies. Most of this subsidy covered costs for LTSM. Safe keeping of these resources was also a challenge since they had fewer class rooms and storage places compared to their counterparts in townships. In this regard, Mrs Batty, the Principal of Battery Secondary School said:

> *We are Quintile 1 and a no fee paying school. We have minimal basic resources for teaching and learning. We get a smaller amount of money from the Department of Education since we have a small number of learners. Most of this money is budgeted for LTSM. There is chalk, board and books. We do not have laboratories but there are boxes with science materials that were sent by the department. Storage and safekeeping of these things is a challenge.*

Similarly, Mr Patrick, the Principal of Phatha Secondary School highlighted the challenge of safekeeping the resources and their utilisation for enhancing teaching and learning. This is how he put it:

> *In 2014 we received a mobile laboratory with twenty laptops as a beneficiary from the 2010 soccer world cup. Few educators are able to use them. They are still trying to capacitate us. The problem is about the thieves that keep on breaking in and stealing them l* (Mr Patrick, Principal of Phatha Secondary School).

The principals also spoke about instructional time as an important resource that they were working hard to optimise its utilisation. For Mr Dlaba, the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School, ensuring that the learners and the teachers were on task on time and monitoring that it was indeed happening was crucial for instructional leaders. This is what he had to say in that regard:

> *There is nothing important for an instructional leader than to ensure that instructional time is used for its purpose – teaching and learning. The whole SMT monitors that teachers and learners move swiftly into their classes and that teaching and learning is indeed taking place in the classrooms* (Mr Dlaba, Principal of Lwandle Secondary School).

Similarly, Mr Ndawo, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School highlighted the importance of effective utilisation of instructional time. His approach was that of utilising mornings and afternoons, Saturdays and holidays to have catch-up classes mostly for Grades 11 and Grade 12 classes. This is what Mr Ndawo had to say:

> *I insist that grade elevens and twelves are here at school by 6h30 in the morning to catch-up with their teachers or by themselves. They are doing the same from 15h00 to 16h30. There is time-table for Saturdays and holiday classes. It really helps these learners because there is no support and time in their homes for them to engage in school work. I minimise teaching during these times. I believe that learners must be given a chance to work on their own. Teachers must work during class time. I work with the SMT to monitor these sessions.*

School principals from rural schools emphasised the negative effects that the long distances travelled by the educators and the learners had on teaching and learning experiences. Such long distances excluded them from holding morning sessions and afternoon classes for the learners as their township counterparts did. This is what this participant had to say:

> *Educators are so worked out by the end of the day. Few educators are lucky to have one free period in a week cycle. Travelling to and from the school is also a killer. Few learners from the surrounding school come early and leave later doing study on their own. I encourage them to do so. It is hard for the others who walk longer distances* (Mr Patrick, Principal of Phatha Secondary School).

It is evident from the discussion above that principals had different experiences about strategic resourcing, management and ensuring that resources were utilised and kept safely. Principals from township schools had a better standing in terms of recruiting quality educators as they had a number of applications to choose from. The working conditions in rural schools made it difficult for them to recruit and retain quality educators. Besides the issue of human resources, physical resource management and utilisation was challenging principals in rural areas more than those in township schools. They had problems with space for safe keeping resources, thefts and vandalism.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented perspectives of principals with regards to their understandings of instructional leadership and how they enacted it in multiple-deprived contexts. The findings revealed that the school principals conceptualised instructional leadership as a leadership influence aimed at directing teaching and learning. This involved complex, multidimensional activities in which they had to observe, interpret and intervene accordingly in response to the challenges and contextual demands of their schools. Perspectives of the principals on the multidimensional activities they enacted in their multiple deprived school contexts included setting the vision and goals; nurturing the beliefs and the value systems that support the well-being of others; harnessing multi-professional collaboration; engendering professional dialoguing and development to ameliorate practice; the management and effective use of resources. The following chapter presents the discussion of the perspectives of HODs on how the principals enacted instructional leadership.

CHAPTER SIX
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: PERSPECTIVES OF THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS

6.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented and discussed the findings from the principals on how they understood and enacted instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations. As explained in Chapter Five, this is the second chapter that is dedicated to the discussion of findings. This was done in order to resolve the issue of voluminous data. In this chapter I discuss in-depth the findings generated through interviewing six heads of departments (HODs) on how they perceived the roles of the principals as instructional leaders to be. *Pseudonyms* are used in order to protect their identities and that of their schools, and these are Mrs Patricia, the HOD from Phatha Secondary School; Miss Thandi, the HOD from Battery Secondary School; Mr Amabili, the HOD from Amadada Secondary School; Mr Ndaba, the HOD from Ndali Secondary School; Miss Anele, the HOD from Zibonele Secondary School and Mr Mdluli, the HOD from Lwandle Secondary School.

In presenting the findings, *verbatim* quotations are used to ensure that the 'voices' of the participants remain pristine in the study. The presentation also incorporates data generated through documents' reviews and observations made during visits into the schools. The literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two is infused into the discussion. Two broad themes are used as headings to present and discuss the findings in this chapter. The first theme is about the HODs' understanding of the roles of principals as instructional leaders in the contexts of multiple deprivations. The second theme is about the perspectives of the HODs regarding the manner in which the school principals practised instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations. These themes are discussed in-depth in the following sections.

6.2 Heads of departments' understanding of the roles of principals as instructional leaders in the contexts of multiple deprivations

To set the scene, I asked the HODs what they understood about the concept of instructional leadership and what they perceived to be the role of the school principals as instructional leaders in the context of multiple deprivations. The HODs expressed similar understandings of instructional leadership as a phenomenon. In all instances, the discussions resonated with the notion of instructional leadership as an approach which focused on leading teaching and learning in the schools. However, there were varying degrees of understandings of the roles of the principals as instructional leaders in the contexts of multiple deprivations. Variations were due to the area of deprivation that the participant focused on. The following excerpts illustrate these conceptualisations.

> *Instructional leadership is about leading teaching and learning* (Miss Anele, HOD from Zibonele Secondary School).

Another HOD participant added the ultimate outcome of influencing teaching and learning in his conception of instructional leadership. This is what he had to say:

> *The core business of the school is that of ensuring that learners succeed academically. It involves quality teaching and learning. The role of the principal as an instructional leader is to ensure that this is happening, a clear focus on curriculum implementation and management* (Mr Mdluli, HOD from Lwandle Secondary School).

Similar sentiments were also echoed by Mr Amabili, the HOD from Amadada Secondary School who perceived instructional leadership as the practice of influencing teaching and learning. This is what he said:

> *Instructional leadership involves many activities that the leader, in this case, the principal does to influence teaching and learning.*

Mr Amabili, the HOD from Amadada further elaborated on the issue of many activities that the principal was doing as part of influencing teaching and learning. He cited activities that in his opinion fell outside the scope of the official role of the principal. This is what he had to say:

> *He is a crisis manager when there is crisis; a social worker when trying to solve many socio-economic problems brought to him by learners as well as parents; a*

security officer; a paramedic; a pastor; plumber; and more importantly, a teacher. He is multitasking with some roles falling outside the official scope of work to keep school going.

Corroborating the above utterances and linking instructional leadership and multiple deprivations, Mrs Patricia, the HOD from Phatha Secondary School said that instructional leadership entails working beyond the call of duty. Amongst other things she cited included motivating the learners to want to come to school and learn. She claimed that some of these learners lacked direction. What seemed to matter most to them was about surviving the present day and wait to see how tomorrow would unfold. Preoccupation with survival had a negative effect in terms of undermining the strength of dreaming about the future and only focusing on the present predicaments. She also highlighted inadequacies of leadership in bringing about change. This is what she said:

*The majority of these learners do not hold prospects for the fu*ture. *They live life as it comes. Their lifestyle for me is risky. Fighting for survival comes before education for them and they do not see education as means to an end. It is not smooth for the instructional leaders. It means hard work and extra time to try to forge what we perhaps regard as normal; that learners want to be at school, want to learn and want to be educated. Very few of them transcend this life. Maybe we are to blame for not doing enough to motivate them. The principal encourages us to motivate learners* (Mrs Patricia, HOD from Phatha Secondary School).

It also emerged from the discussion that instructional leadership in deprived school contexts involved working beyond the call of duty to adapt to contextual realities to influence learning. Miss Thandi, the HOD from Battery Secondary School said:

Eish, that's extra work and time for us and the principal. That is working beyond the call of duty. The roles include attending to discipline issues; attending dissatisfied parents; nursing ill and hungry learners. You have to do that to keep them in the school and in the classes. The worst part is standing in for absent educators. I hate when the principal says it's our responsibility as managers of curriculum to stand in for absent educators. It becomes your daily bread. Teachers are absent because of workshops, transport problems, attending to personal issues or ill-health more often here than perhaps in other areas. Quality teaching and learning is compromised. It's the environment. The work of an instructional leader

includes adapting to these realities to ensure that teaching and learning is not compromised.

Mr Ndaba, the HOD from Ndali Secondary School understood the role of the principal as an instructional leader in the context of multiple deprivations to include shaping the vision and mission of the school to ensure that quality education is given to all learners, more especially those who faced hardship so that the cycle of deprivation could stop. This is what he said:

You see that mjondolo (shack), it is the home for two of our learners, one in Grade 9 and the girl in Grade 12. There is neither electricity nor toilet. It is imaginable to tell how they live there but it is their home. They stay with their father whom we taught and dropped out and their grandmother. They are both not working. The grandmother has not reached the pensionable age. … The point I am raising is that some children suffer more than you can imagine and they are learners here at school. The instructional leader has to take that into cognizance when shaping the vision and mission of the school. It is the duty of the instructional leader to ensure that these injustices are not repeated in the generations to come by shaping the quality of teaching and learning in the school. That's where we have control.

It is evident from the HODs' conceptualisations that the contexts of deprivation influenced their principals' instructional leadership practices. The HODs spoke with intense feelings pointing out the safety and security issues within and outside the school that were viewed as further depriving the learners of quality education, adding to other social and environmental deprivations. Anguish is evident from the following excerpt from the interview with one of the HODs:

This place is hell I am telling you. It's hell!! Suffering is all over. There are different groups of thugs, some of whom are our dropouts and some are our learners who are terrorising the area. From stealing anything, rape, drug and substance abuse, killings you name it. They are stripping the school apart from doors to window frames, electric fittings and even trees we are planting. The community is afraid. We are afraid. Last year they took my car at gun point. The other time they came for our bags, cell phones and laptops. … Look, look, look at that girl learner who is coming with the principal. She is bleeding. They must have been fighting. Where is quality teaching and learning then? The instructional focus is clouded by safety

and security issues I am telling you (Miss Anele, HOD from Zibonele Secondary School).

The findings above are corroborated by the data generated from other methods such as review of minutes of the SMT and staff meetings; and observations during visits to the schools. The extract of the agenda below from the minutes of one of the documents reviewed at Zibonele Secondary School for example illuminates and corroborates the conceptualisation of the HODs that the work of the principals as instructional leaders in deprived contexts was complex and shaped by contexts. The extract of the agenda in figure 9 below illustrates one of the varying realities that principals as instructional leaders in deprived school contexts had to deal with.

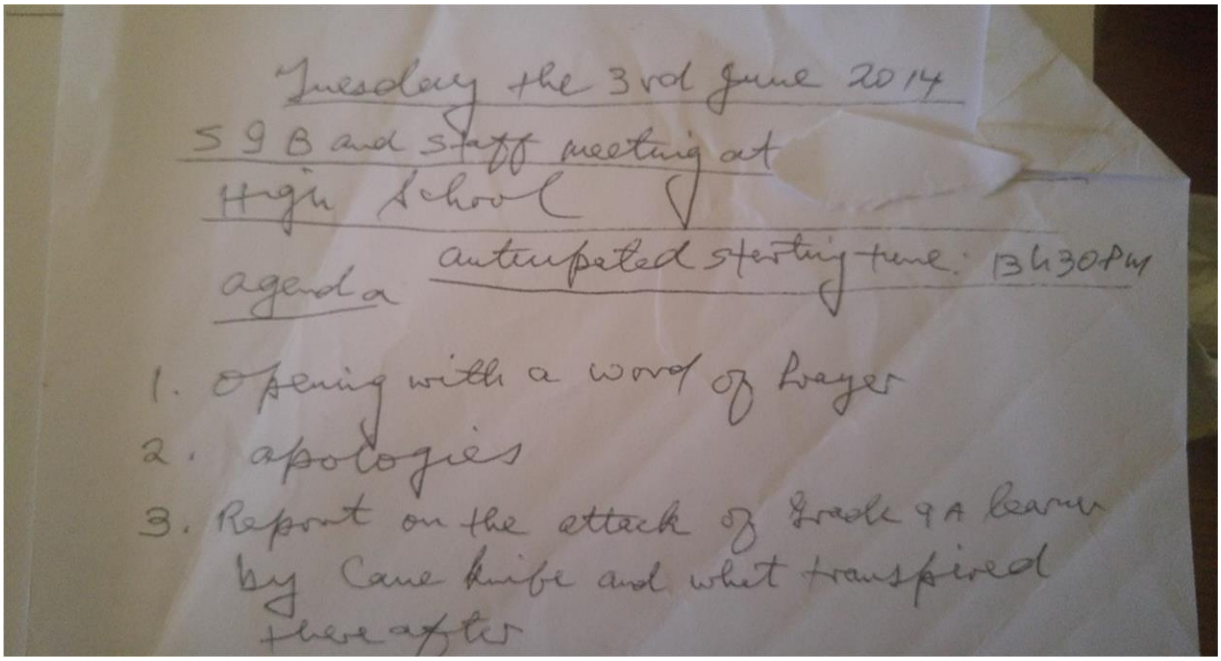

Figure 9: Extract of agenda of SGB and staff meeting at Zibonele Secondary School

It is evident from the extract above that time for teaching and learning was compromised as the meeting was called during contact hours. The agenda of the meeting suggests a breach in the safety and security as the learner was attacked by cane knife in the classroom. What transpired thereafter was chaos that led to the school closing, further depriving the learners of precious teaching and learning time. Emanating from this and corroborating the conceptualisation of instructional leadership by HODs is that some of the roles of principals as instructional leaders in the context of multiple deprivations was to work beyond the call of duty to bring order where

there was chaos so that effective teaching and learning could proceed. The extent of success in this regards seemed to vary with situations and with knowledge and experiences of the leaders.

The finding that the role of the principal as an instructional leader in deprived context is complex is affirmed by the literature. For instance, Mestry and Pillay (2013) affirm that principals as instructional leaders in deprived environments adapt to contextual realities in an effort to promote effective teaching and learning. Adaptive leadership theory also acknowledges that inputs and outputs that shape leadership approaches are not linear (Heifers Grashow & Linsky, 2009). Further, other scholars such as Mulford and Silins (2009) and Leithwood, et al. (2010) attest that instructional leaders operate in an "open system" that consists not only of the community, but also the institutional system and societal culture. The role of the instructional leader is to systematise energy, resources, and creativity to adapt to a particular situation (Heifetz & Laurie, 2011). Effective leadership is therefore both shaped by and responds to the constraints and opportunities extant in the school organisation and its environment.

The findings about how the HODs conceptualised instructional leadership suggests that instructional leadership in multiple deprived contexts has a number of levels of complexity. The role of the principals as instructional leaders was understood beyond the simplistic position of the process of teaching and learning to include the set of social realities that shaped these processes. The HODs seemed to envision the role of the principals as instructional leaders to be working beyond the call of duty to ensure that all learners were offered a chance in life by giving them quality education despite challenges. The following theme presents and discusses findings about how the HODs perceived the instructional leadership practices of principals in the contexts of multiple deprivations.

6.3 Perspectives of the heads of departments on how principals practiced instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations

To understand and to triangulate the findings generated from the principals, I asked the HODs to share their perspectives on how their school principals practised instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations. The findings suggest that there are five aspects that depict the way in which the school principals enacted instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations and these are (a) Nurturing beliefs and value systems that supported well-

being of others (b) Management and effective use of resources (c) Human Resources management (d) Physical resource management (e) Data-informed leadership. The sub-themes that emerged from analysing data generated from interviewing HODs are discussed below.

6.3.1 Nurturing beliefs and value systems that supported well-being of others

The utterances of most of the HOD participants in this study suggested that principals as instructional leaders in the study tried to inculcate beliefs and value systems that encapsulated respect, caring and compassion for others. Others included fellow educators, the learners, the parents and other stakeholders. The HOD participants seemed to agree that teaching and learning in these multiple deprived environments was stressful. They believed that the approach of respect, caring and compassion created a positive and an enabling environment for them and for the learners to thrive. The following excerpts from some of the participants illustrate this:

> *The principal is supportive and cares about the well-being of others. You will find him talking with educators asking them how they are coping with school work. We call him 'I suggest' because the conversation with him always include that. He would say we are in this mess together. We need each other to get out of it. He offers suggestions that encapsulate respect, caring and compassion for other humans be it a learner, parent or educators* (Mrs Patricia, HOD from Patha Secondary School).

Similarly, Mr Amabili, the HOD from Amadada Secondary School stated that his principal was caring and supportive. The idea of such an approach was believed to be bringing hope to the learners and inspiring them to want to do more. This is what he said:

> *Having a good caring relationship with others brings hope to the deprived learners, making them want to achieve academically so as to alleviate the situation.*

The utterances from other participants also indicated the beliefs and value systems that supported the well-being of others. One HOD explained that the principal was encouraging them to connect and to build positive relationships with others, including the learners to create a sense of belonging. He said:

> *The principal builds positive relationships with people that create a sense of belonging. The principal encourages us that we build personal rapport with each other and with learners that we teach. He listens when people tell their problems*

and then responds in a way that makes you really think about things. He asks questions to get you to understand different issues about life. He would then tell of his own experiences (Mr Ndaba, HOD from Ndali Secondary School).

Miss Thandi, the HOD from Batter Secondary School spoke eloquently about the caring nature of her principal adding that she would go extra-miles to assist the needy learners. This is what she had to say:

The principal promotes caring, respect for one another and to become considerate to other peoples' feelings and needs, showing and giving love to each other and especially those in need. She does a lot of fundraising to assist the learners. It is not just about money, it's about offering a shoulder to cry on as well. Of course there are challenges like time and financial constrains to reach everyone. But what I like is that she is not selective.

Miss Anele, the HOD from Zibonele Secondary School used the concept of Ubuntu to describe how her principal promoted beliefs and values that supported well-being of others to enhance teaching and learning. This is what she said:

Teachers' and learners' personal problems are taken into consideration. Ubuntu is about courtesy; it is about showing care towards other people within the school community and sharing of ideas and experiences within the staff. The principal understands that we are from different backgrounds and have different characters. He uses that to forge interdependency and interconnectedness so that we could work collaboratively to enhance teaching and learning.

Mr Mdluli, the HOD from Lwandle Secondary School also linked the caring behaviour of the principal to how they were stimulated to work more. He also indicated that people were different and would behave differently. This is what he said:

If educators and learners feel cared and valued at school, they will be relaxed and happy and want to do more. They will be willing to give and go beyond the call of duty. It's human nature. That's why we are able to come for morning and afternoon classes, Saturdays and holidays. We come willingly to support each other in an effort to enhance results. Of course, we do not all feel the same (Mr Mdluli, HOD from Lwandle Secondary School).

It is emerging from this analysis that all the HOD participants perceived their principals to be showing humanness towards teachers and learners by caring and being warm towards them. It was also evident from the review of minutes of SMT meetings from three schools that principals valued and cared about educators' and learners' well-being. For example, it was on record in the minutes of Zibonele Secondary School SMT meeting held on the 10th September 2015 where the principal was reminding SMT members that they were working with people and that they should strike to balance work-human relationships. In two of the schools that I visited, the charts with *Batho Pele* principles were displayed in the foyers and in principals' offices. The *Batho Pele* principles advocate caring, respect and support by putting interests of other people first.

This finding corroborated with the study that was conducted by Chikoko, Naicker and Mthiyane (2015) that found that school principals in deprived environments thrive by practising servant leadership, building relations with other staff members, the learners, the parents and the community at large. Bekker (2006) supports the idea that compassionate acts by showing a kind of love, caring and interconnectedness are important parts of the communal lifestyle. According to Theletsane (2012), Africans learn from an early age that they are interconnected with each other and that sharing and giving is the only way one can receive. Interconnectedness and interdependency are important organising component of *Ubuntu* where the values of compassion and community, harmony and generosity, respect and receptiveness are held high (Ncube, 2010). Msila (2014) concurs with this narrative by arguing that *Ubuntu* leadership strives for intense interconnectedness and working together. Msila (2008) asserts that the values mentioned above can be significant for school leaders especially, schools that are in contexts of multiple deprivations.

It has emerged from the discussion above that the HODs perceived their principals as instructional leaders to be working towards building healthy relationships by being compassionate, caring, showing humanness towards educators and learners. The participants felt that was necessary to make them belong and feel valued. Nurturing the well-being of others was believed to be encouraging others to want to do more in terms of teaching and learning.

6.3.2 Management and effective use of resources

Management and effective use of resources emerged prominently in the interviews with the HODs. There were varying degrees as to how their principals were engaged in these activities. The levels of success also varied, owing to different contextual factors that each school experienced. I discuss under this section human and physical resource managements.

6.3.2.1 Human resource management

It emerged from the analysis of data from the HODs that schools located in the context of multiple deprivations seemed to face various challenges to managing human resource. Yet, it was important human resources were effectively managed in an effort to ensure that effective teaching and learning was not compromised. In particular, educator absenteeism seemed to be a recurring challenge for rural school principals more than it was for the principals in the township schools. The participants highlighted geographic isolation of rural schools as one of the major causes for the teachers taking leave, including unsanctioned leave, than it was the case with their counterparts in township schools. They claimed that they had to travel long distances and spent more time travelling to and from the schools in dirt roads that were not frequently maintained. When the educators were attending workshops, they would not come to school at all due to the same problem of long distances. Consequently, classes were often left unattended to, and the quality of teaching and learning was being compromised. The principals and the HODs as instructional leaders had to carry the burden of trying to get the work done, and asking for help from the other teachers present to supervise classes left without teachers. The following excerpts from the HODs illustrate how this finding emerged:

> *We are faced with multiple deprivations here. The geographic landscape of the area impacts on transport services and access to services. We travel long distances to and from school in dirt roads. It is very stressful. Transport is poor. We use lift club which also has its own problems. Five people could just be absent from school because of this. Chaos, chaos, chaos trying to bay-sit classes left without teachers. The principal bears that burden. I don't know how this could be solved* (Mrs Patricia, HOD from Patha Secondary School).

Similar sentiments were echoed by Miss Anele, the HOD from Amadada Secondary School that teacher absenteeism was the human resource management that principals were finding it hard to control. Exacerbating the problem were heavy duty loads that educators from rural

schools carried. Exhaustion, anxiety and hopelessness were cited as some of the factors that contributed to teacher apathy and chronic absenteeism. This is what Miss Anele had to say:

> *We have exceptionally high teaching loads by virtue of us having to cover many learning areas and grades. Anxiety, hopelessness and exhaustion propel the teachers to absent themselves. No one has a space to supervise classes left without educators. Forget about going there to teach. You will see the principal marching around the school like a security guard. It is a stressful issue for us as HODs and for the Principal as an instructional leader. Curriculum coverage is greatly compromised* (Miss Anele, HOD from Amadada Secondary School).

The picture below was taken around Battery Secondary School. It corroborates the utterances by the HODs about the geographic landscape of the area making it isolated and difficult to access, contributing to teacher stressors. Further, learner transport was not assisting a number of learners as they still had to walk long distances to the main road to catch a school bus. The principal had to get people to manage late coming.

Figure 10: Photo taken around Battery High School

Scholars such as Chisholm and Sujee (2006); Ngcobo and Tikly (2010); Mbali and Douglas (2012); Spaull (2012) share similar sentiments that late-coming and absenteeism in the South African school system is rife on the part of both the educators and the learners. They opine that such teacher absenteeism results in considerably reduced contact time with the learners; they thus compromise effective teaching and learning. Spaull (2012) elaborates that the high rates of teacher absenteeism have a reciprocal effect on learner absenteeism, whereby the learners choose not to attend school because they are unsure about whether or not their educators will

be at school on that particular day. Then the pressure and responsibility turns the principals as instructional leaders to alleviate the situation since the effect of this is lower learner performance due to the inadequate coverage of the curriculum and shorter time on-task (Spaull, 2012). The HODs described human resource management in their schools as presenting a mammoth task for school leadership to address. Teacher absenteeism and hence adequate coverage of the curriculum in rural schools emerged as management issues that principals were still finding hard to control.

6.3.2.2 Physical resource management

Township schools had more physical resources compared to the schools located in rural areas. Observations and utterances by the HODs seemed to suggest that in some schools these resources were not adequately managed and maintained, thus rendering them ineffective for teaching and learning. It was expected that the little resources that some schools had were optimally used for the purpose of teaching and learning. The HODs had varying views on how their principals ensured effective use of physical resources to improve the quality of teaching and learning. For example, Mr Mdluli, the HOD from Lwandle Secondary School indicated that his principal was very strict in the procurement of essential resources and their use. He wanted to limit the resources he bought because he believed that such resources would end up not being used to enhance quality of teaching and learning. This is what he said:

> *The principal find it indispensable to procure resources and materials that are essential for teaching and learning. He is also very strict on accountability. This makes people to order things they need and will use for the benefit of learners.*

Miss Thandi, the HOD from Battery Secondary School stated that their principal also tried her best to buy resources to be used for teaching and learning. What seemed to differ from Lwandle was the utilisation and management of these resources that were already available. Miss Thandi said that some of the resources were not used optimally or not used at all. She indicated that they talked about this issue in the meetings but the principal did not seem to be stamping his authority to limit wastage of school resources. This is what she said:

> *Resources are procured but lie there unused. Some expensive equipment and facilities are not used for the benefit of teaching and learning. People make long lists of what they want but when they are there, people forget about them. We talk about this in the meetings. The principal should also be stamping authority in this*

regard. For me it is the waste of money. Learners could be learning and using computers; do almost all science experiments. Is this not deprivation?

Mrs Patricia, the HOD from Phatha Secondary High School showed some frustration in the way her principal managed the issues of physical resources. Unlike in the two schools cited above, the principal here did not seem to be quick in getting resources that the educators needed. She also pointed at the school buildings that had broken windows that by not repairing them they were depriving the learners an environment that is conducive for learning. She seemed to be blaming the principal and not including herself as a member of the SMT. This frustration is evident from her utterances:

It is frustrating for educators not to have what they want to facilitate their teaching. It is even more frustrating if the principal is slow or does not take procuring teaching and learning resources as key to effective teaching and learning. This is deprivation at its best in the hands of authorities, gha! Broken window panes, doors, desks, toilets are depriving learners of an environment that is conducive for learning, adding to other socio-economic deprivations they face.

It is evident from analysing the data generated through interviewing the HODs that some principals were not doing enough to acquire, maintain and ensure effective utilisation of physical resources available. This was also observed when visiting some of the schools. At Phatha Secondary School for example, there was a beautiful face-brick building block which had a number of broken windows and doors. Figure 11 below shows this building with broken glasses and it corroborate the utterances shared by Mrs Patricia about buildings that were not adequately taken care of. The toilets were also inadequate and also had broken doors. The buildings at Amadada Secondary School were relatively better compared to the two other rural schools visited.

Figure 11: Picture showing a block with broken windows at Phatha Secondary School

It was also observed that some expensive physical resources were not adequately utilised or properly stored. The picture below was taken at the Battery Secondary School to corroborate this observation and the utterance by Miss Thandi that some expensive resources were not used optimally. The room had unopened boxes of resources, including interactive white board and science equipment. The observation made during school visits was that the computers were minimally or not used. Some educators still had hand written worksheets and mark lists.

Figure 12: Picture showing a room with resources at Battery Secondary School

Literature also talks about physical resources in schools and similar observations have been made. Ngcobo and Tikly (2010) found that many township and rural schools in South Africa lack facilities, furniture and resources to meet the needs of sciences, mathematics and technology curricula. They have also found that whilst this is so, it would seem that some schools lack capacity to manage the little that they have of these resources. According to Prinsloo (2009), the principal and his or her management team is responsible to put into place procedures to minimise vandalism and the loss of equipment and stock, the cleaning of the buildings and the school grounds, and procuring new stock and equipment. Effective management of equipment is essential to establish and maintain a sound culture of learning and teaching.

The findings in this theme suggest that the principals had different approaches and abilities about how they requisitioned physical resources, ensuring that they were optimally utilised and maintained. This had an influence on the culture of teaching and learning. Some HODs were showing frustration about how their principals handled the issue of physical resources. The finding emerging from this theme also suggests that some schools, especially township schools had physical resources and the principals, at least at Lwandle Secondary School were making effort to ensure that they were utilised optimally. This seemed to be lacking in some schools. The HODs also seemed to be absolving themselves from the blame yet they were part of the school management teams.

6.3.2.3 Data-informed leadership

Data-informed leadership emerged as one of the prominent themes from analysing data generated through interviewing the HODs. Data-informed leadership essentially means the use of school data to understand general patterns in the school, identifying strengths and weaknesses in the system so as to make informed decisions (Mandinach, *et al*., 2006). Data-informed leadership was perceived by the HODs as contributing to effective teaching and learning in the schools although they had varying views on what data they kept in the school and how they used it to improve teaching and learning. For instance, Miss Anele, the HOD from Zibonele Secondary School perceived her principal as interpreting data showing how the learners were performing and compared it with other relevant information like the deprivation levels. She believed that the principal did what he did in order to effectively align his leadership approaches on prioritising and improving teaching and learning in the school. This is what she said:

> *The principal analyses learner performance data by himself and wants us to do likewise. The analysis is not just numbers. He wants it explained qualitatively to include who are the learners who are passing or failing; what is their level of deprivation; what needs to be done to each learner to improve performance. The principal sets clear goals and expectations, creating structured time for the HODs and educators to examine data about learner performance* (Miss Anele, the HOD from Zibonele Secondary School).

Similarly, Mr Mdluli, the HOD from Lwandle Secondary School indicated that the principal used data to inform them about learner performance and to identify the learners who qualified

for social grants as the situation required them to do. I am saying this because the situation in the community was dire, hence, the focus of the study on multiple deprivations and the principals were expected to be mindful of the local contexts and adjust their leadership in ways that respond to the context. This is what this participant had to say in that regard:

> *The principal use data on learner performance to advice parents about subject and career choices; used to consider how to group students for maximum potential. Deprivation data is used to inform decision on who gets exempted on school fees and those to benefit on orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) grants* (Mr Mdluli, HOD of Lwandle Secondary School).

It also emerged that the data was not only used to monitor leaner progress but also to control and take decisions on other aspects of the school. This was important as the principal and the SMTs were able to use evidence to base their decisions. This is what the other participant had to say on this issue:

> *We use test data to get general patterns about the school. We use it to identify areas where we are doing well and also areas where we are not doing well. It is important that we SWOT analyse the school. It gives us opportunity to allocate resources and plan accordingly. We plan for professional developments and other kinds of targeted intervention activities. It is not fault finding. Those who are not doing well have to account and they are given the necessary support and guidance to perform better. Those who are doing better are praised. When learners who have no hope in life because of deprivation are praised for doing well, it brings back or sparks hope* **(**Mr Ndaba, HOD of Ndali Secondary School).

Miss Thandi, the HOD from Battery Secondary School praised her principal for embracing and influencing the usage of electronic resources to capture school data that is readily available. She regarded her school principal as forward looking and a principal of the 21st century. This is what she said:

> *The South African School and Administration Management System (SA-SAMS) was a blessing for us. It is also a blessing that the principal understands demands its use by all staff members. This electronic program and data offers many and varied uses to school from human resource information, governance, curriculum related data, physical resources to timetabling. At the punch of the button, the principal knows everything about his school: analysis of results; age cohorts of all learners;*

> *who is orphan; distances travelled by each learner to school; absenteeism by both teachers and learners; what is taught in what grade; and many other uses. Our principal takes advantage of it. It helps him to take decisions* (Miss Thandi, HOD of Battery Secondary School).

In all the six schools, the analyses of the results were pasted on the wall of the principals' offices. It was also evident in the minutes of parents' meetings in all case study schools that the principals analysed the results of the learners' academic performance and they were presented to the parents and other stakeholders. Trophies and certificates of achievement were also displayed in the principals' offices. Miss Thandi, the HOD from Battery Secondary School took some time to show me various data captured in their SA-SAMS programme.

Mandinach and Gummer (2013) support the view of using data-driven decision-making and these scholars further assert that it is an emerging important field of school leadership. Deike (2009) concluded in his study of principals as instructional leaders that principals who used data initiatives and established structures were more successful than their counterparts who did not use this technology. Means, Padilla and Gallagher (2010) believe that data-driven decision-making assisted the principals who faced increased pressure from the public and policy to improve schools. Mandinach, *et al*. (2006) aver that it is important for the school principals as instructional leaders to make use of school data to inform their instructional leadership practices.

The findings from the discussion above suggest that there were initiatives done by their principals to use data to inform their decisions and the ways they enacted instructional leadership. It is also evident that the HODs perceived some of their school principals as taking advantage of electronic data to manage activities of the school.

6.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the findings from the perspectives of the HODs with regards to the manner in which they viewed their principals' enactment of instructional leadership. This was done to triangulate the findings generated from the interviews with their respective school principals. The findings from the HOD also add to the understanding of how principals enacted instructional leadership in multiple deprived contexts. The findings largely corroborate those

of the school principals although there were areas of disagreement based on their respective interpretations of reality at school level. As highlighted in Chapter Four (methodology chapter), interpretive paradigm was used to underpin the way I interpret the worldview from the perspectives of the participants. Therefore, it is accepted that there are many realities and many meanings attached to a single phenomenon. In a nutshell, it should not be a surprise if various categories of participants elicit varying interpretations of the same phenomenon of their principals' enactment of instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations.

CHAPTER SEVEN
PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS: PERSPECTIVES OF POST-LEVEL ONE EDUCATORS

7.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I presented and discussed the data generated from the HODs on how their principals understood and enacted instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations. This is the third and the last chapter that presents the data as I divided it into three chapters as explained in Chapter Five. In this chapter, I present and discuss the findings generated through interviewing six Post-Level One (PL1) educators on how they perceived the roles of the principals as instructional leaders to be. *Pseudonyms* were used in order to protect their identities and that of their schools. The teacher participants are Miss Petronella from Phatha Secondary School; Mr Thabo from Battery Secondary School; Miss Amahle from Amadada Secondary School; Mr Ndanda from Ndali Secondary School; Mrs Zanele from Zibonele Secondary School and Mr Ndlela from Lwandle Secondary School.

Similar to the previous chapter, in presenting the findings, *verbatim* quotes are used to ensure that the 'voices' of the participants remain pristine in the study. The presentation also incorporates the findings generated through documents' reviews and observations made during visits into the schools. The literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two is infused into the discussion. Three broad themes are used as headings to present and discuss data in this chapter. The first theme is about the educators' (PL1) understanding of the roles of principals as instructional leaders in the contexts of multiple deprivations. The second theme is about the perspectives of educators (PL1) on how the principals practised instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations. These themes are discussed in-depth in the following sections.

7.2 Educators' understandings of instructional leadership in deprived school contexts

It emerged from the analysis of Post-Level one (PL1) educators' conceptualisations of instructional leadership that instructional leadership was generally understood beyond curriculum management to include the operational, day-to-day practices that enabled them to thrive in deprived contexts. Educators (PL1) viewed instructional leadership to entail interactions with dynamic school contexts with the aim of ensuring delivery of the curriculum

in the classroom. The principals had to interpret what made sense for their situations to deliver a series of interventions aimed at ensuring optimum teaching and learning opportunities. The following excerpts from the educators illustrate these conceptualisations.

> *I can say instructional leadership is about curriculum management. It's the work of the principal and HODs to ensure that there is teaching and learning in the school* (Miss Amahle, Educator from Amadada Secondary School).

The sentiments are similar to those of Miss Amahle were echoed by Mr Ndanda, an educator from Ndali Secondary School who also viewed instructional leadership as curriculum management. He also expanded this view to include other activities aimed at ensuring that conditions conducive for curriculum delivery were maintained. This is what he had to say:

> *…Instructional leadership is not only about managing curriculum. It is also about ensuring that conditions are conducive for curriculum delivery. For example maintaining discipline, dealing with parents; motivating deprived learners to want to come to school; dealing with drug lords that keep on interfering with the school business; dealing with hungry and sick learners; you name them. If you don't get these rights, there will be nothing to manage in terms of curriculum….There will be no school!*

Miss Petronella, an educator from Phata Secondary School also mentioned interaction with different contextual school variables to ensure that teaching and learning took place as part of their role of instructional leaders, making it difficult to pin it down to one definition. This is what she had to say:

> *There are different educators. There are learners from various backgrounds. There are parents with different levels of literacy, some who like the school and some who don't. There are unpredictable, dynamic days. There are policies. There is an ever-changing curriculum. The instructional leader has to make sense of all these things to ensure that there is teaching and learning. It is difficult to pin it down to one thing.*

The views expressed by Mrs Zanele, an educator from Zibonele Secondary School effaced principals as instructional leaders, making it clear that subject educators are the ones who are directly involved with operational, day-to-day contextual variables that had the direct effect on teaching and learning. School principals were seen as indirect influencers of teaching and learning. This is what she had to say:

> *When it comes to instructional leadership, I am an instructional leader. Subject educators are instructional leaders. We are the ones who do not sleep at night thinking and planning how best to deliver curriculum in the classroom. We are the ones who influence what happens in the classroom. Those people (principals) have no clue of what is happening in the classroom, the hardship of teaching hungry learners and woonga boys. They are just administrators. They are good at asking us to account and slow in ensuring that conditions are conducive for effective teaching and learning* (Mrs Zanele, Educator from Zibonele Secondary School).

The argument raised by Mrs Zanele, educator from Zibonele Secondary School affirmed the notion that instructional leadership commenced in the classroom in the daily relationship between teachers and learners. This argument is congruent with those expressed in Hallinger's Model (2011) of instructional leadership. Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2010) also affirm that educators in the classroom teaching have a more direct impact on influencing learning than leadership. Mrs Zanele's understanding of instructional leadership in in line with (Louis, *et al*., 2010, p.37) argument that the individual teacher is an instructional leader with the support of the principal. Teachers are guided by the principals to implement strategies to ensure optimum learning on a daily basis. This seemed to be lacking at Zibonele Secondary School.

The general conceptualisation of instructional leadership by educators as a contextual construct corroborates Hallinger's (2011) instructional leadership model. The model caters for the diverse nature of school contexts paving path for divergent views that instructional leadership could be understood differently in different contexts. Further, instructional leaders bring with them beliefs, assumptions, values, knowledge and emotions (Argyris & Schön, 1974). These are mental models, an internally held constructs which helps people to understand the world in which they live in. Consequently, there will be variations in how instructional leadership is constructed and understood depending on their internally held constructs. For example, there were elements that are indicative of value for the welfare of learners in Mr Ndanda's conceptualisation of the roles of instructional leaders. Miss Petronella emphasised awareness of contextual variables that impacted on teaching and learning.

Educators (PL1) generally defined instructional leadership as the management of curriculum. Educators acknowledged the variation of contexts as an important factor in how instructional

leadership was understood and implemented. Arguably, the most effective instructional leaders are able to perceive events from a number of different perspectives and shift frames as appropriate during the course of events. The basis for this argument is that schools were subjected to daily unpredictability owing to, amongst other things, classes full of learners from different backgrounds, with different personalities. Plans often fell flat as what worked in one learner did not necessarily work with another, what worked in one context might not necessarily work in another context (Fullan, 2001). Instructional leaders adapted their practices to contextual realities while promoting effective teaching and learning.

7.3 Perspectives of Post-Level One educators on how principals practised instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations

To understand and to triangulate the findings generated from principals, I asked PL1 educators to share their perspectives on how their respectful principals practised instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations. Six sub-themes emerged from analysing data generated from interviewing PL1 educators. These sub-themes are; Developing and working towards realisation of school vision; Creating space for stakeholders to participate in school matters; Dialoguing with teachers to promote reflection; Ensuring that educators attend professional development workshops despite challenges; Direct and indirect involvement in the monitoring of educators' work; Monitoring and use of test data; Protecting instructional time and Recognising and rewarding good performance. I discuss these sub-themes below.

7.3.1 Developing and working towards realisation of school vision

Findings from the data indicate that the school principals made efforts and employed some strategies to develop school vision and expectations. Involving other stakeholders from the early stages in the development of a school vision in order to ensure that the school had a shared school vision was noted by four educators as a strategy used by their principals. This was done to embrace support and to ensure that the vision was effectively implemented. Explaining how their principal did this, Mr Ndlela, an educator from Lwandle Secondary School said that the principal conceptualised the vision of the school alone before presenting it in the stakeholder meetings. His initial conception of the school vision was crushed in these meetings. Allowing

stakeholders to have inputs led to the successful development of shared vision for the school. This is what he said:

> *The principal has been crushed in several stakeholder meetings and new outcomes coming as a result of inputs from others. He uses that as a strategy now to get stakeholders to participate effectively in the implementation of decisions taken in stakeholder meetings.*

Miss Amahle, an educator from Amadada Secondary School emphasised the importance of sharing vision with stakeholders to enhance school performance when she said:

> *For school to perform optimally, the principal should actually share the vision and mission of the school with educators, parents and learners.*

In support of the above comment, Mrs Zanele, an educator from Zibonele Secondary School stressed the importance of engaging all the stakeholders in the school activities. In this regard, she highlighted the benefit of having several sub-committees to deal with specific issues. She illustrated the advantages of distributed leadership by saying the following:

> *After meeting with the SMT for discussions, the principal take issues to staff-meetings for further discussions. Opinions of the staff members that are relevant to the school developmental strategies are allowed. … other stakeholders are engaged so that vision to uplift deprived learners could be a collaborative effort* (Mrs Zanele, Educator from Zibonele Secondary School).

The view that the participants expressed is also supported by literature. The study findings of Supovitz, Sirinides, and May (2010) affirm that the school principals who develop compelling missions and goals, establish cultures of collaboration and trust and encourage instructional improvement draw teachers together to engage in joint work to improve teaching and learning. Such joint work productively entails rich conversation, collaborative planning and advice giving and receiving (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2003; Supovitz, Sirinides & May, 2010). Leithwood, *et al*. (2008) also hold a similar view that the principals need to work with others to identify school improvement goals and objectives and must be strategic in the achievement of these goals and objectives. According to Akcaoglu (2013), principals are instructional leaders whose primary aim is the improvement of the learning environments and the teaching practices in their schools. The views expressed by the participants also indicated that the principals created a collaborative culture where the educators, learners and parents worked

together with the aim of improving teaching and learning environments. The co-operation and input of all assisted them to obtain broader ownership of the school's goals.

7.3.2 Creating space for stakeholders to participate in school matters

The general feeling from the educators who participated in this study was that their principals created space for stakeholders including educators, learners, parents and other partners to participate in the school matters. In varying degree, the principals scheduled meetings with these stakeholders where school matters were discussed in an open and collaborative manner in which the participants were free to share ideas. Whilst there was a general belief that these initiatives were important to enhance teaching and learning, their success varied with schools due to the individual school's peculiar context. To this end, Mr Thabo, an educator from Battery Secondary School had this to say:

> *The principal tries to incorporate all stakeholders in decision making about issues pertaining the functioning of the school. She has formed collaborative networks with other partners like health practitioners, social services, police and sponsors. I would say she has an open door policy. She spends a lot of time meeting different people. This consumes a lot of her time because sometimes people come for personal issues that do not pertain to the school.*

Similar sentiments were also shared by Miss Amahle, an educator from Amadada Secondary School that the principal was spending a lot of time meeting and forming collaborative networks with stakeholders. This is what she had to say:

> *The principal does not have a class. He is busy with these other things. Police, social workers, nurses, sponsors, DoBE Officials and parents are important stakeholders in the school. Now and again we call police if there are security issues. There are also various committee meetings. These kids need to be taken care of. They are troubled by various deprivation issues. It is hard not to involve yourself.*

Mr Ndanda, an educator from Ndali Secondary School indicated that the SMT met briefly every school day in the morning to share ideas about the business of the day. He explained that the process was important to keep them informed about the school, including discussing them as educators. Mr Ndanda had the following to say in that regard:

> *They* (SMT) *have briefing meetings from 7h20 to 7h35 in the morning every day. They share ideas about what has happened and what needs to be done. They discuss us. They also meet with us …depending on the issue being discussed; sometimes it's just orders and directives in the name of policies. …as I said, it's about ensuring that everyone is on-board on many issues that haunt us from discipline, motivating learners, safety and security issues, you name them.*

Mrs Zanele, an educator from Zibonele Secondary School also indicated that there were several meetings which were conducted, following democratic procedures where participatory-decision making were upheld. However, she raised some concerns that some meetings took too long, thus resulting in no tangible outcomes. This is what she said:

> *There are formal meetings and informal meetings with educators, learners, parents etc. I would say he is democratic because stakeholders are allowed to share their views and decision supported. The problem is that some meetings take too long and there are no tangible outcomes. The issue of safety and security has been discussed in many meetings but it still persists* (Mrs Zanele, Educator from Zibonele Secondary School).

All the participants seemed to agree that the principals in one way or the other created space for sharing information. This was done through formal and informal meetings with various stakeholders. Somech (2010) shares similar view that creating space for stakeholders to meet and find collective solution is necessary for schools to succeed. The argument is that participatory decision-making has a potential to bring about school improvement and effectiveness in the school.

7.3.3 Dialoguing with educators to promote reflection

The general view from the educator participants was that their principals valued dialogues that encouraged them to critically reflect on their teaching practices in deprived school contexts. These dialogues took place informally during day-to-day interactions. The teacher participants alluded to the fact that these conversations allowed them to reflect about their professional practices in non-threatening environments. They valued these dialogues purporting that they helped them to grow professionally as they shared experiences and were able to ask for advices. Commenting on this issue, Miss Amahle, educator from Amadada Secondary School said:

> *Informal talks with the principal are supposedly of great value to me as I am able to reflect on my professional practice. The principal sometimes offer some suggestions on the spot that assists me in teaching in other classes. For example, yesterday I had a problem of explaining relativity in the class. The examples he suggested, that used local context variables, worked very well in the class.*

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mr Thabo, an educator from Battery Secondary School who said:

> *She has a way of making you really think about things. She asks questions to get you to recognise facets of a problem and then gives you stories of her own experiences.*

A similar view was also expressed by Miss Petronella, an educator from Phatha Secondary School who also mentioned that her principal asks a lot of questions forcing them to reflect on practice.

> *You do not wish to meet the principal in the corridor because you won't pass him without asking you million questions. He bombers you with million questions asking you to reflect on what you were doing in the class; how you were doing it and the worst question is why. … It forces you to reflect on your professional practice more especially because we encounter different challenges in the classes. I learnt from such conversations that you are not supposed to administer any medication to a sick learner* (Miss Petronella, Educator from Phatha Secondary School).

In the case of Lwandle Secondary School, there seemed to be a disjuncture between the value of leading by inquiry by the principal and how the educators felt about the practice. Similar to the views shared above, Mr Ndlela welcomed the opportunity to open up his practices and appreciated the discussions he had in reflecting on his practices but seemed annoyed to be frequently asked to reflect on his professional practices. To this end, Mr Ndlela said:

> *There is this concept of reflecting on practice that seems to be new in the principal's vocabulary. Every corner you are asked to reflect, reflect and do more reflections. I don't dispute its value but how it is done is killing me.*

The views from the educator participants suggested that the dialogues and inquiry opened learning opportunities for them to reflect critically on their own practices. Emphasising this point, Mrs Zanele, an educator from Zibonele Secondary School said:

> *It is helpful to hear that others struggle with teaching and share common concerns. It provides opportunities for us to build our knowledge base and reflect on and question strategies for best practices in an informal setting.*

It was observed and noted on four occasions that I visited Phatha Secondary School that the principal was not in his office. On three occasions he was talking with the educators in the quad. When I had a discussion with him, he commented that he managed by wondering around and that he was talking informally with the educators created a conducive platform to discuss different issues including reflecting on teaching practices. A similar pattern was observed at Lwandle High School. The principal was very animated about what I was doing. He talked about the workshop he attended where they were told to be unapologetic about constantly asking teachers to reflect on their professional practices. This was corroborated by the minutes of the staff meeting where he was recorded telling the staff members that they were told in the workshop that professional dialoguing could be used as a strategy to help de-privatise classroom practices. In other words, by openly sharing experiences about classroom practices, that classroom space was being opened up (de-privatised) to use his construct.

The views expressed by the participants above resonates with the findings of Blasé and Blasé (1999) that the principals as instructional leaders, informally and in day-to-day interactions make purposeful, appropriate, and non-threatening suggestions that recognise teacher's strengths, focus on sharing experiences and on improving instruction. Dialoguing force educators to reflect on their professional practices and in the process educators are professionally developed to cope with the context. Effective principals "hold up a mirror", serve as "another set of eyes" and are "critical friends" who engage in thoughtful discourse with teachers (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). Effective leadership sets the direction and influences members to work together toward meeting organisational goals. Principals accomplish this essential responsibility by providing individual support, challenging teachers to examine their own practices, and securing models of best practice (Leithwood, *et al*., 2004).

The practice of dialoguing with the teachers promoted reflections on practice and discussion of effective and ineffective practices with their educators. It was believed that such reflections

resulted in increased knowledge, changes to their instructional practices and information they could use in their lesson planning. It gave them learning opportunities that further enhanced their learning experiences, discussing with their peers strategies for teaching in deprived contexts. This increased knowledge and discussion of best practices for classroom instruction. A culture of reflective practice is essential for effective instructional leadership and the improvement of instructional practices.

7.3.4 Promoting teacher professional development

The views expressed by all the PL1 Educators that participated in this study indicated that their principals promoted and ensured that educators attended professional workshops despite the challenges that remained in the schools when educators were attending workshops. There seemed to be a number of such workshops and cluster meetings that were taking educators out of the classrooms. In township schools, there were more subjects offered and more teachers teaching same subject. A number of educators would be attending workshops in one point in time. In rural schools, one educator would be teaching more than one subject in different classes. An individual educator would be attending a number of workshops. The tendency was that they did not start at school because of the transport problems and distances to workshop venues. The participants indicated that it was a difficult task for the SMTs to arrange relief educators to teach or supervise classes left by educators who were attending workshops. Often, the learners were left unattended to in the classrooms leading to chaos. Despite these challenges, the principals were seen to be encouraging the view that educators should attend workshops. The following excerpts illustrate this view:

> *Nowadays there are a number of Departmental workshops that we attend. Today it's this; tomorrow that and sometimes you are required to attend more than one workshop per day* (Mr Ndanda, Educator from Ndali Secondary School).

Similarly, Miss Amahle, an educator from Amadada Secondary School mentioned that there were too many workshops that they had to attend because of the constantly changing curriculum. The dissemination of information about workshops seemed to be problematic. She claimed that they sometimes heard about the workshop when they were told by the SMT to drop whatever they had planned for the day to attend workshops they did not know about. This is what she said:

They are frequently changing curriculum. There are so many workshops to roll out and disseminate information. You sometimes come to school not knowing that you have to attend workshop, only to be told by the principal or HOD that there is a workshop that you must attend. All that you have planned for the day just falls off. These things are too much. We are more in the workshops than in the classrooms.

Miss Zanele, an educator from Zibonele Secondary highlighted her reluctance to attend some workshops as she saw them as time consuming to attend a workshop for a week on something that can be done in one day. The principal seemed to be the one who carry the belief that the educators should attend workshops and who encouraged educators to attend workshops. This is what she said:

If it were not for the principal who wants us to attend these many workshops, I would not be attending a single workshop or would be selective as to which workshop I attend. They are often a waste of time, run by incompetent facilitators. Something that can be done in one day is sometimes done in five days. Can you imagine that!

Similarly, Mr Thabo, an educator from Battery Secondary School echoed that there were too many workshops that he had to attend. The principal was the one who was encouraging them to attend the workshops, knowing that he (the principal) had to take full responsibility of trying to control the chaotic situation that would ensue in the school when classes were left unattended. Mr Thabo also emphasised the value of attending workshops saying that they develop professionally. This is what he said:

I go there (workshops) *for physical sciences, mathematics and life orientation. The principal pushes that we do not miss workshops. You gain from attending workshops. They help us to develop professionally to implement curriculum as required. Yes learners are left unattended. The principal marches along the verandas to maintain order.*

Miss Petronella, an educator from Patha Secondary School explained that it was difficult for them to come to school if they were to attend workshops or cluster meetings in venues that were not easily accessible to them. She complained that their planning were disturbed by attending workshops and that they were not in a position to recover time-lost because of contextual constraints. This is what she said:

> *Workshops and cluster meetings are done in awkward venues. It just means you do not come to school. It just means chaos in the school. … it disturbs your planning. You are required to finish the syllabus. Other schools resort at teaching in the mornings and afternoons to catch-up. That is also challenging for us because of transport and distance issues.*

The general view emerging in this theme was that the principals in this study encouraged educators to improve their professionalism through courses, workshops and the provision of formal leadership that encouraged teachers to collaborate in their communities of practice. This was done despite the challenges that this practice incurred. The reasons that principals seemed to hang on in favour for professional development were that educators needed to develop and upgrade themselves continuously to improve the quality and performance of teachers' instruction. This finding is in accordance with the literature reviewed that the provision of teacher professional development aims at leading to changes in professional learning and changes in professional practice which would ultimately impact on student achievement (Davis & Nicklos, 1986; Steyn, 2000; Supovitz & Poglinco, 2001). The study findings by Supovitz, Sirinides and May (2009) affirmed that the principals who established cultures of collaboration and trust and encouraged instructional improvement, drew teachers together to engage in joint work to improve teaching and learning. Steyn (2000) acknowledges the need for teachers to keep renewing their knowledge for the betterment of their facilitation of teaching and learning. Moreover, Wallace, LeMahieu and Bickel (1990) reveal that the teachers who attended staff development programme were able to improve student's performance and achievement. These findings also resonate with the views expressed by Davis and Nicklos (1986) that the principal's role is important in promoting staff development programme to achieve success for the school. Day, Gu and Summons (2016) found that schools' abilities to improve and sustain effectiveness over the long term is attributed to the principals' understanding and diagnosis of the schools' needs and their application of clearly articulated, organisationally shared educational values through multiple combinations and accumulations of time and context-sensitive strategies that are "layered" and progressively embedded in the school's work, culture, and achievements.

7.3.5 Direct and indirect involvement in the monitoring of educators' work

There were different views about how the principals were involved in the monitoring of educators' work. There were some elements of direct involvement and also some elements of indirect involvement. The general view from the participants indicated that there were lower levels where principals were directly involved in the monitoring of educators' and leaners' work. Principals rarely visited and observed educators teaching in the classrooms. In most cases, such visits were not planned and feedback was erratic. With the exception of Ndali Secondary School, the educators in other schools showed resentment to class visits by their principals. Miss Amahle, educator from Amadada Secondary School articulated this resentment claiming that the principal should not monitor her work because he did not specialise in the subjects she was teaching. Furthermore, she even contradicted herself when she said that it is the stipulated duty of the HODs to oversee curriculum but also doubted him as he is also not a specialist in the subjects she taught. This is what she said:

> *My immediate line manager is my HOD. It is her stipulated duty to manage curriculum implementation in the classroom and not the principal. …we do not want inspectors. This is a secondary school my dear and not the primary. We specialise in different subjects. I teach technical drawing and technology. What would an Accounting Person* (principal) *do in my class? What would the Life Science Person* (HOD) *do in my class? When you ask them for advices they tell you that you are the specialist in the field. Yeah, let me remain a specialist and they should not come into my class.*

Similar comments were uttered by Mr Ndlela, an educator from Lwandle Secondary School who also claimed that it was difficult for the principal to monitor the educators' work because he did not attend any curriculum workshops in the first place, let alone having an understanding of the contents of the subjects concerned. While the principal claimed that he delegated curriculum management to the HODs, they were also not adequately doing the job. This is what he claimed:

> *The principal does not attend curriculum workshops. He does not have a class or learning area that he teaches. …he claims that he is too busy with administrative stuff and has his HODs doing curriculum management. HODs are themselves not doing classroom visits. They claim that they have high teaching loads yet they teach one or two sections.*

At Phatha Secondary School, the monitoring of the educators' and the learners' work was done by the HODs. There was a similar claim from the educator that the principal was clueless about curriculum matters as he was also not attending curriculum workshops.

> *The principal is clueless about the curriculum. He does not attend curriculum workshops pushing it to the HODs. He would come into the class and comment on irrelevant issues* (Miss Petronella, Educator from Phatha Secondary School).

A different view was uttered by Mr Ndanda, an educator from Ndali Secondary School who posited that his principal was actively and directly involved in curriculum management and monitoring. He had classes that he was teaching and that he also attended workshops for his subject and also for other subjects to broaden his knowledge. The principal was getting into the classes observing lessons and giving feedback. The HODs were also doing class visits and time for feedback meetings was set aside for that purpose.

The need to monitor the educators' and the learners' work is also emphasised in the literature. For instance, scholars such as Taylor and Prinsloo (2005), Hallinger (2009), Katterfeld (2011) and Seng (2013) argue that principals must be deeply engaged in supervising and monitoring teachers' and learners' work. It is argued that this has a positive effect on the learner achievement. It is further suggested that successful school principals are directly and indirectly involved in the monitoring of learners' and educators' work. However, there are studies that show that principals seem to disregard this job. These studies include the ones conducted by Bush and Joubert (2004), Mulkeen, Chapman, DeJaeghere and Leu (2007), Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2009) Phillips (2009). The findings of these studies suggest that some school principals in dysfunctional schools are less involved in the monitoring of educators' and learners' work.

7.3.6 Monitoring and use of test data

It emerged from the educators' (PL1) responses that the principals seemed to vary considerably in terms of the levels to which they made data a prominent feature of deliberation about the myriad issues that confronted them on a daily basis. They varied in the way they used test data to understand general patterns of performance and in identifying their schools' strengths and weaknesses. Two principals seemed to be directly involved and created structured time for the SMTs to analyse data so that they could effectively allocate resources and plan professional

development and other kinds of targeted intervention activities. To this end, Mr Ndlela, an educator from Lwandle Secondary School commented on the SMTs influencing them to use technological data. This is what he said:

> *The principal and the whole SMT are computer literate. They prefer to use electronic data and uses their influence to encourage us to work with such data to improve teaching and learning. They continuously create opportunities to support us and to provide resources to make it possible for this to happen.*

Similar sentiments were also echoed by Mrs Zanele, an educator from Zibonele High School. This is what she had to say:

> *The SMT have strong knowledge and skills around using technology. They capture data, interpreting it, transforming it into information in the form of graphs, as knowledge which is shared with teachers and used to stimulate discussions leading to decision making. The HODs also use data to engage teachers at a level of subject or phase teams to monitor learning progress and to support each other to improve teaching and learning. Data is also used to guide the school management team in making decisions regarding necessary innovations to improve school effectiveness.*

In the same vein, Mr Ndanda, an educator from Ndali Secondary School had this to say:

> *We use data to make class lists, to evaluate which students needed remediation, and how we could ensure that students were getting what they needed. We look at data from various assessments to see where the learning gaps are.*

Miss Petronella, an educator from Phatha Secondary School had a different view pointing out that the school leadership used test data to criticise and blame them rather than use it as a way to identify constructive strategies to improve teaching and learning. This is what he said:

> *In many instances, data is used as mechanism for criticism and blame, rather than a way to identify and come up with constructive strategies for school improvement and improve learning. You are just good when your learners pass and bad when they fail, that's the only interpretation. They do not engage with the figures, root causes for such failures.*

Information from the reviewed documents at Lwandle and Zibonele Secondary Schools provided evidence that the SMTs in these schools were striving to engage with data to inform

them about educational changes necessary to improve teaching practices in their schools. Such information about different aspects of the schools were readily available and were captured in the office computers. Some of the information produced from captured data was presented in the form of graphs and was used to generate discussions with the teaching staff. Notice boards had school data ranging from school statistics, school profiles and school curriculum management plans, time tables, examination results, LTSM, and different committees displayed. The SMT and staff met regularly to analyse and discuss assessment data.

The use of multiple sources of data by schools to improve teaching and learning is supported by literature. For instance, the Wallace Foundation (2012) found that well managed data and processes that foster school improvement was central to effective school leadership. Deike (2009) concluded that principals who worked collaboratively and who set clear structures for using data were more likely to lead successful data initiatives. Successful teachers drew upon multiple sources of data about student learning, and they understood how best to use this information to improve instruction. Furthermore, Botha (2015) contends that use of data informs and enables school leadership to make evidence-based decisions for school improvement. Mandinach and Gunner (2012) also support the view that dealing with daily information and using the broad array of tools to search and organise information, to analyse results, and to communicate and integrate the results were crucial leadership practices to improve school effectiveness.

Findings from this theme indicate that some principals were knowledgeable about and were committed to using data and shared strong vision for its use to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning practices. The use of assessment data enabled these schools to measure success in learning, and enabled them to reflect on their instructional roles. Data was also used to make schools accountable, and enabled school leadership to explore and formulate innovative ways to improve school effectiveness.

7.3.7 Protecting instructional time

There were different views about the use of instructional time. There were principals who ensured that instructional time was not interrupted. The reasons put forward was that if the schools were to succeed in their mission, they required that the teachers and the learners focused most of their time and energies on teaching and learning. This would prevent

unnecessary interruptions which tend to waste instructional time. Contrary to this practice, it would appear that some principals were struggling to ensure that instructional time was used efficiently and effectively. There were a number of non-educational activities which were allowed during teaching and learning time. To this end, Mr Thabo, an educator from Battery made the following comment:

> *There is a lot of instructional time that we lose from activities that are outside teaching and learning. They are important though as we cannot ignore them.*

There were many instances at Phatha Secondary School where the learners were not being taught during teaching and learning times. Mr Thabo alluded to the view that it was sometimes difficult to ensure that the teachers were always in the classes teaching because of various activities like workshops and cluster meetings that teachers had to attend. This is what he said:

> *Yeah, teacher absenteeism impacts on the effective utilisation of teaching time. Teachers who are left in the school are not able to cover for those teachers because they are themselves overloaded. We do not seem to have a strategy for this.*

Mr Ndlela, an educator from Lwandle Secondary School indicated that there were efforts and strategies that were done to protect instructional time. He mentioned that his principal worked collaboratively with his SMT, Master and Senior educators, as well as, with the RCL, to maintain order in the school. This helped prevent unnecessary interruptions which had the potential to waste instructional time.

> *The principal uses the SMT, Master teachers, Senior teachers, Grade Coordinators and RCL to protect instructional time by ensuring that there is always a teacher in the class teaching and learners are not roaming around. The principal, I would say, minimises things that interrupt teaching and learning although some of the things are beyond his control. For example yesterday we had to leave early as there was no water in the school.*

Mr Ndanda, an educator from Ndali Secondary School emphasised that his principals was very firm about time on task. While acknowledging that there would be some disturbances from time to time, the principal was known for his firm position on adherence to year plan and avoiding unnecessary interruptions of the programme. He even encouraged the educators to hold extra classes in the mornings, afternoons, Saturdays and on holidays to ensure that the curriculum was completed. He acknowledges that deprived learners got minimal or no support

at all outside the school and so the best thing was for the school to maximise as far as possible contact time with the teachers. To this end, he said:

> *The principal does not compromise on instructional time. Interruptions; yes we cannot stop them from time to time but they try by all means to minimise them. We have got a year plan and everything must fit in its place. He makes sure that we fulfil our obligations of being at school and in classes on time for the sake of all learners especially those who do not get any other support from home. He also encourages us to have extra- classes to close gaps.*

It is advocated by some scholars that the principals as instructional leaders, should work collaboratively with their SMTs and the educators to protect instructional time from various interruptions and effectively use time allocated for instruction. For example, Blase and Kirby (2000, p.75) asserted that "effective principals understand that the key to improving their schools' effectiveness lies not with persons skilled in compliance with bureaucratic rules and procedures or in discussions about those rules, but in effective use of time allocated for instruction." The finding in this study indicated that in the schools where the principals were minimised interruptions and maximised effective use of instructional time had higher rates of learners succeeding in their National examinations. This does not exclude other factors that contribute to learner success.

7.3.8 Recognising and rewarding good performance

Participating school principals were in agreement that they recognised and rewarded good performance by both the educators and the learners. They believed that this helped to motivate the educators and the learners to perform better. In other words, recognising and rewarding good performance served as a tool to motivate those who were performing well and those that were not performing well, thus persuading them to improve their performance. Various methods were given as means to motivate learners. For example, Mr Ndanda, an educator from Ndali Secondary School had this to say:

> *We have got a rewarding kind of a set up for top learners where they are called in front and given tokens to uplift their spirit and motivate learners that are a little bit lazy. We also display trophies and certificates of achievements in the foyer and offices to inspire others. Educators also get incentives for their achievements. It is not meant to shame those who do not perform well but to encourage them.*

Mrs Zanele, an educator from Zibonele Secondary School shared similar view that their principal was passionate about recognising and rewarding good performance. Similar to what they were doing at Ndali Secondary School, they were displaying trophies and certificates of achievements in the foyer which they regarded as their sacred place. They were also receiving vouchers from the local mall that were used as gifts for achievers in different categories. This was done to motivate the educators and the learners to do more. This is what she had to say:

> *Our foyer is our sacred area as the principal would always call it.* We *display trophies and certificates to show that we value our achievements. It's inspirational. I am sure he took you to the foyer to explain items that are there. It's his pride and that of the school. It is rearranged quarterly and he will talk about it for ages in the assemblies. Through networking with the management of the local mall, a number of shops donate vouchers for the school that are also used as prizes for achievements in different categories.*

Educators from Battery and Lwandle Secondary Schools shared similar views that their principals recognised and rewarded good performance by both the learners and the educators as illustrated by the following excerpt from the interview:

> *The principal praises those who produce good results. He believes that good performance has to be recognised and made public so as to encourage good performance and instil that attitude to others as well* (Mr Ndlela, Educator from Lwandle Secondary School).

Whilst acknowledging that the principal recognised and rewarded good performance, Miss Amahle, had a different view about how the principal should motivate learners as she did not believe in incentives. She emphasised intrinsic motivation rather than extrinsic motivation. This is what she said:

> *The principal motivates educators and learners to perform more. He acknowledges good performance. I do not believe in incentives but in inculcating the culture of discipline. Learners should not work because they expect to be paid for their work. We need to inculcate a culture of working whether there are incentives or not. It is motivation all the way rather than giving them incentives. Probably what can replace incentives is acknowledgement of good performance. This can be done by for example, naming the class with that particular learner* (Miss Amahle, Educator from Amadada Secondary School).

The display of trophies and certificates of achievements were observed in almost all the research sites. There were variations in how each school displayed these trophies and certificates of achievements depending on the spaces they had and the value they attached to it. These were mostly in the principals' offices. At Ndali and Zibonele they had these displays also in their foyers. Below are pictures of these displays that were taken at Ndali and Zibonele respectively.

Figure 13: Pictures showing displays of trophies and certificates of achievements at Ndali and Zibonele Secondary Schools respectively

The finding that the principals as instructional leaders recognised and rewarded good performance is in line with the finding of Sim (2011) which showed that successful principals identified and incentivised outstanding educators and students. This was done to motivate them to do more and to encourage others to do likewise.

7.4 Conclusion

In this chapter I presented data generated from Post-Level 1 educators on how they perceived their principals were doing in terms of their roles as instructional leaders. In some cases, their views corroborated what was uttered by their respective principals and in other cases they refuted their principals' perspectives. This was important to me as a researcher because it enabled me to draw patterns of what was really happening in the field. This is not to say that I was searching for the truth and that the truth could only come from any particular category of participants. However, by obtaining different perspectives from different participants, even from the same organisations gave me a better perspective which otherwise, could have been missed.

From the educator participants, I developed and discussed the following practices: Developing and working towards realisation of school vision; Creating space for the stakeholders to participate in school matters; Dialoguing with the teachers to promote reflective practice; Ensuring that the educators attend professional development workshops despite challenges; Direct and indirect involvement in the monitoring of educators' work; Monitoring and use of test data; Protecting instructional time; and Recognising and rewarding good performance. I used this data to map out patterns with the data from principals and HODs. In the next chapter, I present these patterns.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

MAPPING EMERGING PATTERNS FROM THE DATA

8.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters presented descriptively data on the perspectives of the participants on how they understood instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations and also on the dominant leadership practices enacted by the principals in these schools. This chapter moves on to making analysis of the findings by drawing patterns from the findings and relate them to the literature and theoretical frameworks that were presented in Chapter Two and Three respectively in this thesis. I start by outlining the patterns depicting similarities as well as differences among research sites and in the participating principals. I them move to discuss similarities and differences in the participants' definitions and understandings of instructional leadership. Emerging patterns on how the secondary school principals enacted instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations are then discussed. The chapter concludes by discussing the emerging nature of instructional leadership practiced by principals in multiple deprived contexts.

8.2 Similarities and differences in the schools

There are similarities and differences that are prevalent amongst the studied schools. As Budge (2005, p.3) suggests, "peculiarities of the local contexts … must be understood", I also felt that it was necessary to outline these similarities and differences in the schools in order to illuminate how the participants made meanings of their local contexts and enacted instructional leadership the way they did.

There were six sampled schools for this study. Three schools were located in deep rural communities with homesteads largely made of mud houses and wood. These schools shared inadequacies in terms of proper infrastructure, classrooms, and toilets. Battery Secondary School had only eight classrooms. In one of these classes, steel cabinets and book shelves were used to partition the class into principal's office, staffroom and a storage place. Phatha and Amadada Secondary Schools had buildings structured in a similar way. There were two long buildings each with six classrooms that were parallel and facing each other. The smaller

buildings that contained the principals' offices and staffrooms were located adjacent to the longer buildings forming U-shaped structures. The condition of buildings in these rural schools was poor and was characterised by broken windows and doors. The building condition at Amadada Secondary School was better compared to the other two schools since it was recently renovated. Table 4 below depicts the building profiles of the three rural schools.

	Phatha Sec. School	**Battery Sec. School**	**Amadada Sec. School**
Buildings conditions	Poor	Poor	adequate
Number of classes	12	8	12
Science laboratory	0	0	1 fully equipped science laboratory
Computer laboratory	+/- 13 computers in the staffroom, some not working	Mobile kit with 20 laptops	Class with 24 computers, some not working
Library	0	0	Used as storage
Toilets	Inadequate pit toilets with broken doors	Pit toilets with broken doors	Pit toilets for learners; Flushing toilets for educators

Table 4: Profiling school buildings in rural schools

Amadada Secondary School also had a fully equipped science laboratory that was sponsored by a company from abroad. Some of the materials were still sealed in the boxes indicating that the laboratory was not fully utilised. There was also a classroom with 24 computers, some of which did not seem to be functional at Amadada Secondary School. There were about 13 computers that were catching dust in the staffroom at Phatha Secondary School. Educators did not show any interest in them claiming that they were old and many were not functional. Battery Secondary School had recently received mobile computer kit with 20 laptops. They had trouble though in the use and safekeeping of these laptops owing to frequent burglary that the school experienced. One could sense that the handling and the use of the equipment in these three rural schools were not adequate. Capacity and time constraints were cited as limiting factors for the adequate use of resources. This sounded arbitrary for me as instructional leaders are expected to ensure that staff members are capacitated so that teaching and learning resources could be effectively and efficiently utilised to enhance quality education for the deprived learners.

All the schools had electricity supply and all the classes had electricity connections. At Phatha and Battery Secondary Schools, some classes had live electric wires ripped open and were posing danger to the learners and other users. The participants from these schools said that there were some thugs from outside and within these schools who were constantly vandalising and stealing from the schools. I asked the principals about the potential danger of live wires to the learners and other users. It was shocking to learn that they acknowledged the potential dangers of these live wires but were adamant that they would take corrective measures and repairs, saying that it was draining on their minimal financial resources. They claimed that repairs were done but did not last as thugs were constantly vandalising the school. This suggests that there were serious safety and security challenges that were continually troubling these schools and principals seemed to have no control over them. These acts were depriving learners to learn in a safe and conducive environment.

All the three rural schools had municipal piped water in their premises but only Amadada Secondary School had flushable toilets for the educators and visitors. However, the learners were using pit toilets that were recently built and these were adequate. Phatha and Battery Secondary Schools had pit toilets for both the educators and the learners. Toilets used by the learners were inadequate, smelly and had broken doors. Figure 14 below shows broken doors in the toilets at Battery Secondary School. Participants in these schools said that the toilets in the schools were more decent than the ones found in the majority of the learners' homesteads. Some learners were observed in and around these toilets staying for longer periods during breaks and sometimes when bunking classes, suggesting that the conditions of the toilets were not a deterrent to them. The justification by the participants and the non-action to rectify these conditions suggested anomaly in the meanings and interpretations of decent, in this case decent toilets. The beauty of interpretivist paradigm underpinning this study is that it acknowledges the multiplicity of meanings in one place and in one time which could be different from what goes on in different places and times. Participants were making sense of their local contexts and were acting accordingly.

Figure 14: Picture of toilet building at Battery Secondary School showing broken doors

Enrolment levels of leaners in rural schools were lower than in the schools in the townships. In rural areas, houses were sparsely located over larger areas and that has implications for lower learner populations than in equivalent spaces in townships. Table 5 below indicates learner enrolment levels for the past three years in each of the three rural schools. Whilst enrolment levels showed a steady increase at Amadada and Battery Secondary schools, the opposite was seen at Phatha Secondary School in the same period. The principal of Phatha Secondary School explained that he was observing over the years more and more families migrating to informal settlements in urban areas. He was reluctant to support the move of people to informal settlements in urban areas, noting the difficulties that people were facing in those areas.

Leaner enrolment			
Period	**Phatha Sec. School**	**Battery Sec. School**	**Amadada Sec. School**
2015	321	259	361
2014	334	241	353
2013	372	238	344

Table 5: Learner enrolment levels in the three rural schools in the past three years

The principals of these three rural schools reported that about 90% of their learners faced multiple forms of deprivations. The living environments around rural schools were disconcerting. The geographic terrains made access to different amenities difficult. The gravel roads were poorly maintained. Some learners had to walk longer distances from the valleys to the main roads where they could get learner transport services. Learners at Battery Secondary School did not enjoy learner transport services because their homes were scattered around the valleys which were inaccessible by roads (see Figure 15 below). Piped water was only along

the main roads. Whilst schools had electricity, homesteads did not have electricity connections. A number of hours which could be used for school work were spent by most female learners fetching water and firewood. The lack of electricity connections in these communities further alienated them from global awareness and knowledge. Very few learners were able to access computers and television sets at home. Cellular phones were used sparingly, mostly for emergencies as it was hard to get them charged. The participants in rural schools shared similar sentiments that the combined effects of these factors were disadvantaging their learners and were impacting on their instructional practices.

Figure 15: Picture taken around Battery Secondary School showing valleys and sparsely located homesteads

Education and literacy levels of many adult people in these communities surrounding the participating rural schools were reported to be low. The participants highlighted that a larger population of the learners living with family members who did not have secondary school qualifications. It was discussed in Chapter Two that the levels of education that individuals have achieved determine both current income and future opportunities for their dependents. With the majority of adults in the surrounding communities of these schools having lower levels of education, there were signs of inadequate financial resources, material possessions, lifestyle, and support networks deemed necessary for learners to prosper in their education. In all the three schools, participants reported that parents, in varying degrees, were not giving adequate support to the learners and the schools. I observed that school uniforms of some of the learners were signalling poverty. There were learners in these three schools who were solely dependent on the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). Drawing from the NSNP food provisions, some educators organised food parcels for these learners to take home.

The employment rate of adults in these areas was low, resulting in a number of homesteads dependent on social grants. The few parents that were employed worked in the farms and or in the city, leaving their children with extended family members whilst others were left alone. There was a general agreement among the participants that this had negative implication on learners as they did not get adequate support from home, enjoyed perhaps by learners who stayed with both parents. There were very few homesteads around these schools that were well built, with parents working in decent jobs. The common trend was that these families were sending their children to urban schools and were hardly integrating with their local peers.

Some parents were reported to be shy to come to schools or to help their children with school work because they themselves were dropouts from these schools. On the other hand, Mrs Batty, the Principal of Battery Secondary School said that her school embraced a number of individuals or groups of individuals from the local community who would come to school for enlightenment and assistance on various issues owing to their lower levels of education. For them, the school was a powerhouse of wisdom and they confided in the educators on various issues such as higher education for their children and for themselves, health, deaths, estates and many more. Through collaborative networks that the school had created with other professionals, the school was able to support the local community and built trusting relationships. School-community partnership was also evident at Phatha Secondary School. There seemed to be lower levels of such partnership at Amadada Secondary School.

All the participants in rural schools in one way or the other alluded to the fact that there was inadequate support received from Department of Education officials, and such inadequacy was largely due to distance, poor roads and alienation. Some officials demanded that the principals and/or the educators should go to the district offices or to the schools near the main roads to get information instead of them going to these schools. Combined with poor transportation, absenteeism due to meetings was rife, especially at Phatha Secondary School. Educators did not come to school if there were cluster meetings or developmental workshops due to distance and transport problems. Similar patterns were observed at Battery Secondary School. The implication was that the learners were frequently left without educators in some classes, depriving them quality instructional time.

The three rural schools were participants of the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP), receiving daily meals for each learner. This was one of the strategies used by the DoBE aimed

at motivating deprived learners to attend schools regularly by providing these learners with daily meals. It was envisioned that this programme would contribute to the improved learner attendance and that hunger could not be an impediment to learning. The participants also confirmed that since the introduction of NSNP in the secondary schools, learner attendance and concentration had improved for some learners. A concern was raised at Phatha and Amadada Secondary Schools that some learners came to school for food and then bunked classes after meals. In both these schools I observed learners who were wandering around the toilets and outside the school premises during teaching and learning times. I offered and gave a lift to three learners from Phatha Secondary who were walking away from school during teaching and learning times. That episode posed an ethical dilemma for me. I asked myself a question whether I should give them a lift, and thus contribute towards more learners leaving schools prematurely or whether I should help them and lesson the burden of travelling long distances home. I had to make a decision soon; I opted for the latter; I thought that if I gave them a lift, I may get an opportunity of getting some explanations about their behaviours.

After I had stopped and gave them a lift, I informed them that as much as I was giving them a lift, I might also be committing a crime and therefore I was not completely satisfied with what I was doing. I then asked them why they were leaving school at that time of the day. They were unanimous in their response, saying that a number of educators were absent from school and they were not being taught. Whilst soliciting views from the learners was not part of the research design, I viewed it as serendipitous to the study findings. I had indeed observed during my visits to this school that on a number of occasions, some classes were left unattended by the educators and the situation would be chaotic for the most part of the day. Some learners would be loitering around the toilets and some were seen leaving the school during teaching and learning times. Similar patterns were observed in the other schools but the intensity and frequency were lower than at Phatha Secondary School. Whilst the principal was seen marching around the school trying to maintain order, I argue that these were some elements of inadequacies on the side of the leadership more than challenges of leading in multiple deprived schools. In short, I have some doubts about the view that such chaotic scenarios could be attributed to the socio-economic situation of the communities in which the schools were located. My view was that such experiences were directly related to the kind of leadership that prevailed in the schools.

Township schools were also not immune from the challenges encountered in the rural settings or deprivations found in rural areas. The proximity and accessibility of the schools in the townships made them accessible to the learners from various backgrounds, thus resulting in the integration of diverse types of learners. Lwandle Secondary School was located in a small township, surrounded by informal settlements in the eastern side of the school and a rural area in the west side of the school. There were a lot of big houses in the rural side near the township. Most of the learners walked from all these areas to Lwandle Secondary School. As such, this school had a whole mix of learners from the rich and the poor families; learners from township, informal settlement and rural areas; learners with well-educated parents and those with low levels of education.

Similarly, Zibonele and Ndali Secondary Schools had the whole mix of the learners. These schools were located in a big township which catered for various economic classes of people. There were a lot of congested low cost houses provided by the government and also, there were lots of informal dwellings commonly known as *imijondolo* around the schools, patching every piece of land that was left vacant when the township was originally built. The areas around these schools were densely populated. In describing the area around her school, Miss Anele, an HOD at Zibonele Secondary School said the area was;

> *Very busy and life is fast. There is lot of everything: lot of people, lot of cars, lot of noise, lot of pollution, lot of drugs, alcohol and sex abuse.*

The schools were accessible by various modes of transport and hence learners came from all over the places. The enrolment levels of learners (see Table 6 below) were more than triple those from rural schools participating in this study. Learner enrolment levels were averaging 1100 in the past three years in these schools with post provisioning norms (PPN) of 44 at Ndali and 40 at Zibonele and Lwandle Secondary Schools. Evidently, there was huge difference between learner enrolment for those schools that were located in rural areas and those that were located in the township. Similarly, the number of the teachers differed widely between the two categories of schools. In each of these schools, the school management teams comprised the principal, two deputy principals and five HODs.

Year	Ndali Sec. School	Zibonele Sec. School	Lwandle Sec. School
2015	1341	1186	1027
2014	1238	1204	993
2013	1257	1290	1144
PPN	44	40	40

Table 6: Enrolment levels in the three township schools in the past three years

The township schools boasted about having well-built, big schools with classrooms in excess of 24 and additional classrooms specially the modified ones and equipped for various subjects. The conditions of the school buildings were good except at Lwandle Secondary School where signs of vandalism were evident. Toilets were adequate and well maintained except again for Lwandle Secondary School where some water pipes and taps had been stolen. The principal said this was an ongoing problem.

Unlike in rural schools, township schools had similar, well-built administration buildings with various offices and staff rooms. They all had trophies and certificates of achievements displayed in their foyers setting scenic, welcoming and invitational environment for everyone who entered the school. In a similar pattern, big banners of schools' vision and mission statements were also displayed in the foyers. Smaller items were displayed in the principals' offices. Mr Banele, the Principal of Zibonele said that the foyer was their temple which must reflect their vision and quest for success. This is what he had to say:

> *It (*the foyer*) is our msamu* (sacred area) *where we display our achievements and pray for future successes. When learners enter the foyer, they are inspired to do more. They say their prayers to want to be like their successful predecessors. I tell learners to continually look and read and respect what is displayed in the foyer. That applies to educators as well. That's my strategy for success.*

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mr Ndawo, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School who said "*The foyer is our face. It reflects who we are and what we want to achieve."* The pictures taken at Zibonele and Ndali Secondary schools respectively (see Fig. 13, p.151) illustrate the commonalities in how the two schools displayed their trophies and certificates of achievements.

All the schools were fenced and had security guards at the gates who controlled the incoming and outgoing vehicles and persons. The efficiency of these practices was sometime questionable because there were instances where the gates were left open and unattended. At Zibonele and Lwandle Secondary Schools, there were big holes in the fence, allegedly made and used by the learners to enter into the school when they were late and play truant. The principals said that attempts were made to close them but *culprits* continued to open them. Thugs were reported to be gaining access through these *holes* to sell drugs and rob the learners and the teachers of their valuable items. This was amongst the highlighted major safety and security threats in these schools.

The three township schools did not participate in the National School Nutrition Programme (NSNP). There was a school tuck-shop at Zibonele Secondary School and the learners were not allowed to go outside the school premises during school hours. At Lwandle and Ndali Secondary Schools, the learners scattered outside the schools to buy food or eat in their nearby homes during breaks. Whilst this seemed strange and adding to safety and security risks, the principals of these schools said that they could not do otherwise to cater for over a thousand of hungry learners who often did not carry lunch packs or tuck money for various reasons, including poverty. The participants in these schools echoed one another's views with regards to major challenge which exposed the learners to various safety and security risks. The utterances of Miss Zanele, a PL1 Educator at Lwandle Secondary School capture and illustrate some of these security and safety issues. This is what she had to say:

> *This movement of learners during breaks is problematic. Learners go out to drink alcohol and smoke/take drugs. They even go and have sex during this time. There is a case where a Grade 10 boy went out and allegedly killed a woman during break and then came back to school. When the police were investigating this matter, it was discovered that the boy was marked present at school in the morning and in the afternoon. The boy was indeed present at school when I marked the register.*

Some means were made for some 'lucky learners' who were identified by individual educators, who then 'supported' them. The support came out of love and sacrifices of certain individuals. The three principals supported and encouraged these and other initiatives that tried to support the needy students. Even though there was poverty in the communities surrounding township schools, the fact that there was better support and infrastructure and a better chance of obtaining

assistance (in the form of social and health services) differentiated township schools from rural schools.

Battery Secondary School, the rural school headed by a female principal, had a higher learner pass percentage rates in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations compared to other schools in this study (see Table 8.4 below). The results at Phatha Secondary School were dismally low in the past two years. The average pass percentages at Phatha and Amadada Secondary Schools were below 50%. The implication for this is that about half of the learners who sat for the NSC examinations in these two schools failed. One would argue that these schools were not doing enough to turn the wheel of multiple deprivations in these areas as the levels of education that individuals have achieved determine both the current income and the future opportunities for their dependents (Bhorat, *et al*., 2004). Township schools, though not excellent, were doing much better.

NSC Pass rate %age	**Rural schools**			**Township schools**		
	Phatha	**Battery**	**Amadada**	**Ndali**	**Zibonele**	**Lwandle**
2015	17	96	56	74	72	63
2014	24	82	53	60	77	81
2013	88	94	54	79	81	90
2012	52	67	53	56	76	68

Table 7: National Senior Certificate pass rate for the past four years of the participating schools

The table above (Table 7) shows that the results in these schools were fluctuating. When the principals were asked about this, Mr Dlaba, the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School said "*iminyaka kayifani"* (years are different); somehow suggesting that they did not have a concrete recipe to ensure improved and consistent rate of learner outcomes. Similarly, other participants mentioned varying degrees of constraints and opportunities existing in their schools and in their environments. Personal characteristics of the principals were also at play in shaping learner outcomes. Below I discuss similarities and differences in the principals to illuminate emerging personal characteristics that were thought to be impacting on their instructional leadership practices.

8.3 Similarities and differences in the participating principals

There were notable similarities and differences in the participating principals that emerged from analysing data. For instance, Mrs Batty, the Principal of Battery Secondary School was the only female participant principal with the rest of the other principals being males. The principals were in their early 50s in terms of age except for Mr Armando and Mr Ndawo who were in their late 30s. Mr Armando was the youngest principal with the least number of years as a teacher and mere three years as a principal followed by Mr Ndawo and Mr Banele who, respectively had 5 years and 6 years experiences as principals. Table 8 below depicts the gender, age, teaching experiences and experiences as principals of the six participating principals.

	RURAL SCHOOLS			**TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS**		
	Phatha Mr Patrick	**Battery Mrs Batty**	**Amadada Mr Armando**	**Ndali Mr Ndawo**	**Zibonele Mr Banele**	**Lwandle Mr Dlaba**
Gender	M	F	M	M	M	M
Age	53	51	36	38	47	49
Teaching experience	28	28	10	16	19	26
Experience as principal	15	14	3	5	6	17

Table 8: Gender, Age, Teaching experience and experiences as principals of the participating principals

There were similarities in the findings that seemed to suggest that the principals were strategic, visionary and innovative in their own contexts. Their job entailed constant encounters with technical and adaptive challenges that required them to be strategic and willing to take calculated risks and opportunities in order to have positive impact on instructional practices. When there were struggles for safety and security, they had to find ways and means to re-orientate focus to teaching and learning; when self-esteem and confidence were low, found ways of inspiring people and made them want to do more; when there was loss of hope, they showed humility, empathy and caring behaviours; when solutions were not obvious, they challenged existing ways of thinking and generated new ideas.

To illustrate innovations and creativity, Mr Ndawo, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School, initiated means to demystify taboo around menstruation to restore dignity of teenage girls who would be humiliated by the act of nature. Mr Ndawo said that he championed for school to budget and buy sanitary pads for needy girls to enable them to come to school with dignity. Furthermore, he encouraged the educators and the learners to talk openly about menstruation to de-stigmatise it. The cited value for this initiative was that girl learners had developed self-esteem and reduced absenteeism.

Whilst Mr Ndawo was initiating and encouraging support for deprived learners, he was firm in averting labelling of learners as deprived. He wanted the learners to be treated as equals within school gates. He argued that it was easy to be derailed from the core business of the school (teaching and learning) when the school started to focus on the social ills in the communities that they would not be able to alleviate. His efforts were more directed on learners within the school gates learning. He said that teaching and learning time should not be wasted for work of other government departments. The excerpt below, discussed in Chapter Five, captures his position on this issue:

> *… That is why I maintain that inside the school gate are learners who must be taught and who must learn. I do not have orphans, drug addicts, deprived children but learners. Outside the school gate, they are multiple deprived children* (Mr Ndawo, Principal of Ndali Secondary School).

Echoing this position was Mr Banele, the Principal of Zibonele Secondary School who maintained that there were other departments that were responsible for social ills in the communities and that their focus was on teaching and learning. This is how he put it:

> *When Angie (Minister of education) announces results, she counts 'learners' and not orphans; abused children; deprived children, and so forth; she does this because she leads the Department of Basic education and not the other departments* (Mr Banele, Principal of Zibonele Secondary School).

The preceding discussion suggests that the two principals were firm in their positions and focus on teaching and learning. The other principals were somehow spent substantial amount of time, effort and energy (physical and financial) on issues pertaining to deprivations. There was a

continuous struggle to re-orientate school focus on teaching and learning. Embracing collaborative work with other professionals, social and economic partners was in varying degrees sought.

It is emerging that most principals were able to inspire others to follow them and to work towards common vision to achieve desired results. This was done by galvanising teamwork and distributing leadership amongst team members. There were different committees in all the schools which supported the functioning of the schools. Common amongst the principals was the belief that teamwork made the people want to work rather than tell them to do work. Their responsibilities were to identify capability needs of their team members and promote team development rather than self-development. They supported collaborative work and team efforts believed to be important for effective teaching and learning. Further details and evidence of collaborative work are presented in **Section 8.4** below.

The principals believed in building meaningful relationships with others. They viewed inter-connectedness, caring attitudes, empathy, willingness and readiness to sacrifice their time and other resources as important, and it characterised the six principals in this study. The principals demonstrated interest in the teachers' and the learners' personal lives. The principals were seen to be going extra miles and beyond the call of duty to assist the deprived learners and families on issues of education, health and social welfare. This was more prominent in the rural schools than in the township schools, possibly because of smaller numbers of staff members and the learners. Remoteness of rural areas made accessibility to social welfare and healthcare services a challenge to the learners and the surrounding communities. It was the willingness and readiness of the school principals to open their doors to work with these deprived communities that intensified interconnectedness. Personal attributes discussed above were seen to be mediating the way principals conceptualised their roles as instructional leaders in the schools. I discuss the similarities and differences of these conceptualisations below.

8.4 Similarities and differences in the definitions and understandings of instructional leadership

Evident from the findings of this study is that the understandings of instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations varied from one participant to the next. Such differences

could be attributed to their beliefs, values, knowledge and experiences (Hallinger, 2011). Nonetheless, there were also some similarities that were drawn from the participants' unique perspectives. As it was explained in Chapter Four, this qualitative research was concerned with in-depth meanings that the participants generated and there was a focus on the uniqueness of the participants' perspectives on how they made sense of the phenomenon in their contexts (Cohen, *et al*., 2011; Creswell, 2014). The analysis of the findings generated three subthemes that can be used to capture the similarities and differences in the manner in which the participants from all six schools in this study made sense of instructional leadership as a phenomenon in their contexts. The three sub-themes can be termed as (1) Instructional leadership as a collaborative process; (2) Instructional leadership as a complex and socially constructed phenomenon and lastly; (3) Instructional leadership as a complex, nonlinear and multidimensional process. In all of these sub-themes, the common threads were the principals' direct and indirect influences and interactions with dynamic, challenging school contexts with the aim of ensuring that teaching and learning took place and ultimately that learner outcomes were achieved. Below I discuss in details these emerging sub-themes.

8.4.1 Instructional leadership as a collaborative process

The recurring theme that emerged prominently from this study and which corroborate the existing literature was that instructional leadership was understood as a collaborative process. A collaborative culture in the six schools was more preferred than individualism which is characterised by uncertainty and lack of shared instructional practices. The participants acknowledged that the principals could not be experts on everything and therefore, they relied on the broad base of various other people to provide additional support and expertise. This view was dominant in all the six schools studied but varied in the manner in which it was practised. Predominantly, the principals as instructional leaders were viewed as responsible for creating meaningful collaborative cultures. The most common objective for collaborative cultures evident in all the participating schools was the belief that the principals encouraged collective interactions about how to provide and promote effective teaching and learning for all the learners. For example, Mr Armando, the Principal of Amadada Secondary School, clearly articulated this belief when he said *"the muscles of others assist in pulling together resources that target student success."* How, when and why these "muscles" were used emerged to be a complex and context embedded process, very much dependent on the

individuals' beliefs, values, knowledge and experiences (Hallinger, 2011). These variables account for the variances in how the collaborative culture was understood and created in the six schools that participated in this study.

The evidence of how these variables (individuals' beliefs; values; knowledge and experiences) appeared to mediate the participants' understandings of instructional leadership as a collaborative process was observed from the terms that were used by the participants to describe this phenomenon. For example, Mr Patrick, the Principal of Phatha Secondary School used his music experience to metaphorically describe the principal as a *"conductor*" directing and coordinating *"harmonic activities"* of educators, parents, learners and other bodies aimed at ensuring that the learners could learn and succeed. Harmonic activity was indicative of his belief and value for continuous collaborative culture aimed at achieving the desired outcome. On the other hand, Mr Dlaba, the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School took an authoritative stance as "*Commander in Chief*." Similarly, Mr Armando, the Principal of Amadada Secondary School used the concept of "*coercing",* signalling an authoritative position he took in getting "*the muscles of others"* to pull together towards student success. The *"others",* had themselves different characters, beliefs, values, knowledge and experiences. Bringing them to work collaboratively and collegially required principals as instructional leaders to use their mental models (Senge, 1997) to *"make sense of the various situations*" as acclaimed by Miss Petronella, an educator from Phatha Secondary School.

Viewed from Adaptive leadership theory, the principals in this study, based on their beliefs, values, knowledge and experiences, de-emphasised the notion of hierarchies and silos. They engaged various stakeholders at different organisational levels in a collaborative manner. This is captured clearly by the utterances of Mr Banele, the Principal of Zibonele Secondary School who said:

> *I discourage working in silos. Schools are public spaces and all stakeholders must have voices in tackling challenges and shaping practice.*

Drawing from the descriptions made by the proponents of Adaptive leadership (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009), I can say that the school principals in the current study were mobilising talents from different people to tackle tough challenges with the hope of not just surviving but thriving in their contexts. They were systematically influencing and engaged in collaborative interactions that were believed to be the glue that keep various stakeholders together. Furthermore, it was believed that if these stakeholders were kept

together, that would ensure that effective teaching and learning would occur. They acted in a manner that made it possible to deal with competing demands from different stakeholders. This included the principals observing different stakeholders and getting to understand their different capabilities so that meaningful collaborative structures capable of dealing with multiple demands of educating learners in a multiple deprived context could be created.

The focus and purpose of working collaboratively was on flattening the organisation and hence empowering the people involved (Felin & Powell, 2016). Post-Level One educators affirmed that they felt empowered when they were involved in shaping the direction of various activities of the school. Leadership involves empowering others to achieve the goals of the organisation (Leithwood, *et al*., 2007). The HODs from Battery, Amadada and Ndali Secondary Schools felt that continuous collaboration led to the creation of professional learning communities that encouraged collective interactions and provided opportunities for teachers to learn and think together about how to deal with varying contextual issues that impacted on their teaching. For the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School, it increased a climate of accountability as "*teachers were accounting for teaching, parents for parenting and learners learning"*.

It is emerging from the above discussion that instructional leadership in multiple-deprived contexts could be understood as a spectrum of leadership practices that embrace collective and collaborative efforts to face challenges brought by these contexts and to ensure that schools thrive academically. Knowledge and experiences of multiple deprivations at a particular point in time and structural working conditions in schools mediated the form of stakeholder collaboration, as well as the way collegiality was experienced and valued by the people involved.

8.4.2 Instructional leadership as a complex, contextual and socially constructed phenomenon

Another theme that came up prominently in this study was that instructional leadership was viewed as a complex, socially constructed practice by principals in their specific contexts to influence teaching and learning. The majority of the participants alluded to the fact that the principals as instructional leaders acted according to the school context as well as in response to the particular school needs in order to influence the stakeholders to work collaboratively towards achieving the core objectives of the school. Compounded with multiple deprivations,

the practices become complex, socially constructed processes which varied from one setting to the next. This view corroborates with the assertion by Dimmock and Walker (2000) who concluded that the meaning of successful instructional leadership must be seen in relation to the context in which people are located and the values underpinning the school as an institution in society. This view is also shared by Osborn, Hunt and Juach (2002) who argue that leadership and its effectiveness is to a larger extent dependent upon the context.

The participants in the six researched schools described instructional leadership in terms of context-specific factors including the learners' backgrounds, the community type, the schools' cultures, the teachers' experience and competence, financial resources and the school size (Hallinger, 2003; Bloch, 2009). Mr Patrick, the Principal of Phatha Secondary School described instructional leadership as characterised by the fact that *"one must take different school factors into cognizance."* He was alluding to the fact that as an instructional leader, he was dealing with the learners some of whom were heading their families because their parents were themselves school-drop-outs and had been consumed by chronic drunkenness and they always shouted at them. Mr Armando explained instructional leadership in terms of environmental factors that impacted negatively on his instructional leadership role. Similarly, other principals alluded to the whole mix of deprivations which made their work as instructional leaders, complex and context-dependent. Again, the common thread of their variegated construction of instructional leadership in context was the focus on teaching and learning.

The participants further alluded to the plurality of social forces and perspectives that shaped the schools cultures and hence, the nature of instructional leadership in each school. These social forces seemed to be stronger in schools in rural areas than in schools in the township. Evident in this study and also noted by Maringe and Moletsane (2015) was the view that principals in rural areas embraced a stronger tie with their communities and other constituencies, thus sacrificing more of their time and other resources trying to build positive relationships. In some ways, all these activities took the principals away from their core function which is curriculum management. Therefore, the participants from schools located in rural areas highlighted the roles of the principals to include being social workers, home affairs officers, safety and security officers; health personnel, transport providers and pastoral care givers. They seemed to be strongly humanitarian, focussing their attention to physically

assisting and keeping deprived learners at school. Visiting families; attending ceremonies/funerals integrated them with the communities around their schools. While attending to these social activities was a distraction, to them it was part of their leadership life, and therefore, they were integrated into their leadership practices. Therefore, the extent to which the principal was effective or not, did not depend on whether the principal engaged in such activities or not. Maybe I can say that it may have depended on how well the principal was doing these things.

On the other hand, technological sophistication was seen in practices of township school principals where for example, they talked about emailing the parents or phoning for help/services which detached them from physical contact with their communities and other constituencies. Akcaoglus (2013) contend that technology makes it easier for today's principals to effectively fulfil their instructional leadership duties, such as communicating with and providing information or feedback to the educators about instructional matters, finding and reaching outside resources for school improvement. In this context Akcaoglus (2013) propose that the 21st century school principals should encourage the use of technology in order to carry out daily tasks of teaching and learning effectively. The variance in the use of these technologies came as a result of their availability and access in the users (parents). E-mails were not commonly used in rural areas due to WiFi and network availability problems. Cellular phones were used sparingly to save airtime and batteries as some areas did not have electricity. Physical contact was more preferred by the parents who would also want to explain their plights and sought for assistance from educators. These differences seemed to account for the diverse aspects of leadership emphasised by the participants and seemed to support the argument that leadership was embedded in context and hence, they would be constructed differently by people in different contexts.

In line with this emerging theme, other scholars (e.g. Mulford & Silins, 2009; Hallinger & Heck, 2010; Leithwood, *et al*., 2010; Hallinger, 2011) share similar sentiments that instructional leaders in multiple-deprived contexts embrace a more complex leadership role in response to the needs and requirements of the environment within which they work. Hallinger (2005) asserts that contextual factors shape leadership behaviours and therefore leaders ought to be sensitive to their context. For example, it emerged from a number of the participants that different challenges were cropping up each day requiring principals, sometimes not to follow *"known policies"* to ensure that teaching and learning was minimally compromised. Consistent

with Hiefetz's, *et al.* (2009) assertion, the principals in the research schools faced situations that demanded responses outside their current toolkit or repertoire and which could not be closed by expertise and procedures in place at the time. Hence, instructional leadership was seen as a blend of both the art and the craft of dealing with complex, contextual variables of multiple deprivations with the aim of ensuring that effective teaching and learning took place. The ways in which the principals blended these practices demonstrated responsiveness and adaptation to the context in which they worked. Adaptive leadership is ideally suited to drive creative approaches in complex environments (Oftelie, Booth & Wareing, 2012). In line with this argument, Starratt (2004) defines leadership as practices that extend beyond the usual procedural context of organisational management. This understanding seem to be congruent with how the participants in this study described instructional leadership, placing the significance of context and personal attributes in influencing teaching and learning practices. This is a new conception of instructional leadership in the sense that, instead of using the binaries of the focus on teaching and learning on one hand and the focus on other activities on the other hand, this construction of instructional leadership brings the tow dichotomies together.

Emerging in this study is that the principals construct a particular form of action to fit the context or situation. Individual leader's attributes, societal culture, institutional systems, staff and community characteristics, and school as an organisation mediated how they created their reality. This is supported by Hallinger's (2011) model in that reality, whether an issue of attribution to individuals or the conditions found within the situation, is constructed by those embedded in the situation. The implication of the discussion above is that instructional leadership could be properly understood by taking context into account. Furthermore, the importance of instructional leadership as a socially constructed phenomenon suggests that it is a complex phenomenon. This explains the variations and difficulties the participants had in trying to explain the concept of instructional leadership.

8.4.3 Instructional leadership as a complex, nonlinear and multidimensional construct

It emerged from the findings of the current study that instructional leadership in multiple-deprived contexts could be described as a complex, non-linear and multidimensional construct (Fullan, 2008; West-Burnham, 2009; Marishane & Botha, 2011). The participants alluded to the fact that the roles of the principals to ensure that learners were equipped with specific skills

that were particularly relevant for the globalised economy irrespective of the background they came from involved complex, multidimensional leadership practices that were linear and non-linear, structured and unstructured, direct and indirect. The principals were faced with mammoth tasks to redirect focus to teaching and learning when for example the instructional focus was clouded by safety and security issues: learner bush-knifed in the class (Zibonele Secondary School); teachers hijacked of their cars and belongings (Zibonele Secondary School); angry parents insulting the teachers (Phatha and Battery Secondary Schools); about half the number of educators absent from the schools because of transport problem or workshop commitments (Phatha and Amadada Secondary Schools); learners coming to school hungry (all schools); noise pollution (township schools); insufficient teaching and learning resources (all schools); when betrothal system and teenage pregnancies, smoking dagga were tolerated in the society (Amadada Secondary School); when there was no internet connectivity; no electricity; limited access to libraries and relevant information. Figure 16 below depicts the confluence of factors that often derailed school focus from teaching and learning. Often, the principals had to rethink how best to exercise their instructional leadership in their dynamic, complex contexts so as to re-orientate school focus to teaching and learning. They had to facilitate learners' acquisition of skills relevant for the globalised economy effectively and efficiently despite these challenges.

Most principals had a responsibility for several diverse tasks in a typical day or week, and it was often necessary to shift quickly from one type of activity to another. In line with this argument, Mr Ndlela, the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School described the job of the principal as an instructional leader in multiple deprived contexts to be a 24 hour operation, exhausting job involving constant thinking about the school in an attempt to ensure that teaching and learning took place. Display of critical and creative thinking skills, communication skills, global awareness and cross-cultural skills were necessary skills described by the participants for this job. Below I discuss commonalities and differences in the dominant practices of principals in attempting to ensure that teaching and learning took place

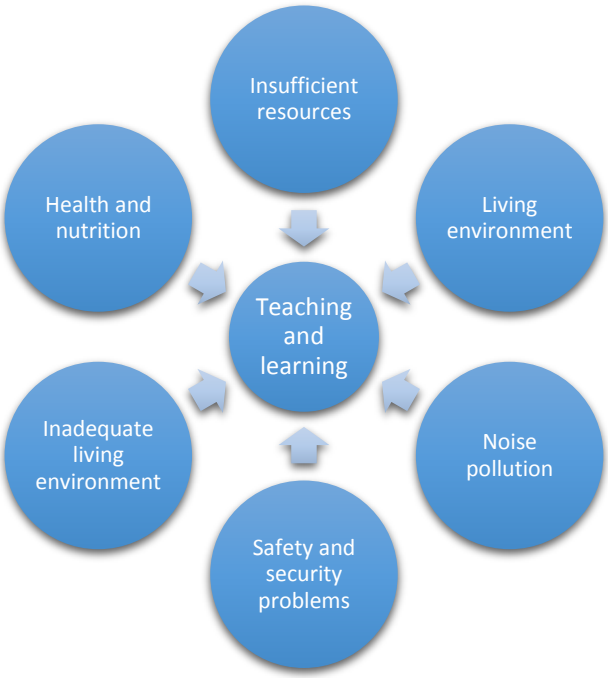

Figure 16: Confluence of factors that principals had to deal with to re-orientate school focus to teaching and learning

8.5 Similarities and differences in the dominant practices of instructional leadership

There seemed to be no one-size-fits-all approach to the practices of instructional leadership. Consequently, the principals were responsive to the contexts in which they were leading. This supports the argument that instructional leadership is a complex, non-linear and multidimensional construct. Nonetheless, as discussed in Chapter Two, there are dominant domains that seem to characterise instructional leadership. In this section, I use these domains to analyse the similarities and differences of the dominant instructional leadership practices of the six principals in the case schools. These domains are vision and goals; instructional management and creating climate hospitable to teaching and learning.

8.5.1 Vision and goals

There was a general agreement from all the schools in this study that the principals as instructional leaders were keeping the visions and the schools' destinations in mind. All the schools were experiencing varying degrees of different challenges brought by multiple deprivations phenomenon. These challenges were constantly derailing schools from focusing on their core business of teaching and learning. With the vision and goals in mind, the principals

had to constantly re-orientate focus to teaching and learning. Covey (2004) affirms that keeping the purpose and the school's destination in mind, leaders are better able to deal with daily challenges.

More so, the participants suggested that their principals were inspiring their staff and other stakeholders to take ownership of the vision by involving them when they were drawn. The beliefs were that the visions owned by the stakeholders were inspiring and eliciting commitment from the stakeholders to face the challenges and thrive. This was easier said than done. Whilst the vision and mission statements were visible in the offices and foyers, some participants, including two principals, could not articulate what their "shared" visions for their schools were. Mr Banele for example, inadvertently disclosed that he was not part of drawing the vision and mission statements that were hanging in his office since they were drawn by his predecessor. Although he was not part of drawing the school vision, his practices were demonstrating that he was strongly advocating and directing activities aimed at bringing vision to realisation.

Similarly, Mr Patrick, the Principal of Phatha, was not directly involved in the drawing of the school vision. He said that they bought a file from a service provider which contained all the policies that were required in the school, including the vision and mission statement. The vision and mission statement were nicely printed on a banner (see Fig. 17 below). He argued that the departmental officials who visited the school were happy that the school had all the required policies. There seemed to be a missing link between what was stated as the vision and mission statement with some practices in the school. I argue that prevalent and tolerated teacher absenteeism and learners left unattended, amongst other things, were not associated with the provision of quality education in their mission statement. The NSC results speak for themselves that the school was not doing enough to stabilise the socio-economic status of the province.

Fig. 17: Vision and mission statement of Phatha Secondary School

The principals had a clear vision and aspirations of how best their schools could accomplish their missions. However, there were variations in how they put their ideas into practice. It is emerging from the discussion above that some of the things said by some participants were just rhetorical and devoid of any practical substance. They had a sense that they had to include all relevant stakeholders in decision-making, establishing shared vision and goals for their schools. However, the processes of doing that were formidable. For example, Mr Ndawo, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School admitted to being crushed whilst trying to involve other stakeholders when vision was being developed. This is illustrated by the following excerpt from Mr Ndawo's utterances:

> *I have been crushed in several stakeholder meetings and got new outcomes coming as a result of inputs from others. I use that as a strategy now to get stakeholders to participate effectively in the implementation of decisions taken in stakeholder meetings. Mine is to say it was suggested and agreed in the stakeholder meeting.*

For Mr Armando, the principal of Amadada Secondary School, the challenge was getting stakeholders to agree and to work towards a common vision of the school since they had different understandings. The principal said:

> *…The challenge is to get these stakeholders to agree on common goal. Contextual realities, church doctrines, cultural issues differ drastically and impact on decision making. It is often challenging to reach consensus.*

Only Mrs Batty, the Principal of Battery Secondary School spoke about reviewing the school vision and re-envisioning the school purpose. She mentioned that there were changes in the school and outside the school that warranted revisiting school vision and goals. She explained

that dreams are not static and that there were changes in the staff, the learners and the parent components that warranted the new group to shape destiny of the school. In doing that, she claimed that she forged collaborative culture whilst encouraging ownership and trust. She believed that this inspired stakeholders to contribute their effort towards the achievement of collective goals. This was confirmed by Miss Thandi, the HOD and by Mr Thabo, PL1teacher confirmed that their levels of commitment towards collective goals increased.

It is emerging that all the participating schools had visions statements written down on paper. There seemed to be different views on how these visions were developed with some principals directly involved in the process of drawing them whilst others were not involved. Inspiring other stakeholders to contribute in the drawing of shared vision was regarded as important though challenging. The belief was that it increased the levels of commitment by stakeholders towards the achievement of collective goals. The levels of commitment by the stakeholders in the six schools varied possibly because of differences in the approaches used by the principals in developing, advocating and implementing school visions. It would appear that in two schools, the visions remained on paper as the routines and actions that were enacted on the daily basis were not directed or could not be associated with achieving stated goals. Reviewing and re-envisioning visions were not common. Only one school pronounced that they reviewed the school vision to align it with current trends. Whether in theory or practice, developing and bringing visions to realisation were seen as important tasks of the principals as instructional leaders.

8.5.2 Instructional management and direct supervision of instruction

The principals in this study unanimously agreed that time constraints and unexpected interruptions frustrated their endeavours to effect meaningful teacher supervision. This raised eyebrows as the need to improve the quality of teaching and learning through instructional supervision was well documented as discussed in Chapter Two. School principals as instructional supervisors have the responsibility to ensure that the teachers implement the set curriculum and that learning is actually taking place. In most cases, this responsibility was delegated to the deputy principals and the heads of departments. The principals claimed to be getting feedback from these groups of supervisors as it was their immediate duty to do so as stipulated in the policy. The policy on the South African standard for principals (RSA, 2016)

does not specify that the principals should do classroom supervision, but it stipulates that the principals should create systems and processes to deal with curriculum implementation. It allows for the principals to devise strategies for effective monitoring and evaluation of performance related to the National Curriculum.

Whilst there could be valid reasons for some principals' non-involvement in direct supervision of instructional practices, the findings revealed that some principals lacked knowledge of the National Curriculum. For example, Mr Ndlela, PL1 Educator at Lwandle Secondary School mentioned that his principal was not directly involved in the management of curriculum implementation, claiming to be 'delegating' this work to his SMT. The HODs were themselves not doing justice in the monitoring of classroom practices. This is what Mr Ndlela said:

> *The principal does not attend curriculum workshops. He does not have a class or learning area that he teaches. …he claims that he is too busy with administrative stuff and has his HODs doing curriculum management. HODs are themselves not doing classroom visits. They claim that they have high teaching loads yet they teach one or two sections.*

Mr Mdluli, the HOD in the same school confirmed that they were not adequately supervising the teachers' work, including conducting class visits. This finding suggests that there seemed to be no direct supervision of the teachers work in this school both by the principal and by the HODs. It emerged from the other schools as well that direct supervision of teachers in the form of class visits were not regular practices. Miss Petronella, PL1 Educator at Phatha Secondary School said that she did not want *"useless people"* to observe her teaching as they *"do not have a clue of the current curriculum".* Three principals (Mr Patrick, Mr Dlaba and Mr Banele) admitted to not attending curriculum workshops but they maintained that they knew good performance when they see it. Only one principal, Mr Ndawo claimed and it was confirmed by the HOD and the PL1 Educator that he attended curriculum workshops and that he was also teaching Grade 12 classes. The knowledge and experience gained was assisting him in supervising others. Other principals were talking about distant past when they were themselves still HODs or deputy principals.

It emerged strongly in all the six schools that PL1 Educators had reservations about instructional supervision by their principals and/or by the SMTs. Justifications raised by the PL1 educators seemed to point at inadequacies in confidence to supervise teaching and teachers; the lack of supervisory skills and abilities, and the lack of adequate and current

knowledge by the SMTs about instructional methods in all subjects. Confirming that educators did not readily accept the supervision of their classroom practices, Mr Amabili, the HOD from Amadada Secondary School said:

> *We cook IQMS scores. Educators do not want people to observe their classroom practices.*

The above discussion raised eyebrows and questions about the effectiveness of the principals in the instructional supervision, delegation of instructional supervision to other personnel, feedback leading to meaningful professional development. It raised questions about what it meant for the participants to say that they were working collaboratively to promote effective teaching and learning if instructional supervision was loosely monitored. School principals were claiming to be de-privatising classroom practices yet it is emerging that they rarely visited and observed classroom practices. It appeared that they relied on self-portrayed narratives about classroom practices to help teachers to grow, improve basic teaching skills, and expand knowledge and the use of teaching repertoires. One would therefore falter that professional dialoguing that emerged prominently from the data was indeed adequately providing teachers with feedback on their teaching and strengthening their instructional skills if principals were not "hands-on" in the monitoring of classroom practices.

It was discussed in Chapter Two that the principals are expected to have competencies and current knowledge in the implementation and supervision strategies of curriculum (DuFour, 2002; Marzano, *et al*., 2005; Stronge 2013). Findings of this study suggest that some principals lacked knowledge in the implementation and supervision strategies of the curriculum. Whilst scholars (e.g. Bush, *et al*., 2010; Wanzare, 2012) note that classroom observation is a valuable monitoring device, the majority of the school principals in this study did not seem to be "hands-on" in such activities. This finding corroborates that of Bush, *et al*. (2010) who found limited evidence of classroom monitoring in their eight case study schools and that where it occurred; it was sporadic and unsystematic activity, restricted by the lingering belief that it was discouraged by the educator unions.

A large component of instructional leadership is modelling, mentoring, and monitoring (Southworth, 2002) and assumes that school leaders can model effective instruction, lead others to understand effective instruction, recognise effective instruction when it occurs, and

understand the outputs of effective instruction. To this end, this study found limited modelling of classroom practices. Professional dialoguing emerged strongly as a means to monitor and mentor educators. Such professional dialoguing entailed rich conversations and advice giving to help the educators cope with classroom challenges of multiple deprivations. Further details about professional dialoguing are discussed in the following section.

8.5.3 Promoting professional development

There was a general agreement among the participants in all the six case schools that the principals were promoting professional developments. The nature of such professional developments varied with the schools and with the participants owing to their knowledge, experiences and contexts, supporting the argument that there is no 'book rule' for instructional leaders. Dominant variations were on direct or indirect involvement of the principals, formal or informal learning and effectiveness of such practices.

Overall, the data indicate that the principals were encouraging and supporting the educators to attend workshops organised externally by the DoBE. There was a strong belief that attending such workshops enabled the educators to network with other educators, giving educators opportunities to discuss how they could improve their teaching practices. It was this belief that impelled the principals in rural schools to allow educators to leave early or to be absent from schools in order to attend workshops and/or cluster meetings. Whilst one would argue that this was an impediment to curriculum delivery, these principals were at ease to say that *"you lose some and you gain some!"* At Phatha Secondary School, for example, the principal had to constantly march through the verandas trying to maintain order in the classes left by educators who were attending workshops or cluster meetings. Similar patterns were observed at Battery and Amadada Secondary Schools. This suggests that the principals valued and supported professional development of their educators despite challenges that came with it.

The principals in township schools also valued and supported their educators to attend workshops and cluster meetings. Their challenges were somehow different from those experienced by the principals in rural schools. Some of the workshops were conducted in their schools or in the nearby venues which were readily accessible. Because they had larger number of streams and educators, larger number of educators would be attending workshops or cluster

meetings at one point in time, leaving some classes unattended by the educators. Again, these principals emphasised the value of their teacher developments.

Whilst the principals in all the six schools supported their educators to attend professional development workshops, they did not seem to be directly involved or to participate in such workshops. Yet, there are studies (e.g. Blasé, *e.*, 2010; Hallinger, 2011; Supovitz, *et al.*, 2009) which suggest that principals' participation in the learning of their teachers is an important component leading to learner success. It enables them to know what the educators have learnt in order for them to support and go along with their educators in the practical implementation of what was learnt. The discussion above indicated that only one principal was actively participating in the curriculum workshops, putting him in an advantageous position to know the latest developments and implementation strategies of the curriculum. Gemeda and Tynjälä, (2015) contend that high-performing leaders are fully aware of the need to continually update their knowledge and skills and that they do so in order that they may better facilitate the core business of learning and teaching at their schools.

Professional dialoguing emerged prominently to be the strategy used by most principals in the study to promote professional development of their educators. The centrality of this practice was the belief that the practice of dialoguing with the teachers promoted reflection on practices and discussions of effective and ineffective practices which would result in gaining knowledge and improve instructional practices. However, PL1 Educators had mixed feelings about how their principals implemented professional dialoguing. Most of the PL1 Educators felt that professional dialoguing helped them engage in processes of self-reflection and knowledge construction. During these sessions, the principals and the teachers informally assess the weaknesses and strengths of what has been learned and generalise about using these skills in different settings. For example, Miss Amahle, an educator from Amadada Secondary School commented that:

> *Informal talks with the principal are supposedly of great value to me as I am able to reflect on my professional practice. The principal sometimes offer some suggestions on the spot that assists me in teaching in other classes.*

Similar sentiments were echoed by other educators as well. However, the way Miss Petronella an Educator from Phatha Secondary School expressed her views suggested that they were disgruntled by the practice. She mentioned that her principal asked a lot of questions forcing

them to reflect on professional practices. This is evident from the following excerpt from her utterances:

> *You do not wish to meet the principal in the corridor because you won't pass him without asking you million questions. He bombards you with million questions asking you to reflect on what you were doing in the class; how you were doing it and the worst question is why. … It forces you to reflect on your professional practice more especially because we encounter different challenges in the classes.*

Even though there were indications of disgruntlement, the merits of professional dialoguing were noted. Moloi (2005) for example, concedes that if instructional leaders and their staff are able to reflect on their actions, talk about them openly and correct themselves and each other when mistakes are diagnosed, a meaningful impact in their own professional development, as well as on the lives of their learners, will be made. Similarly, all the participants felt that professional dialoguing was supporting, inspiring, creating and sustaining school-wide focus on quality teaching and learning. It fostered collaboration, sharing of techniques and materials, caring, trust and communication among educators. The effects this practice differed with different schools since it was performed differently by different principals in accord with each principal's knowledge and experiences.

8.5.4 Building and promoting positive relationships within and external of the school

All the case schools experienced varying degrees and forms of deprivations which negatively impacted on teaching and learning. To thrive in such conditions, findings suggest that the principal, amongst other things, were building and promoting positive relationships within and external of the school. Data from all case schools reflects a high degree of concern and support for the overall well-being of colleagues and that of learners. Four principals acknowledged that building positive relationships with colleagues and learners was essential glue to keep them together and towards working together to achieve common goals. Whilst it was not the intention of this study to separate principals by gender, it was noticeable that Mrs Batty, the only female principal in this study, seemed to be more empathetic, loving and supportive. In her words, she said *"I try to make the school a caring and supportive environment for everyone."* The belief was that schools needed to be spaces that reinforced human dignity and built positive self-esteem for all. This was demonstrated in varying degrees and forms from principals' practices.

The practices where the principal seemed to be nurturing beliefs and value systems that support well-being of others were discussed in **Section 5.3.3.** Knowing others (value for people); harnessing multi-professional collaboration (value for teams) were also discussed. The HODs and the PL1 Educators supported their principals in highlighting these values (**Section 6.3.1**). For example, the HODs believed that the practices where principals showed respect, caring and compassion created positive and enabling environments for them and for the learners to deal with the challenges of multiple deprivations that negatively impacted on teaching and learning.

Literature reviewed in **Section 2.6.3** of Chapter Two supports the practices where the principals focus on relational aspects of the work. Sindhvad (2009), for example, found that the principals of effective schools show a higher quality of human relations. In Carreau's (2008) study, the principals unanimously voiced that they made it a priority to get to know their school staff and students. They put special emphasis on getting to know their teachers so that they can readily see changes in their behaviour, teaching style, or communication. They attempted to do this by using open door policy, making themselves visible in the hallways, and getting to school early so that they may be able to share collegial talking time with staff. They expressed the view that school leaders needed to be humanistic by demonstrating interest in the teachers' personal lives, realising that the stages in their lives dictate the amount of time they can dedicate to their profession. Similarly, the principals in this study were wondering around the school, dialoguing with their educators and learners, emphasised and worked with teams. This finding is further corroborated by Levin (2008) who contends that building strong teams requires knowing and understanding the strengths and abilities of the existing members. Principals believed that nurturing teachers and learners strengthened interpersonal connections.

8.5.5 Compromised learners' rights to quality education while building positive relationships

It is emerging from the findings that the principals in multiple-deprived rural schools had difficulties in balancing the teachers' rights to the taking of leave and the learners' rights to quality education. It was noted that most educators in rural schools did not come from immediate community where the schools were located. This placed an added burden of travelling costs and time lost while travelling long distances to and from the schools. The consequences of this were sanctioned absences that did not correspond with leave measures. Evidence from the data shows higher frequency of teachers who were absent from school due

to transport problems; visiting bereaved families during school hours; teachers attending workshops not coming to school or leaving the school very early. School principals, mostly at Amadada, Phatha and Battery Secondary Schools, often had to make decisions that compromised the learners' rights to quality education and learner safety where some classes were left unattended by the educators. The Learner Prefects were often asked to 'look after' the absent teachers' classes and no formal teaching took place during that time. In this context, while the teachers' rights to leave-taking were ensured, teaching and learning were often interrupted or lost, and the learners' right to quality education was compromised. This was not prevalent in township schools where the principals used stricter measures to curb teacher absenteeism.

Contrary to the finding above, literature (Ronfeldt, *et al*., 2013; Mbokazi, 2014; Chikoko, Naicker & Mthiyane, 2015) shows that instructional time is a direct correlate to student achievement. Therefore, the principals as instructional leaders have the duty to encourage the teachers to make maximum use of subject allocated time for teaching and engaging students in learning. The prevalence of instances where the learners were left unattended indicate that the principals, especially those in rural schools had challenges in ensuring that instructional time was effectively and efficiently used for teaching and learning. Poor transport, longer distances to workshop venues seemed to be standing issues and principals did not have viable solution. There were also instances where instructional time was used for 'other' activities (e.g. religious groups visiting schools during teaching and learning times at Phatha and Battery Secondary Schools) which suggests that there were times where building relationships with others took precedence over quality teaching and learning. This did not seem to resonate with the core values of instructional leadership which prioritise focus on teaching and learning.

8.5.6 Strategic resourcing, management and utilisation of resources to enhance teaching and learning

The findings suggest that there were different levels of commitments by the principals to get, utilise and manage strategic resources to enhance teaching and learning. Contextual factors favoured the principals in township schools compared to those in rural schools. Principals in rural schools were finding it hard to recruit and retain quality educators, especially in subjects such as Natural Science and Mathematics. Transport costs, road conditions, accessibility, heavy

workloads and scarce resources were some of the factors highlighted by participants from rural schools to be impacting on educator attrition and the provision of quality of teaching and learning in these schools. Educators were finding it hard to teach in the context of heavy workloads and outside their specialisations. I have grouped the following excerpts from various participants in rural schools to illustrate frustrations they experienced:

> *There are eleven of us teaching in a school with grades from eight to twelve and there are two streams in grades ten to twelve. Do permutations and combinations yourself to see difficulty of staffing in this school* (Ms Patricia, HOD at Phatha Secondary School)

> *There is just no time for educators here at school. We are all over the school. If you are lucky, you get one free period a week. … we spend more time to and from the school. The distance and the condition of the road is killing me* (Ms Petronella, PL1 Educator at Phatha Secondary School).

> *I teach everything that I am given. I do not even know what my specialisations were! … there are closed boxes with chemicals that are sitting there. I do not want to burn myself and the learners. They should rather stay closed* (Mr Thabo, PL1 Educator at Battery Secondary School).

> *I have to attend workshops and cluster moderations for four different subjects I teach in this school. There is just no time to monitor other teacher's work* (Mr Amabili, HOD at Amadada Secondary School).

Drawing from the pattern in these utterances, it is evident that the HODs and the PL1 Educators from rural secondary schools were equally frustrated by contextual realities in their schools. Whilst they were not pointing fingers at the principals, there are indications that somehow, the principal were overwhelmed by these realities which seemed to compromise quality teaching and learning in these schools. Mr Patrick, the Principal of Phatha Secondary School described how environmental deprivation impacted on his role as an instructional leader, and he put it this way:

> *I am either busy declaring educators in excess or recruiting new educators. There is always a headache of getting right educators here. I am always on this long dirt road to and from the circuit office. Can you imagine what it does to educators? It's complains, complains, complains. Sir this, Sir that. I am not coming to school*

today, the car is broken, or I am sick or I am attending workshop in town. Look at our time-book, look at our result. I wish I can go underground. Yeah, where does this leave the children you are talking about … a continued cycle of deprivation.

This evidence suggests frustration on the part of the principal and an indication that he was had difficulties coping with the situation. He displayed lower level of commitment to improving quality of teaching and learning by strategically recruiting and retaining quality educators; lower level of motivation on his side which could have been used to inspire and motivate others to adapt to contextual realities seemed to be less firm in protecting instructional time by not curbing teacher absenteeism. In effective schools, there is maximum utilisation of time for teaching and learning (Chikoko, *et al.,* 2015). Evidence of under-utilisation and poor management of time, human and physical resources cut across rural schools, at different levels.

Township schools had different factors from those of the rural schools which negatively impacted on their strategic utilisation and management of resources. Township schools were better resourced compared to their rural counterparts. However, a large number of the learners enrolled in the schools limited the use of other resources. The principals showed higher commitment to effective utilisation of the resources to enhance teaching and learning compared to the principals in the rural schools in this study. The principals promoted integration of cellular phone technology as a teaching and learning tool. This was more prominent in the township schools compared to the rural schools. This exposed the learners to globalised information which assisted them in their learning. Recruitment of quality educators was not an issue in the township schools than in the rural schools. Whilst the data use and management figured prominently from all the researched schools to be strategic move to track trajectory of learner progress, township schools were technological advance. The large numbers of the learners enrolled in the schools forced them to use computer programmes to capture, process and store data. The NSC results were pasted onto the walls as well as the certificates of achievements.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter has identified and discussed emerging patterns that were found to be common in six case schools. What emerged from these patterns was that beliefs, values, knowledge and experiences that principals held shaped their understandings of instructional leadership and

how they enacted it in their multiple deprivation school contexts. The principals' understandings of instructional leadership as a complex, non-linear, multidimensional and a collaborative construct corroborates literature. The chapter discussed emerging patterns on how secondary school principals enacted instructional leadership in multiple deprived contexts. The emerging patterns suggests that principals as instructional leaders were driven by personal value systems that placed emphasis on *Ubuntu* principles. The following chapter discusses lessons learnt from the study.

CHAPTER NINE

ENACTMENT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATIONS: LESSONS LEARNED

9.1 Introduction

The previous chapter, Chapter Eight, focused on mapping the patterns that emerged from the across sites analysis of the findings that was presented in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. This chapter presents the conclusions made and highlights some lessons learnt in terms of research and practice. However, before the conclusions are presented, I begin by providing the synthesis of the whole thesis. In presenting the findings from this multiple case study of instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in multiple-deprived contexts, I adopted an approach of using the research questions that underpinned the study. This approach was preferred because it gave me an opportunity to organise the presentation of the conclusions. I also believe that by using the research question I will be in a better position to assess the extent to which the research questions that drove the study had been sufficiently answered. The chapter begins by providing a synthesis of the whole thesis. Thereafter, the research questions are re-stated before they are used as headings to organise the discussion of the conclusions. The chapter concludes by highlighting lessons learned.

9.2 Synthesis of the whole thesis

I undertook the study to explore instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in the deprived school contexts. The study aimed at understanding how the principals understood their roles as instructional leaders in these conditions. I sought to understand how the principals enacted instructional leadership in these conditions and the nature of instructional leadership practices by these principals. The assumption that I had was that the practice of instructional leadership should be seen in relation to the context in which schools were located. There are peculiar challenges brought by multiple deprivations that individual principals as instructional leaders had to deal with. I aimed at identifying those facets of instructional leadership that transcend context and shine a new light on our understanding of instructional leadership.

I introduced the study in Chapter One where I gave the background and rationale that prompted me to do this study for my PhD. Through that chapter I was orienting the reader to the whole research project, setting the scene for the discussion of issues pertinent to the study. I provided the background, the statement of the problem, the purpose and the rationale for the study. Furthermore, the significance of the study was discussed. The three research aims and three research questions that guided the study were also provided. Furthermore, this chapter provided the clarification of key terms, demarcation and limitations of the study. The chapter concludes by outlining the layout of the study which spelt out what each chapter of the thesis entailed.

In Chapter Two, I reviewed literature on instructional leadership. I began by positioning the review conceptually. The body of literature on leadership was analysed to assess competing conceptualisations of the leadership construct leading to instructional leadership. I orient the reader with how the concept had evolved. Next, I interrogate instructional leadership. This was developed from consideration of a particular context: multiple deprivations in rural and township schools. The framework represented the inherent contextual diversities faced by instructional leaders. I discussed how instructional leadership enabled the creation and support of the conditions under which high quality teaching and learning could take place in challenging contexts. I then interrogated literature linking instructional leadership and the context of multiple deprivations. Ethical dilemmas faced by principals in enacting instructional leadership in these contexts were also discussed. Through this review, I gained the theoretical insight as to how instructional leadership was understood and practiced elsewhere in the world. I then had to position myself conceptually for the study I was undertaking. This was done in Chapter Three. I drew on Adaptive Leadership Theory (Heifetz, Grashow & Linsky, 2009) and Hallinger's (2011) synthesised leadership for learning model. These were preferred theoretical and conceptual constructs because I believed that they can act as a map that could provide coherence for this empirical inquiry to enable the reader to understand how I conceptually grounded my approach. The frameworks represented the inherent contextual diversities faced by instructional leaders.

In Chapter Four I presented and justified research design and methodology that I adopted for this qualitative, multiple case study which explored school principal's instructional leadership practices in multiple-deprived contexts. I began by declaring and describing paradigmatic disposition taken about the nature of reality (ontology), the relationship between knower and known (epistemology) and assumptions about methodologies. The interpretivist paradigm,

being my paradigmatic home assisted me to look at multiple realities of leading instructional leadership in multiple deprived contexts. As a research instrument myself and using face-to-face interviews as my primary data generation method, I established a relationship of trust and sincerity with the participants. This in a way enabled them to be more open with their feelings and shared some truthful experiences freely with limited reluctance. The aim was to get each participant's unique contextual interpretations of instructional leadership and the meaning it brought to each of them. I was always aware and maintained ethical considerations as guided by the Ethics Committee of the University. I also discussed strategies I used to ensure that my study remained trustworthy in this chapter.

In Chapters Five, Chapter Six and Chapter Seven, I presented and discussed in-depth the findings generated through the use semi-structured interviews with the principals, the heads of departments and Post-Level One educators that were participants in this study. It was the voluminous nature of data that I generated that prompted me to divide the presentation and discussion of findings into three chapters. In presenting the findings, *verbatim* quotations were used to ensure that the 'voices' of the participants remained pristine in the study. The presentation also incorporated data generated through documents' reviews and observations made during visits into the schools. The literature that was reviewed in Chapter Two and the theoretical framework presented in Chapter Three were infused into the discussion.

In Chapter Eight, synthesis of findings from the previous chapters was done. I drew patterns from the emerging findings and related them to the literature and theoretical frameworks. Appraisal of findings was done. I conclude the thesis in this chapter, Chapter Nine, by presenting my conclusions about what the findings are telling me and I also share some lessons learned in terms of research and practice implications. I present the synthesis of the findings and relating them to the research questions. The aim is to evaluate the extent to which research questions have been answered; and contributing to the existing knowledge and ongoing debates in the field.

9.3 Research questions re-stated

The research questions that underpinned this study were:

- How do school principals understand their roles to be as instructional leaders in the context of multiple deprivations?

- How do secondary school principals practise instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations?
- What is the nature of instructional leadership practised by secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations?

These key questions are used below to present summary of the lessons learned in this study.

9.3.1 How did school principals understand their roles to be as instructional leaders in the context of multiple deprivations?

The detailed discussions about this question were done in the previous four chapters. The conclusions on this question indicate that there were three components in principals' understandings of instructional leadership. Instructional leadership was understood (1) as a collaborative process; (2) as a complex, socially constructed phenomenon and (3) as complex, non-linear and multidimensional process.

Drawing from the discussion of findings that was presented in the earlier discussions, particularly in **Section 8.4.1 of Chapter Eight**, I can conclude that the principals of the six secondary schools conceptualised instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations to be characterised by a spectrum of leadership practices that embraced collective and collaborative efforts to face the challenges brought by these contexts and to ensure that the schools thrive academically. Knowledge and experiences of multiple deprivations at a particular point in time and structural working conditions in schools mediated the form of stakeholder collaboration, as well as the way collegiality was experienced and valued by the people involved. This in part, contributed to the variations of the practices of instructional leadership. It was apparent that to some school principals, collaborative work was not reflected in their practices as they proclaimed in our conservations with them. There were cases where the HODs and the Educators absolved themselves from what was happening in the schools, thus disowning the decisions or actions taken. One would expect that with the highlighted values of collaborative work, the schools would be smooth sailing or at least thriving to enhance quality education of all learners. Thriving is itself a relative construct for different people in time and in context; hence the conceptualisation of instructional leadership as a complex, contextual and socially constructed phenomenon as discussed in **Section 8.4.2 of**

Chapter Eight. Therefore, more details about the issues highlighted above are provided in that section.

The participants in the six research schools described instructional leadership in terms of context-specific factors including the learners' backgrounds, the community type, the schools' cultures, the teachers' experiences and competences, financial resources and the school sizes to mention a few. The general idea was that principals constructed a particular form of action to fit the context or situation. A dichotomy was seen for example, where at one extreme Mrs Betty, Principal of Battery Secondary School paid particular focus learners that where visibly affected by their poor family background. She strongly believed that such learners had to be supported in ways that mitigated the impact of their poverty-stricken homes on their schooling. As they entered the school gate, she saw them as orphans and destitute children and empathised with them and sought tangible action to alleviate their plight so that they could cope with school work. Evidently, what she did as a school principal was largely driven by the context of deprivation.

On the other extreme end of the continuum we have Mr Ndawo, Principal of Ndali Secondary School whose approach to dealing with the learners was, on the surface, less empathetic and he deliberately did not want to see any orphan in the learners. Instead, he saw the learners as young people who were eager to learn, and in his mind, attempted to trip them from their lived-contexts. He did not want to get involved in understanding and/or taking any interest in their family background. Such constructions of reality manifested in the different approaches they used in leading teaching and learning. Mrs Betty assumed a softer approach to leading teaching and learning that was characterised by caring, nurturing and compassion. Mr Ndawo on the other hand assumed a harder approach to leading teaching and learning, firm in averting labelling of learners as deprived and on focusing on the social ills in the communities that they would not be able to alleviate. His efforts were more directed on learners within the school gates learning.

There were many other cases that emerged from this study where the principals had to use their mental models to make sense of their complex, contextual situations. The principals were seen to be going extra miles and beyond the call of duty to assist deprived learners and families on issues of education, health and social welfare. There were issues of safety and security that plagued the schools that the principals had to contend with to bring abnormal situations to

normalcy. Normalcy is a contested terrain as evidenced in the different ways that the principals were handling complex, contextual issues. It was normal, for example at Lwandle and Zibonele Secondary Schools that learners had to go outside the school gates during breaks to buy "food", which in my view was compromising safety and security of learners and that of the educators. It is imaginable the extent to which educator absenteeism due to transport and attending workshops was tolerated. In my view, this was compromising the quality of teaching and learning time of the already deprived learners. Bush-knifing of a learner in the class raised goose bumps about the safety and security in the schools.

It was evident from this study that the principals were dealing with complex, contextual challenges where following "rule book" could not work. Their understandings of their roles as instructional leaders were affected by their values, beliefs, experiences and knowledge they had. The ways in which the principals blended these practices demonstrated responsiveness and adaptation to the context in which they worked. I therefore argue that instructional leadership in multiple deprived contexts should be seen as an art dealing with complex, contextual variables of multiple deprivations with the aim of ensuring that effective teaching and learning takes place.

In this study, most principals had responsibilities for several diverse tasks in a typical day or week, and it was often necessary to shift quickly from one type of activity to another. In line with this argument, Mr Ndlela, the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School described the job of the principal as an instructional leader in multiple deprived contexts to be a 24 hour, exhausting job which involved constant thinking about the school in an attempt to ensure that teaching and learning took place. In essence, the job entailed complex, non-linear and multidimensional practices (see **Section 8.3.3 of Chapter Eight**). Display of critical and creative thinking skills, communication skills, global awareness and cross-cultural skills were necessary skills described by participants for this job.

In all of the constructs of instructional leadership presented above, the common threads were the principals' direct and indirect influences and interactions with dynamic, challenging school contexts with the aim of ensuring that teaching and learning took place. In part, knowledge, experiences, values and beliefs that principals held, combined with specific contextual variables of their schools shaped their understandings of the phenomenon and their roles as instructional leaders. The diagram below, Figure 18 depicts the emerging model of this

complex interplay of variables that shaped principals' understandings of instructional leadership in multiple deprived contexts.

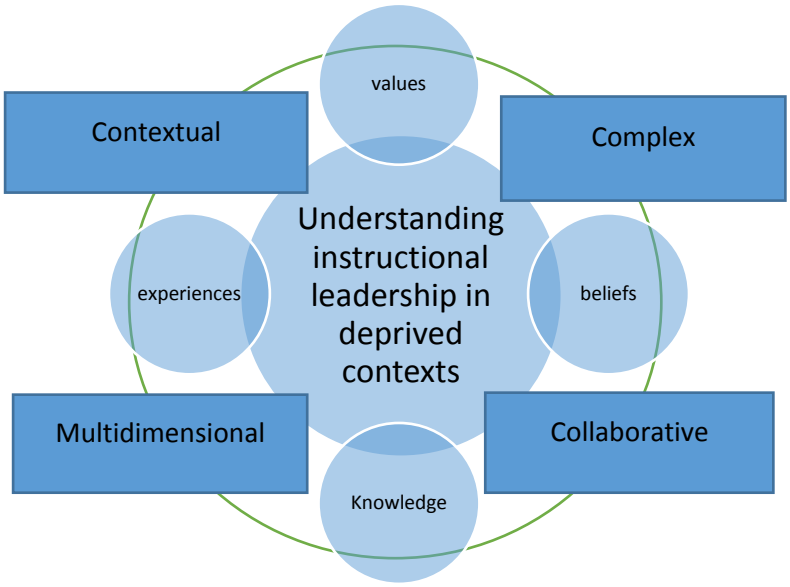

Figure 18: Emerging model of principals' understandings of instructional leadership in multiple deprived contexts

Values that principals held shaped their thinking and their day-to-day enactments of instructional leadership. For example, the majority of the principals in this study valued collaborative culture; hence, teaming up with other stakeholders to strengthen teaching and learning in their schools. This entailed embracing and harnessing multi-professional collaborations and building positive relationships with stakeholders. The notion of inviting to the schools various stakeholders with expertise such as health care personnel, social workers, and safety and security personnel that participants talked about could be attributed to the values held by principals. Their beliefs were that the practice of working collaboratively with various stakeholders supported and enhanced teaching and learning of deprived learners. Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom and Anderson (2014) found a strong connection between student achievement and what they call the "collective leadership" of the principals, the teachers, the parents, the school administrators and others. Indeed, the report says that high-performing schools have "fatter" decision-making structures, meaning that almost all people associated with such schools have greater influence on decisions than their counterparts in lower-performing schools. In keeping with these beliefs, the principals in the current study connected

with various stakeholders and valued their contributions that aimed at enhancing teaching and learning.

Bringing various stakeholders to contribute towards enhancing teaching and learning was not a straight forward process. It involved among other things inspiring, motivating, organising, conflicts and tolerance. Mr Ndawo, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School for example, spoke of being crushed in a stakeholder meeting before shared vision for the school was crafted. The point I am raising here is that knowledge and experiences that principals held also factored into their understandings and practices of instructional leadership. The school principals operated and had to respond to the constraints and opportunities existing in their schools and their environments. Knowledge and experiences shaped how they responded to these constraints and opportunities, and hence their understandings of what worked for them in their deprived school contexts. I discussed in **Section 8.5.5 of Chapter Eight** cases where quality teaching and learning times in rural schools were or seemed to be compromised by acts emanating from contextual constraints and personal choices by principals. It could be easy to point fingers at the principals as their experiences and knowledge factored the way they responded to situations. Drawing from Adaptive leadership theory, leaders observe, interpret and intervene accordingly to various situations and this could vary with different knowledge and experiences possessed by these leaders. As such, these contribute to the understanding of leadership, in particular, instructional leadership as a complex, contextual construct.

In this study, the principals viewed instructional leadership as a complex, contextual, multi-dimensional collaborative process focusing on teachers teaching and learners learning. Values, beliefs, knowledge and experiences that leaders possessed, in varying degrees, shaped their understandings of instructional leadership and their practices. These conclusions made affirm the notion that instructional leadership, and more specifically in the context of multiple deprivations, is a complex and dynamic construct containing plurality of factors and perspectives that shape its nature. The conclusions also affirm the appropriateness of viewing personal characteristics of principals and contextual factors as significant to understanding how principals exercise educational leadership.

9.3.2 How do secondary school principals practise instructional leadership in the context of multiple deprivations?

The study revealed different practices that school principals engaged on which helped their schools to thrive although to a limited extent. The word thriving is a relative term which could indicate different levels of success for different people in different settings. In this study, the schools were encroached by different deprivations that necessitated different approaches to handle such deprivations. The differences in approaches could also be attributed to different beliefs, values, knowledge and experiences that each principal held. The school principals' leadership was actually inspired by the need to respond to contextual realities that they faced. There are six dominant instructional practices that emerged from this study, and these are (a) Vision and goals practices; (b) Engendering professional dialoguing and development; (c) Promoting professional development of the educators ; (d) Direct and indirect involvement in the monitoring of educators' work; (e) Recognising and rewarding good performance; and (f) Creating space for stakeholders to participate in school matters. My presentation in this section is just an overview of these sub-themes because a detailed discussion has been made in **Section 8.3** and in the preceding chapters.

9.3.2.1 Vision and goals practices

It is emerging that all the schools had visions and mission statements written down on paper. There seemed to be different views on how these visions were developed with some principals having been directly involved in the process of drawing them whilst others were not involved. Inspiring other stakeholders to contribute in the drawing of shared vision was regarded as important although challenging at the same time. The belief was that shared vision increased the levels of commitment of the stakeholders towards the achievement of collective goals. The levels of commitment by the stakeholders in the six schools varied possibly because of the differences in the approaches used by the principals in developing, advocating and implementing school visions. For example, at Ndali and Zibonele Secondary Schools, the principals inspired commitment to achieving the school vision through the use of a culture of displaying schools' achievements in the form of trophies and holding prayers for high levels of achievements.

It would appear that in two schools, the visions remained on paper as the routines and actions that were enacted on daily basis were not directed or could not be associated with any attempts at achieving the stated goals. Reviewing and re-envisioning of the visions were not a common practice. Only one school pronounced that they had reviewed the school vision to align it with current trends. Whether in theory or practice, developing and bringing visions to realisation were seen as important tasks of the principals as instructional leaders.

9.3.2.2 Engendering professional dialoguing and development

This study revealed that the principals promoted professional dialoguing and development in their schools. Professional dialoguing entailed the practice of continuous dialogue among the teachers and also with the active participation and probing by the school principals. It also entailed simulating professional dialogues and incorporating lived-experiences as part of the discussion about how best the school could look. These practices led to collaboratively and interactively generated and co-owned solutions to institutional challenges. The other element of this dimension included advancing adaptiveness in finding positive energies out of the very difficult and often nerve-racking circumstances that the principals and the teachers encountered in their professional lives. The idea of promoting professional dialoguing was used to connect content knowledge, values and perspectives of the formal curriculum to the lived experiences of the teachers and the learners.

Dialogues took place informally during day-to-day interactions. The teacher participants alluded to the fact that these conversations allowed them to reflect about their professional practices in non-threatening environments. They valued these dialogues on the basis that they helped them to grow professionally as they shared experiences and were able to ask for advices. The practice of dialoguing with the teachers promoted reflection of practice and discussion of effective and ineffective practices with their educators resulting in increased knowledge, changes to their instructional practice, and information they could use in their lesson planning. It gave them learning opportunities that further enhanced their learning experiences, discussing with their peers strategies for teaching in deprived contexts. This practice also increased knowledge and discussion of best practice for classroom instruction. A culture of reflective practice is essential for effective instructional leadership and the improvement of instructional practices.

9.3.2.3 Promoting professional development of the educators

The study revealed that the principals promoted and ensured that educators attended professional development workshops despite the challenges that remained in the schools when educators were attending workshops. There seemed to be a number of such workshops and cluster meetings that were taking educators out of the classrooms. In township schools, there were more subjects offered and more teachers teaching the same subject. A number of educators would be attending workshops in one point in time. In rural schools, one educator would be teaching more than one subject in different classes. An individual educator would be attending a number of workshops. The tendency was that they did not start at school because of the transport problems and distances to workshop venues. The participants indicated that it was a difficult task for the SMTs to arrange relief educators to teach or supervise classes left by educators who were attending workshops. Often, learners were left unattended in the classrooms leading to chaos. Despite these challenges, principals were seen to be encouraging that educators should attend workshops.

9.3.2.4 Direct and indirect involvement in the monitoring of educators' work

There were different views about how the principals were involved in the monitoring of educators' work. There were some elements of direct involvement and also some elements of indirect involvement. The principals rarely visited and observed educators teaching in the classrooms. In most cases these visits were not planned and feedback was erratic and also generic. Except for Ndali Secondary School, educators in other schools showed resentment to class visits by their principals. The claim was that some principals were not developing themselves in terms of curriculum understanding and supervision.

9.3.2.5 Recognising and rewarding good performance

The principals in this study recognised and rewarded good performance by both the educators and the learners. They believed that this helped to motivate the educators and the learners to perform better. In other words, by recognising and rewarding good performance, it served as a tool to motivate those who were performing well and those that were not performing well, to

improve their performance. Various methods were given as means to motivate educators and learners including praises in the assemblies, certificates, trophies and vouchers.

9.3.2.6 Creating space for stakeholders to participate in school matters

This study found that the principals created space for stakeholders including the educators, the learners, the parents and other partners to participate in school matters. In varying degree, the principals scheduled meetings with these stakeholders where school matters were discussed in an open and collaborative manner in which the participants were free to share ideas. Promoting an inclusive working culture included strengthening multi-professional collaboration in the schools. They created a space for cooperation and collaboration with social workers, health-care professionals and safe and security officers. The core idea was that schools, as multi-professional communities, provided a lot of competences and a forum where ideas could be shared. The school principals saw the multi-professional collaboration as a joint task that supported teaching and learning through their participation and an interactive dialogical culture. Whilst there was a general belief that these initiatives were important to enhance teaching and learning, their success varied with schools due to individual school's peculiar context.

9.3.3 What is the nature of instructional leadership practised by secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations?

The conclusions made in this study suggest that the strategies and tactics that appeared to be dominantly used by principals to deal with different instructional leadership practices embraced varying degree of humanness, with a pervasive spirit of interconnectedness, caring, compassion, inspiring and respect for others. These value systems resonate with *Ubuntu* principles (Bhengu, 2006; Pillay, 2012; Waghid, 2014). At different levels, the principals seemed to be using these principles to create a clear sense of school purpose and direction.

Most of the participants alluded to the notion of principals connecting in varying degree with others including the educators, the learners and the parents forming collaborative relationships with other professionals. The principals adopted leadership styles that advanced collaborative decision making and problem solving processes to uphold human dignity, build trusting

relationships and communalism between stakeholders. I bring again the voice of Mr Armando, the Principal of Amadada Secondary School who clearly articulated the value of working with others to target student success. He said *"the muscles of others assist in pulling together resources that target student success".* It was evident at Phatha and Battery Secondary Schools where the principals embraced religious groups to work with the school on spiritual guidance. Learners in deprived contexts suffer in varying degrees emotionally, physically and spiritually. Connecting and working collaboratively with others and thus embracing the notion of '*umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu'* (a person is a person through other people) was seen to be positively influencing teaching and learning.

It is emerging prominently from the findings of this study that the element of caring for one another, supporting each other's needs seemed to be dominant in the instructional practices of the participating principals. The study has revealed that the principals in one way or the other influenced the process of building positive relationships, demonstrating *Ubuntu* commitment to people whilst still focusing on teaching and learning. This was not only between the principals and the educators but also with the learners, the parents and other stakeholders as well. Caring personality was also observed where the principals influenced the educators to be nurses to the ill learners; to be mothers and fathers to the orphans; to be social workers and also to be comforters to the bereaved. The fundamental principles behind this seem to gear towards the enhancement of others' wellbeing (pastoral care).

The strategies used by the principals that suggested caring were overt for others and covert for some others. On one hand, the school principals demonstrated overt care and support to the learners and encouraged their teaching staff to do the same. At the core of such efforts was a belief that the learners in the school had to feel supported. A directly opposing view was expressed by Mr Ndanda, the Principal of Ndali Secondary School who maintained that no sympathy should be expressed at learners, especially those who come from poverty-stricken families. His argument was that all the learners should be treated equally and they must be made to feel that way. Covertly though he ensured that the learners get the support they need and he did it through embracing collaborative network with other professional bodies and departments who were constantly visiting the school to assist affected learners. Instead of learners losing instructional time going to the health care facilities for example, he ensured that the mobile clinic was coming to the school on certain days to provide health care. Sick learners were also given first preference in the clinic if they had permission slip and were wearing

school uniform. This was to ensure that learners spend more time at school learning rather than to be somewhere else.

Strategies and tactics used on the daily basis were flexible, depending on the nature of the contingency sometimes resulting in the '*rules*' being bent when for example, religious groups were allowed to use teaching and learning time to offer spiritual guidance; educators taking and accompanying sick learners to health centres or attending community events during teaching and learning time. Mr Patrick, the Principal of Phatha Secondary School explained that this was important saying that:

> *You lose something, you gain other things. It is important to keep the school going. That is how we thrive. Learners feel valued and want to come to school to learn.*

Another explanation for *'losing something and gaining something'* while embracing collaborative work was given by Mr Dlaba, the Principal of Lwandle Secondary School who explained that teaching time was lost but also that the school gains a lot from connecting and working with others. He cited that NGOs, departmental officials and parents came to the schools during teaching and learning hours. Mr Dlaba said that:

> *We minimise disturbances but we cannot run away from them. Even workshops are run during school hours. …The school gains from connecting with relevant others.*

This again indicates that principals valued "interconnectedness" to an extent that teaching and learning was somehow compromised. However, the principals believed that their schools were going to benefit in those activities. There were many cases where the learners' rights to quality teaching and learning were compromised whilst embracing *Ubuntu*. The findings suggest that some principals in schools in the context of multiple deprivations had difficulties in balancing the teachers' rights to leave taking and the learners' rights to quality education. It was noted that most educators in rural schools did not come from immediate community where the schools were located, placing varying demands of travelling longer distances to and from the schools. The consequences of this were sanctioned absences that did not correspond with leave measures. Evidence from the data shows that there was high frequency teacher absenteeism due to various reasons including transport problems; visiting bereaved families during school hours; teachers attending workshops not coming to school or leaving the school very early. The principals, mostly at Amadada, Phatha and Battery Secondary Schools, often had to make decisions that compromised learners' rights to quality education and learner safety where some classes were left unattended by educators. Prefect learners were often asked to 'look after' the absent teachers' classes and no formal teaching took place during that time. In this context,

while the teachers' rights to leave-taking were ensured, teaching and learning were often interrupted or lost, and the learners' right to quality education was compromised. This was not prevalent in township schools where principals used stricter measures to curb teacher absenteeism.

Contrary to the finding mentioned above, literature reviewed (see Chapter Two) shows that instructional time is a direct correlate to student achievement. Principals as instructional leaders have the duty to encourage the teachers to make maximum use of subject allocated time for teaching and engaging students in learning. The prevalence of instances where the learners were left unattended indicate that the principals, especially those in rural schools had challenges in ensuring that instructional time was effectively and efficiently used for teaching and learning. Poor transport, longer distances travelled to the workshop venues seemed to be standing issues and the principals did not have viable solutions to these issues. There were also instances where instructional time was used for 'other' activities (e.g. religious groups visiting schools during teaching and learning times at Phatha and Battery Secondary Schools). These activities suggest that there were times where building relationships with the others took precedence over the quality teaching and learning. This did not seem to resonate with the core values of instructional leadership which prioritise focus on teaching and learning.

The conclusions reached are consistent with the narratives from the literature which suggest that the principals do what is necessary for the learners to pass even if it means going an extra mile maintaining human dignity (Oelofsen, 2015). In this regard, Letseka and Iyamu (2011) claims that teachers and school staff should respect, care for themselves and then care for all the learners in the schools regardless of their background or circumstances. Human dignity and respect are key values of Ubuntu leadership (Mestry & Ndlovu, 2014). 'Ubuntu' philosophy means "*I am because we are.*" The spirit of living together and providing support where necessary prevails. In essence, instructional leaders adapt to their contextual realities and act accordingly to ensure that teaching and learning could happen.

9.4 Conclusion

This chapter endeavoured to synthesise and conclude the journey traversed and lessons learned after embarking on this study. Reaching this milestone has not been easy as perhaps research books suggest. It involved the process of immersing myself into the research including establishing rapport with the main the school principals as they were the main participants in this study and also interacting with the literature to gain insight of what is there in the field. Instructional leadership has been studied vastly internationally and not much nationally. The debate which remains is how principals enact instructional leadership in their particular contexts. I chose to research school principals in multiple deprived contexts in township and rural settings to push boundaries in the field. This study is therefore contributing to the field from the contextual perspective of multiple deprivations. It has shown and confirmed that instructional leadership is a complex, contextual, multi-dimensional collaborative process focusing on teachers teaching and learners learning. Values, beliefs, knowledge and experiences that leaders possessed, in varying degrees, shaped their understandings of instructional leadership and their practices. These conclusions affirm the notion that instructional leadership, more specifically in multiple deprived contexts, is a complex and dynamic construct containing plurality of factors and perspectives that shape its nature. The conclusions reached have also affirmed the appropriateness of viewing personal characteristics of principals and contextual factors as significant to understanding how principals exercise educational leadership. The model is suggested which indicates that beliefs, values, knowledge and experiences that individuals hold factor in the way they understand and enact instructional leadership.

The study has also revealed different instructional leadership practices that principals engaged in. The dominant practices that emerged from this study, adding to the debate in the field are Vision and goals practices; Engendering professional dialoguing and development; Promoting educators professional development; Direct and indirect involvement in the monitoring of educators' work; Recognising and rewarding good performance; and Creating space for stakeholders to participate in school matters. I make a case that these activities assisted the principals to survive and in some instances, to thrive in leading teaching and learning in multiple deprived school contexts. It is therefore crucial for the principals to have a good understanding of the interconnecting factors that would enable them to intervene accordingly to their contextual realities in an effort to ensure that all learners get quality education.

The study has also shown that the principals in multiple deprived school contexts were practicing *Ubuntu inclined instructional leadership*. The values of trust and respect, teamwork, compassion and human dignity featured prominently in the day-to-day instructional leadership practices of the principals. I therefore argue that this hybrid of instructional leadership emanating from the analysis of the data generated in this study, could be a profound ingredient that could contribute to a strengthened Afrocentric approach to enacting instructional leadership in multiple deprived contexts.

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Appendix A: Declaration form

Declaration

I……. (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations in Umlazi District: A multiple case study**. I have received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from research at any time should I so desire.

I **agree/ do not agree** for the use of audio recording device.

Signature of Principal Date

…….. ……

Thanking you in advance

BN Mkhize (Mr)

Appendix B: Letter to DoE requesting permission to conduct research in KZN schools

P.O. Box 65
Umbumbulu
4105
20 October 2014

Attention: The Superintendent-General (Dr NSP Sishi)
Department of Education
Province of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X9137
Pietermaritzburg
3201

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Bongani Nhlanhla Mkhize, a PhD student in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree fulfilment, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in six secondary schools under your jurisdiction in Umlazi District. The title of my study is **Instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations in Umlazi District: A multiple case study.**

This study aims to explore how secondary school principals in multiply-deprived contexts enact instructional leadership and why they enact it the way they do. The planned study will focus on secondary school principals. The study will use semi-structured interviews with principals, educators and parents. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 40-60 minutes at the times convenient to them which will not disturb teaching and learning. Each interview will be voice-recorded. Observations and documents review will also be done.

Responses will be treated with confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of the actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews, and they will be purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.

You may contact my supervisors, UKZN Research Office or me should you have any queries or questions:

Supervisors:

Dr TT Bhengu
Tel. 031-2603534 (office)
Cell: 083 9475321
E-mail: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za.

Dr SE Mthiyane
Tel. 031-2601870
E-mail: Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za

UKZN Research Office

Mariette Snayman
HSSREC-Ethics
Tel: 0312608350
E-mail: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

My contact number:

Cell: 0836530077
E-mail: bnckmkhize@gmail.com

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely
B.N. Mkhize (Mr)

Appendix C: Letter requesting permission from the principals to conduct research in schools

P.O. Box 65
Umbumbulu
4105
20 October 2014

The Principal

Umlazi District

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Bongani Nhlanhla Mkhize, a PhD student and a lecturer in the School of Education at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus). As part of my degree fulfilment, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct this research at your school. The title of my study is: **Instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations in Umlazi District: A multiple case study.**

This study aims to explore how principals, more particularly, as instructional leaders, navigate around the impact of multiple deprivations on their instructional leadership practices and still meet the demands and expectations of the department. That is, how secondary school principals in multiply-deprived contexts enact instructional leadership and why they enact it the way they do. The planned study will focus on secondary school principals. The study will use semi-structured interviews with principals, educators and parents. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 40-60 minutes at the times convenient to them which will not disturb teaching and learning. Each interview will be voice-recorded. Observations and documents review will also be done.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THAT:

- There will be no financial benefits that participants may accrue as a result of their participation in this research project.
- Your identity will not be divulged under any circumstance/s, during and after the reporting process.
- All the responses, observations and reviewed documents will be treated with strict confidentiality.
- Pseudonyms will be used to represent the school and names of the participants.
- Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so wish without incurring any penalties.
- Participants purposively selected to participate in this study and they will be contacted well in advance for interviews.
- The interviews shall be voice-recorded to assist me in concentrating on the actual interviews.

You may contact my supervisors, the Research Office or me should you have any queries or questions:

Supervisors:
Dr TT Bhengu
Tel. 031-2603534 (office)
Cell: 083 9475321
E-mail: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za.

Dr SE Mthiyane
Tel. 031-2601870 (office)

E-mail:Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za

UKZN Research Office
Mariette Snayman
HSSREC-Ethics
Tel: 0312608350
E-mail: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

My contact number:
Tel: 031 2601398 (work)
Cell: 0836530077
E-mail: bnckmkhize@gmail.com

Your positive response in this regard will be highly appreciated.

Thanking you in advance

Yours sincerely
B.N. Mkhize (Mr)

Declaration

I…… (Full names of the principal) of ----------
----------(School name) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations in Umlazi District: A multiple case study**. I have received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily for the school to be part of the study. I understand that the school is at liberty to withdraw from research at any time should the school so desire.

I **agree/ do not agree** for the use of audio recording device.

Signature of Principal Date

…….. ……

School stamp

Thanking you in advance
Mkhize Bongani Nhlanhla

Appendix D: Letter requesting the principal to participate in the research

P.O. Box 65
Umbumbulu
4105
20 October 2014

The Principal
Sample Secondary School

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH

I am currently a PhD student in Education Leadership, Management and Policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. I am presently engaged in a research study which aims to explore how secondary school principals enact instructional leadership in multiple deprived contexts. The topic of my research is: **Instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations in Umlazi District: A multiple case study**. I would very much like to conduct the study in your school because I believe that you can provide valuable insight in extending the boundaries of our knowledge on this concept.

Your identity in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to uphold your autonomy as the participant. You will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. However, you will be asked to complete a consent form. In your interest, feedback will be given to you during and at the end of the study.

You may contact my supervisors, UKZN Research Office or me should you have any queries or questions:

Supervisors:

Dr TT Bhengu

Tel. 031-2603534 (office)
Cell: 083 9475321
E-mail: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za.

Dr SE Mthiyane

Tel. 031-2601870 (Office)

E-mail: Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za

UKZN Research Office
Mariette Snayman
HSSREC-Ethics
Tel: 0312608350
E-mail: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

My contact number:
Cell: 0836530077
E-mail: bnckmkhize@gmail.com

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

BN Mkhize (Mr)

……..DETACH AND RETURN……

Declaration

I…… (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations in Umlazi District: A multiple case study**. I have received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been

explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from research at any time should I so desire.

I **agree/ do not agree** for the use of audio recording device.

Signature of Principal Date

…….. ……

Thanking you in advance

BN Mkhize (Mr)

Appendix E: Letter requesting permission from the HODs/ PL1 Educators to participate in the research

P.O. Box 65
Umbumbulu
4105
17 August 2015

The Educator/HOD
Sample Secondary School

Dear Sir/Madam

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH

I am currently a PhD student in Education Leadership, Management and Policy at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus. I am presently engaged in a research study which aims to explore how secondary school principals enact instructional leadership in challenging multiple deprived contexts. The topic of my research is **Instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations in Umlazi District: A multiple case study**. I would very much like you to participate in this study because I believe that you can provide valuable insight in extending the boundaries of our knowledge on this concept.

Your identity in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to uphold your autonomy as the participant. You will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. However, you will be asked to complete a consent form. In your interest, feedback will be given to you during and at the end of the study.

You may contact my supervisors, UKZN Research Office or me should you have any queries or questions:

Supervisors:

Dr TT Bhengu
Tel. 031-2603534 (office)
Cell: 083 9475321
E-mail: bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za.

Dr SE Mthiyane
Tel. 031-2601870 (Office)

E-mail: Mthiyanes@ukzn.ac.za

UKZN Research Office
Mariette Snayman
HSSREC-Ethics
Tel: 0312608350
E-mail: snymanm@ukzn.ac.za

My contact number:
Cell: 0836530077
E-mail: bnckmkhize@gmail.com

Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours faithfully

BN Mkhize (Mr)

……..DETACH AND RETURN……

Declaration

I…… (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I have been informed about the nature, purpose and procedures for the study: **Instructional leadership practices of secondary school principals in the context of multiple deprivations in Umlazi District: A multiple case study**. I have received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and I consent voluntarily to take part in the study. I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from research at any time should I so desire.

I **agree/ do not agree** for the use of audio recording device.

Signature of Educator/HOD Date

…….. ……

Thanking you in advance

Appendix F: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

[NB. These questions will guide my discussion with the principal and probes are indicated under each question. However, follow-up questions will also be posed depending on the responses of the participants].

1. The Department of Basic Education expects principals to be instructional leaders notwithstanding the conditions you find yourselves in. Do you believe that principals need to be instructional leaders?
   Yes/No
   [Probes: If yes, why do you believe that principals need to be instructional leaders?
   If No, why do you believe they should not?

2. Do you consider yourself as an instructional leader?
   Yes/No
   [Probes: If yes, what exactly is your understanding about instructional leadership?
   What do you do as an instructional leader in your school? Please elaborate!
   Why do you enact these instructional leadership tasks the way you do? Please elaborate!]

3. Does your school suffer from any forms of multiple deprivations?
   Yes/No
   [Probes: If yes, which deprivations are prevalent? How do these multiple deprivations impact on your instructional leadership practices? How do you navigate around these impacts of multiple deprivations and still ensures that teaching and learning takes place as it should? Please elaborate!]

4. Do you think that instructional leadership is essential in schools?
   [Probes: If yes, why do you regard these instructional leadership tasks essential?
   If, No, please explain why?

5. How do you ensure that the right climate is created to facilitate teaching and learning despite multiple deprivations?

[Probes: How do you ensure that teachers and learners want to come to school and produce the best of their abilities, given the challenges of multiple deprivations? How are teachers and learners held accountable for their performance?]

6. What role do you play in developing your staff members to cope with issues of multiple deprivations?

7. Do you regard your instructional leadership activities as contributing to the effectiveness of teaching and learning in your school?
   [Probes: If you do, what personal qualities do you think assists you and why? Please elaborate?]

8. What other information can you add as far as the issues of instructional leadership and multiple deprivations in your school are concern?

Thank you very much for participating in this interview.

Appendix G: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HODs/ PL1 EDUCATORS

[NB. These questions will guide my discussion with the principal and probes are indicated under each question. However, follow-up questions will also be posed depending on the responses of the participants].

1. The Department of Basic Education expects principals to be instructional leaders notwithstanding the conditions you find yourselves in. Do you believe that principals need to be instructional leaders?
   Yes/No
   [Probes: If yes, why do you believe that principals need to be instructional leaders?
   If No, why do you believe they should not?

2. Do you consider your principal to be an instructional leader?
   Yes/No
   [Probes: If yes, what exactly does he/she do as an instructional leader in your school? Please elaborate! Why do you think your principal enact these instructional leadership tasks the way he/she does? Please elaborate!]
   [Probes: what exactly is your understanding about instructional leadership? Please elaborate!]

3. Does your school suffer from any forms of multiple deprivations?
   Yes/No
   [Probes: If yes, which deprivations are prevalent? How do these multiple deprivations impact on your principal's instructional leadership practices? How does he/she navigate around these impacts of multiple deprivations and still ensures that teaching and learning takes place as it should? Please elaborate!]

4. Do you think that instructional leadership is essential in schools?
   [Probes: If yes, why do you regard these instructional leadership tasks essential?
   If, No, please explain why?

5. How does your principal ensure that the right climate is created to facilitate teaching and learning despite multiple deprivations?
   [Probes: How does he/she ensure that teachers and learners want to come to school and produce the best of their abilities, given the challenges of multiple deprivations? How are teachers and learners held accountable for their performance?]

6. What role does your principal play in developing staff members to cope with issues of multiple deprivations?

7. Do you regard your principal's instructional leadership activities as contributing to the effectiveness of teaching and learning in your school?
   [Probes: If you do what personal qualities you think assists your principal and why? Please elaborate?]

8. What other information can you add as far as the issues of instructional leadership and multiple deprivations in your school are concern?

Thank you very much for participating in this interview.

Appendix H: OBSERVATION GUIDE

This schedule is aimed at observing the instructional leadership practices of participating principals and the multiple deprivation contexts impacting on the school. I will, amongst other things, focus and take notes of the following:

1. Deprivation contexts;
2. Late coming; absenteeism of both learners and educators
3. Uniform;
4. What learners eat during breaks;
5. Instructional activities of the principals;
6. Display of vision and mission statements of the province and that of the schools;
7. Distribution of instructional tasks;
8. Personal attributes of the principals;
9. School environment

I will record the notes of what was observed during the actual observation/s and or as quickly as possible thereafter in cases where I foresee that writing notes will make participants feel uncomfortable.

Appendix I: DOCUMENTS REVIEWS GUIDE

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

1. Written sources such as minutes where teaching and learning issues and development are discussed.
2. The school's code of conduct for learners' policy shall be the focus of review.
3. School disciplinary committee meetings and tribunals will be studied for frequency of these incidents.
4. The school's log book and incident books shall be extensively studied.
5. Mark schedules, attendance registers; and evidence of parental involvement.
6. Educational Management Information System (EMIS) data on issues of multiple deprivations, for example, learners without parents; unemployed parents; child headed families or learners living with caregivers; education levels of parents; and learners receiving child support grants.

Official documents will be used to corroborate the observations and interviews, thus improving the trustworthiness of findings. The documents may reveal aspects that were not found through the interviews and observations. Extensive notes will be taken on matters relating to multiple deprivations and its impact on instructional leadership practices of the principal.

Appendix J: School profile form

SCHOOL PROFILE: SCHOOL _____

		Comments		
1. Location	Rural/Tship			
	Approximate distance from Durban CBD			
2. Deprivation levels (Approximate %age of learners facing these deprivations)	Income and material deprivation			
	Employment deprivation			
	Education deprivation			
	Adequate care deprivation			
	Living environment deprivation			
3. School enrolment	2015			
	2014			
	2013			
4. Teacher learner ratio per class. approximation				
5. School size/	No. of classes			
	Special classes			
6. School building	Condition			
	Toilets			
	Water			
	Electricity			
	Fencing			
7. Physical resources	Library			
	Laboratory			
	Computer lab			
	School hall			
	Sports grounds			
8. Staffing	PPN			
	Princ;DP;HODs;PL1			
	SGB paid educators			
	Non- teaching staff			
9. School fees per annum	Amount			
	% learners affording			
	% learners exempted			
10. DoBE allocation	Quintile ranking			
	Special allocations			
	Learner transportation			
	Feeding scheme			
11. Pass rate %age 2014;2013;2012	NSC			
	Internal average			

Appendix K: Permission letter from KZN DoBE

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Nomangisi Ngubane Tel: +33 392 1004 Ref: 2/4/8/1

Mr BNCK Mkhize
PO Box 65
UMBUMBULU
4105

Dear Mr Mkhize

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN THE CONTEXT OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATIONS IN UMLAZI DISTRICT: A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY", 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 01 February 2015 to 28 February 2016.
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 Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below.
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 (Umlazi District).

Nkosinathi S.P. Sishi, PhD
Head of Department: Education
Date: 24 November 2014

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

POSTAL: Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200, KwaZulu-Natal, Republic of South Africa ...dedicated to service and performance
PHYSICAL: 247 Burger Street, Anton Lembede House, Pietermaritzburg, 3201. Tel. +33 392 1004 ...beyond the call of duty
EMAIL ADDRESS: kehologile.ramtle@kzndoe.gov.za / Nomangisi.Ngubane@kzndoe.gov.za
CALL CENTRE: 0800 596 363; Fax: +33 392 1003 WEBSITE: www.kzneducation.gov.za

Appendix L: Turnitin certificate