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School of Education

**Leadership for quality teaching and learning in
challenging contexts: Perspectives of secondary
school principals in Pinetown District**

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**Leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging
contexts: Perspectives of secondary school principals in Pinetown
District**

By

Thandolwakhe Katamzi

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

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL
(EDGEWOOD CAMPUS)**

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

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This dissertation has been submitted with my approval



Dr B.N.C.K. Mkhize (Supervisor)



19 May 2021

Mr Thandolwakhe Katamzi (209530387)
School Of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Katamzi,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00002667/2021

Project title: Leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts: Perspectives of secondary school principals in Pinetown District

Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 13 April 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

This approval is valid until 19 May 2022.

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

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

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

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

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INSPIRING GREATNESS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my lovely wife Mrs Chwaita Katamzi, and to my two lovely kids Omela and Amile Katamzi for supporting and motivating me to accomplish this academic goal. I am very grateful to have them.

I dedicate this study to my lovely parents Mr Sijadu Katamzi and Mrs Nonyaniso Katamzi.

This study is also dedicated to my wonderful sibling, Miss Neliswa Katamzi, Mr. Masande Katamzi, Mr. Zuko Katamzi and Miss Melinda Katamzi for their understanding during this academic journey.

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The school principals of the four schools where study was conducted.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this qualitative study was to have an in-depth understanding on how secondary school principals enhance leadership for quality in challenging school context. This study explored how secondary school principals understand leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging school context. The study also highlights the challenges that secondary school principals experience while they practice their leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging school context. It also investigated how secondary school principals navigated some of the challenges they encountered while ensuring quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts. The research paradigm that was employed in this study was interpretivism. The research design of the study adopted qualitative approach. The study selected four secondary school principals; all four secondary school principals are from Pinetown education district. In this study, semi-structured interviews were utilised as the only research method to generate data. Then data was generated from the participants through semi-structured individual interviews. Thematic abstraction was utilised to analyse data and to provide meaning to the data. Scholastic works across the globe on leadership for quality teaching and learning on school principals were used to pick out similarities and differences in the existing literature and with what has been obtained in the field.

The research findings revealed that secondary school principals that participated in this study have a reasonable understanding of leadership for quality teaching and learning. Their practices in ensuring that quality teaching and learning in challenging context also revealed reasonable understanding. However, their schools are inundated with some challenges rooted from lack of parental co-operation, late coming, and COVID-19 related issues. The study suggested the following recommendations: school principals need to broaden up their understanding in leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging context, assess the rate of quality looking at the whole school, and school principals need to keep themselves abreast of all the latest developments relating to life threatening conditions in their schools.

List of acronyms

KZN: KwaZulu-Natal

DoE: Department of Education

SGB: School Governing Body

SMT: School Management Team

HOD: Head of Department

QMS: Quality Management System

COVID-19: Corona Virus

PPE: Personal Protective Equipment

QMS: Quality Management System

SASP: South African Standard for Principalship

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Leadership for quality in teaching and learning is a world-wide phenomenon, including South Africa; however, in some instances, this important issue does not seem to be acknowledged (Akareem & Hossain, 2016; Marshall, 2016). Radical political transformation in South Africa has developed high expectations for school principals to improve the quality of education by providing better life for all the learners (Van Der Voort & Wood, 2016). Therefore, school principals are responsible for, and are held accountable for the quality teaching and learning in schools (Ademola, Tsotetsi, & Gbemisola, 2021). Due to the political transformation brought about by the demise of apartheid, South Africa has shifted away from the segregated education system of the past to a new system open education for all (Pampallis, 1998). This aspect emphasises the need for equal access to education and quality teaching and learning for all learners through effective and proficient leadership (Ngcobo & Tikly, 2010). Using a plethora of policies, South Africa has set standards and requirements that schools should thrive for increasing education quality and performance of all learners (Klocko & Wells, 2015; Pustolka, 2012).

The Policy on the South African Standards for Principalship (2015), for example, clearly outlines the functions and other expectations of school principals as leaders of schools. For instance, school principals are expected to lead teaching and learning in their school (through developing leaders of learning in school) ; to lead the process of shaping the direction of the school (being in the forefront as a leader); to manage quality accountability (to be in charge in every decision); to develop and empower themselves and others (through learning and mentor teachers); to manage schools as organisations; to work closely with the community (involving SGB and other stakeholders in building the school); to manage school human resources, and to manage extra-mural activities in the school (through counselling teachers and resolve internal cases) . Given this, Personnel Administrative Measures document of (2016), supports the South African Standards for Principalship (SASP) policy document that school principals have to provide professional leadership in the school in order to improve quality of teaching and learning across all contexts. This is a clear indication that, on paper, South Africa is committed,

not only to the provision of quality education, but also to leadership for quality teaching and learning. However, it is not clear if all these noble ideas are being realised in schools. Therefore, this study sought to explore this important issue. Specifically, the study focused on exploring the understanding of leadership for quality of school principals in challenging context in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. The main assumption underpinning the study is that, without a clear understanding of what leadership for quality teaching and learning is about, principals as custodians of quality education at school level are unlikely to lead for quality teaching and learning.

1.2 Background to the study

Across the globe, education systems seem to be affected by radical political as well as economic changes (Mestry, 2017). Therefore, schools in South Africa and across the globe have to respond to rapid changes and implement new practices (Tirri, Eisenschmidt, Poom-Valickis, & Kuusisto, 2021). Political transformation in South Africa saw the need to introduce new legislative framework for education in the form of SASP (Department of Basic Education, 2015), which indicates that school principals are mandated to lead quality teaching and learning in schools. School principals are not left alone to fight for the realisation of this goal, but are theoretically assisted by circuit managers to enhance their practices in schools (Mavuso & Moyo, 2014). Therefore, leadership at circuit level is required to enhance quality teaching and learning through the following aspects; setting directions, and developing school principals. However, in South Africa, some principals leading in challenging context are experiencing difficulties in enhancing leadership for quality teaching and learning (Brown, 2010; du Plessis & Subramanien, 2014).

Research reveals that there is a growing concern about the necessity to improve the level of learner performance in South African education (Coetzee & Venter, 2016). Given this, school principals are drivers of change to improve that learner performance in school. Therefore, their role in South African schools is indisputable (Bantwini & Diko, 2011). It is clear that their influential leadership practices include ensuring quality teaching and learning to increase learner performance. However, there are findings that suggest that many school principals in South Africa have been inundated with many challenges during this decade. In spite of that South Africa has mandated school principals through Department of Basic Education to provide adequate support to schools using their authority (Van Der Voort & Wood, 2016). In

the past few years, the importance of role and the impact of leadership for quality has been prospering (Masango , 2013). Research by Hallinger and Ko (2015), for instance, indicates that there are some efforts that reflects a shift in school principals' practices from being administrative managers to being leaders of learning.

1.3 Rationale for the study

I have been teaching for the past seven years, and that experience has provided me an opportunity to have more knowledge about some important issues in the education systems. Throughout these years I have been exposed to leadership and management issues, including the role that school managers do. One critical leadership role, which is core to their responsibilities is supporting curriculum delivery Department of Basic Education (2015). However, I have noted that some principals I have been exposed to, do not seem to focus on providing leadership that promotes quality teaching and learning. As a result, my personal observation as a post level one educator has raised interest in me in terms of seeking knowledge about whether or not principals provide leadership that promotes quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts. Some do not engage in leadership practices that create a culture that is conducive to quality or effective teaching and learning. Hence, the need to understanding leadership practices that promote quality teaching and learning.

Another point relating to how some principals work is that they themselves require support in order for them to provide support for quality teaching and learning situation. In some districts, school principals work alone without having any physical support of an immediate senior present for the whole year. There are no school visits for newly appointed principals. The novice principals are not properly guided by circuit managers on how to lead and produce quality and perform other tasks. In some schools, principals are often not present due to union activities. Informally, when talking with some teachers, they echo their concerns about the lack of support from school principals. These school principals are officially supposed to be supervisors of their schools (Bantwini, 2018). It is clearly indicated in number of national policies that school principals must provide support and curriculum guidance to improve quality teaching and learning (PAM, 2016). Research by Waters and Marzano (2007) reveals an evidence of circuit manager's impact on learner achievement when schools their authority are goal-orientated. This study seeks to close the gap on the un-researched area and bring about the understanding of quality on secondary school principal's leadership practices.

1.4 Statement of the problem

School principals provide professional leadership in schools in a variety of ways such as monitoring and supervising teachers' work and coaching them in order to better influence their practices (Mafuwane & Pitsoe, 2014; Tirri, Eisenschmidt, Poom-Valickis & Kuusisto, 2021). They also have to ensure that teaching and learning materials are available for the teachers to use to enhance their learners' understanding (Alemu, et al., 2021). Preparing the teaching and learning forms part of the strategy to improve the quality of curriculum delivery. However, in some instances, school principals do not perform their curriculum leadership effectively; hence, the quality of teaching and learning is not of an acceptable standard. I use the term teaching and learning and curriculum delivery interchangeably.

Literature shows that school principals play an important role in school leadership (Bantwini & Moorosi, 2018; Zuze & Juan, 2018). Therefore, without pro-activeness and accountability of the principals in their daily leadership activities, leadership in teaching and learning may produce less quality (Mafuwane & Pitsoe, 2014). The SASP (Republic of South Africa, 2015) outlines the duties of school principals, and these include monitoring the curriculum, schools' functionality and the facilitation of professional development. Current literature further supports the view that school principals have to support and monitor school teachers (Chabalala & Naidoo, 2021). However, what seemed not to be happening in some of the schools in challenging contexts, principals provide leadership that falls short of the standards as enshrined in the SASP. I therefore argue that the main problem of this study is to understand how school principals enact leadership for quality in teaching and learning within secondary school principals in challenging contexts.

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of this research is located in the understanding of how secondary school principals in challenging contexts thrive to produce quality despite their circumstances. The study sought to understand how school principals provide leadership for quality in teaching and learning in secondary schools that are located in challenging contexts. I believe that the findings of this research may contribute to a better understanding of how, through leadership practices, principals in challenging or deprived contexts enhance quality teaching and learning.

The findings may also assist to provide insights on how secondary school principals enhance quality teaching and learning in challenging context.

1.6 Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the study are:

- To explore secondary school principals' understandings of leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts.
- To explore secondary school principals' leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts.
- To navigate challenges faced by secondary school principals in their leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts.

1.7 Critical research questions

- What are secondary school principals' understandings of leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts?
- How do secondary school principals lead for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts?
- What are the challenges faced by school principals in their leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts?

1.8 Clarification of key concepts

There are five key concepts that are clarified in terms of their operation in this study. These key concepts are; school principal, leadership, quality, quality teaching and learning and challenging contexts, and they are briefly discussed below.

1.8.1 School principal

A school principal is a head teacher in a school and is an immediate senior of a deputy principal. According Policy Standard for Principalship (Department of Basic Education, 2015), a school principal is the leader of the school that shapes the direction of the school, manages quality of

teaching and learning and manages staff in the school. According to the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) of 1996, a school principal promotes the culture of teaching and learning and enhance the quality of education.

1.8.2 Leadership

Leadership has been described by many scholars in many different ways. For instance, according to Chemers (2014), leadership is a process of social influence to support others to accomplish common task. Similarly, leadership is defined by Northouse (2015) as a process whereby people generate influences on others in order for organisational goals to be met. Sergiovanni and Starratt (1983. p. 70) defines leadership as the supervisor's ability to influence individuals and groups towards the achievement of goals". Robbins (1989, p. 302) describes leadership as "the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of goals". Therefore, it is evident that many scholars are in agreement about a number of issues regarding leadership. While others limit the conception of the term to certain positions in organisations, they all agree that leadership as a process of influencing a group of people in organisations towards the achievement of an organisational goals. This concept is used in the same way in this study.

1.8.3 Quality

The concept quality is a catchphrase in all spheres of work. This concept captures different understandings by different people. Researches I have read thus far suggests that quality is a set of essential characteristics which always transform requirements of the organisation (Elshaer, 2012). Alexander (2015) views quality as a degree of excellence. Similarly, Bunglowala and Asthana (2016) view quality as the plan to a company's success. In the context of this study, quality has to do with all those elements that depict issues of excellence and high standards in terms of teaching and learning, schools that producing good results, and schools that their leadership is functional.

1.8.4 Quality in teaching and learning

The nature of quality in teaching and learning is viewed as a way to strengthen the ability of knowledge and skills of a teacher that are utilised to provide a meaningful methodology for learners (Loughran, 2018). Quality in the provision of teaching and learning encompasses a whole range of activities which are aimed at facilitating the process of teaching and learning in an effective and efficient manner.

1.8.5 Leadership for quality teaching and learning

Leadership for quality teaching and learning seems to be a rare phenomenon with limited literature. However, in this study it refers to school leadership that is able to ensure the core business quality teaching and learning occur despite of all odds. Therefore, school principals ensure that there is excellent management quality (Bunglowala & Asthana, 2016) in the school leadership team, employment of quality teachers, leadership that actions the vision and set clear goals of the school (Hallinger, 2003), and leadership that is able to communicate and network effectively with all stakeholders.

1.8.6 Challenging context

Challenging context is a complex and heterogeneous concept (Crichton & Onguko, 2013). This concept challenging is used interchangeable with the concept deprived in this study. School principals that are leading in challenging context are considered being deprived. Challenging context is understood as a setting where people are challenged in different number of situations such as: easy access to transport; continuous formal learning; and situations linked to poverty (Crichton, 2014). In school context, this concept covers non-paying fee schools (quintile 1-3), schools that do not have library and access to computers, and schools that are situated mostly in rural areas.

1.9 Demarcation of the study

The study focuses on how leadership for quality teaching and learning is understood and translated in a challenging context. The main focus of the study was on four secondary school principals in one district. This study was conducted in a challenging context in the Pinetown District in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. Pinetown District is one of the biggest districts in KwaZulu-Natal (KwaZulu-Natal Education Province, 2013), and it is affected by many socio-economic difficulties such as high levels of unemployment, especially amongst the youth, and dependency on social grants.

1.10 Limitations of the study

This study focused on four secondary school principals as the participants. The school principals were from one district in KZN. That means that ideas about the notion of leadership for quality teaching and learning is limited to a very small sample of schools and participants. Because of this, I tried to ensure that I provide a thick and nuanced description of how the participants express their understanding of leadership for quality teaching and learning, and the meaning they attached to their leadership practices.

1.11 Outline of the study

This study consists of five chapters. Therefore, this section seeks to provide a summary of the entire study. The summary overview of each chapter is discussed below.

Chapter One

This chapter introduced the study as a whole. It also presented a background of the study, the rationale, the statement of the problem, the research questions, the purpose and significance of the study, as well as the clarification of the key concepts underpinning the study. A chapter summary brings the chapter to a conclusion.

Chapter Two

This chapter is a review of relevant literature on leadership for quality teaching and learning drawing from both local and international perspective. The theories that provide a framework for the study are also discussed.

Chapter Three

This chapter provides a detailed discussion about issue of research design and methodology. Included in that discussion are philosophical issues in the form of research paradigms, research methodologies and sampling techniques.

Chapter Four

This chapter presents and discusses the findings that are generated from the secondary school principals through the use of semi-structured interviews.

Chapter Five

This is the last chapter, and it presents conclusions that were drawn from the findings that were presented and discussed in Chapter Four. On the basis of the conclusions, recommendations are made.

1.12 Chapter summary

The first chapter served as an orientation of the study, and it presented a discussion of various elements of an introductory chapter. These included the provision of a background and the rationale for the study, as well as, the research questions driving the study. The next chapter provides a comprehensive discussion of relevant literature that was reviewed, as well as the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the introduction and orientation to the study. This chapter reviews relevant literature on how school principals understand leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging context, and how they translate their understanding of leadership for quality teaching and learning into practice in their contexts. I also discuss the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

2.2 Understanding leadership as a concept

In Chapter One, I presented a section on clarification of key concepts, and leadership was one of the five key concepts that were clarified in relation to how they are applied in the study. Leadership for quality seem to be a broad phenomenon which is influenced by number of factors in a particular context. Number of researchers across the globe have conceptualised leadership in a manner that brings life to quality. According to Northouse (2010) leadership is a process where a leader carries an influential role in a group and agreed on objectives of the institution. Yukl (2012) views leadership as a power to individuals and groups to facilitate shared objectives. Given these conceptualisations, leadership is whereby a leader influences the subordinates to achieve a common goal. In a school context, leadership rests on shoulders of school principals and it seeks to improve team performance in a challenging context. Therefore, school principals as leaders must have exceptional leadership skills to support and develop school teachers on day-to-day activities. Through their power vested on them, their leadership power should skills to persuade principal's behaviours and attitudes towards the school objectives (Deventer & Kruger, 2013). Research trends reflect that leadership for quality teaching and learning is the main reason in school quality performance (Gurr, 2015; Marishane, 2016). School principals should lead functional teachers to use strategies in bringing about the best in schools in a challenging context.

When school principals in challenging context lead effectively, they strengthen educational leadership at a level of the school. Educational leadership refers to a way of supervising all

school entities to achieve a common educational goal. Research argues that educational leadership is based on developing rich understanding on the phenomena at levels of the system while attending policies, programs and structures (Spillane, 2004). Therefore, effective educational leadership is important for schools in challenging context to achieve quality.

2.3 Understanding quality as a concept

The notion of quality seems to be commonly used in all educational contexts. “Quality” has been an important buzzing word in education (Bunglowala & Asthana, 2016), and has been at the heart of education (Alexander, 2015). Quality contributes severely in solving crisis in education (Alemu, et al., 2021). The view of understanding quality, I argue that quality is the high standard of excellence. Similarly, quality refers to a degree to which a product meets some of the design standards (Elshaer, 2012). Not refuting the above ideas, quality is viewed as an important aspect of processes as well as products (Zonnenshain & Kenett, 2020). The diverging view reveals that quality refers to a “fitness for purpose” and “fitness of purpose” (Wittek & Habib, 2013). Given the least of ideas on quality, it is hard precisely define quality. However, there is consensus evidence from scholars that the importance of understanding quality varies depending on the research approach adopted and the context (Alexander, 2015; Elshaer, 2012; Bunglowala & Asthana, 2016).

In South African context, secondary schools put more emphasis of quality on grade 12, hence, it is the only grade that write national examination. Therefore, minister of education provide qualitative and quantitative results. Whereas researches of quality in education base this notion on school evaluation. While other research marked the emphasis on teaching and learning (Wittek & Habib, 2013), hence Quality of teaching and learning is the major task in education (Seyfried & Pohlenz, 2018). In light of these ideas the notion of quality remains crucially pertinent (Wittek & Habib, 2013).

2.4 Quality teaching and learning

Quality teaching and learning refers to an approach used that is responsive and appropriate to learner needs and achievements in school context (Pendergast & Main, 2020). Quality teaching and learning is associated with roles of education policies of schools and teachers in promoting

high learner performance (Costa & Araujo, 2018). Therefore, quality teaching and learning is grounded in high teaching and learning that meet all the needs of the school. It involves all instructional settings (Killen, 2010) such as effective teaching and high quality learning. Given this, in international context quality teaching and learning resonates catering for learner needs and high performance of learners. In South African context, research shows that quality teaching and learning education system can be achieved if it has a core of good teachers (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). However, quality teaching and learning in challenging context seem not be supported fully in some schools than in urban context. Given this, most school principals in challenging context are left alone and it takes some time to for them to be visited. Therefore, leadership for quality of teaching and learning is affected negatively. The provision of quality teaching and learning in education is important to ensure that learners receive equal opportunities in life (Bantwini, 2017). However, there is a concern across the globe based on quality of education obtained by learners from rural contexts (Van Der Berg, Burger, Burger, De Vos, De Vos, Gustafsson, Moses, Shepherd, Spaul, Taylor, Van Broekhuizen & Von Fintel, 2011). Quality in teaching and learning seem to a basic need for learners succeed in life (Bantwini, 2017). Contrary to this, learner achievement in rural contexts seem to be different and poor, depending how rural is the context (Du Plessis, 2019). Yet, school principals in rural contexts are expected to provide quality leadership in their schools to develop these communities.

2.5 School principals enacting leadership for quality teaching and learning

Principals of school are mandated to improve quality teaching and learning in schools (Trilaksono, Purusottama, Misbach, & Prasetya, 2018), and quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts is a centre of learner achievement (Bantwini, 2017). Therefore, leadership of school principals play an important role in school improvement (Steyn & Mashaba, 2014; Schulze, 2014). School principals are important leaders in leading change. My review of literature has generated six main aspects of principals' leadership for quality teaching and learning, and these are (a) Principals as instructional leaders; (b) Professional development for teachers; (c) Motivating teachers and the learners; (d) Team teaching as a developmental programme; (e) Principals as teachers in the classroom; (f) Extra classes to support quality learning. These six aspects are discussed below.

2.5.1 Principals as instructional leaders

To mobilise school changes, principals of school have to practice instructional leadership to improve the quality of teaching and learning in challenging (Muda, Mansor & Ibrahim, 2017). Instructional leadership is perceived as the most important function of school principals who prioritise quality (Shaked, 2020). Instructional leadership is described as leadership that is based on delivering quality teaching which aim to promote classroom practice and learning (Thaba-Nkadamene, 2020). According to Mestry (2017), it is a leadership for curriculum management. Hallinger (2017) views it as leadership for learning. It has been also noted that instructional leadership had a major role in educational administration (Hallinger, 2019). Therefore, evidence on the literature reveals that there has been a positive connection between instructional leadership and school performance (Hallinger, 2019; Shaked, 2020; Thaba-Nkadamene, 2020). Therefore, I argue that school principals in challenging context adopt instructional leadership to attain quality in their schools. Research conducted in South Africa supports that school principals improve their school and learners' outcomes through prompting best instructional practices (Thaba-Nkadamene, 2020).

Literature suggests that principals as instructional leaders should set clear goals (Hallinger, 2019; Hallinger, 2005; Hallinger, 2003), manage instruction and curriculum, dispense resources and assess teachers. Furthermore, instructional leadership includes teacher development, classroom interactions, and analysis of learner data (Honig & Rainey, 2020). Principals put more attention on improving quality of teaching and nurture learning (Naz & Rashid, 2021; Thaba-Nkadamene, 2020). School principals as instructional leaders execute a number of tasks (Naz & Rashid, 2021). Furthermore, they perform tasks of being school manager, school administrator, and curriculum leaders. I believe that by engaging fully in the forgoing tasks they become effective. Then school principals become effective as instructional leaders, school teachers become more engaged, and learners succeed (Naz & Rashid, 2021).

Since there is consensus amongst the scholars that instructional leadership has become dominant in education, it is emphasised that instructional leadership focuses on managing quality teaching and learning as core tasks in schools (Mosoge & Mataboge, 2021). Principals in challenging context are engulfed with different number of tasks in leading schools well. However, the expectation of government, parents and learners is that the school must produce quality learners. Support from the research points that principals create collaborative

environment, support collective effectiveness for teachers, and welcome parents in school (Honig & Rainey, 2020). Consequently, school principals' expectations are to create positive relationships to achieve good results of learners (Maponya, 2020). Since instructional leadership is about tasks that have direct effect on learner development (Kılıç, 2021), the attentive attention of principals' leadership is on the teacher. Therefore, the instructional leadership ideas and practices are to change behaviour of the teachers (Karwanto, 2020; Hallinger, 2019). Given this, the professional development of teachers is important in leadership for quality. The supervisory teacher development interaction is performed by principal working with school management team (Wanzare, 2011). Managing instructional practices in South African context, principal of schools have to supervise instruction in the classroom.

Education is now being labelled as the bedrock of every society and a tool (Dianabasi, Catherine, & Ugochukwu, 2021; Nombo, Nyangarika, & Mwesiga, 2020). School principals have an important role in the achievement of school goals (Nombo, Nyangarika, & Mwesiga, 2020) and school teachers have a duty to produce high quality in education irrespective of the context. Current findings suggest that principals' communication and motivation have an important positive relationship in school effectiveness of teachers particularly in aspects such as; punctuality, preparation of lesson plans, lesson delivery, and classroom management (Asuquo & Etor, 2021). To attain quality teaching and learning in a challenging context school principals, teachers, students and other stakeholders need to be organised in such a manner that there is cooperation amongst all of them. However, some school teachers go late to classes and unprepared, interval absenteeism (Mthiyane & Mudadigwa, 2021). Later on in this chapter, I present an instructional leadership model is developed by Hallinger and Murphy.

2.5.2 Professional development for teachers

Professional development (PD) is a necessity to help school teachers learn as well as to sharpen the instructional strategies (Darling-Hammond, Hyler, Gardner, & Espinoza, 2017). Professional development captures various programmes within the school context such as Quality Management System (QMS), team teaching, motivation and mentoring. Therefore, I argue that school leadership should show leadership through necessary developments such as motivating school teachers and conducting quality management system. Through these aspects,

leadership for quality may prevail in schools in challenging context. However, the concern of leadership for quality emerged in number of sectors across the globe education (Diez, Iraurgi, & Villa, 2018), and has been used successful. In the South African context, the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) which now has been changed to Quality Management System (QMS) has been implemented in many schools. This system sought to identify areas of development to teachers. Professional development for teachers contributes in creating favourable conditions to ensure quality of learners (Simkin, Mozhaeva, & Proskurin, 2019). And debates in educational sector concerning utility of QMS reveals that there are more advantages in schools than disadvantages. Research indicates that the identification of QMS model is to provide an extra professional education (Simkin, Mozhaeva, & Proskurin, 2019). However, in the field school principals seem to not to be firm in engaging support programmes. Professional development is essential for new teachers as well as experienced teachers (Coenders & Verhoef, 2019). It is emerging that support programmes and high-quality mentors seem to positively influence new teachers and teacher quality. Research points that school teachers perceive their school principals are good in some mentoring skills in terms of being knowledgeable and experienced (Yirci, Ozdemir, Kartal, & Kocabas, 2014).

2.5.3 Motivating teachers and the learners

Studies world over indicates that working with staff that is not motivated achieves very little compared with those that are motivated. Motivation is understood as the driving force behind individuals that are engaging in any task (Singh, 2016). Motivation is a common phenomenon in leadership and management terrain; however, it encourages staff members to put more effort on their productivity (Asuquo & Etor, 2021). It makes teachers to execute their core duties with joy in delivering quality teaching and learning (Owan, Ekpe, & Bassey, 2020). I therefore argue that each institution has to put in practice motivation programmes or strategies to its staff members. Research shows that motivation comes in the form of two domains, internal influence and external influence (Asuquo & Etor, 2021). Internal motivation refers to an individual desire to execute tasks that are not associated with rewards, while external motivation on the other hand has to do with performance linked with some rewards (Asuquo & Ekoph, 2018). Evidence in the literature shows that motivation to school teachers have average contribution to the extension commitment in secondary schools (Owan, Ekpe, & Bassey, 2020; Asuquo & Etor, 2021).

In executing internal motivation in challenging context, principal use formal setting (meetings) and informal setting (corridors) to motivate their staffs. Due to COVID-19 measures, school principals ensure professionalism (Stone-Johnson & Weiner, 2020), that involves wearing of masks and social distancing. In South Africa, school principals motivate their teachers in the morning briefings and staff meetings in a challenging context. Teachers are motivated in factors such as trust, creating a culture of respect and recognition (Singh, 2016). Research by Okorie and Usulor (2016) supports that school principals ensure that they inspire school teachers in staff meetings for effectiveness in public and private secondary schools. Hence, they serve as essential, frontline workers (Stone-Johnson & Weiner, 2020) in their schools. I argue here that it is their duty to ensure that all teachers are motivated. Research findings suggest that future information leaders as well as managers have to note that intrinsic factors play an important role in employee motivation and emphasise the creation of a culture of respect (Singh, 2016). The scholar further suggests that intrinsic factors are more important to staff than extrinsic factors.

Extrinsic motivation is described as performing because it leads to outside reward (Singh, 2016). In a nutshell, a teacher receives something for executing teaching instead of enjoying teaching. There is a consensus in the existing literature that extrinsic rewards involve tangible rewards such as salary, promotions, as well as benefits (Asuquo & Etor, 2021; Okorie & Usulor, 2016; Owan, Ekpe, & Bassey, 2020; Singh, 2016). In South Africa, secondary school teachers are likely to get those rewards. Teachers who are assigned to teacher Grade 12 are paid for having taught winter and spring school programmes, marking Grade 12 final examination, and they are being awarded for having obtained good quality in their subjects. Given this, it also results to high level of intrinsic motivation, however initial motivators are extrinsic (Singh, 2016). What is important is that school leaders need to be aware of all these dynamics so that they can carefully implement motivation strategies to the benefit of the teachers, the learners and the school.

2.5.4 Team teaching as a developmental programme

Team teaching is an instructional technique that seems to be widely used across the globe (Zambrano, Kirschner, Sweller, & Kirschner, 2019). These scholars further state that team

learning has become important in schools. Therefore, learning as a team seems to be the key for success in teacher teams (Zambrano, et al., 2019). General consensus by scholars suggests that team teaching is based on number of teachers that come together in planning and teaching the subject (Baeten & Simons, 2014; Canaran & Mirici, 2020; Crawford & Jenkins, 2017; Vesikivi, Lakkala, Holvikivi, & Muukkonen, 2019). Team teaching is also considered as a collaborative teaching approach (Crawford & Jenkins, 2017). Team teaching is suggested as an avenue to spread quality teaching skills (Vesikivi, Lakkala, Holvikivi, & Muukkonen, 2019). Literature suggests that team teaching shows some important advantages for teachers such as emotional and professional support, increased dialogue, professional growth and personal growth (Baeten & Simons, 2014; Simons, Baeten, & Vanhees, 2020). These scholars further highlight the disadvantages such as the lack of compatibility, comparison between peers, difficulty of providing feedback, increased workload, and less individual teaching (Baeten & Simons, 2014; Simons et al., 2020). It is evident that team teaching practice by teachers is still in its infancy (Simons, Baeten, & Vanhees, 2020). However, the views of research suggest that teachers in team teaching may come from different disciplines or same discipline (Canaran & Mirici, 2020).

Since team teaching is not a new phenomenon (Canaran & Mirici, 2020; Crawford & Jenkins, 2017), therefore, it provides benefits and opportunities for quality teaching and learning, and the learning works best when learning activities are cognitively demanding (Zambrano, Kirschner, Sweller, & Kirschner, 2019). Teachers working in team teaching face almost same challenges across the globe (Canaran & Mirici, 2020). Notwithstanding that, team teaching enhances professional development (Crawford & Jenkins, 2017), and its main aim is to enable learners to achieve a higher level of integration in studying new topics (Salim, Abdullah, Haron, Hussain, & Ishak, 2019). Within the nature of team teaching, challenges may transpire such as lack of training which may result in conflict between teachers and result in ineffective lessons (Canaran & Mirici, 2020). Secondly, they further note the energy and time needed to plan, as well as, to teach as a team. Literature speaks of two team teaching models which is parallel as well as sequential teaching (Simons, Baeten, & Vanhees, 2020), both of these models can apply in secondary schools. Parallel teaching is also known as “split class teaching” whereby teachers separate a class in subclasses and each teach teaches same content. While sequential teaching, teachers get to separate learning content. What is evident is that team teaching offers more opportunities for personal and professional growth for the teachers

involved. Such professional and personal growth can contribute to quality teaching and learning situation.

2.5.5 Principals as teachers in the classroom

In the first part of this section on principals' leadership for quality teaching and learning, I highlighted that principals are expected to be instructional leaders in terms of which, their core focus and duty in ensuring that effective teaching happens. One of the ways in which they do this is to be actively involved in teaching in the classroom. Teaching plays an important role in developing all societies in the world (Maldrine & Kiplangat, 2020). It is viewed as a complicated task (Rotas, 2020). However, research findings show that principals of schools notice that having a lesson to teach limits the time to perform other important activities such as supervision and monitoring teaching and learning (Turkoglu & Cansoy, 2020). They are of the view that school principals have to devote their time to improving education. Workload of principals needs them to spend time at school and at home to prepare for the following day (Ademola, Tsotetsi, & Gbemisola, 2021). In support of this, literature reveals that workload of school principals increase daily with new expectations (Bedi & Kukemelk, 2018; Klocko & Wells, 2015). In the South African context, some school principals are taking classes in their school though their duty load in terms of subject is very low, particularly principals from Quintile 1-3 schools.

Since principals of schools are the most important drivers in shaping school climate which seek to support school teachers and students (Bedi & Kukemelk, 2018). It is clear that principals in teaching profession seemed as highly stressful (Juma & Simatwa, 2016) due to a number of reasons, including fatigue and work overload. However, the literature I have reviewed thus far seem to be silent about school principals being teachers in the classroom. Nevertheless, what is clear is that being a teacher as a school principal is part of job stress (Bedi & Kukemelk, 2018). It adds up on the workload they execute as school principals such as evaluation, changing legislative mandates, supervision, and accountability (Klocko & Wells, 2015). In South Africa, some school principals have no choice but to teach because of a number of reasons, including the impacts of COVID-19. The factors pushing principals to be actively involved in the classroom as teachers, involve the following; schools are short staffed, the

number of educators have passed away (Shepherd & Mahohlwane, 2021) and the Department of Basic Education slow pace in filling the posts of those teachers that perish to this pandemic, some educators are taking short leaves that do not have substantive post to quarantine themselves, and learner enrolment in some schools dropped (Van Der Berg, Van Wyk, & Selkirk, 2020). Therefore, the involvement of the principals in teaching in the classroom is driven by a multitude of factors as mentioned in this paragraph.

2.5.6 Extra classes to support quality learning

Education is an important aspect in the lives of the learners (Kapur, 2018). In leading for quality teaching and learning, this chapter has indicated that school principals utilise a variety of strategies to ensure that learners perform well in terms of academic performance. We Chapter One and in the first sections of this chapter, particular attention to the principals' understandings of quality education. One of the key elements of quality education is the achievement of high percentages in Grade 12 examinations. This comes as no surprise that principals devote a lot of their time ensuring that the prescribed curriculum is covered. To do that, they invest more time encouraging both the learners and the teaching staff to attend extra classes that teachers organise. On the part of the teachers, the principals encourage them to agree to organise such classes.

In South Africa, secondary school devote their time in extra classes to enhance quality teaching and learning. It is evident that secondary school learners have a demanding schedule (Kapur, 2018). Interestingly, secondary school teachers and learners understand the nature having an extra time (John , 2019). Corona virus pandemic has even made this issue even more important as schools could not provide sufficient times teaching due to the requirements of health protocols which do not permit all the learners to be in schools as they used to. Therefore, COVID-19 has negatively affected education through placing schools on lockdown, and creating teaching and learning gap (IPIA-OGBU, 2021; Jacob, Abigeal & Lydia, 2020). Therefore, teachers, through the motivation and leadership of their principals, are using strategies to cover the time lost and to fill the gap in the curriculum.

In the ground, schools organise afternoon classes to cover curriculum and revisions of the past question papers. The secondary school principals lead those extended programmes. Research by Smith (2017) suggests that more attention is needed in terms of leadership practices in challenging school context. However, school teachers that are taking critical subjects such as Mathematics and Physics also take initiative in this respect. Literature reveals that teachers and schools used appropriate strategies to promote quality teaching and learning (John , 2019). All this was done to save the academic year (Asuquo & Etor, 2021). In this extended programme, competent school teachers are the main actors in learning (Kibona, Ndabi, & Kibona, 2020).

2.6 Challenges school principals encounter leading for quality teaching and learning

This theme focuses on the challenges that school principals encountered as they led their schools for quality teaching and learning. Our conversations generated three major challenges which tended to undermine the quality of teaching and learning. The three challenges are the lack of parental involvement and cooperation; learner attendance in challenging context and late coming in challenging context.

2.6.1 Lack of parental involvement in quality teaching and learning

According to Sari (2020), basic education requires collaboration amongst parents and school teachers. Parental involvement in secondary education seems to be under scrutiny and it is also critical for the success of school principals' leadership (Anastasiou & Papagianni, 2020). Parental involvement has an important aspect in learner education (Sari, 2020). Report from the existing literature shows parental involvement is very important in the success of learners' academic processes towards quality (Stage, Wilkerson, Hegde, Lisson, Babatunde & Goodell, 2018). Therefore, parental involvement in challenging contexts is important, and it plays a big role in the motivation of a learner. For instance, Bang (2018) and Sari (2020) reveal that school teachers and principals see the importance of parental involvement in learner's development of self-confidence. They further show that parental involvement benefits teachers and the school at large on the attentiveness of the learner (Sari, 2020).

According to Stage et al. (2018), the aspect of parental involvement may take different form. It involves all kinds of interaction between school teachers and parents (Sari, 2020; Silinskas

& Kikas, 2019). Studies reveal that parents in nowadays due to corona virus (COVID 19) take advantage of digital engagements such as social network sites, and other online platforms (Anastasiou & Papagianni, 2020). Study by Peck and Wong Mee Mee (2020) shows that parental involvement might involve in a number of ways such as learning at home, communicating, volunteering, as well as collaborating with the community. In this time of Covid 19, it would help if all schools may engage in a mutual agreement that on what level parents might make inquiries regarding their learners teaching and learning processes. However, parental involvement in challenging contexts remains a challenge in schools. Therefore, trying to maintain parental involvement in challenging school context needs to be done meaningfully (Sari, 2020). Unfortunately, many studies conducted in South Africa, especially in rural and other challenging contexts, paint a bleak picture with regards to this issue (Myende & Nhlumayo, 2020). Research by du Plessis and Subramanien (2014) reveal that there is lack of support from parents because poverty, employment conditions and illiteracy level. In most communities in challenging contexts of South Africa, illiteracy level of parents remains high, and as a result, some parents fail to understand why their children will be promoted and encourage them to go to school (Kucita et al., 2013). This is an indication that school principals have to work harder in trying to get parental involvement high especially during these times when children spend more time at home due to COVID-19 situation.

Principals of school are leaders that are expected to oversee curriculum implementation in schools (Tapala, Van Niekerk, & Mentz , 2020), however, their impact on day-to-day activities that seek to enhance quality teaching and learning seem not to be easy to achieve. School principals play an important role in guiding schools and shaping the vision of the school (Shava & Heystek, 2021). School principals in challenging context seem to be multifaceted by a plethora of challenges in their schools in enhancing parental involvement.

2.6.2 Learner attendance in challenging context

The second challenge that school principals encountered relates to learner attendance which has become a major problem, especially during COVID-19 situation. Literature shows that leaner attendance has been challenged by factors which result to absenteeism such as illnesses and lack of interest (Amalu & Abang, 2016), family problems, economic impossibilities and failure to understand importance of education (Sahin , Arseven, & Kilic, 2016), and learners'

social and economic circumstances (Coetzee & Venter, 2016). However, COVID-19 pandemic has led to a massive disruption in education systems across the globe (Chirinda, Ndlovu, & Spangenberg, 2021; Daka et al., 2021). In South Africa, literature has shown that COVID-19 has resulted to school closure in all provinces (Department of Basic Education, 2020; Mchunu, Ngcobo & Bhengu, 2021). There is a consensus among the scholars that this emergency has created new challenges in schools regarding learner attendance (Conrad, 2020; Daka et al., 2021; Sibanda & Mathwasa, 2021). In South African context, Grade 12 learners are attending every day to improve curriculum gaps. Other secondary school grades are doing weekly rotational attendance. However, attendance seems to be important for learner achievement (Conrad, 2020). He further reveals that perfect school attendance has four characteristic flaws during this era namely; it increases risk of other learners on getting sick when an unhealthy learner attends school, whereas chronic absenteeism is a major problem, incentives which may increase learner attendance rates however it may distract school leaders, and school teachers influence learner attendance. Evidence from the literature suggests that secondary school learners abscond lessons without parents' knowledge, learners dislike the teachers, learners feel bored and avoidance of tests (Daka et al., 2021; Hamaleka Daka & Mphande, 2020).

2.6.3 Late coming in challenging context

The issue of late coming has been a recurrent factor amongst rural school learners. Travelling long distance has been attributed to the late coming of learners, while other factors were the lack of discipline amongst the learners. Schools in South Africa seen to be encountering a severe problem of indiscipline (Gcelu, Padayachee, & Makhasane, 2020) particularly the late coming in schools. Current findings support that late coming in South African school context has become the main problem (Maile & Olowoyo, 2017). Research by Maria (2020) further supports the view that one of the main causes of late coming is the lack of discipline amongst the learners. Many in South Africa acknowledge the fact that South African learners are multifaceted with numbers of challenges such as child headed family phenomenon, poverty (their parents do not have money to buy cellphones to set alarms), some learners travel long distance to and from school, some use public transport to go to school. Contrary to this, research by Maile and Olowoyo (2017) points that late coming seem to be triggered by these factors like laziness and carelessness. Since the advent of COVID-19 pandemic, we have noticed another factor which is new and little is known about it in the research world. Learners become late

because they forgot their masks, and that demands them to go back home in the middle of the way to school, and this obviously result in learners reaching school late.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

The global literature that has been reviewed on the previous section covers understandings and practices discourse of leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts. This section of the chapter seeks to foreground the theoretical framework that guides this study. In understanding secondary school principals' leadership practices and understandings when providing enhanced quality teaching and learning in challenging context, I noted that one dimensional view of leadership theory may be sufficient to wrap-up scope of this study. This study utilised lens of instructional leadership model as a theoretical framework. The study is underpinned in one theory by Hallinger (2005). Instructional leadership model is used to positively promote the level of support by school principals in understanding leadership for quality teaching and learning in a challenging context. I therefore realised that Hallinger (2005) theory of instructional leadership is the best model to explore perspectives of secondary school principal's leadership for quality in challenging contexts. In dealing with this section, I delve on the focus of Hallinger (2005) model of instructional leadership and the dimensions.

2.7.1 Instructional leadership theory

Hallinger (2003) suggests three dimensions namely; defining mission; secondly, managing instructional programmes, and promoting positive school-learning. These dimensions will further be discussed below. According to Bush, Bell and Middlewood (2002) excellent outcomes on education have been a global concern in quality teaching and learning in a challenging context. However, the use of instructional leadership model gives a clear guide to leadership and management of schools in challenging contexts. Research suggests that instructional leadership focuses on leader's goals that are academically orientated, supervision and work of principals as professional teachers to improve school performance (Tan, 2012). Furthermore, in this study instructional leadership focuses more on roles of school principals in supervising, coordinating, and developing instruction to schools (Hallinger, 2003). This is rooted from the views of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) theory that developed instructional

leadership framework. Consequent to that, it correlates with SASP (2015) in capacitating school principals.

Instructional leadership is the main element in improving education in the school environment. It inspires school principal to ensure quality teaching and learning take place in schools. Therefore, the in-depth of instructional leadership helps the improvement of quality teaching and learning. However, approach does not focus only on quality teaching and learning, it also involves professional development and student success (Southworth, 2002). Similarly, Bush (2007) explains that Instructional leadership concentrates on quality teaching and learning, behaviour of teachers in working with students. He further posits that although instructional leadership is an important element of the school's central activities, it must not take too light other aspects in the school. School principals as instructional leaders have to understand quality teaching and have knowledge of the curriculum (SASP, 2015). School principals have to give valuable effort to enhance instruction and to give this support to teachers (Msila, 2013). Botha (2004) points that instructional leaders have to set clear objectives, maintaining discipline and enforcing high standards, with the intention of improving teaching and learning at school.

Instructional leadership has no single model (Hallinger, 2009). However, narrow view of instructional leadership seems to focus on supervision of quality teaching and learning, and development of principals (Deventer & Kruger, 2003). Similarly, Southworth (2002) concurs with the view that instructional leadership is about quality teaching and learning, improvement of learner achievement, and professional development. The researcher further argues that a person who adopts instructional leadership possess high competence of understanding of curricular knowledge as well as student learning. For this study, I adopted Instructional leadership model developed by Hallinger and Murphy.

2.7.1.1 Hallinger and Murphy (1985) Model of Instructional Leadership

Hallinger and Murphy (1985) have developed an instructional leadership model comprising three critical dimensions namely; defining mission, managing instructional programmes, and promoting positive school learning climate. These dimensions will further be discussed below.

Defining the school mission

This dimension puts attention on the role of school principals in defining the mission of the school. In line with SASP (2015) school principals in South Africa in challenging context should be instructional leaders and perform all the expectation. School principals are instructional leaders of their schools; therefore, they are expected to communicate vision and mission with school teachers and various stakeholders (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Similarly, Bush (2014) echoes the same view, saying that school principals should develop vision and mission for the school that places teaching and learning at the centre. Highlighting the importance of inclusivity and collaboration, Hallinger (2003) emphasises the fact that principals should not develop the school vision alone, however, it remains his or her responsibility to ensure that the school has a clear academic mission. Given this, school principals in challenging context have to be well acquainted with departmental goals towards schools, and should have to influence school teachers to understand vision and mission in order to be part of it. I argue that this theory is relevant for this study because collaboration with the teachers the parents and other stakeholders is critical in developing the school vision and mission.

Managing instructional programmes

Hallinger (2005) suggests that managing the curriculum is the second dimension of the Instructional leadership. Similarly, in South African context managing instructional programmes is the core duty of the school principal (SAP, 2015). The most important task of the school is to offer quality teaching and learning. There is a convergence among scholars that managing instructional programmes lead to effective teaching and learning (Bhengu & Mthembu, 2014; Hallinger, 2005; Naicker, Chickoko & Mthiyane, 2013). Therefore, this dimension focuses on the coordination of instruction. Hallinger (2005) supports the view that the second dimension is about supervising instruction, evaluating instruction, coordinating the curriculum as well as monitoring progress of learners. It needs school principal to engage deeply in supervising and monitoring quality teaching and learning. In South African, it is not only the school principals that are involved in leading instructional programmes. The Departmental Heads carry out the duty of making sure that teaching and learning activities take place daily (Bush, 2014). However, the school principal remains accountable for everything.

What is even more important is that all the other key stakeholders have to be fully involved in managing instructional programme.

Promoting a positive school learning climate

Promoting a positive school learning climate is the third dimension of the model. Creating positive school climate is a major duty of school principals which needs to be considered when developing teachers (Masuku, 2011). This dimension also involves numerous functions such as protecting the instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility (Hallinger, 2003). For the purposes of the study, this dimension is deemed to be relevant as it is the principals' role to provide positive learning climate. In addition, to provide time for teacher collaboration it is the principals' responsibility to provide professional development of teachers, amongst other activities (Sargent & Hannum, 2009). The principal's responsibility is to create a climate that supports quality teaching and learning. Similarly, Naicker, Chikoko and Mthiyane (2013) support the notion that instructional leaders promote a positive learning by communicating goals and establish expectations. Through promoting a positive school learning culture, school principals should be managing the school as an organisation (SASP, 2015).

2.8 Chapter summary

Chapter Two has reviewed the literature on leadership for quality in challenging school context. The theoretical framework underpinning the study was also discussed. The next chapter will discuss research design and research methodology of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed related national and international academic literature, empirical studies around leadership for quality teaching and learning, and explained the theoretical framework that I used in this study. This chapter presents a detailed explanation of the research design and the research methodology that was utilised to generate data in understanding the perspectives of school principals on how they understand leadership for quality teaching and learning in a challenging context, and how they put their understanding in into practice. This chapter starts by explaining the research paradigm, the research approach, and the research design as well as research methodology that was used. The discussion of sampling techniques, research methods utilised for data generation, data analysis, and ethical issues is also presented.

3.2 Research paradigm

This study is located in the interpretive research paradigm. A paradigm is normally described as being about how a researcher makes sense of the world (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Scholars (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014) converge on the view that a paradigm is based on how people view the world. A research paradigm as a way of viewing the world captures three aspects in a research namely; axiology, ontology and epistemology (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Willis, 2007). The scholars further explain the three aspects as follows: axiologically, the traditions of interpretive paradigm acknowledge many truths. Ontologically, the traditions of interpretive paradigm acknowledge many realities that are socially constructed; those realities are socially based and mentally constructed through the influence of external factors (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Epistemologically, in this paradigm, knowledge comes from interaction between a researcher and the participants. Creswell (2007) suggests that qualitative researchers utilise a variety of paradigms depending on the set of beliefs they ought to bring in research. Interestingly, an appropriate paradigmatic framework in a research is very important for researchers (Asghar, 2013). Therefore, this study embraced qualitative research approach which is positioned within the traditions of interpretive research paradigm. Interpretive

paradigm seeks to understand how people view and interpret the situations where they work and live (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) also point that interpretive paradigm tries to understand the phenomena through human experiences. Interpretive paradigm perspectives are based on multiple realities (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2020; Creswell, 2007). This study tried to understand school principals as heads of schools practising their leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging context. Having chosen this paradigm, I sought to understand how school principals perceive leadership for quality teaching and learning.

3.3 Research approach

I have read the work of numerous educational researchers utilising qualitative or quantitative research approaches. However, I argue that qualitative approach is the most commonly used approach to understand the experiences of the participants. Therefore, the choice of a research approach in this study was influenced by the nature and purpose of the study. This study adopted a qualitative approach within an interpretive paradigm. Qualitative research approach is viewed as a way to understand behaviours as well as experiences of human (Krauss, 2005). Similarly, qualitative research approach is more appropriate for representing perspectives of school principals as participants in this study (Cohen et al., 2011; Yin, 2011). Bertram and Christiansen (2014) further assert that qualitative research seeks to give answers on existing matters in reality. In this study of leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging context, the school principals shared their own views and experiences within their context. Given this, research by Polkinghorne (2005) shows that qualitative methods capture features of human experiences and also help researchers to sightsee those experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005). Therefore, the nature of qualitative research is more exploratory (Cohen et al., 2011). The exploratory nature of my research puzzle (question) is thus best suited to a qualitative research approach.

3.4 Research design

It is important for a researcher to plan how to conduct a research project. Literature (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2009; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014) suggests that planning a research project is dependent on a research design. In other words, it is unthinkable that a researcher can develop plans about the execution of a research when the design has not been clarified because a planned process has to be aligned according a design. Therefore, a research design is a framework that researchers follow in order to find answers of their research questions (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2020). Research design is viewed as a detailed strategy on how a research will occur (Burns & Grove, 2003). Similarly, Creswell (2009) postulates that research design is a detailed process of a research that include data analysis and data generation methods. Sharing similar views as these scholars, McMillan & Schumacher (2014) also describe the research design as a plan that seeks to answer research questions by describing the procedures of data generation in a study. Given the views of these scholars, research design involves how data is generated, instruments and will they be utilised in the study, will be employed, and means of analysing data that was produced.

In this study, I chose a case study design. Rule and John (2011) view case study design as an in-depth or systematic investigation in a particular research to generate knowledge. Similarly, case study designs focus on in-depth of a programme or an activity of one person or more (Creswell, 2013). A case study design has number of characteristics (Rule & John, 2011; Creswell, 2013). Case study design capture rich description of programmes which are relevant to a case. Secondly, it captures an individual or groups of people. Lastly, it seeks to understand individuals' perceptions on events. In the context of this study, the school principals possess rich information that can provide insights about leadership for quality teaching and learning. Therefore, in this study, the case is secondary school principals' understanding and practices of leadership for quality teaching and learning. The purpose is to understand how secondary school principal enact their understandings of leadership for quality teaching and learning.

3.5 Sampling technique

Sampling focuses on the procedure of selecting participants who will participate on the study. Similarly, literature (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Maree, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014) suggests that sampling is a strategy that is used to select participants for the study. According to Maree (2011) as, well as, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) sampling consists of two broad categories, namely, probability and non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling is usually used in studies that are located within qualitative designs and their results are not generalisable, whereas probability sampling is used by quantitative and positivist researchers whose study findings are generalisable.

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014), non-probability sampling captures purposive and convenience sampling. Purposive sampling is a type of a sampling technique that is used based on certain typical characteristics of the participants. In other words, the researcher hand picks the participants based on their appropriateness for the study because of showing those characteristics that the researcher is looking for. Therefore, in the context of this study, secondary school principals were purposively selected as participants in this study. Purposive sampling is where participants are chosen with intention that they will provide sufficient knowledge for the study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Four participants were purposively selected from one district because of the experience and knowledge they have in answering my research questions. They were also selected because their quality leadership in teaching and learning in their schools, and school that were leading are in the challenging context. The sample consists of four secondary school principals in a challenging context. In a qualitative research, sample size is less important compared to richness of information that will be attained (Njie & Asmiran, 2014). These school principals were considered to be appropriate because they have rich information in leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging context (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011).

3.6 Data generation methods

Data generation methods are the ways used by a researcher to generate data in a particular study. Literature (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen et al., 2011; McMillan & Schumacher,

2014) indicates that data generation methods are strategies in which data is generated in a study. Since this study utilised a case study design, there are a number of data generation methods it can employ. According to Njie and Asimiran (2014), there are more methods that could be utilised but it depends on the nature of a case. They further mention six dominant methods that are used to generate qualitative data, and these are interviews, documents, observations, research diaries, archival records, and physical artefacts. The data generation source methods that were employed in this study are semi-structured interviews.

3.7 Interviews

Interviews is a process of interchanging views between a researcher and the participant by means of generating data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Interviews is conversation between two people with purpose by means of which qualitative data can be generated quickly (Cohen et al., 2011). Similarly, interviews are a well-planned event for data generation between researchers and participants (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Creswell, 2013). Since the interviews were employed in this study, the primary aim was to have an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Literature supports the view that interviews are constructed to access an in-depth description of the phenomenon directly from the participants (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013; Maree, 2012). Therefore, the purpose of doing interviews with secondary school principals was to gain their point of view on how they understand leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging context. Interviews are divided into three main categories, structure interviews, unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews. For the purpose of this study, semi-structured interviews were used, and this kind of interviews is discussed next.

3.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews help a researcher to have rich information and to understand participants' perspective as well as their experiences (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Maree, 2012). Semi-structured interviews were utilised in the study to gain rich information from school principals as the participants of the study. They were also used to understand how school principals perceive and draw from their experiences on how they practice their

leadership for quality teaching and learning in a challenging context. Semi-structured interviews were deemed to be the best suitable instrument because they are flexible for collecting data using verbal, non-verbal (Cohen et al. 2011). Therefore, this type of interviews enabled school principals as participants of the study to freely express their experiences and understandings. It also gave me flexibility to follow up on my questions and do member-checking where necessary.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis focuses on analysing data through scrutinising and categorising data. Literature (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Maree, 2011; McMillan & Schumacher, 2014; Bertram & Christiansen, 2014) suggests that data analysis is a process of organising data by explaining the data so that it conveys a clear message to the readers. Therefore, this section seeks to interpret the data generated from the school principals in challenging context. According to Maree (2011), data analysis involves methods to interpret data generated, namely; thematic, content as well as discourse analysis. In this study, content analysis was used. Content analysis interprets data generated from the interviews (unstructured or semi-structured) through identifying patterns in the content of the interview text.

Interviews data was first transcribed from audio-recorded format to a word format so that they can be read. After the data had been transcribed, I then had to read the transcripts, again and again so that I could immerse myself for better understanding of the content of the conversations between me and the participants. This was important because I sought to analyse and make sense of every spoken word of the participants. The method of analysing data utilised was thematic analysis, and thematic analysis is the most appropriate tool that can be utilised to examine qualitative data (Maree, 2011). In the thematic analysis that I used *verbatim* transcriptions, and these were coded and organised to give meaning (Maree, 2011). Coding refers to a strategy of organising generated data into chunks of text before providing a meaning (Creswell, 2013). During the coding process, I broke down the data into themes to interpret as well as to elaborate on them. I used the same techniques to analyse the contents of written

records kept in the schools about how principals practised leadership for quality teaching and learning.

3.9 Trustworthiness

One of the most important aspects of the research findings is that they should be believable or trustworthy. Therefore, I ensured that while generating data, all the steps taken enhanced trustworthiness of the findings, or that any issue that might undermine the quality of the findings was dealt with. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that issues trustworthiness entails number of criteria in the research study, and these are credibility, transferability, dependability, as well as, confirmability. These criteria to judge trustworthiness are discussed below.

3.9.1 Credibility

Credibility is concerned about the truthfulness of the generated data within the study. Therefore, to ensure that credibility was considered I used a number of strategies to enhance it. One of them is member checking. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that member checking involves a continuous testing of generated data by the original source. Patton (2002) speaks of member-checking as a technique of providing an opportunity to give alternative interpretations. One of the techniques to ensure credibility of the study is that all my participants voluntarily participated and they gave all the information without any pressure from me or anybody else.

3.9.2 Transferability

Transferability is based on the findings of the study to be used in a similar context. Lincoln and Guba (1985) views transferability as a situation whereby research findings are to be implemented in places with similar contextual situation. In ensuring Transferability, I ensured that I provided thick descriptions of all steps I did while conducting the study. Thick descriptions focus on providing detailed information of processes while the study was conducted (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). In this context, the thick description is about the district where the research was conducted, the description of profiles of the participants

involved, and time taken to generate data, as well, as context of our conversations and the socio-economic issues of the schools and the locality.

3.9.3 Dependability

Dependability focuses on the findings with consistency. Dependability seem to be closely linked to credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These scholars further argue that dependability involves using a number of techniques such as member-checking, triangulation, persistent observations, prolonged engagement in research site, and use of reflexive journals. To ensure dependability, I used a number of methods of data generation and these techniques mentioned by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

3.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability focuses of the validity of findings in a research. Confirmability refers to concern to neutrality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, this means that there is no bias or less bias by the researcher. To make sure that confirmability is considered, I made sure that my interpretations was based on the perspectives of the participants. I did this by soliciting confirmation from them. That involves member checking technique to confirm my understanding.

3.10 Ethical issues

It is important that when research is conducted, it is done in an ethical manner. When a study is conducted in an ethically and responsible manner, it observes the issues of non-maleficence, beneficence, autonomy as well as anonymity (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). For non-maleficence, research standards that there should be no emotional, professional, psychological and physical harm inflicted to a participant while generating data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Therefore, in conducting this study, I ensured that none of the participants was harmed during the research process. Beneficence means that the study should be beneficial too, especially to the participants (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Lee, 2006).

The next important aspect of ethical consideration is the respect for autonomy of the participants. Participants' autonomy refers to the right to participate or not to participate in the study. Therefore, voluntary participation is a crucial element of the participants' autonomy. That is why researchers have to ask for a permission to conduct a study and obtain informed consents from participants (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011; Maree, 2011). In line with autonomy requirements, participants in the study were given sufficient information based on research aims; participants were informed about the nature of the study and were also informed about their rights, that they have the right to withdraw their participation at any time or declare their contribution null and void (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). In addition, I also requested permission from the University of KwaZulu-Natal to conduct the study. In addition, I sought permission to conduct the study from KwaZulu-Natal Department of Basic Education as the main gatekeeper, and permission was granted.

To protect the participants from possible harm from other people which might feel threatened by the findings of the study, I ensured that strictly observe anonymity, confidentiality and privacy of the participant. Their identities were concealed from the readers. In terms of this requirement, any information that might uncover their identity was removed from all the documents in the research report (dissertation). This includes the names of the participants and those of their schools (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). In this study participant's identity was protected through utilising *pseudonyms* rather than use their real names. Secondly, the permission was asked from participants to use voice recorder and to take notes in generating data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). In this research study, I used voice recorder to capture all the conversation between us. Having granted this permission, I assured the participants that I would keep the information they gave me confidential. All the steps that are outlined in the above explanation of ethical dimensions were taken into consideration.

3.11 Chapter summary

The purpose of this chapter was to give an in-depth description of research design and research methodology that was utilised in conducting the study. Therefore, research design as well as

research methodology that I utilised in this study have been clearly explained, together with other important elements of the research process. The next chapter presents a detailed discussion of what emerged from the data analysis described in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed the research design, methodology, and research paradigm issues which the study is located in. This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the research using the themes that emerged from the data analysis, and these are utilised to organise the discussions. Before the presentation of findings, profiles of schools that participated, as well as the introduction of participants are presented for purposes of contextualising the findings of the study. In ensuring that the perspectives of participants are captured well, *verbatim* quotes are utilised in data presentation and discussion. The different concepts that appeared during data analysis are presented as themes. The data that was generated is discussed using themes. Since the data was generated through utilising semi-structured interviews, the main aim was to address the critical questions presented in Chapter One. The findings emerging from the interviews are analysed using reviewed literature and theoretical framework that were discussed in Chapter Two. The use of literature and a theoretical framework is meant to enhance the analysis. In reminding the reader, the critical research questions that were presented in Chapter One are again listed below.

- What are secondary school principals' understandings of leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts?
- How do secondary school principals lead for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts?
- What are the challenges faced by school principals in their leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts?

The chapter presents the findings and discussions of four secondary school principals. As mentioned in the previous sections, the literature reviewed and the theoretical framework discussed in Chapter Two, is utilised to assess and identify relations, similar views and contradicting views between generated data as well as previously researched work by scholars.

4.2 Profile of school principals

There were four secondary school principals that participated in this study. These school principals were all from challenging context. In adhering to research ethical issues discussed in Chapter Three, *pseudonyms* are utilised to conceal the identify the schools and the principals in the study. The table below summarises the demographic information of secondary school principal that participated in the study:

| Details | Mr Bin | Mr King | Mr Ludwe | Mr Zane |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Age | 51 | 40 | 54 | 49 |
| Teaching Experience | 23 | 12 | 30 | 24 |
| Highest Qualification | BA Honours (psychology) | BEd Honours | BEd Honours | BEd Honours |
| Years of experience as a principal | 10 | 6 | 19 | 12 |

Table 1: The profiles of the participants

It can be noticed from Table 1, that the study was male dominated and three participants were above fifty years. The second issue to highlight is that three of four participants has teaching experiences of more than 20 years, and one had 12 years of experience. This is an indication that all the participants were sufficiently experienced as professional teachers. If you look at their respective experiences as school principal, only one principal had less than 10 years, while all three had 10 years or more in terms of leadership experience as principals. The last important point to pick up is about their educational qualifications. They had had postgraduate degree qualifications. One can assume from their qualifications that they have value for education. Other principals are satisfied with junior degrees given that the requirements to become a school principal do not even require a postgraduate degree qualification.

4.3 Profile of the participating schools

This study was conducted in four secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal in the Pinetown District. The four participating schools were named Izwe Secondary School, Icebo Secondary School, Ucu Secondary School and Khula Secondary School. The profiles of these schools are outlined below.

4.3.1 Izwe Secondary School

Izwe Secondary School is a Quintile 3 school located at a township of Inanda in KwaZulu-Natal. Inanda is one of the areas in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) that are known for high crime rate in South Africa by media reports of SAPS crime statistics. Most of the youths and teenagers are involved in a number of narcotic substances. Some youths are unemployed due to criminal records and being dropouts at school. However, Izwe Secondary School is a big school known of producing 100% percent pass rate in Grade 12 results in the last five years. Izwe Secondary starts from Grade 8-12. It falls under Inanda North Circuit, in Pinetown district.

4.3.2 Icebo Secondary School

Icebo Secondary School is a Quintile 3 school situated in a deep rural context where access to the schools through the use of gravel road which makes access to the school difficult on rainy days. Driving to the school, you pass through livestock in the form of cattle strolling on the road unattended. Unemployment is reported to be high and I was informed that most of community members are unemployed and they survive on social grants of one form or another. Ucu Secondary school is a small school. It has been producing more than 80% in terms of Grade 12 results. Icebo Secondary falls under Inanda North Circuit, in Pinetown district.

4.3.3 Ucu Secondary School

Ucu Secondary School is a Quintile 3 school situated at uMzinyathi part of Inanda area. It is a school that is performing well in curriculum and extra curriculum. Lately, it has been producing

plus 80% in Grade 12 results. It is also partaking on ABC Motsepe South African Schools Choral Eistedfod and the school has one reached a national level in the competition. Ucu Secondary School is a manageable school with few number of classes. All the learners this school are from the same village. Ucu Secondary falls under Inanda North Circuit, in Pinetown district.

4.3.4 Khula Secondary School

Khula Secondary School is a Quintile 3 school located at Umzinyathi part of Inanda. Learners around the village like to go and swim in the dam. People in the community survive by fishing from the dam and social grant. Most of the learners walk to come to school. Khula Secondary is a combined school. It starts from grade R to 12. Khula Secondary is in Pinetown district under Nanda North Circuit. It is a school known as one of best performing public school in the circuit. The school has been producing more than 90% in terms of Grade 12 results.

4.4 Discussion of findings

The section captures the presentation of research findings in the form of themes. Firstly, the secondary school principals' understandings of leadership for quality in teaching and learning in challenging contexts. Secondly, the secondary school principals' practices of leadership for quality in teaching and learning in challenging contexts. Lastly, the challenges faced school principals in supporting quality teaching and learning.

4.5 What are school principals' understandings of leadership for quality in teaching and learning in challenging contexts?

The secondary school principals as participants of the study were asked questions to address the above critical research question. Given this, the questions assisted me to gain their in-depth understanding on what exactly their understanding of leadership for quality in teaching and learning in challenging contexts. When interviewing secondary school principals in addressing this critical research question, four themes emerged, and these are (a) Principals' understandings of quality as a concept, (b) Assessing the degree of quality; (c) Principals'

understandings leadership for quality; (d) Principals' understandings of quality teaching and learning in schools, and these are discussed next.

4.5.1 Principals' understandings of quality as a concept

Discussing the notion of quality with secondary school principals, the question was posed on what their understandings of the concept quality is. Ideas on the term emerged and there was a common view from the principals that quality is something of good standard and excellence. However, since the term has no singular meaning, the following further ideas on the interviews emerged; quality as good value, expected or good standard, excellence, and perfection. The following quotes from school principals are the evidence that gives more light about how the concept quality was understood. The utterances from principals are as follow:

According to my own interpretation, quality is something of good standard with good value (Mr King, Izwe Secondary School).

Mr Bin, the Principal of Icebo Secondary School echoed similar sentiment in expressing quality as something of good standard and a degree to which something is excellent. Mr Bin said:

The word quality to me, means the degree to which something is excellent or with good standard. Quality maybe the totality of features and characteristics of a service that bears on its ability to satisfy the given numbers.

Congruent to the above utterances, Mr Ludwe from Ucu Secondary School expressed the concept quality as the process of attaining expected high standard by the department. Mr Ludwe has said this:

When you talk of quality, having or attaining the expected standards in terms of competency. The highest standards expected that is quality.

Adding to the foregoing utterances, there seems to be a convergence of views with those of Mr Bin in describing quality as excellence. Furthermore, he viewed quality as perfection. Mr Zane from Khula Secondary School said the following:

My own understanding, quality has to do with (ah) perfection and excellence, but qualitative business of the school cannot be defined based on the comparison with others.

The views from school principals suggest that quality has no singular explanation. Their understandings of the idea depicted by secondary school principals seem to corroborate with the reviewed literature that quality is high standard of excellence. Research shows that quality refers to a degree to which a product meets some of the design standards (Elshaer, 2012). In line with some of the emerging views, research by Seyfried and Pohlenz (2018) supports the understanding of quality as excellency as expressed by Elshaer (2012). Therefore, in line with the findings and with the existing literature, school principals in the study views quality as something that captures high level of excellence.

If one draws from the participants' expression of what quality is about, one can assume that principals will attach a value to a performance of high standard that can be equated with excellence. The participants' perspective suggests that school principals subscribe to the need to set clear goals to high standard of excellence as reflected in the literature reviewed (Naz & Rashid, 2021). Scholars indicate that setting high standards can have a positive impact on the learner achieving high standard of excellence in academic (Maponya, 2020). Since school principals focus on improving the quality of teaching (Naz & Rashid, 2021), quality as perfection and as degree of design standards and as excellency can be attained. Drawing from the context of instructional leadership theory, quality is understood and described through setting vision and mission of the school (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Therefore, in achieving quality school principals as instructional leaders foster success to all learners.

4.5.2 Assessing the degree of quality

The secondary school principal as participants assessed the degree of quality in their schools. Analysing the data generated, there seen to be divergence of views in assessing the degree of quality. One school principal assessed based on the product of the learners they produce. Whereas evidence from three school principals assessed the degree of quality based on obtaining voluminous number of bachelors in secondary schools. Given this, the secondary school principals in this study seemed to put more focus only in Grade 12 as a measure to assess quality of their schools. In assessing the degree of quality, secondary school principals pointed the following ideas; school should have voluminous number of bachelors, quality of teachers, the product of the learners and the behaviour in the society. Mr King, the principal of

Izwe Secondary School assessed the degree of quality based on product of learners they produce. This is what Mr King said:

To me it is sometimes difficult to judge quality. I am judging it with the product of learners. I am glad that there are learners who come back to help those who are still studying. For an example, we have a product who is now a deputy principal in another school. He used to come to help Grade 12 learners with Physical Science.

A different view came up from Mr Ludwe of Ucu Secondary School. His assessment of quality of the school was based on the school getting more bachelor passes. He Said this:

In terms of the school, we want to have more bachelors than having level two. It's about attaining good results that is high quality.

Congruent with the above evidence by Mr Ludwe, Mr Zane from Khula Secondary School also assessed quality in his school based on the number of bachelor passes. This is what he had to say:

Without comparing us with other schools, we assess quality through results on how many learners got bachelors.

Concurring with the above evidence by Mr Ludwe and Mr Zane, Mr Bin the Principal of Icebo Secondary School echoed similar a sentiment in assessing quality of the school through bachelor passes in Grade 12. In addition, he further noted the aspect of quality of teachers, results of each learner and the behaviour in the society. He said this:

I rate it by bachelor passes and also by passing almost all our learners. Quality of teachers, quality of a learner that comes out in terms of academic and how they behave and handle themselves in the society.

The evidence from the participants captures different ideas however there is a common view that emerged in three secondary school principals. The view suggested that in assessing the degree of quality of teaching and learning, the higher the number of bachelors the school obtained in Grade 12 results, the higher the quality of education provided. With the exception of Mr Bin, all three principals assessed quality only on the basis of Grade 12 results. The only difference among them was the quality of the passes themselves. Other wanted all the learners to pass Grade 12 examination irrespective of the level of pass. It is only Mr Bin who went beyond Grade 12 results to also talk about human resources available in the school.

Literature shows that assessing degree of quality should be based on perfection (Marshall, 2016; Naz & Rashid, 2021). Seyfried and Pohlenz (2018) rate the degree of quality as obtaining excellence. Given the above views, it is also noted that quality is also rated using different conceptions (Marshall, 2016), and assessing quality is a complex and multifaceted construct (Tadesse, Manathunga, & Gillies, 2018). That is why participants have diverging ideas in assessing quality. Concurring with the views expressed by Marshall (2016), Tadesse, Manathunga and Gillies (2018) acknowledges that assessing quality is a complex and multifaceted construct.

Drawing from the evidence, it is also clear that secondary school principals seem to only care about the assessment of quality of Grade 12 rather than the quality of the whole school. Quality as sense-making is important to recognise small qualities (Seyfried & Pohlenz, 2018). School principals as instructional leaders are expected to develop and communicate the vision and mission (Bush, 2014; Hallinger, 2019). It will be interesting to understand if the focus on Grade 12 results is the results of a particular vision and mission that is adopted for the participating schools. The findings do not show any interest in other grades other than Grade 12 and it is the performance of learners at that level that constitutes the quality of teaching and learning. Using the instructional leadership theory lenses underpinned in this study, school principals assess quality of the school through setting vision and mission of the school (Hallinger, 2005). In line with instructional leadership theory, school principals in this study recognise setting the goals for their schools. Consequent to that, they push the teachers and learners to meet them.

4.5.3 Principals' understandings leadership for quality

The evidence from the four secondary school principals that participated in the study revealed that school principals had a reasonable understanding of leadership for quality. In their responses in leadership for quality, various ideas emerged and there seemed to be divergence of views in all four secondary school principals. These school principals understood that leadership for quality captures the following; having quality leadership skills, inspiring quality to people, influencing quality, knowing the direction to quality, motivating quality towards the vision of the school, quality interaction with people, and managing quality resources. Mr Bin,

the school Principal of Icebo Secondary School noted a leader that is influential, innovative, honest, and a mediator towards the attainment of quality. This is how Mr Bin responded:

I would describe it as where a leader is influential, innovative, a person who is honest and a person who is a mediator when there is a problem. That is a good leader for me.

Mr King the Principal of Izwe Secondary School had a different view about leadership for quality. He viewed that a leader must be able to encourage teachers and apply the department and school policies for smooth operation and to achieve common goal. This is how Mr King responded:

It is an ability of the leader to encourage his/her juniors or subordinate to follow and apply the policies of the department as well as the policies of the organisation for it to operate successfully and to reach its goal successfully.

Mr Zane from Khula Secondary School revealed that a principal should be exemplary to the school teachers and should have integrity. This is what Mr Zane had to say:

In my understanding in should involve integrity and being exemplary (aah) to the followers. Aaah!! At a school level, it is guided by the dimensions of the school, like how do you manage those dimensions.

Mr Ludwe, Principal of Ucu Secondary School echoed a different view. He noted that a leader should exhibit good leadership skills which entails inspiring and motivate teachers, interacting with teachers, and being approachable. He further noted that a leader should be a good manager. This is what Mr Ludwe Said:

There are two things you can consider in terms of leadership. It is good to have the leadership skills that are good and be a manager because to be a leader you are able to inspire people and arouse your team to do certain things; to manage you have to manage your resources. So, a good leader is a person that knows the direction and person who leads by example. When you are a leader, you lead and you motivate people towards the vision of the school; you interact with people, you are approachable and you can listen.

From the above assertions of school principals, it is notable that leadership for quality demands a number of things to be portrayed. This involves having quality leadership skills, inspiring quality to people, influencing quality, knowing the direction to quality, motivating for quality

towards the vision of the school; quality interaction with people, and managing quality resources. Research by Northouse (2010) shows that leadership is a process where a leader carries an influential role in a group of people in the institution. The voices of the participants have not indicated what they actually do to achieve quality results and to ensure quality teaching and learning. What many scholars say regarding improved learner academic achievement, is that school principals have to instructional leaders (Muda, Mansor & Ibrahim, 2017). Drawing from instructional leadership theory perspective, school principals should put more attention on improving quality of teaching and nurture learning (Naz & Rashid, 2021; Thaba-Nkadimene, 2020). Leadership for quality emanates from instructional leadership theory. However, this study utilised instructional leadership theory by (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and participants understand the leadership for quality by having a knowledge of what is expected of it.

4.4.1.4 Principals' understandings of quality teaching and learning in schools

In attempting to obtain the views of secondary school principals' understandings of quality teaching and learning in challenging school context, four dimensions emerged. It emerged from the data that the understanding of secondary school principals toward quality teaching and learning resonate in the following aspects; teacher ability to use resources, well planned and delivered lesson, a learner being a good citizen and lifelong skills. Four principals of secondary schools in challenging context were interviewed. However, there seemed to be divergent on their views in understanding quality teaching and learning. Given this, the above argument is supported by the utterances from the participants:

In my view, quality teaching amongst other things consist of a well-planned and prepared lesson plan which adheres to annual teaching plan, number 2 quality teaching should have a lesson which is well articulated to the learners (Mr King, Izwe Secondary School).

Mr Zane the Principal of Khula Secondary School seemed to share the views expressed by Mr King when he said that this phenomenon must adhere to prescribed document. However, he further alluded that quality teaching and learning goes beyond curriculum delivery. It moulds learners to become good citizens, and moulds teachers to be aware of professional ethics. This is what Mr Zane had to say:

Aah! I understand quality for teaching and learning as curriculum delivery according to the prescribed curriculum statement; however, teaching and learning at a school level goes beyond curriculum delivery it also involving moulding a learner to become a good citizen, on the side of educators, it also involves professional ethics.

A different view from the above participants emerged. Mr Ludwe the Principal of Ucu Secondary School understood quality teaching and learning as the vision that seeks to produce quality learners and citizens; learners who are technologically inclined and who can face life challenges. Similar to Mr Zane, he emphasised that it must result to good citizenship. Mr Ludwe had to this to say:

In terms of the standards, especially looking at feeder schools, learners from different schools there is a gap, you have to try as a teacher, to make use of resources that you have, so as to make sure that you put them in their expected standards. It is a vision of producing quality learners, producing quality citizens who will be able fit in technological word which we are entering in. We need to produce learner who can fit in the future South Africa which adopts sophisticated ways of technology, learners who are technological viable and learners who can stand against all challenges in their lives.

Mr Bin the Principal of Izwe Secondary School highlighted different views that it resonates with a teacher to impart lifelong skills to learners and they must be able to apply those acquired skills in their daily lives. Mr Bin said:

For me, it is the ability of educator to pass or to impart lifelong skills to the learner, on the Quality learning now; the ability of the learner to apply those acquire skills from the educator to his/ her daily life. To me that would be quality teaching and learning.

Based on the above emerging utterances, evidence suggests that adhering to prescribed curriculum document, the ability of a teacher to impart knowledge and outcomes of learners seem to be pillars of quality teaching and learning. Literature findings seem to support and strengthen what school principals actually understand about quality teaching and learning in schools. Research (Ayodele, 2018) suggests that teachers have to show ability to teach their learners. The scholar further points out that quality teaching and learning is influenced by quality of teachers. Given this view, school principals should be leaders of quality teaching and learning in their schools. Drawing from Hallinger and Murphy (1995) instructional leadership theory, school principals as instructional leaders promoting positive learning and managing

instructional time. School principals understand what quality teaching entails. Therefore, they are responding in empowering educators to achieve it.

4.6 How do school principals lead for quality in teaching and learning in challenging contexts?

To understand the data generated from secondary school principals as participant of the study, I asked them and probed them on how they translated their understanding of leadership for quality in teaching and learning into practice in challenging contexts. Their responses indicated that there are four ways in which they did it. These are as follows; (a) school principals walking the talk; (b) Use of extra lessons to learners; (c); principals providing professional development in supporting teachers; (d) providing motivation to teachers. These aspects are discussed below as themes:

4.6.1 School principals are walking the talk

It emerged in the generated data that secondary school principals as participants of the study went to classrooms to teach like all teachers in school. Evidence from three of the four school principals revealed that they performed both teaching and leading duties. However, there is a diverging view from one secondary school principal who was not allocated a subject to teach, although, sometimes, he taught in the absence of another teacher. The views that were shared by the principals indicated that due to staff shortages, some principals carried similar teaching load like the teachers. In another case, a principal taught one class, whereas, in another case, the principal taught certain categorise of learners in a particular stream. Mr King from Izwe Secondary School was the only exception; he had sufficient complement of teaching staff, and thus did not teach any subject. He only taught when one teacher was absent. This is what he had to say:

I am not teaching because we are having sufficient educators since we are a big school, and it is very easy for me to manage the school. For instance, if one teacher is absent, then I go to class and teach his or her subject if it is within my scope of understanding.

Mr Bin, the Principal of Icebo Secondary School shared a different view about his school. He taught two subjects as a school principal since he was managing a small school and learners are passing his subjects. This is what he said:

I teach two subjects, Business Studies and Accounting in Grade 12. I am a very competitive guy by nature so we are a small school. That is why other principals choose not to teach because they are managing schools that are three times bigger than mine. I have obtained 100% in Accounting and 94% Business Studies so I still have that challenge that I have never achieved 100% in business studies.

Mr Ludwe from Ucu Secondary School echoed similar sentiments about teaching as a school principal. He further argued that it was a challenge having to balance both teaching and office administration responsibilities. However, one cannot be a teacher if he does not go to teach. This is what he had to say:

Yes, I do take lesson although it is lower class. I am taking Mathematics in Grade 8. But I have a challenge to cope with office administration work especially during this COVID-19 era. Since we are under staffed, then, I felt compelled to take it. I used to take the whole Grade 8 but this year there was a slight relief since there was an addition of level one educator. So, I had to take one class otherwise I cannot be a teacher if I do not go to the class.

Congruent with the two school principals, Mr Bin and Ludwe, Mr Zane from Khula Secondary School also pointed that, as a school principal, he was also teaching. Apparently, Mr Zane was not necessarily forced by circumstances to teach, but, that it was his aim to teach in order for him to be able to put learners in the relevant streams. This is how he put it:

I have just started a month ago to take a lesson. Since I have been back fulltime in my school I began to teach. I am teaching Grade 9 Mathematics. The main purpose for me to teach them, is to be able to identify learners who can do Maths in Grade 10; in other words, learners who can fall in the stream of commerce and science.

Teaching as a school principal seem to be challenging because of heavy of workload that are executed by them in schools. However, due to some challenges within the Department of Basic Education, some principals are expected to teach. Three of four principals had teaching duties and one of them had two subjects. Research points out that teaching plays an important role in developing the world (Maldrine & Kiplangat, 2020). However, it is a complicated task (Rotas,

2020). Therefore, Workload of teaching needs principals to spend time at school and at home to prepare for the following day (Ademola, Tsotetsi, & Gbemisola, 2021). Yet, the workload of school principals increase daily with new expectations (Bedi & Kukemelk, 2018; Klocko & Wells, 2015). They are expected to do evaluations, changing legislative mandates, supervision, and accountability (Klocko & Wells, 2015) etc.

Instructional leadership theory perspective suggest that school principals as intuitional leaders must ensure that instructional time is managed (Bantwini, 2018; Hallinger, 2019). Therefore, if school principals are in the classrooms this dimension may suffer sometimes. However, there are also some difficulties posed by learners when teaching is one of the daily responsibilities in the schools.

4.6.2 Use of extra lessons to learners

It emerged from the participants that working beyond the call of duty is one of the practices that the principals used to enhance quality teaching and learning in challenging school context. The data also indicated that secondary school principals put more focus on Grade 12 learners such that principals are engaging evening classes, Saturday classes, morning classes and holiday classes for them. The following quotes from school principals elaborate on this matter. Mr King from Izwe Secondary School highlighted that his school has a compulsory study period from three to six o'clock and encouraged learners to ask their teachers to remain in school to solve some of the problems they experience. This is what he had to say:

One thing that helps us in Grade 12 as a school is that we take learners even after hours from three o'clock to six o'clock. Currently, we leaving at six o'clock because we have a compulsory study time. Over the past two years, I was leaving the school at 8 o'clock. But to work after hours is voluntary; however, the department is making it as if it is compulsory. I normally remind teachers that learners are available after school so that they remain to occupy these learners. Sometimes, I advise learners when they encounter problem to ask their subject teacher to remain at least for an hour after school.

Contrary to the above view, Mr Bin the Principal of Icebo Secondary pointed out that they cannot have evening sessions because of remote transport in the area. Nevertheless, subject

teachers have opted for Saturday and holiday classes. The education department also prefers holiday classes for extra lessons.

We have Saturday classes, we cannot do evening classes because of remote transport in the area, but mostly these Saturday classes are not run by myself as a school principal because I do not think I should influence them. They are influenced by subject teachers, even myself I go there if I want to take my lesson but I normally don't because think about it, being a principal means if I were to say this Saturday I am available I might put pressure on them if they want to teach them. Holiday classes are influenced by the department.

What is also very important about extra classes is that a decision to hold them was reached collaboratively, in a transparent process that was inclusive of all key stakeholders including parents. Mr Ludwe from Ucu Secondary School explained that before they introduced extra sessions, he called parents to devise strategy to help their children. The school had a strategy to conduct morning classes, evening classes, weekend classes and holiday classes. He elaborated on this:

Early this year, we sat down with the parents coming up with strategies, so we have got a plan that from Monday to Thursday there is a morning class studies and evening classes, Saturday classes from eight o'clock to one o'clock, on Sunday from nine o'clock to twelve o'clock, even during the holidays that we normally have, teacher or no teacher a learner should be in class. Out of those four hours that we have from five o'clock to nine o'clock in the evening, two hours they can discuss and help each other but the last two hours focus on your studies as individuals.

What comes out of all the voices of the participants is that the principals saw value in putting extra efforts to support learners learn. Providing extra tuition is acknowledged in the literature. For instance, research notes that secondary school teachers and learners understand the nature having an extra time (John, 2019). By honouring the planned instructional programmes, principals and teachers contributed to the enhancement of quality within the school. It may also help those learners who learn at a slower pace than the others, to also process the content taught earlier in the day as some form of re-enforcement. Drawing from instructional leadership theory lenses of (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) school principals should manage instructional time. In understanding the curriculum demands particularly in grade 12, school principals are

managing time understanding their challenging school context. SASP (2015) also points that school principals as instructional leaders should be managing quality of teaching and learning.

4.6.3 Providing professional development to support teachers

Providing professional development support to the teachers was one of the strategies adopted by the principals to enhance quality in teaching and learning. It emerged from the data that school principals organised programmes that sought to equip teachers with requisite skills and knowledge. Strategies that were adopted included team teaching, inviting subject advisors to engage with subject teachers on certain topics with which they experienced some difficulties, dissemination of information through group chats, internal workshops, Quality Management System (QMS), and use of Professional Learning Committees. Mr Bin, the Principal of Icebo Secondary School confirmed this view and highlighted that he even told his teachers not to be afraid of subject advisors, and he introduced team teaching within and outside the school. This is what he said:

We organise programmes a lot, we encourage teachers not to be afraid of subject advisors because those are the people who have big understanding of the subject. I organise what we call team teaching; let us say there is an educator maybe in Grade 11 another one in Grade 12 maybe they are both teaching tourism. Grade 11 must help Grade 12 educator. I introduce my teachers to team with the best performing schools in the area.

Different views emerged from Mr King, the Principal of Izwe Secondary School. He said that he gave teachers necessary information to update them about present happenings through sending them department of education circulars and make them aware of external seminars. This is what he had to say:

I develop teachers through providing necessary material that keep them updated about teaching and learning. I also ensure that I read circulars and are circulated to all staff members through group chat and during morning briefings, particularly circulars that invites educators to seminars.

Mr Ludwe, Principal of Ucu Secondary School pointed out that he tried to workshop his teachers in the morning about policies and management plans. He also conducted mentoring

sessions for novice teachers and then, let the departmental heads to further the work. This is what Mr Ludwe said:

Having the management plan, policies and trying to change the mindset, I workshop them. For instance, there is a teacher who started in April and I have done mentoring for that teacher and there were workshops that were organised to bridge the gap (ahhh) that is mediation programmes attended by subject teachers. This novice teacher, as much as I have done as a principal, but then the specialist in term of being the head of subject department is mentoring that teacher.

Mr Zane from Khula Secondary School further indicated that he used quality management system to see the areas of development that are need to his staff members. Therefore, they organised developmental programmes yearly. Interestingly, his teachers are the one who used to workshop other teachers in the circuit. This is what Mr Zane had to say:

Every year we have development programmes. We are fortunate to be a combined school; so, there are subject meetings which take the cue of the PLC where you find all the maths educators sitting together from Grade 1 to Grade 12 and develop each other. Fortunately, as I said, my school is doing well in the circuit so my teachers became top teachers; it is them who go to other schools to workshop others, we have reached that as a school.

The voices of the school principal clearly showed that they had a clear understanding of the value of professional development programmes as well as professional development needs of their teachers. As mentioned earlier, professional development programmes included team teaching, invitation of subject advisors, and others. There is convergence in the existing literature regarding the value of team teaching as one of the venues for quality teaching skills (Vesikivi, Lakkala, Holvikivi, & Muukkonen, 2019). It is evident that team teaching can enhance professional development (Crawford & Jenkins, 2017), as its main aim is to enable learners to achieve a higher level of integration in studying new topics (Salim, Abdullah, Haron, Hussain, & Ishak, 2019). With regards to developing novice teachers through mentorship, research findings support the view that new teachers have to be capacitated through professional development programmes that assists in developing professional identity (Coenders & Verhoef, 2019). Professional development can also be seen as a tool to promote a positive school climate. Creating a positive school climate is the major duty of school principals which needs to be considered when developing teachers (Masuku, 2011).

Instructional leadership theory perspective points that school principals should develop teachers (Hallinger, 2005). Similarly, school principals should empower staff to become instructional leaders who share the responsibility for achieving the mission, vision and goals that have been set (SASP, 2015). School principals in this study recognise and are aware of the need to empower others. They, therefore, organise internal workshops and allow teachers to meet and go to external workshops, and mentor novice educators.

4.6.4 Providing motivation to the teachers

The data indicates that school principals used motivation of their teachers as a mechanism to promote leadership for quality teaching and learning in their schools. All four school principals that participated shared similar views about the importance of motivating their teaching staff as one of the essential element in leading for quality teaching and learning. Many of them utilised morning assemblies as an opportunity to motivate their teachers. They also used morning briefing, and staff meetings for that purpose. Besides giving motivational talks, they also provided incentives of various categories to the teachers. These categories included a certificate for best performing teachers, well behaved class for a quarter and the district also played a role in some of the incentives. Mr Bin the Principal of Icebo Secondary School mentioned that he encouraged his teachers to work hard, to donate their time to teach learners and he incentivised both the teachers and the learners. This is what he said:

I tell them that in order to succeed we have to work very hard. I encourage them to donate their time because we are looking at the final results of Grade 12. At the beginning of the year there is a function for the previous year students where top students are given certificates, trophies and laptops from the donors, as well as educators. It used to be a very big function.

Congruent with the previous utterances of Mr Bin Principal of Icebo Secondary School, Mr King the Principal of Izwe Secondary School echoed similar views and experiences, saying that he also gave incentives to his teachers, he gave encouraging words and appreciated them. This is what Mr King had to say:

I use incentives to encourage my teachers. When you give incentive, they get motivated to work harder. Apart from giving incentives, I also give encouraging words, appreciate my staff and I believe this makes them to do their core duties without grudges.

Mr Zane the Principal of Khula Secondary School pointed out that he motivated his teachers during morning briefings, organised lunch for the teachers who were teaching on weekends, and he organised prize giving for learners. This is what Mr Zane said:

I motivate teachers by myself during morning briefings. But I have never asked for any outsider to motivate us. Aahh for teachers who come during weekends, I buy lunch for them, normally I buy Nandos to ensure that they are happy, and for learners we organise prize giving where they receive certificates.

Diverging view from the above utterances emerged from Mr Ludwe the Principal of Ucu Secondary School. He emphasised that in his school, he relied on the passion of teachers but also that he motivated teachers in staff meetings. In addition, the Department of Education in the province organised the programme to incentivise teachers. This is what he said:

We rely merely on passion of teachers in everything we do. I only motivate them while when I called staff meeting. But the department has a programme that incentivise the educators that are doing well in their subject. The school does not have a cost centre for such programmes and I also believe that the salary that we are paid for also involves weekends.

It emerged in the interviews that the school principals in the study motivated their school teachers in almost the same way. I say this because even Mr Ludwe, who claimed that he relied only on the teachers' passion for teaching and love for the children, he also mentioned that he gave motivational talks during staff meetings. This is the same technique that the other three principals used. What these principals were doing is consistent with what various scholars say. Motivation makes teachers to execute their core duties with joy in delivering quality teaching and learning (Owan, Ekpe, & Bassey, 2020). For instance, literature (Singh, 2016; Okorie & Usulor, 2016; Owan, Ekpe, & Bassey, 2020; Asuquo & Etor, 2021) reveals that in addition to the provision of incentives for best performing teachers, other aspects of motivation involves tangible rewards such as salary, promotions, as well as benefits. Drawing from instructional leadership perspective, school principals should empower and encourage teachers. School principals as instructional leaders recognise good instructional practices that motivate and increase learner achievement, and encouraging teachers (SASP, 2015). Therefore, school

principals in this study understand and are aware of the role they have to play. Given this, they organise programmes that will motivate whole school functionality.

4.7 Challenges faced by school principals in their leadership for quality teaching and learning

To understand the data generated from secondary school principals, I asked them to share their experiences about the challenges they encountered when enhancing quality teaching and learning in challenging context. The findings reveal that the challenges they encountered in enhancing quality teaching and learning can be categorised into three dimensions. These challenges involve (a) lack of parental co-operation (b) Late coming of learners (c) COVID-19 related issues in the school. These sub-themes emerged from the analysis of data generated from interviews of secondary school principals and they are discussed below.

4.7.1 Lack of parental co-operation

The data generated revealed that parents were not co-operating with the schools on a number of areas. They were not taking full responsibility for ensuring that their children got quality education in their school context which was challenging. The evidence pointed that all four school principals that participated in the study were experiencing a similar challenge. In analysing the findings, evidence indicated that there was a common cry on the part of the school principals regarding parent co-operation. It emerged that not all parents attended school meeting; parents responded to certain teachers and school principal. Parents became involved in teaching and learning only when their children were doing Grade 12, and parents did not report their children formally. The following quotes from school principals sheds some light on the discussion about how the lack of parent co-operation unfolded. This is what Mr King from Izwe Secondary School said:

We try by all means to have at least more than 60% of attendances. Of course, not all of them attended meetings. In order to encourage them, we organise something like catering or tea. In our invitation we specify that meals will be served.

Mr Bin, the Principal of Icebo Secondary School experienced a severe challenge in terms of parent co-operation. He emphasised that parents did not report their children when absent; there were few parents that attended meetings, and as a result, election process of the School Governing Body was a struggle. However, similar strategy of Mr King from Izwe Secondary School of serving refreshments was adopted. This is what he said:

There is challenge of meeting the expected quality because there is lack of co-operation with parents. Parents do not want to come close to their children. They are failing even to write a letter to report their children. To tell you something, School Governing Body meeting was postponed several times because there were only seven members present, and those parents became SGB members by virtue of their presence. Parents only participate when their learners are in Grade 12 because there are refreshments involved when there is a prayer. I ended up calling parents meeting according to grades and I tell them food will be served. However, there is still a minority that attends.

Congruent to the above utterances, Mr Ludwe from Ucu Secondary School shared a similar sentiment about the attendance of parents on the election of School Governing Body. However, it is emerging that the principal became harsh when he needed a parent of the learner when there is a case. He further pointed out that they encountered a challenge of reaching parents when calling them using SASAMS parent information. This is what he said:

Parents are responding to the school but we have to be harsh. If a learner has a case, we tell him/her to bring a parent and must not come without a parent. When we phone at times using SASAMS information, you find that cell phones are on voicemail, some parents do not even know the children because they were asked by their neighbours to register on behalf of the parent. Before covid-19, we use to have no problem in our meetings but it started when we were electing SGB, as a result it failed for the first time, it was done on the second day.

Mr Zane from Khula Secondary School shared a slightly different view. Even though parent co-operation was a challenge, parent did attend meeting called by the school principals and responded to calls of some educator. He further noted that parents came to school with their children later on during their studies. He said:

In our school, parental involvement is always a challenge, but for certain grades there is full compliance for certain teachers and myself as a school principal. That is why

when I call for evening study for Grade 12, I do not have a problem. Parents will be there accompanying their children and sit in a certain class.

The evidence highlighted the challenge of parents not being involved in the learning process of their children and school principals found it hard to control. For an example, one of the school principals had to be harsh on learners by stopping them not to come back to school without a parent. Despite the situation, education requires collaboration amongst parents and school teachers (Sari, 2020). According to Stage et al. (2018), the aspect of parent co-operation may take different form. For instance, the evidence viewed indicated that parents in one school accompanied their children for evening classes. On the other hand, two school principals were experiencing a severe challenge on parent co-operation. Existing literature findings refute the current findings that parental support seem to have increased (Silinskas & Kikas, 2019). Analysing the evidence, there is a consensus on the evidence that parent co-operation needs more attention particularly in challenging context to enhance quality teaching and learning in schools.

From an instructional leadership perspective, Maponya (2020) argues that involving parents as an instructional leader yields positive results. Hallinger (2019) emphasises that school principal do not develop the school vision alone, instead they communicate it with all stakeholders involved (Naz & Rashid, 2021). However, the data has shown that this is an aspect on leadership issues that constituted a weakness in the participating schools, despite empirical evidence pointing to the efficacies of parental involvement (Maponya, 2020; Naz & Rashid, 2021). School principals as participants in the study are aware of the non-parent co-operation and they devised strategies to overcome it particularly when they are invited in school meetings.

4.7.2 Late coming of learners

There was a common view from the three participants that there late coming among the learners was rife. Data suggested that late coming has been a challenge and that it was caused by a number of factors such as use of public transport, long distances walked by the learners to the schools, and the issues of learners having to go back to fetch masks in instances where they

had forgotten them. However, there was one school that did not suffer from late coming problem. On the issue of late coming, Mr King from Izwe Secondary School had this to say:

We are experiencing late coming as a school, but punctuality is very important. When the bell rings at quarter to eight, I tell security guard to close the gate at ten to eight and we write names of the late comers.

Mr Ludwe from Ucu Secondary School shared a similar sentiment that even in his school there was a problem of late comers. However, it emerged that majority of the learners are traveling long distance to school, and some have to take U-turn on the way to school to fetch the mask they have forgotten at home. This is what Mr Ludwe said:

Most of our learners walk a long distance to come to school, they do come late. However, some of the learners come late and give an excuse that they went back home to fetch the mask.

Mr Bin, the Principal of Icebo Secondary School seemed to be experiencing late coming as other school principals. However, the nature of his school seemed to be more severe as a result he cannot introduce extra lessons in the morning and afternoon because transport is very remote, and the majority of their learners used public transport

Our learners rely on public transport that is the first challenge, so our school instead of starting maybe at seven, it is impossible. That is why we do not have six o'clock classes like other school because these learners come to school exactly at eight, and our school starts at eight o'clock.

There is a diverging view from Mr Zane of Khula Secondary School that in his school learners are not considered late if they arrived before half past seven which is the expected time for all learners to be at school. However, I must indicate that there were those who failed to make half past six which was introduced as an extra tuition.

If I can talk about late coming, the school starts at half past seven but there are studies for all secondary school section that starts at half past six. So, if you are late for half past six, at least will fall in the before half past seven category. That is why I can assure you that when you walk around my school you will not see a single learner being late at high school section.

Drawing from the evidence of the participants, it is clear that most schools encountered the challenge of late coming in the participating schools. Evidence from the literature also suggests that late coming in South African school is a major concern (Maile & Olowoyo, 2017). The factors that contributed to late coming were similar to those highlighted in the literature (Maile & Olowoyo, 2017). For instance, research findings by Gcelu, Padayachee and Makhasane (2020) highlighted child headed family, long distances travelled by the learners to school, and the use of public transport to go to school as the main contributory factors. Instructional leadership theory perspective notes that school principals should manage instructional time (Hallinger, 2019). Similarly, SASP (2015) also outlines that school principals as instructional leaders should manage instructional time and communicate vision of the school with all stakeholders. School principals in the study understand and are aware of the challenge. They take decisive actions to mitigate the challenge in disciplining the learners and ensuring that they are taught.

4.7.3 Challenges posed by COVID-19 related issues

The data generated from secondary school principals revealed that COVID-19 has negatively affected education system in challenging contexts, perhaps, more than it did in other areas (Mchunu, Ngcobo, & Bhengu, 2021). Evidence suggests that secondary school principals were engulfed in enormous challenges and were confused about how to prevent cases in their schools. School principals complained that there was no clarity about what to do when there were COVID-19 infections cases in the schools. Principals are invigilating learners who had been infected by COVID-19 virus, and they had inadequate supply of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Principals used their own personal resources to buy masks, and in some instances, many teachers did not report for duties. The situation became chaotic at some point. The following quotes are responses from school principals. Mr King, the Principal of Izwe Secondary School pointed that he had to invigilate learners with Covid-19 without full protective gear. This is what he had to say this:

This is giving me hard time because the department is not clear about what needs to be done about learners who contracted the virus since there has been a budget cut because we have learners who are in close contacts with infected home members and the department said those learners must write the examination but who will invigilate those

learners without PPEs. I have such learners and I cannot force a teacher to invigilate them because unions will contest that; now I have to invigilate the infected learners by myself without proper protective gear.

Mr Bin, the Principal of Icebo Secondary School explained that his school did not have enough PPEs, had to collect some masks from the circuit and he discouraged teachers not to share COVID-19 related cases to avoid stigmatisation. This is what he had to say:

We do not have enough PPEs. The department takes time to deliver even now the circuit manager has requested us to come to the circuit to collect some masks for learners but we still have sanitizers. It was a challenge at the beginning of the year when cases were rising because teachers were afraid, I normally hear them talking from the staff room about COVID -19 and I decided to tell them not to share with others the number of cases or the number of cases they have heard on social platforms to avoid stigma from others.

Contrary to the above views and experiences, Mr Ludwe from Ucu Secondary School said that teachers are calling to report that they are not coming to school. This is what he said:

Eeey! This COVID-19 has dis-organised us. The problem that I have now are teachers who just call and say they are not feeling well and do not come to school. Because you cannot force someone to come to work during this time, I give them that time to quarantine themselves only to find out they do not visit the doctor.

Mr Zane from Khula Secondary School reported that his school was affected by COVID-19 cases, but, the school had enough supply of Personal Protective Equipment. This is what he said:

Our school had COVID-19 cases and I had to close my school for about a week. When I had to re-open it, the Minister [of Basic Education] closed all the schools in the country. But my teachers were not afraid because it was me who had COVID-19, and school had enough Personal Protective Equipment.

The evidence from four secondary school principals suggested that COVID-19 brought some challenges and confusion in some schools in the education system. Due to budget cuts in the Department of Basic Education (Chirinda, Ndlovu & Spangenberg, 2021; Daka, et al., 2021), schools were left alone to use their funds to fumigate when there was a case of infection. Literature points out that COVID-19 created new challenges in schools (Conrad, 2020; Daka,

et al., 2021; Sibanda & Mathwasa, 2021). Drawing from the context of instructional leadership theory, school principals recognise the challenges related to COVID-19 which limits the instructional time in schools. However, they take action to respond to this contextual reality through extending hours for other grades.

4.8 Chapter summary

This chapter focused on the presentation of findings from four secondary school principals, their understandings of leadership for quality teaching and learning, and also about their leadership practices. From the outline of the precise practices of secondary school principals in enhancing quality in teaching and learning in challenging context. The following chapter will capture the presentation of conclusions and make recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented data analysis and discussed the findings from the interviews. The discussion of data generated was enhanced through the use of literature that was discussed in Chapter Three. This chapter present conclusions reached after the presentation and discussion of findings, and based on these conclusions, it makes recommendations. However, before the conclusions are discussed, I begin the chapter by providing a summary of the entire study. The recommendations suggested are based on the critical research questions presented in Chapter One. Lastly, the chapter concludes with the chapter summary like all other chapters.

5.2 Study summary

Chapter One introduced the entire study by presenting an introduction and background of the study. I believe that by providing a background of the study, it makes it easier to present formal statement of the problem. The chapter also presented the purpose and rationale of the study. The significance of the study and other key research components such as critical questions, key concepts and demarcation of the study were presented. An outline of the whole dissertation is given, followed by a chapter summary which concludes the chapter. Chapter Two presented a review of the literature on leadership for quality teaching and learning from various scholars and contexts. The theoretical framework underpinned in the study is also discussed in this chapter.

Like all theses and dissertations, a chapter on research design and methodologies is presented after a discussion of literature and theories that underpin the study. In this study, that methodological chapter was presented in Chapter Three. This was followed by the presentation and discussion of findings which was given in Chapter Four. Verbatim quotes from the participants are given as evidence that what I am saying is based on the actual statements made by real people. Based on the findings discussed in the fourth chapter, conclusions reached are presented and discussed in Chapter Five. This is followed by the recommendations.

5.3 Conclusions

Conclusions in research studies seek to provide a summary of the themes covered in the study (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Therefore, they provide the final comment about the study. Based on the key research aims, this study sought to explore secondary school principals' understandings of leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts. It also sought to bring about how secondary school principals translated their understandings of leadership for quality teaching and learning into practice in challenging contexts. Drawing from the presented findings in Chapter Four, conclusions were discussed and guided by critical research questions of the study. The critical research questions in the study are as follow:

1. What are school principals' understandings of leadership for quality in teaching and learning in challenging contexts?
2. How do school principals' practise their understandings of leadership for quality in teaching and learning into practice in challenging contexts?
3. What are the challenges faced by school principals in practising leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts?

The above critical research questions are used as main headings in the next section where conclusions are presented and discussed.

5.3.1 What are school principals' understandings of leadership for quality in teaching and learning in challenging contexts?

This first question aimed to gain an understanding of what secondary school principals understood about their leadership for quality in challenging context. In addressing this critical research question number of themes emerged and conclusions on themes are made below.

5.3.1.1 Principals' understanding of quality as the concept

In this theme, the evidence from Chapter Four on principals' understandings of quality as the concept can be understood in different ways. Given this, understanding the concept quality itself is complex (Naz & Rashid, 2021). However, the findings suggested that secondary school

principal have a good and common understanding of the concept. The research findings revealed cited the following aspects as constituting the core of quality, and these are that quality is good value, expected or good standards, excellence and perfection. In analysing the findings, school principals had a common understanding of quality as something of good standard and excellence. Therefore, it can be concluded in the study that quality is something of good standard and excellence.

5.3.1.2 Assessing the degree of quality

The third theme that emerged from the data was assessing the degree of quality in challenging school context. Secondary school principals in challenging context assessed quality based on number of bachelors obtained in Grade 12 examinations; it is also based on the product of learners, and quality of teachers available in the school. Research finding revealed that all four school principals assessed rate of quality by checking the number of bachelors in Grade 12. It can be concluded that secondary school principals put more focus only on grade 12 to rate the degree of quality in their schools. The main conclusion to be made here is that all the participants assessed quality based on the academic performance of the learners in Grade 12 examinations. It could be seen that there were differences amongst the participants about the quality of the learners' performances in Grade 12. Other focused on the number of passes while other put more emphasis on the number of bachelor passes. This does not mean that the focus is not on Grade 12 examinations. Therefore, their assessment of quality is not balanced at all. Similarly, extra classes that were organised underscore this emphasis on Grade 12 examinations results.

5.3.1.3 Principals' understanding leadership for quality

The second theme that emerged from the data was principals' understanding leadership for quality. The analysis of the findings revealed that school principals perceived leadership for quality as having quality leadership skills, inspire quality to people, influence quality, know the direction to quality, motivates quality towards the vision of the school, quality interaction with people, managing quality resources. Given this, it can be concluded that school principals did play multiple roles in enhancing quality in challenging context. These roles included

ensuring that quality teaching and learning is practiced, that detailed plans for the lessons taught were designed and implemented and monitored. It can also be concluded that, through their leadership practices, these principals were instructional leaders as contemplated in Hallinger and Murphy's model of instructional leadership.

5.3.1.4 Principals' understandings of quality teaching and learning in schools

The fourth theme that emerged from the data was that of principals' understandings of quality teaching and learning in schools. The research finding showed that secondary school principals have a reasonable understanding of quality teaching and learning in schools, within their own contexts. They expressed a view that quality teaching and learning cannot be separated from the teachers' ability to use resources, developing well planned and delivered lesson, and a special focus on engendering values of good citizenship and lifelong skills amongst the learners. One major conclusion to be made here is that the principals in the study regarded quality teaching and learning to be future focused; the creation of future leaders and teachers from the learners. Good citizenship and lifelong learning are key components of learning outcomes.

5.3.2 How do school principals lead for quality in teaching and learning in challenging contexts?

This second question aimed to know the practices of secondary school principals in their leadership for quality in challenging contexts. The findings show that principals walked the talk; they used extra lessons for the learners; the principals provided professional development in supporting teachers, and also provided motivational talks and incentivised the teachers and the learners. Walking the talk is very important because it sends a message to those led that you mean what you say and you are not just paying lip service. In their efforts to walk the talk, the participants also showed that they lead by example. More details on this issue are given in various sections of Chapter Four. Exposing teachers to professional development opportunities is one of the most important leadership practices. It can be concluded here that participating principals adopted a comprehensive strategy of leading for quality teaching and learning. This comprehensive approach included walking the talk, conducting and encouraging teachers to go

beyond the call of duty by conducting morning and evening classes among other things; principals also provided professional development opportunities, motivated their teachers and their learners.

5.3.3 What are the challenges faced by school principals in practising leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts?

The findings indicated that the principals faced numerous challenges as they practised leadership in their contexts. The challenges ranged from the lack of parental involvement and cooperation, late coming of the learners and other COVID-19 related challenges. The lack of parental involvement in the activities of the schools is a recurrent challenge facing school leaders in rural communities and other communities in challenging contexts. Similarly, the issue of late coming of the learners in rural and challenging contexts, as well as long distances travelled by the learners is well documented when reading about rural education contexts. This is not surprising that the participants faced these challenges as well. The main conclusion to draw here is that the conditions within which school leaders' work in challenging contexts seem to persist, and that the participating principals seem to have sufficiently adjusted to working in these conditions. These conclusions are not meant to be generalisable across the population as the sample is too small. However, what is evident is that, drawing from this study and other qualitative cases studies conducted in rural and challenging contexts in South Africa, continued marginalisation of these communities in terms of facilities and infrastructure, persists. School principals working in these contexts are resilient. This study is clearly adding to such debates.

5.4 Recommendations

The above previous discussion focused on research findings and conclusions. Although secondary school principals showed reasonable qualities of leadership for quality in challenging contexts, there is still room for improvement in understanding and enhancing quality teaching and learning. Drawing from the conclusions in this study, recommendations were made and are grounded in the objectives of the research. The recommendations provided below are informed by the conclusions presented above.

School principals in this study showed an interesting and reasonable understanding about the phenomenon. However, the phenomenon of this study is broad aspect and it is not well researched. Quality in schools is the major concern and all schools across all context thrive to achieve it. School principals in this study showed a reasonable understanding about the phenomenon. However, the phenomenon of this study is broad aspect and it is not well researched. Quality in schools is the major concern and all schools across all context thrive to achieve it. Therefore, it is recommended that school principals need to broaden up their understanding in quality teaching and learning in challenging context. It is also recommended that school principals need to assess the rate of quality looking at the whole school, and not just focus on teaching and assessing teaching and learning in Grade 12 classes.

One of the findings that concerned me a lot relates to the challenges that the participants faced about COVID-19. The findings suggested that “secondary school principals were engulfed in enormous challenges and were confused about how to prevent cases in their schools. School principals complained that there was no clarity about what to do when there were COVID-19 infections cases in the schools”. One conclusion to be made here is that some principals do not seem to be conversant with COVID-19 regulations despite the fact that these regulations and protocols were circulated in the media and the schools. It was concerning that the principals in the study say that they did not know what to do when cases of COVID-19 were found in their schools. One major recommendation to make is that school principals need to keep themselves abreast of all the latest developments relating to life threatening conditions in their schools. Principals are accounting officers in their respective schools, and they also represent the Department of Basic Education at the local level. That is why it is important that the Department of Basic Education should preach a gospel that the school principals do not understand. If such a scenario exists, it will be difficult for them to keep the school community properly informed about the latest developments in the school sector.

5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented the conclusions of the study and made various recommendations. Before the conclusions were presented and discussed, the summary of the whole study was given.

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List of appendices

APPENDIX A: Permission letter to KZN Department of Basic Education

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APPENDIX A: Permission letter to KZN Department of Basic Education

955 Chris Hani Road
New Germany
3610
19 April 2021

The Superintendent-General (Dr EV Nzama)

Department of Education
Province of KwaZulu-Natal
Private Bag X9137
Pietermaritzburg
3201

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Thandolwakhe Katamzi, Masters Student (Education Leadership, Management Policy) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Edgewood Campus) and I am an educator. As part of my degree fulfilment, I am required to conduct research. I therefore kindly seek permission to conduct research in three schools under Pinetown District. The title of my study: **Leadership for quality in teaching and learning in challenging contexts: A case of secondary school principals**

My research will focus on secondary school principals, more particularly, how they understand leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging context. In order to understand this I will be interpreting and understanding the experiences of secondary school principal's leadership in leadership for quality. My intention is also to explore the support they provide in achieving what they consider as quality in teaching and learning. Therefore, school principals are the source of the data in this research and will assist me in achieving the aims of my research by providing valuable insight into their leadership for quality teaching and learning. I presume this research will be beneficial to your school since it will allow school principals improve how they understand quality in teaching and learning by reflecting their leadership practices in producing quality in challenging context. The study will use semi-structured interviews with school principals. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 40-60 minutes at the times that are convenient to them which will not disturb their work. Each interview will be telephonically and it will be recorded.

You may contact my supervisors or me should you have any queries or questions. The contacts details will be provide below. I hope that you will consider my request favourably and grant me written consent to conduct my research in your district.

Supervisors:

Dr B.N Mkhize

Tel: 031 2601398 (office)

[REDACTED]

E-mail: bnckmkhize@gmail.com

Thanking you in advance for your time and consideration

Yours faithfully

T Katamzi

[REDACTED]

Katamzithando@gmail.com

APPENDIX B: Permission letter from KZN Department of Basic Education



KWAZULU-NATAL PROVINCE

EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

Private Bag X9137, PIETERMARITZBURG, 3200
Anton Lembede Building, 247 Burger Street, Pietermaritzburg, 3201
Tel: 033 3921062 / 033-3921051

Email: Phindile.duma@kzndoe.gov.za
Buyi.ntuli@kzndoe.gov.za

Enquiries: Phindile Duma/Buyi Ntuli

Ref.:2/4/8/7100

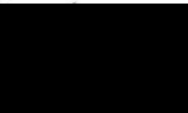
Mr Thandolwakhe Katamzi
955 Chris Hani Road
New Germany
3610

Dear Mr Katamzi

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"LEADERSHIP FOR QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING IN CHALLENGING CONTEXTS: PERSPECTIVES OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS IN PINETOWN DISTRICT"**: in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 04 May 2021 to 10TH October 2023.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma/Mrs Buyi Ntuli at the contact numbers above.
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.


Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 04 May 2021

GROWING KWAZULU-NATAL TOGETHER

APPENDIX C: Permission letter to School Principals



The Principal
Sample Secondary School
Pinetown District

Dear Participant

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH

My name is ...**Thandolwakhe Katamzi**... I am an Education Leadership Management and Policy Masters candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Edgewood campus, South Africa. I am interested in learning about the understanding of leadership for quality teaching and learning of secondary school principals, and how they translate it into practice. I intend to study cases from challenging contexts. 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 supervisor is Dr. Bongani Nhlahla Mkhize who is located at the School of Education, Edgewood campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal.

Contact details: Mkhizeb3@ukzn.ac.za

Phone number: (031) 260 1398

You may also contact the Research Office:

UKZN HSSREC Research Office

Tel: 031 260 4557

E-mail: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Thanking in advance for your contribution to this research.

Yours faithfully

T Katamzi (Mr)



katamzithando@gmail.com

DECLARATION

I..... (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

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

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

.....

APPENDIX D: Interview Schedule

Questions:

1. What is your understanding of quality?
2. What is your understanding of quality teaching and learning?
3. What is your understanding of leadership for quality?
4. What policies that guide your leadership and management functions as a school principal?
5. How do you ensure that these leadership and management functions are implemented?
6. Do you believe that these leadership and management functions enhance the quality of teaching and learning in your schools? If so How? If not why?
7. How do you rate quality in your schools?
8. What is the role of school principal in supporting teachers in enhancing quality teaching and learning in challenging context? Elaborate.
9. Were you encounter any challenges in supporting teachers in enhancing quality teaching and learning before the pandemic? If yes, explain what kind of challenges were involved in supporting teachers.
10. Are there any developmental programmes that you provide to equip teachers to enhance quality teaching and learning? If yes, what form of the programmes that you present to teachers in your school?
11. Does your support to teachers meet your expectations of quality? If yes, how? If no, why not?
12. What challenges do you encounter during this Covid-19 pandemic period as a school which are not related with normal situation?
13. Is the teaching and learning being affected by Covid-19 pandemic? If yes, how?

APPENDIX E: Turnit in certificate

Leadership for quality teaching and learning in challenging contexts: Perspectives of secondary school principals in Pinetown District

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