

**The role of principals in supporting effective teaching and learning in the
uMkhanyakude Education District**

By

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Educational Leadership, Management and Policy

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

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Edgewood, South Africa

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DECLARATION

I, Buthelezi Siduduzo Ruen declare that


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ABSTRACT

This study explored the role played by school principals in supporting teaching and learning in secondary schools under uMkhanyakude Education District. Specifically, the study examined a variety of strategies used by principals in assisting School Management Teams (SMTs) and educators in promoting effective teaching at chosen schools. The study was guided by three research questions, namely, (a) What is the role of principals in supporting effective teaching and learning at uMkhanyakude education District? (b) How do principals lead and manage teaching and learning in their schools? (c) What strategies are used by principals in assisting School Management Teams and educators in promoting effective teaching at chosen schools?

A qualitative research design was employed in this study which was located in the interpretive research paradigm. Purposive sampling was used to select schools to participate in the study. Semi-structured interviews and documents reviews were used to generate qualitative data. Principals, Departmental Heads and educators were interviewed. Content analysis was used to analyse the data. The findings indicate that principals and Departmental Heads monitored the work of the Departmental Heads and the teachers in their schools. Many schools planned together how principals and Departmental Heads would check and control the educators' files and learners work. Departmental Heads also planned together with the educators about what is going to be required of them. The most important effect of planning is that many uMkhanyakude principals and educators plan when and how to finish the syllabus early and ensure that thorough revision takes place. Some of the recommendations made in this study include the need to focus on teaching and learning, the adoption of collaborative work with the educators and ensuring that learning and teaching materials are supplied to the schools and teachers.

UKZN Ethical Clearance Certificate



08 November 2018

Mr Siduduza R Buthelezi 211557434
School of Education
Edgewood Campus

Dear Mr Buthelezi

Protocol reference number: HSS/2184/017M

Project Title: The role of principals in supporting effective teaching and learning at Umkhanyakuce Education District.

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application dated 13 November 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the above-mentioned application 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.

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

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

Yours faithfully

[Redacted Signature]

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DEDICATION

- I wholeheartedly dedicate this research to the almighty God and to all those who had faith in my ability to complete my work.
- Special dedication also goes to my mom and my family for their support and prayers.
- Lastly, this study is dedicated to my late grandmother, Philda Deliwe Buthelezi. I am quite sure that she would have been proud of me in view of the role she played in raising me from a young boy to mature adult, capable of completing my masters study.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACE	Advance Certificate in Education
ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CAPS	National Curriculum And Assessment Policy Statement
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CMC	Circuit Management Cluster
Covid - 19	Coronavirus Disease of 2019
CPTD	Continued Professional Teachers Development
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DH	Departmental Heads
DoE	Department of Education
DSTV	District Support Team Visits
EEA	Employment of Educators Act
HOD	Head of Department
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management Services
LoLT	Language of Learning and Teaching
LTSM	Learner, Teacher Support Material
NCS	National Curriculum Statement
NEPA	National Education Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NTA	National Teaching Awards
PAM	Personnel Administrative Measures
PPN	Post Provision Norm
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SACE	South African Council for Educators
SES	Senior Education Specialist
SGB	School Governing Body
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely
SMT	School Management Team
SMTs	School Management Teams
SWOT	Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats
WSE	Whole School Evaluation
WTS	Where To Start

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study is about understanding the role of school principals in supporting effective teaching and learning in the uMkhanyakude District. Various scholars (Bhengu & Mthembu, 2014; Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013; Hallinger & Heck, 1996) have highlighted the significant role that school principals play in supporting effective teaching and learning, including in schools that are located in rural communities such as the uMkhanyakude District. This is the first chapter of the dissertation, which introduces the study. The chapter introduces the study by first providing the background to the study. This includes clarifying the statement of the problem, outlining the aims, the motivation to conduct the study, its contribution and significance, the research objectives, the questions of the study, limitations as well as, clarifying the key concepts. The chapter begins with a discussion of a global overview of the standard of education in terms of learner achievement in the National Senior Certificate (NSC) nationally, provincially and locally at the uMkhanyakude District level. The chapter concludes by giving a short summary of the major issues highlighted within it.

1.2 Background to the study

South Africa is a developing country and its control of education is divided into three tiers, namely, the national, provincial and district level (Smith & Ngoma-Maema, 2003). However, all the three education tiers are intertwined. UMkhanyakude District is one of the 12 education districts in the KwaZulu-Natal's provincial education department. The district is geographically located in the deep rural area, on the far North of KwaZulu-Natal. Education is the representation of the broad social, economic and political structure of the country (Kirov, 2014). This scholar further argues that poverty is highly concentrated in regions that are geographically located within the deepest of rural expanse. Inhabitants of such rural areas are predominately the black populace in the context of South Africa (Kirov, 2014). High poverty levels in such areas are mostly demonstrated by high levels of illiteracy and unemployment (Kirov, 2014). Poor learner performance is also closely related to the issues of poverty and unemployment (Kendra, 2019); Lacour & Tissington, 2011). Research evidence has also emphasised that principals who have

to supervise and support teaching and learning face numerous challenges relating to issues of poverty (Chikoko, 2018; Hallinger, 2005; Mkhize & Bhengu, 2015).

Scholars like Hallinger (2005) indicate that principals have a major challenge of creating a sound culture of teaching and learning where effective education is taking place. Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998 (RSA, 1998) stipulates that principals must ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place in schools. This legislation further stipulates that principals in particular, are expected to provide professional leadership within the school; to guide, supervise and offer professional advice on the work and performance of all staff and, where necessary, to discuss and write or countersign reports on teaching, support, non-teaching and other staff; are responsible for the development of staff training programmes, both school-based, school-focused and externally directed, and to assist educators, particularly new and inexperienced educators, in developing and achieving educational objectives in accordance with the needs of the school, and participate in agreed school/ educator appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management (RSA, 1998).

The National Education Policy Act (NEPA), No. 27 of 1996 stipulates the time that educators are to spend in teaching the learner (RSA, 1996a). In addition, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and provincial education departments have introduced several policy initiatives to improve curriculum delivery in our schools. These policies include the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), Foundations for learning, Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), and Policy on Whole School Evaluation (WSE). Principals are therefore, expected to understand and promote the aforementioned policies (Sijako, 2017). In my opinion, given the stipulations of the policies mentioned, principals need to give high priority to the management of teaching and learning as instructional leaders. This is the main reason why this study sought to understand the ways in which principals of the three selected schools in the uMkhanyakude District support effective teaching and learning in their schools.

This study also sought to examine the significance of school principals in enhancing effective teaching and learning so as to shape classroom practices and improve learner outcomes in selected schools under uMkhanyakude District. Therefore, the study focused on the role of the three secondary school principals and their school management teams in creating and maintaining sound culture of teaching and learning. It was hoped that the study would also

identify some common features of how the principals have succeeded or not succeeded in promoting effective teaching and learning in their schools. As I have indicated in the previous sections, one factor that might contribute to poor teaching and learning could be socio-economic conditions in an area. For instance, Hallinger (2003) and Fleisch (2008) show that the main predictor of learning outcomes is the socio-economic context faced by the school and its learners. These conditions exist in the uMkhanyakude District where this study was conducted, and thus, it would be interesting to note the extent to which they also affect the work of school principals and their School Management Teams (SMTs) in supporting teaching and learning. Acknowledging the differing contextual conditions in which schools are located, it was important that the new democratic government in South Africa addressed these issues of disparities in schools across the country.

In trying to resolve the issue of inequalities, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) introduced the policy called Norms and Standards for Funding, in terms of which schools were categorised into five quintiles. The higher the quintile in which the school belonged, the less the amount of funding it was going to receive from the DBE and *vice versa*. In terms of the quintile system, the school with high community poverty and unemployment was ranked as Quintile 1 school. Schools in Quintile 2 were regarded as better compared to those in Quintile 1, and so forth. This means that, based on the infrastructure available in the community, many of the schools ranked as Quintile 5 schools were largely located in urban areas and also charges school fees from parents (Van Dyk & White, 2017). Schools that are ranked between Quintile 1 and Quintile 3 are categorised as NO-Fee paying schools as the DBE funded them on 100% basis. This means that such school depended on the DBE wholly (Van Dyk & White, 2017). Schools that participated in this study were affected by these policy provisions as all of them belonged to the No-Fee paying schools category, and this may affect school principals in terms of supporting teaching and learning.

I became interested in this study partly based on my personal and professional experience. My experience of working as a Post-Level One Educator (Teacher), Departmental Head, a principal and most recently, as the district official (Senior Education Specialist – Examination and Assessment Section), has exposed me to the work of the principals, especially in the context of rural communities. Some of my activities include doing school visits, checking the school functionality and checking how educators teach and assess learners. My involvement in such activities tells me that when school management gets very close to the teaching and learning

situation, examination results are likely to improve, whether in a rural or urban area. Robinson (2007) supports the idea by opining that the impact on student outcomes is likely to be greater where there is direct leader involvement in the oversight of, and participation in, curriculum planning and co- ordination, and teacher learning and professional development. From my experience, the introduction of the subject specialists in schools caused confusion about the role of the principal in supporting teaching and learning.

Recently, I was requested by the district officials to accompany the IQMS external moderators from the Department of Basic Education at national level, to check the level of IQMS implementation. Mendels (2012) suggests that principals as instructional leaders monitor teaching and learning activities and give feedback to teachers. He further suggests that principals need to guide teachers on their teaching and learning. Some principals, when requested to answer few questions about teaching and learning, such as class visits, planning and necessary records that promote teaching and learning, they referred the officials to the subject specialists. In those cases, it was not because of delegation, rather, it was because they did not understand what was happening in the classroom. While that does not constitute empirical evidence that some principals have limited insights about what is going on in the classroom, it does indicate that there are challenges that require inquiry regarding the principals' instructional practices. We need to know the extent to which their leadership supports effective curriculum delivery or not.

According to the South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996 (henceforth, the Schools Act), the school principal as the accounting officer is responsible for the drawing of comprehensive turnaround strategy for matric results (subject improvement plan) (RSA, 1996b). The assumption is that a principal that is very close to teaching and learning is aware of any thing taking place in the classroom that has made learners to fail, and how to improve that situation. He or she can identify the problem and work towards solving that problem. In that regard, Grissom, Loeb, and Master (2013) found that on average, principals spent less than 13% of their time on instructional activities. Concurring with this view, May and Supovitz (2011) found that principals spent only 8% on supervising instruction. This indicates that principals are expected to be instructional leaders. However, it is not clear whether all principals play this role in any effective and efficient manner as they should. Unfortunately, most studies conducted in South Africa on instructional leadership role of principals suggest that principals' time is largely consumed by administrative activities rather than influencing what is going on in the

classroom (Chisholm, Hoadley & Kivilu, 2005; Gustafsson, 2005; Kanjee & Prinsloo, 2005).

1.3 Statement of the problem

Mendels (2012) suggested that principals must be the instructional leaders who dedicate their times and energy in ensuring that there is effective and good quality teaching and learning. However, there are schools that still perform below the expected standard or benchmark set by the department of education which is 65% in the NSC examination. Poor Grade 12 results in the uMkhanyakude District has been the major concern for many people and for many years, including those people who work in the district. Most school principals seem not to be spending time with their teachers and SMTs analysing learners results and conducting staff meetings discussing learner results, although looking at the latest Grade 12 results there seems to be a slight improvement. I must hasten to say that for the schools to be effective, Grade 12 results are not the only indicator to measure the schools' effectiveness.

The school principals, the SGBs, the parents, the educators and the learners are to be at the centre of promoting effective teaching and learning and school improvement (Brookover, Beamer, Efthim, Hathaway, Lezotte, Miller, Passalacqua & Tornatzky, 1982). However, empirical and anecdotal evidence suggest that this is not always the case. The following tables provide an overview of learner academic achievement in the uMkhanyakude District.

Table 1: The uMkhanyakude District Grade 12 results between 2011 and 2017

YEAR	PASS RATE %
2011	55.27
2012	65.2
2013	74.2
2014	71.92
2015	62.69
2016	69.19
2017	77.01

(Adapted: KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education NSC Report 2017)

Table 2: District NSC Results summary (2011 to 2017)

Year	No. wrote	No achieved	% achieved	No. of bachelor	% of bachelor	No. of diplomas	% of diplomas	No of certificate	% of certificate
2011	10400	5748	55.27	1321	22.98	2477	43.09	1950	33.92
2012	10407	6781	65.2	1937	18.6	2869	27.56	1975	18.97
2013	10469	7770	74.2	2842	27.14	3113	29.73	1815	17.33
2014	10308	7413	71.92	2276	22.08	3268	31.70	1869	18.13
2015	14054	8810	62.69	2565	18.25	3851	27.40	2394	17.03
2016	12783	8844	69.19	2712	21.22	3745	29.30	2387	18.67
2017	11452	8819	77.01	2852	24.90	3894	34.00	2073	18.10

Source: Adapted from (2017) uMkhanyakude District Analysis

Table 3: Performance range of schools under uMkhanyakude District from 2011- 2017

No.	% RANGE	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
1.	100	01	01	06	05	04	05	12
2.	90- 99	03	06	19	12	12	15	30
3.	80- 89	18	17	39	36	19	34	34
4.	70- 79	24	37	39	37	22	34	39
5.	60- 69	19	35	19	21	29	23	24
6.	50- 59	22	28	11	21	24	18	12
7.	40- 49	25	11	12	05	23	15	06
8.	30- 39	13	10	06	10	13	10	03
9.	20- 29	17	05	01	05	08	05	01
10.	10- 19	04	01	02	02	06	02	00
11.	0- 09	01	0	0	01	01	00	01
12.	Below 30	22	06	03	08	15	07	02
13.	Below 60	101	55	32	44	75	50	23

Source: Adapted from (2017) uMkhanyakude District Analysis

1.4 Motivation to conduct the study

Very limited studies in South Africa have focused on effective teaching and learning, especially on the role of principals in this regard. The three requirements made by Bush and Glover (2009) and Taylor (2007) mentioned above, form the bases of my research. As the researcher, I work in the district as Senior Education Specialist (SES) under Examination and Assessment Section, where schools under study are located. Although we noticed an improvement of results in 2017, the district has recorded 02 schools that performed less than 30%. The number of schools that performed below the threshold made by the provincial KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education of 60% are 23, which constitutes 14% of the total schools of 162. Since 2013 the level of bachelor pass percentage required by the University for Entrance is dropping from 27.14% to 24.90% (uMkhanyakude District Analysis document, 2017). These figures point to the importance of school principals' supporting teaching and learning in order to ensure improvement in learners' academic outcomes. Such scenarios also motivated me to want to understand what principals and their SMTs were doing in supporting teaching and learning.

1.5 Aim of the study

This study aimed at investigating the role played by principals as instructional leaders in supporting effective teaching and learning at three high schools within the uMkhanyakude District.

1.6 Research objectives

In pursuance of the above aim, this study set out to address the following research objectives:

- To understand the role played by principals in supporting effective teaching and learning at chosen schools within the uMkhanyakude District.
- To explore how principals lead and manage teaching and learning in the uMkhanyakude District.
- To identify strategies used by principals in assisting School Management Team members in promoting effective teaching in the uMkhanyakude District.

This research also sought to contribute to closing this gap and on-going discourse on principals supporting effective teaching in schools. Lastly, the specific aspects to be addressed in the research is reflected in the research questions.

1.7 Key research questions

The principal objective of study is to find answers to the following critical questions:

- What is the role of principals in supporting effective teaching and learning in the uMkhanyakude District?
- How do principals lead and manage teaching and learning in the uMkhanyakude District?
- What strategies are used by principals in assisting School Management Team members and educators in promoting effective teaching in the uMkhanyakude District?

1.8 Significance of the study

One has to note the fact that the principals' role can be measured in terms of many components. One of them can be grade 12 results. Based on the 2015 Grade 12 results analysis, it was found that out of 14054 learners who wrote the National Senior Certificate examinations, only 8810 managed to pass and the percent of learners that obtained bachelor passes have dropped from 27.14% in 2013 to 18.25% in 2015 according to uMkhanyakude district analysis document produced in 2015. This means that few learners could gain access to university education. According to Delport and Mangwana (2008), the learners' achievement particularly in Grade 12, are normally perceived to reflect the general standard of teaching and learning, not only in a particular school but also in a particular country. These scholars further suggest that the academic achievement of learners at remote secondary schools in developing areas tends to be low compared to those who attend urban schools (Delport & Mangwaya, 2008). It was hoped that this study would contribute towards an understanding of how some school principals in remote areas such as uMkhanyakude District support effective teaching and learning. It would share stories from the experiences of such principals and thus add to the debates on the subject.

1.9 Clarification of key concepts

There are numerous concepts that are key to the study and it is important that I clarify how they are used in this study. These concepts are teaching staff, effective teaching and learning, leadership, leadership teaching and transformational leadership. These concepts are discussed next.

1.9.1 Teaching staff

The National Education Policy Act defines a teacher as any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons in an institution or assists in rendering education services, or education auxiliary or support services provided by or in an education institution (RSA, 1996a). This concept is used in this study to refer to teaching staff in the schools, inclusive of all ranks that exists in school-based teaching staff.

1.9.2 Effective teaching and learning

Creemers (1997) suggests that effective teaching is about different methods, approaches, resources and techniques to produce learners who will be able to attain requisite instructional outcomes. Ndlovu, Bertram, Mthiyane and Arey (1997) contend that effective teaching means different things to different people because the way people value examination results; they will say the school that produce the best results, is an effective school. Contrary to this, if people value silent conducive environment, they will refer to a school as an effective school (Ndlovu et al., 1997). Therefore, they mean that effective teaching is judged on the basis of what one considers valued.

1.9.3 Leadership

Northouse (1997), cited by Liphadzi, Aigbayboa and Thwala (2017), states that leadership includes many dimensions such as traits, ability, skill, behaviour, relationship and a process. Kyalampa, Asimwe, Netswera and Rankhumise (2017) see leadership as requiring 10 competencies, including strategic, financial and investment, planning considerations; investment considerations; fundraising strategy considerations; income diversification considerations; funding partners; income generation capabilities; responsiveness; attributes of NGO leader/ CEO; empowerment and motivation of the staff. Leadership is used in this study in an inclusive manner that encompasses all the above-mentioned dimensions.

1.9.4 Leadership teaching

The concept leadership teaching entails instructional leadership (Leithwood, 1999). Concurrently, Kruger (2003) asserts that instructional leadership occurs when the principal provides direction, resources and support to both the educators and the learners with the aim of

improving teaching and learning at a school. Therefore, leadership teaching focuses on the outcomes of leadership which is about providing direction and achievement of organisational goals. It is in this sense that this concept is used in this study.

1.9.5 Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership is about inspiring subordinates such that their behaviours are transformed (Barth-Farkas & Vera, 2014). Therefore, transformational leaders are the ones who are able to stimulate, inspire and transform his or her subordinates to strive harder in order to achieve extraordinary outcomes (Barth-Farkas & Vera, 2014). In addition, this type of leadership inspires followers to believe in their own potential, so as to create a better prospect and future for the organisation while believing in the leader personally (Barth-Farkas & Vera, 2014). Therefore, a transformational leader is expected to be able to provide a clear vision and mission, inspire self-esteem and gain trust and respect through charisma.

1.10 The structure of the dissertation

This dissertation consists of five chapters, and these are outlined below.

Chapter One

The first chapter introduces the study and the chapter. As part of that introduction, the chapter contains various elements of introductory chapters, and these include issues of the background to the study, the rationale, the aims of the study, the research objectives and research questions, the significance of the study and definition of key concepts.

Chapter Two

This chapter presents various debates and dimensions of principals' support to effective teaching and learning efforts in schools. In addition, the chapter also describes the theories and/or models that can help in the understanding of support that principals as instructional leaders can provide to the teaching staff.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three is the design and methodology chapter. This chapter provides a detailed explanation about methodological issues and justification for decisions made in this regard.

Chapter Four

Chapter Four presents and discusses the data that was generated through the use of semi-structured interviews and reviews of documents kept in the studied schools.

Chapter Five

This is the final chapter that presents the findings that are based on the data that was presented and discussed in Chapter four and five.

1.11 Chapter summary

The first chapter has introduced the study by, *inter alia*, presenting a short background to the study, including the role played by principals in supporting effective teaching and learning, drawing from global and local level. Other elements of the study as summarised in the study outline above have been explained. The next chapter provides a detailed discussion of the literature review and theoretical framework.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has introduced the study and given all the key elements of the orientation of the study. This chapter presents a review of scholarly literature that relates to the study. Scholarly literature discussed in this chapter considers geographical context including South Africa, Africa and other countries. The reviews explored the existing research on the role played by principals in supporting effective teaching and learning. The review further looks at strategies used by principals and educators in improving teaching and learning. It also highlighted some challenges that impede instructional leadership practices. Towards the conclusion, the theoretical framework of the study is presented.

2.2 The role of principals in supporting effective teaching and learning in the schools

Over the years, numerous scholars have attempted to describe and give their views on different roles played by school principals in managing teaching and learning. For instance, according to Hallinger (2005), one of the tasks of the principal is instructional leadership, and this entails creating a clear goal that focuses on student learning. Hallinger (2005) further suggests that one of instructional leadership roles of principals is to make sure that the teaching staff understand the academic goals to be achieved in the school. Parylo and Zepeda (2014) have examined and described an effective instructional leadership role of principals and proposed four major characteristics of that leadership. These characteristics are (a) Documented Characteristics; (b) Instructional Skills; (c) Being a data leader, and (d) Being a passionate leader. These are briefly discussed next.

(a) Documented Characteristics are about the principal having a traceable record where evidence of relevant experience in the needed service can be found. For instance, it is an expectation that such as a person should have a character of being a good manager. Therefore, selectors need to pay specific attention to formal leadership positions that the candidates had held before.

(b) Instructional skills are important and an effective principal is expected to focus on teaching and learning. This includes pushing for the achievement of desired results,

conceptualised as improved student achievement. Values accountability is also important and drives the school's instructional direction. Therefore, instructional leaders understand the curriculum, instructional and assessment processes and are able to bring the teaching team together to focus on teaching and learning (Parylo & Zepeda, 2014).

(c) Principals as data leaders are expected to understand and consider the need to analyse data from time to time (Parylo & Zepeda, 2014). Principals study and know their data and take necessary action and performance intervention, for example, in order to close the achievement gap.

(d) Principals as passionate leaders are expected to be devoted and caring leaders. This can only happen if they are passionate about education, children and are enthusiastic about working with people (Parylo & Zepeda, 2014). In addition to these characteristics, Du Plessis (2013) emphasises that as instructional leaders, principal should be able to order quality teaching and learning through, for example, setting higher goals; managing curriculum and instruction distribution; creating a sound culture that encourages quality teaching and learning; strategizing on measures that can be used by educators to effectively assess teaching and learning outcomes. Looking at the three scholars, Du Plessis (2013) and Parylo and Zepeda (2014), it has become clear that the role that principals have to play in supporting effective teaching and learning has to foreground instructional leadership practices. These practices primarily focus on teaching and learning which include engaging various activities that are aimed at supporting educators in providing effective teaching and learning experiences among the learners. In this regard, Glanz, Shulman and Sullivan (2007) argue that effective instructional leaders need to be able to support educators by providing resources to improve instruction. They make efforts to hire experienced educators who promote student achievements.

Effective instructional leaders place an emphasis on learners achieving good academic outcomes (Glanz et al. 2007). Additionally, such leaders set high expectations and standards for student learning, improve instructional practices by conducting instructional sessions with the educators, providing staff development and develop educators' reflections. (Glanz et al. 2007) further argue that it is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that they are familiar with and take a lead in the matters of school curriculum implementation, practice and development. For instance, it is the responsibility of the principal to ensure that formal and

informal tasks are properly implemented and controlled by all the educators at school.

2.3 How principals lead and manage teaching and learning in their schools

This study is about instructional leadership of school principals located in a particular context, uMkhanyakude District which is completely rural. The review of literature has identified key aspects that should constitute their leadership and management practices. In this section, I discuss three of them and they are issues of (a) Accountability as part of leadership process; (b) Planning process as a way of strategic management; (c) Collaboration with educators, the SMT and the outside world.

2.3.1 Accountability as a process of leadership

The notion of accountability to stakeholders cannot be over-emphasised. In this regard, Wagner (1989) argues that giving an account includes reporting and clarifying or justifying the existence of education events. According to Sargor (1996), the term accountability is complex and refers to a professional work resolute by understanding of those ideologies, theories, and factors that undergird suitable decisions about actions that should be hired and the understanding of events themselves. This implies that accountability should not be taken for granted and assume that people have a clear and common understanding of what it means and what implications it has for them. Schelder, Diamond and Platter (1999) came to a similar conclusion in relation to accountability where they say it carries everlasting concern of checks, oversight, scrutiny and institutional limits on the exercise of power.

Another significance of accountability or answerability is raised by Lello (1993) by arguing that accountability involves being answerable to other stakeholders both junior and senior to one. This is important in many ways because there are people who have a belief that accountability is about being answerable to people in senior positions in the organisation. This view dispels that notion and I believe that the view expressed by Lello (1993) is helpful in that regard. Brundrett and Rhodes (2011) describe accountability as a relationship whereby an individual or institution has a responsibility to account for their actions or performance to another. This is not dissimilar to the view expressed by Lello (1993), in the sense that seniority

does not feature in this conceptualisation. Mongon and Chapman (2012) suggest that accountability involves both responsibility and accounting which may be assessed against recognised standards and action taken. Other scholars provide some proposals about what should constitute real accountability in practice.

Earley and Weindling (2004) have reviewed numerous articles and from these they have identified four dimensions of Accountability. These are moral dimension whereby principals through the learners, pass information about the school to the parents and community; Professional dimension whereby the principal passes information to colleagues; contractual dimension whereby principals pass information to employer or government and Market dimension whereby a principal passes information to the market. Perhaps, it is for that reason that Arnett (2010) suggested that principals need to have that human skills of motivating, facilitating, co-ordinating, leading, communicating, managing conflicts, and getting along with one another.

Principals of the 21st century face numerous challenges like entering the 4th industrial revolution and closure of schools for a long time because of COVID-19 to mention but a few. To recover the lost time, instructional leadership and effective schools that are dedicated to teaching and learning are needed. Perhaps it is for that reason Sava and Koemer (1998) suggested that recent challenges require schools to be led by effective instructional and administrative principals. In this regard, Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) suggest that instructional leadership is whereby the principal as a head of the school sets goals, manages the curriculum and supervises all activities for effective teaching and learning to take place at school. However, what is of critical importance is that principals need to be able to account for their actions whether they are good or bad as their clients and employers need to know what is going on in their schools and why things are happening the way they do. Hitt and Tucker (2016) state that effective leadership practice includes transmission, communicating and implementing a vision. For the school to be successfully effective, the principal and his or her SMT must ensure that educators are supported and be developed where necessary. There should be that interlink between the SMT and educators, and with the SGB of the school and the community. There should be that positive climate and that favourable learning culture.

2.3.2 Planning process as a way of strategic management

Koontz and Wehrich (1994) define planning as a process of selecting missions, objectives, strategies, policies, programmes, and procedures for achieving them, decision-making, the selection of a course of action from among options. Parker (2011) defines planning as where the school wants to be in the future and how to get there. Given that there can be no movement of the school without the learners, this could mean that teachers' projections are made in relation to student needs to succeed in achieving their goals. Instructional principals use learners' achievement for making decisions about school improvement. Megbu (2005) describes planning as an attempt to raise the rationality of decision making, carefully specifying objectives and systematically shifting alternative policy instruments so as to find the optimal means of achieving the objectives. In other words, a mindful effort is made to align the course content with state consistent test. In other words, planning can be said to be successful and thus effective when there is alignment between the goals and the processes of getting to those goals.

Oosterlynck (2011) emphasises that planning provides staff with a sense of purpose and direction; it outlines the kinds of tasks they will be performing, and explains how their activities are related to the overall goals of the school. One good thing about planning is that the staff use their time and energies on good and expected things, hence, they are trained and understand their roles and responsibilities and it minimise wasteful expenditure (Oosterlynck, 2011). The most important thing about planning according to McDonnell (2011), is that it becomes the basis for monitoring and evaluation of the actual performance. The suggestion given by McDonnell (2011) is that plans made at first step become a benchmark for monitoring stage at the later stage. In the development of the plan, scholars like Burton (2007) introduced a number of activities that principals can use to allocate activities to all stakeholders, that is, developing methods to help educators and subject advisors to understand the share of their accountabilities, coordinating individual efforts through work schedules to avoid unnecessary delay in task achievement, designing an efficient system for making day-to-day work assignments, and cross training personnel.

Other scholars like Boschee (2009) and Wanjala and Rarieya (2014) propose a new model of planning called strategic planning. This kind of planning involves an estimated resources and funds needed to achieve a particular strategic plan (Wanjala & Rarieya, 2014). Lastly, Haines

(2007) suggested that the strategic plan of the school should be drafted to cover a period of 3 to 5 years. One of the disturbing factors in the strategic planning, is found in a study carried by Horng, Klasik and Loeb (2009) when analysing the work of the principal in Florida, their finding was that principals engage in over 40 different kinds of tasks each day daily. This enforces the principal to compromise monitoring and evaluation of the planned activities.

2.3.3 Collaboration with educators, the SMT and the outside world

Collaboration with stakeholders is always important in leading and managing organisations, including schools. Heck (1992) suggests that principals are mostly regarded as the communicators in disseminating information about reform initiatives in their schools. This is to say principals as instructional leaders need to promote school effectiveness by collaborating with their SMTs and educators in developing instructional school-based programmes. Coburn (2005) contends that principals influence how educators directly and indirectly make sense of those initiatives and give meanings to those initiatives in educators' classroom practice. The emphasis made by Coburn (2005) is that principals involve educators in all planned instructional activities and every staff member feel being recognised for a job well done. Educators are contented with the extent of independence and control that they have over their classrooms and school as such. One of the principal's role as outlined by Finnegan (2010) is to hold educators and students accountable for their performance. Goldring, Huff, Spillane and Barnes (2009) contend that principals are responsible for generating a culture of opportunities and holding educators and learners accountable for their contribution to the collective results.

Reitzug and West (2011) suggest that principals build teacher knowledge and skills by working with educators and others who are directly engaged in instruction, like for instance, educators and many other stakeholders have influence over school policies. Other researchers like Sherer and Spillane (2012) emphasise that principals show their great leadership by the decisions they make in the allocation and management of school resources like the structured time and access of staff to staff development and instructional coaches for successful collaboration. In the local context, the principal's role is defined in various legislation such as the South African Schools Act (RSA, 1996b), and specifically in the Personnel Administration Measures (PAM) document and the National Education Policy Act (RSA, 1996a). According to the above documents, the principal's role is to ensure that the school is managed satisfactorily and in compliance with applicable legislation, regulations and

personnel administration measures as prescribed. The core duties and responsibilities of the job, are general: administration, personnel, academic performance of the school, teaching and interaction with stakeholders, and communication.

Drawing from Smith and Andrews (1989), who suggest that one of the principal's role is to communicate his/ her vision with all stakeholders including educators, parents and the outside school world like head office, district, one may then conclude that one of the roles of the principal is to communicate. In this regard, Parlyo and Zapeta (2014) concur with Smith and Andrews (1989) who say a good principal is an effective communicator that is able to establish good relationship with educators, parents and community surrounding the school. PAM document supports the views expressed above and suggest that one of the principal's role is to communicate. The principal communicates his or her vision with internal and external school world. Taole (2013) shares similar views by suggesting that principals should delegate and leave managerial tasks to other members of the School Management Teams (SMTs), but they must not over delegate, hence PAM document rests all curriculum management functions with the principals.

2.4 Strategies used by Principals in assisting SMTs and educators in promoting effective teaching at chosen schools

The review of literature indicates that globally (Blasé' & Blasé, 1999; Southworth, 2002) and locally (Bhengu & Mthembu, 2014; Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Van Rooyen, 2009; Du Plessis, Conley & Du Plessis, 2009), when principals seek strategies that will promote effective teaching and learning environments in their schools, they adopt strategies that are consistent with instructional leadership. A definition given by Du Plessis, Conley and Du Plessis (2007) is that effective teaching is a process whereby the school through its educators, creates an opportunity for learning to take place by helping learners to acquire new knowledge or skills through an integration of activities. Furthermore, Bhengu and Mthembu (2014) suggest that effective teaching only take place in schools which are led by effective instructional principals.

In explaining how these strategies work at school level, Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu, and Van Rooyen (2009) propose a number of activities that empirical research has found to be useful. Some of these activities include principals increasing the role they play in managing teaching and learning. Empirical research had revealed that principals had only a limited role in

managing teaching and learning. Principals, according to these scholars have to have the ability to make a clear distinction between the work of individual Departmental Heads and the collective work of the School Management Team as a whole in curriculum leadership (Bush et al., 2009). The other underlying factors that support improved learner achievement include the availability of committed and experienced teaching staff, extra lessons when necessary, good learning and teaching support materials, as well as, any appropriate interventions that may be internally or externally initiated.

Besides Bush and his colleagues, Southworth (2002) expounded on three major strategies to enhance the efficacy of teaching and learning, and these are modelling, monitoring and professional dialogue. Modelling is about the power of example, whereby, a leader demonstrates by doing what s/he expects from others. Southworth (2002) suggests that principals should use their pedagogical practices as a template for others to follow, work in close proximity with educators in the classroom, coach staff, and use assemblies to promote core values and practices. Monitoring is an approach whereby, principals look at the educators' daily or weekly plan, visiting classrooms, inspecting learners' work, observing lessons, implementing school policies and analysing the best results of the school and providing feedback on different teaching and learning issues (Southworth, 2002). All these approaches assist in promoting effective curriculum delivery.

Professional dialogue is where the principal provides opportunities for educators to communicate with school management and their colleagues regarding teaching and learning (Southworth, 2002). Hence, professional dialogue is propagated by means of, for example, staff meeting, developing curricular programme, re-evaluating practice, examining learners' data, joint planning sessions and overall teamwork (Southworth, 2002). Principal may also visit classrooms and engage in informal conferences with staff, use probes to understand teacher assumptions and promote strategies to proceed. Blasé' and Blasé (1999) also talk about professional dialogue and stress the issue of the significance of teacher reflections on their teaching. They further note the importance of educators subsequently communicating their views to their colleagues (Blasé' & Blasé, 1999). Their views are similar to those expressed by Southworth (2002).

2.5 Theoretical framework: Instructional leadership

This section focuses on the theoretical framework guiding this study. The suggestion given by Ravitch and Riggan (2011) is that theoretical and/or conceptual frameworks are pertinent to our understandings of a particular phenomenon and they explain the way things work and why they work in a particular manner. The discussion that has been presented in previous sections leads us directly to the theory of instructional leadership. The conceptualisation of the term leadership in literature has been given in many different perspectives. Yukl (1998) for instance, postulates that researchers usually define leadership according to their own way of thinking and they cover the aspects that are of most interest to them. In other words, the definition given by Yukl (1998) suggests that one person influences the group of people in terms of their own philosophies. In short, it is their beliefs system that drive the way they guide, structure and facilitate activities and relationships in any organisation. In the next section is a discussion of the Instructional leadership model as developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985).

2.5.1 Hallinger and Murphy's Model (1985)

In this study I used Hallinger and Murphy's Model (1985) of instructional leadership within a broader knowledge area of instructional leadership. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) proposed a model that focused on three dimensions for instructional leadership role of the school principal. These three dimensions are (a) Defining the school mission, framing and communicating school goals; (b) Managing the instructional programme, and (c) Promoting a positive school learning climate. My choice of Hallinger and Murphy's Model (2005), was largely based on these scholars' own view that suggest that this particular model has been used most frequently in empirical investigations. Furthermore, my view is that this model focuses on the most important dimensions of providing instructional support, namely, that of creating a vision and direction for the school, managing instructional programmes and then, promoting a positive school learning climate.

2.5.1.1 School mission, framing and communicating school goals

Hallinger and Murphy (1985) suggested that defining a school mission goes together with framing and communicating school goals. That is why I further focus on the two elements that constitute this dimension of their instructional leadership model.

(a) Framing the school goals

Kotter (2002) suggests that the vision assists every organisation by giving the direction or destination. Manus (1991) contends that the mission statement describes ways or strategies the organisation has to use to achieve a particular vision. In this case, the school or the instructional leader has a dream which is the vision and the strategies to achieve that dream called the mission. Clark (2007) suggests that for school principal to develop a school vision, he or she needs to undertake the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis. In other words, the principal needs to first know the strength, the weakness within himself/herself and staff on one hand, and the opportunities, and the threats that exist in the environment outside the school, on the other hand. This means that school principals needs to be more aware of the situation within and without the boundaries of the schools. This may enable them to develop a comprehensive picture about the school and environment within which it is located. Thereafter, principals may be fervent about their vision and should be ready to sell it to other people once developed.

In South Africa, the Department of Basic Education mandates all principals to draw the vision and mission of the school. There are prescribed national and provincial goals that schools need not to deviate from when drawing their vision and mission statements (Bush, 2003). The most important advantage of drawing the school academic goals, according to Schunk (2009), is the fact that it can lead to students' motivation to excel in their academic accomplishments. The above statement suggests that if academic goal setting is executed appropriately, it can yield good school results. Therefore, it is important that they are able to generate school mission and goals efficiently, and in a manner embraces the skills of conducting SWOT analysis so that they are able to obtain a comprehensive view of the school and its surrounding.

Drawing from this dimension, it is also evident that designing the school vision and vision alone is not sufficient, but leaders need to have skills to communicate effectively with all stakeholders so that they all understand what the schools seeks to achieve and how. In that regard, Hitt and Tucker (2016) state that effective leaders are those that are able to carry, communicate and implement a shared vision. In addition, a study conducted by Blasé, Blasé, and Philips (2010) found that high performing principals are those that include all stakeholders in drawing their school plans. This is consistent with the views expressed by Hitt and Tucker (2016). Krug (1992) defines instructional leadership as a strategical, implanted

knowledge to resolve a particular problem content and to reach the goals of schooling through others. Latip (2006) suggests that instructional leaders need to determine the areas teachers will focus on and resources needed during that year. This is consistent with this dimension of mission designing and assessing the situation in and outside the school and identifying the areas of growth in each staff member.

(b) Communicate the school goals

Effective communication of an organisation's goals is an important dimension of instructional leadership. It is the principal's responsibility and the duty to communicate and make the school goals widely spread, known and supported by the community for school goals to be successfully achieved. What is important here, is the fact that the school has clear academic goals that teachers and other supporting staff understand and support and make those goals their daily performance or practices. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) suggest that when instructional leaders frame school goals, one of the factors they need to take into consideration is the combination of the past and the present student performances including the teachers' responsibilities.

Naidu et al. (2008) suggest that goals should come from the school's vision and mission. Gupton (2003) suggests that goals should be clear, detailed, concrete and should come from the vision and mission of the school. Clarke (2007) suggests that instructional leaders should communicate the school's vision and mission to all stakeholders and push to ensure that it is put into practice. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) suggest that the communication can be informal in the form of conversation among the school staff and formal in the form of staff meeting, school assemblies newsletter and parent conferences.

2.5.1.2 Managing the instructional programmes

In any school situation there are replicable instructional activities that are designed and need to be implemented to achieve a particular goal. Principals need to be on top of their games in ensuring that their schools are effective instructional schools (Reitzug 1989). In terms of the third dimension of instructional leadership as proposed by Hallinger and Murphy (2005), there are several techniques that instructional leaders can use to manage instructional programmes. These include but are not limited to, supervising and evaluating instruction, co-coordinating the curriculum and monitoring students' progress, and these are discussed next.

2.5.1.1.1 Supervising and evaluating instruction

One of the things expected from the principal is that he or she must supervise all educational processes and evaluate teachers' performance through, *inter alia*, classroom visit and provide feedback to the teachers after the visit. In the context of South Africa, Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) remains the major tool used by principals to evaluate teachers' performance (Weber, 2005). Therefore, it is highly expected that principals should, amongst his/her duties of supervising and evaluating instruction, check the learners' work and their performance on regular basis. These can be done weekly, monthly or quarterly. Perhaps, that is why Glanz (2006) argues that principals should perceive themselves as teachers of teachers.

2.5.1.1.2 Co-ordinating the curriculum

The principal together with his or her School Management Team (SMT) is expected to check and review the school curriculum of his or her school from time to time and check its suitability to achieve the school's good results. This does not necessarily mean that the principal has to go to class of each teacher and check the exercise books of each learner in the school. However, coordination means that all the planned activities that are meant to achieve some or all of the above-mentioned activities are realised. Therefore, as part of coordination, the principal conducts regular meetings with the SMT members, especially the HODs to check if they perform their duties well or if they manage the curriculum correctly. The suggestion given by Glanz (2006) is that instructional leaders need not to be experts in curriculum, rather, they need to familiarise themselves with basic concepts pertaining to curriculum development.

2.5.1.1.3 Monitor students' progress

It is highly imperative that the principal conducts regular meetings with subject teachers and parents about the learners' performance on test and on examinations. The principal then reports about the strengths or weakness of learners in school subjects, and has to report on regular basis. The afore statement is also supported by Mead (2011) by arguing that successful

principals regularly analyse data with teachers and support them in collecting and using data to monitor students' progress and evaluate it in order to design improvement strategies. This dimension prescribes that principals monitor, supervise and encourage teachers and learners to be committed to their work and school improvement. Glickman, Gordon and Ross-Gordon (2005) note that an instructional principal monitors students' academic achievement. These scholars further highlight that instructional leaders develop action plans to achieve the school's vision (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2005). As part of monitoring students' progress, Mendels (2015) suggests that instructional principals gather and analyse pertinent assessment data with the purpose of using the results to improve teaching and learning. Adding to the significance of monitoring students' progress, Naidoo and Paterson (2015) suggest that principals can effectively use the information originating from the analysis of learners' performance to detect teachers and classes that need extra support. This is an important dimension to the issue of monitoring students' progress.

2.5.1.3 Promoting a positive school learning climate

The third dimension is about promoting a positive school learning climate in the school. In this regard, Bhengu and Mkhize (2013) suggest that it is every principal's responsibility to promote an environment that is conducive for effective teaching and learning. Their ideas seem to have been drawn from those of Hallinger and Murphy (1985), who argue and have developed specific functions for principals to promote a positive school learning climate. These functions are protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers and providing incentives for learners. Hallinger (2005) further highlights that a principal needs to infer standards and practices that create a positive atmosphere and provide the incessant growth of teaching and learning at school.

2.5.1.3.1 Protecting instructional time

Various scholars of instructional leadership emphasise the importance of protecting instructional time. For instance, Anderson (2008) argues that schools need to ensure that they use time optimally and that they should be held accountable for the way time it is used. For example, after the development of the strategic plan, principals need to see to it that all relevant stakeholders are trained on time to allow the plan to roll out immediately (Anderson,

2008). Blasé et al. (2010) found that principals who do not improve effective systems to organise the school often find themselves spending a lot of time on upkeep tasks which then reduces time that could be used in supporting teaching and learning in their schools. On the same issue, Glanz (2006) warns that things like excessive announcements over the intercom, learners sent on errands, drop-in visitors and unplanned assembly talks in schools should be avoided at all cost. If at all possible, school meetings should be scheduled for the afternoon, after all teaching and learning has taken place. This will enable schools to finish the syllabus on specified time.

Instructional leaders develop a plan to curb issues like teacher and learner absenteeism, late coming, attending meetings during teaching times. Glanz (2006) suggests that instructional leaders ensure that teachers push to finish the syllabus on time to allow enough time for revision to take place. Perhaps it is for that reason that he suggests that instructional principals should monitor time and ensure that they provide supervisory workshops on strategies to increase direct teaching. One thing suggested above is that principals should be cautious about time wasted on meetings and speeches taking place during contact time. Therefore, according to the scholars cited above, principals need to ensure that teachers and learners are in the classroom at stipulated times. It is for that reason that Glanz (2006) emphasises that principals should collaboratively develop a school wide strategy on discipline which is cascaded to the teachers that informs teachers about guidelines and measures to deal effectively with corrective difficulties in their classes.

Lastly, Creemers (1994) mentioned that the management of time is considered as one of the most important indicators of the teacher's ability to manage classroom in an effective way. Creemers (1994) identified 5 dimensions of time management that an instructional principal must pay more attention to in order to ensure an effective school. These dimensions are the frequency where the principal measures it by considering the time used in teaching per lesson and its coverage within the allocated timeframe. The second one is the focus dimension where an instructional principal's keen interest is whether learners are on task or off task. The third dimension is the stage. Here, the principal has to consider time attributed to different phases of the lesson. The fourth is the quality dimension where the principal looks at data collection in relation to the factor concerning the role of the teacher in creating a learning environment in his or her classroom. The fifth and the last factor is differentiation where the principal and the teachers look at the allocation of time for different groups of students.

2.5.1.3.2 Promoting professional development

Nicholson, Harris-John and Schimmel (2005) suggest that principals need continuous professional development to run their schools effectively and efficiently. These scholars suggest two reasons for that, namely, that continuous professional development assists principals to gain confidence to perform their leadership functions and secondly, that it develops their competences to lead the schools which then increases their job satisfaction. Confident and competent principals tend to develop their schools to become effective schools. Reitzug (2002) suggests that professional development may be in the form of training which could be on site or off site, networks and professional development schools. Reitzug (2002) further explains that by networking, an instructional principal may invite a crew of personnel from different schools who regularly interact and share their expertise and knowledge with him/her or his/her teachers on a particular focus. In this regard, the principal creates time for professional development of his /her teachers.

There are too ways in which continuous professional development can occur. For instance, Jones and Lunsford (1989) mentions one day conferences, single session activities, short courses over a period of time, formal meetings by subject specialist, and membership of working groups as some of the most common professional development activities teachers engage in. Instructional principals ensure that they support activities that encourage the development of their teachers' self-esteem.

2.5.1.3.3 Maintaining high visibility

Maintaining high visibility as a school principal is one of the ways of promoting the school's positive climate. For example, a study conducted by Blasé et al. (2010) found that the walk-throughs by the principals are more effective than the class visits, since the principal provides a non– evaluative constructive feedback to individual teachers for evaluative purposes. Gupton (2003) is also of the view that the walk-through provides instructional leaders with valuable information about teaching and learning that may not be obtained in other ways. Gupton (2003) further revealed another important part of the principals' visibility by mentioning that the

principal should attend social events in the community outside the school premises. This affords the principal an opportunity to communicate with the outside world his or her vision. Other ways of forming a visibility by the principal is by using surveys, telephone calls, personal visits, letters and e-mail notes depending on aims of communication (Bender, 2005). It is on those bases that that a principal may make a fresh formal or informal visit to the teachers or the learners in their classrooms or during breaks or lunch times. This enables the principal to be aware about all issues taking place in his/ her school.

2.5.1.3.4 Providing incentives for teachers

Blasé et al. (2010) suggest that principals should use instructional leadership strategies like talking with teachers to promote a reflective culture where principals use strategies like making suggestions, creating feedback opportunities, modelling, using inquiry, and asking for advice and opinions from teachers and praising them as a way to recognise his or her teachers. Blasé et al. (2010) further suggest that principals should promote professional growth by having significance on the study of teaching and learning, support for co-operation, development of instruction relationships, support for programme re-organising, teacher development programs and use of action research. The principal is able to recognise and reward the good work done by his / her teachers. If possible, a token of appreciation is given to the teachers that have done well in the school.

2.5.1.3.5 Providing incentives for learning

Gupton (2003) emphasises that an instructional principal should promote the importance of working together of the three parts, namely, the teachers, the family, and the community. An instructional leader needs to work with these structures to provide incentives for learning. Successful learning mostly comes from the environment that is safe, clean, and well-maintained (Berry, 2002). According to Gupton (2003), successful principals reward excellent work from the learners and the teachers. This builds confidence on the side of both the teachers and the learners. Successful principals keep a close look at the stakeholders and frequently inform them of any school developments (Blasé & Blasé, 2001). Recognising and rewarding good work done by learners is of paramount importance. Principals show their accountability by, for example, reporting to parents about learners' performance. Fullan (1994) suggests that nothing

motivates a child more than when learning is valued by the school, the family and community working in partnership.

2.6 Chapter summary

Through the review of literature, this chapter has presented the views from different scholars regarding the role that principals play in supporting effective teaching and learning. The review of literature has also shown that the leadership activities that have a special focus on teaching is instructional leadership. Therefore, instructional leadership theory was an automatic choice as a theoretical framework. Specifically, I chose Hallinger and Murphy's Model of instructional leadership. The next chapter provides a detailed account of research design and methodology issues.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has provided a detailed discussion on literature reviewed on the role played by principals in supporting effective teaching. This chapter is dedicated to the discussion of design issues and the methodology used in the study. The chapter commences with the discussion of the research paradigm adopted, and then moves on to discuss other important aspects of the methodology, and these include the discussion of the research design, the methodology, sampling techniques used, issues of access to the research sites, data generation methods and instruments, data analysis, measures used to ensure trustworthiness of the findings, and concludes with the discussion of ethical considerations.

3.2 Research methodology

Case study methodology was adopted for this study, and this case study involved three secondary schools, focusing on understanding how principals supported effective teaching and learning. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) describe a case study as a methodology in the field of research that seeks to provide a unique example of real people in real situation, and it further enables readers to understand how ideas and practices can be incorporated to make living meaningful. Extending on the nature of case studies, Creswell (2012) defines case studies as constituting an in-depth exploration of a bounded system, event, process, or an individual. According to Creswell (2012), boundedness refers to the fact that the case study is separated out for research in terms of time, place, or some physical boundaries. In defining a case study. Bell (1993) refers to it as an umbrella term for a family of research methods having a decision to focus on inquiry around an instance. Bell (1993) further suggests that a case study methodology may be particularly appropriate for certain individual researchers; hence, it provides an opportunity for one aspect to be studied in some depth. In my case, the common issue is looking at an instructional role of the principals in supporting curriculum delivery in their schools.

3.2.1 Research paradigm

According to Bassey (1999), a paradigm is a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the

world and of the functions of researchers which are adhered to by a group of researchers. This study adopted the interpretive paradigm. Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004) argue that knowledge is constructed from the descriptions of people's intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning-making and self-understanding. Adding to what Henning van Rensburg and Smit (2004) maintain, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) suggest that the cornerstone of interpretive paradigm is the understanding of the subjective world of human experience. I found this paradigm to be appropriate for this study, as the study is designed to understand principals, and departmental heads. This paradigm was appropriate in that it enabled me to obtain an understanding of how principals supported effective teaching and learning from their own perspectives, as well as, getting to understand the intentions, beliefs, values and reasons underpinning their actions.

3.2.2 Research design

Many research scholars maintain that there are three main research designs, and these are quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2016). In conducting this study, I used qualitative research approach, since it was suitable for social research and can be done in natural setting of the participants. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Creswell (2008) further explains that qualitative research is a research that the researcher relies on the views of the participants asks broad and general questions, generate data consisting largely of words from the participants, describes and analyses these words for themes and conducts the inquiry in a subjective manner. Therefore, to study the social problem that Creswell (2007) speaks about, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the generation of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes (Creswell, 2007). The final written report includes the voices of the participants, the reflectivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem.

To conclude this discussion on qualitative designs, I draw from the descriptions of Mouton and Marais (1991) who highlight the issue of data generation techniques as one of the characteristics of qualitative approaches. These scholars explain that within the tradition of qualitative research, there are three broad categories of data generation namely, interviewing, participant observation and the use of personal documents. The present study used interviews as the main method of

data generation. The study further adopted the semi-structured interviews to explore the problem from the participants' perspectives. Finally, the data is reported in the form of words rather than in numbers as it is the case with quantitative approaches.

3.2.3 Research Approach

The researcher used qualitative research approach, since it was suitable for social research and can be done in natural settings. For common understanding of the term, the researcher defined qualitative research. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. To study this problem, qualitative researchers use an emerging qualitative approach to inquiry, the collection of data in a natural setting sensitive to the people and places under study, and data analysis that is inductive and establishes patterns or themes. The final written report or presentation includes the voices of participants, the reflectivity of the researcher, and a complex description and interpretation of the problem.

According to Creswell (2008), qualitative research wherein the researcher relies on the views of participants, asks broad and general questions, collect data consisting largely of words from participants, describes and analyses these words for themes and conducts the inquiry in a subjective manner. In other words, my research was able to cover 3 important aspects of the research. Namely, to describe, explain and validate findings. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) suggested the following principles that underline qualitative research:

Qualitative research is holistic; it looks at the larger picture and begins with a search for understanding of the whole. Qualitative research looks at the relationships within a system. Qualitative research focuses on understanding a given social setting, not necessarily on making predictions about that setting. Qualitative research demands time consuming analysis; it requires ongoing analysis of the data. Qualitative research design requires the researcher to become the research instrument. It also incorporates room for description of the researcher's own biases and ideological preferences. Qualitative research design incorporates informed consent decisions and is responsive to ethical concerns.

Lastly, Mouton and Marais (1991) suggest that within the tradition of qualitative research, there

are three broad categories of data collection namely; participant observation; interviewing; and the use of personal documents. The present study used interviews as the main method of data collection. The study further adopted the semi- structured interviews approach to facilitate the problem from the participant's perspective, and finally data is reported in words rather than in numbers which is a sign of qualitative research

3.2.4 Population and sample

The population for this study consisted of 03 principals (1 from Mdladla, 1 from Esiphondweni and 1 from Phiwamandla high schools), 03 educators (01 from each school) and 03 HoDs (01 from each school). The researcher regarded the identified population as the relevant group about whom generalisations can be drawn.

Characteristics of participants

Educators in all three high schools can be classified as part of the middle-income group. Most of them reside in rural areas and are from the local area. The researcher assumed that educators were academically suitable to teach at high schools since schools are expected to comply with the requirements for each post allocated to such educators which is a minimum of M + 3, which is the diploma in education.

HODs

The accessible population according to Creswell (2009) is a subgroup of the target population that mirrors particular characteristics. For this study, HoDs were the most accessible population; as they were the heads of the subject teachers.

Principals

The principals of Mdladla, Esiphondweni and Phiwamandla high schools can be categorised as being from a low-income group and also qualified based on the assumption that one cannot be a principal at a high school if he/she does not meet the requirements of the post or is not adequately qualified.

3.2.4.1 Sampling

Gravetter and Forzano (2003) argue that a sample always implies a simultaneous existence of a population or universe of which the sample is a smaller section or a set of individuals selected from a population. This implies that it is impossible to study the entire population, and because of that, researchers have to select a smaller section of that population. Scholars such as Cohen et al. (2018), De Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2011), and Maree and Pietersen (2007) highlight that there are two broad families of sampling, namely, probability and Non-Probability sampling. Probability sampling has various sampling techniques within it and this sampling approach is associated with quantitative researchers while the non-probability is associated with qualitative researchers (Cohen et al. 2018). Like the probability approach, non-probability approach has numerous techniques within it, including purposive sampling.

Purposive sampling was used in this study. Purposive sampling entails researchers picking and choosing participants or research sites based on the kinds of information they have that will assist answer the research questions (Cohen et al, 2011). Highlighting the distinction between purposive sampling used for qualitative research and others that are used for quantitative research, Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtler (2010) emphasise that the goal of purposive sampling is not to obtain a large and representative sample as it is the case with quantitative research. However, the goal of purposive sampling is to select persons, places, or things that can provide the richest and most detailed information to help answer our research questions.

This study was conducted in 03 purposively selected schools in uMkhanyakude District at Hlabisa, Ubombo and Ingwavuma Circuits with the aim of understanding the role principals play in supporting effective teaching in their schools. The Superintendents of Education of these three circuits were contacted to obtain permission to visit schools. The schools showed their willingness in writing to participate in the study. The sample size consisted of 09 participants, comprising 03 principals, 03 Departmental Heads and 03 teachers. This means that a principal, a Departmental Head and a teacher participated per school. These schools were selected because of their sustained good learner academic achievement for many years. In other words, they had a reputation of high performance in terms of learner academic achievement which is usually in the ranges of 90% and 100% while others were achieving between 0% and 20% in the National Senior Certificate examinations, although they are located in deep rural areas. These are areas that are known for poor infrastructure, and physical resources (Mkhize & Bhengu, 2015).

3.3 Data generation instruments

According to Patton (2002), qualitative data can be generated in three ways, that is, interviews (structured interviews, semi-structured interviews or in-depth, open-ended interviews, direct observation and written documentations. Patton (2002) further suggests that interviews (semi-structure or open-ended) generate direct quotations from people about their opinions, feelings, knowledge and experiences, while documents reviews include quotations, personal diaries and written-responses to questionnaires and surveys. The observation data consist of detailed descriptions about people's activities, behaviours that are part of observation. Patton (1983) also highlights 4 elements of generating data in qualitative inquiry. These elements are that qualitative inquirers must get close enough to the people and situation being studied; Qualitative inquirers must capture the perceived facts, meanings, what actually takes place and what people actually say; Qualitative data consists of direct quotations from people, both what they speak and what they write down and qualitative data consist of a great deal of pure description of people, activities and interactions. For purposes of this study, I generated data through the use of semi-structured, face to face interviews with principals, Departmental Heads and educators.

3.3.1 Interviews

According to Robbins (2007), interviews are conversations with a purpose. Interviewing is a process of exchanging information and gathering data and perhaps, the oldest and one of the most acknowledged research tools (Robbins, 2007). Cohen et al. (2007) maintain that interviews enable participants to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their point of view. In that way, interviews are not about generating data about life rather, they form part of life itself and is human embedded (Kvale, 1996). This author defines qualitative interviews as attempts to understand the world

from the participants' point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences to uncover their world prior to scientific explanations (Kvale, 1996). Similarly, as a qualitative researcher, I sought to achieve what the above writers has suggest about interviews.

3.3.1.1 Semi- structured interviews

De Vos et al. (2005) refer to semi-structured interviews as conversations with a purpose. They further maintain that the purpose of using this type of interviews is not to get answers to questions, nor to test hypotheses, and not to "evaluate" in the usual sense of the term. However, at the root of semi-structured interviews is an interest in understanding the experiences of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. Most qualitative scholars (Cohen et al, 2007, 2011, 2018; Creswell, 2007, 2007; De Vos et al,2011; Kvale, 1996; Maree, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Patton, 2002), highlight the point that semi-structured interviews enable the research participants to freely express themselves unlike structured questions where there is no such space.

In the context of this study, I prepared interview questions in advance to ensure that the interview process in more systematic, focused, time saving and highly comprehensive. I had to ensure that I had familiarised myself with all key aspects of the phenomenon so that I would be able to construct relevant questions for my participants. That is why I had to develop my literature review chapter first before I could start my conversations with my participants. In addition, I anticipated some probing areas, and therefore, I prepared some probes beforehand. This does not mean that there were no follow up questions or member checking during the interview process. In fact, I was ready to ask new questions for further clarity and seeking understanding. This allowed me to go into more depth on the subject and clear up any misunderstandings that arose while conducting interviews. De Vos et al. (2005) support this idea by referring to this type of interview as the in- depth interviews All my research participants were informed in advance about the interview, and we reached an agreement about the right time and venue that was suitable for them.

Interviews with principals took place in their respective offices after school hours. I started to introduce myself yet again, and sign the declaration of informed consent. I also assured them about confidentiality issues and their autonomy although, they had signed. Before we started with our conversation, I asked for permission to tape record our discussion, and they all

agreed. I had explained that by recording our discussion, that would ensure that I have an accurate record of what we talked about. I also promised them that after I had transcribed them I would give them a copy so that they can confirm them and agree if I should proceed and write what was contained in the transcripts. Our interviews lasted for about an hour on average. Interviews with the Departmental Heads also took place in their schools after school hours. It was important that teaching time was not compromised in anyway. All interviews were conducted in English as all my participants were comfortable with this language. On average, our discussions lasted for about 40 to 45 minutes. The same happened with the teachers. Interviews were conducted after school hours and we conducted them in their classroom which were empty at the time and were conducted in English as well and lasted for between 40 to 45 minutes.

3.4 Data Analysis and interpretation methods

Watling and James (2007) define data analysis in qualitative research as entailing a researcher making a series of deliberate, critical choices about the meanings and values of data that has been gathered. A researcher has to also make sure that the decisions can be justified in terms of the research, the context in which it was carried out and the people who were involved in it. In this study, I used qualitative research content analysis. According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), qualitative data analysis includes making sense of data in terms of the participant's definitions of the situation, themes categories and regularities as well as noting patterns. Maree (2012) posits that inductive analysis of qualitative data is normally used within the interpretivist paradigm. Maree (2012) claims that inductive data analysis permits research findings to emanate from significant themes that are immanent in the raw data. This study used thematic (content) analysis for both interviews and document review. Content analysis is an orderly approach that recognises and summarises message content (Maree, 2007). According to Cohen et al. (2011), content analysis is suitable for any written material such as documents and interview transcripts. The choice of content analysis for this study was informed by this assertion.

Data was organised and prepared for the analysis (Creswell, 2009). The interviews recorded were transcribed *verbatim*, read repeatedly and divided into analytical units (Maree, 2012). Coding is the process of translating question responses into specific sets for the purpose of analysis (Cohen et al., 2011). Coding enables the researcher to identify the related information. Transcriptions and document analysis were analysed using content (thematic) analysis, as they

are both written materials. After coding, the related codes were grouped into themes (Maree, 2012). According to Rule and John (2011), data is coded followed by a thematic analysis of the data analysis. Furthermore, thematic analysis involves working with codes to identify patterns and grouping them into themes (Rule & John, 2011). Sequences for thematic analysis were used to analyse the findings of the study. Documents were used to support the data that was generated through interviews. According to Bowen (2009), document analysis needs data to be reviewed and interpreted for the extraction of meaning, acquiring understanding and developing empirical knowledge. The analytic procedure for documents entails finding, selecting, making sense of and synthesising data contained in documents (Bowen, 2009). Watling and James (2007) have developed their steps of qualitative data analysis. These steps entail defining and identifying data, collecting and storing information, data reduction and sampling, structuring and coding the data, theory building and testing, as well as, reporting and writing. In this study I followed the above-mentioned steps which include those mentioned by Maree (2007) and Rule and John (2011). For example, before generating codes and broader themes, I had to read and read again the transcripts as I have highlighted earlier in this section of the chapter.

3.5 Measures to ensure trustworthiness

According to Creswell (2008), the researcher must ensure that all explanations, findings and conclusions are true and accurate. There are various techniques that qualitative researchers use. Lincoln and Guba (2005) have developed four criteria to assess trustworthiness, and these are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability, and they are discussed next.

3.5.1 Credibility

Credibility is about whether the study measures what is intended to be measured (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Wahyuni, 2012). Shenton (2004) argues that credibility refers to the relationship between research findings and the reality. In this study data was generated using semi-structured interviews and document review, this ensured triangulation; therefore, in this study triangulation was used to ensure credibility of research findings (Wahyuni, 2012). One of the ways in which credibility can be enhanced is by ensuring that the study is conducted in a credible manner and that the participants are aware of these processes such that they have trust in the process. Some of these ways is to ensure that all ethical processes are followed. While

on this issue, I can mention that it was not easy to win and keep the trust of the participants. This was largely due to the fact that they know me as a person who works in the District and they were not sure if I was checking on them or trying to get knowledge from their own experiences. To deal with such scepticism, I had to spend some time with them prior to the interviews. I had to make sure that I show them evidence that this was my study. For example, I had to show them approval from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and the ones from their Circuit Managers. In addition, I ensured that I guaranteed their autonomy and relied on them to give me their own preferred time to meet and hold interviews. Subsequently, I could note that trust between the participants and me developed and I had to try and retain it (Koro-Ljungberg, 2010).

3.5.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the extent to which research findings can be applied in another context (Shenton, 2004; Wahyuni, 2012). Wahyuni (2012) further argues that if the context of the study is extensively described, study findings can be applied in another related context. A definition given by Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010) is that transferability is a degree of similarities between the research site and other sites as judged by the reader. They go as far as suggesting that the judgement of transferability may be made by the reader on the bases of similarities of the participants, schools, resources, policies, culture and other characteristics of the research site against the reader's own site. In support of the above definition by Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010), Shenton (2004) suggests that the findings of a qualitative project are specific to a small number of particular environments and individuals. Similarly, to ensure transferability, I made sure that I provide a detailed description of all the process of carrying out the study. This is also called an audit trail.

3.5.3 Dependability

Dependability refers to the extent at which the research can be repeated by other researchers and arrive at the same research findings (Shenton, 2004). Lodico, Spaulding and Voegtle (2010) define dependability as the way one can track the procedures and processes used to generate and interpret the data. They further suggest that good qualitative studies provide detailed explanations of how the data were generated and analysed. In order to ensure dependability, the research report should provide enough information about the research process so that another researcher can do the same research and have similar findings (Wahyuni, 2012). To

ensure dependability of my research in this study, I gave a detailed explanation of how my research unfolded from research design, methodology (including selection of participants, data generation instruments with interview questions and data analysis).

3.5.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is about the extent to which research findings are based on the responses provided by research participants (Wahyuni, 2012). One of the ways in which confirmability is through ensuring that the researcher's interpretations are consistent with what the participants say. In the context of this study, after interviews had been transcribed, I took the transcripts back to the participants for verification of accuracy of what they had shared with me during the interviews. This was to ensure confirmability. This idea is supported by Shenton (2004) when he suggests that steps should be taken to help ensure, as far as possible, that the findings are the results of the experiences and ideas of the participants rather than the characteristics and preferences of the researcher.

3.6 Ethical considerations

It is always important that when research is conducted, it complies with ethical standards and procedures. The University of KwaZulu-Natal has a policy that guides both students and staff that wish to conduct research under the auspices of this university. As a result, I had to apply for ethical clearance from the College of Humanities, Ethics Committee. This committee had to satisfy itself that my study would be conducted ethically in all respects. Creswell (2009) suggests that ethics command the rank of obtaining an informed consent from the participants, as well as, guaranteeing that the participants understand fully what participations means in the research project.

Besides applying for and receiving ethical clearance from the university is not enough. It is important that I was granted permission to conduct research by the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education as the main gatekeeper. Therefore, I sought and received permission to conduct research from the Circuit Managers of uMkhanyakude District and also from the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education which is a provincial department of education. Voluntary participation in research is one of the most important ethical principles which guarantees the participants' autonomy. I also sought permission from each of the school principals to conduct research in their schools. Since principals were also participants in the study, it meant that I

also sought a declaration of informed consent from them and also from the Departmental Heads and teachers from each school that participated. These declarations of informed consent were written and signed individually. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity are also important in research ethics. Cohen et al. (2007) underline the need for confidentiality of participants' identities and that any violations of this should be made with the agreement of the participants. In this regard I made sure that the information provided by the participant was kept confidential between the two of us and also that their names were not divulged. This is to ensure that they are protected from any possible harm due to their participation in the study, which was also voluntary.

3.7 Chapter summary

The chapter has provided a detailed description of the design and methodological issues. All pertinent issues of methodology were discussed from theoretical and practical perspectives. The next chapter presents a detailed discussion of data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a detailed discussion of design and methodology that were used to explore the role played by principals in supporting effective teaching and learning. This chapter is dedicated to the presentation and discussion of data that emerged from the analysis that was done in Chapter Three. As it is the normal practice in qualitative inquiry, I used direct voices of the participants as evidence to support my claims. In addition, I also use literature that I have presented in my literature review in Chapter Two to enhance the analysis. This chapter is divided into three broad sections, and these are aligned with the research questions. Before I present the data, I begin by presenting a brief profile of the school and the participants so that the readers can obtain a better understanding of the schools that participated in this study. This profile is presented next.

4.1 Profiles of schools and the participants

The profiles of the schools and the participants are reflected in the tables that follow.

4.1.1 Table 1: Summary of the participating schools' profiles

School	Quintile Grouping of the school	Socio- Economic Status of Majority of the Learners.	Language of Instruction	No. of Learners	No. of SMTs	No. of Educators
School M	1	Below Average	English	523	06	19
School E	1	Below Average	English	393	04	12
School P	1	Below Average	English	320	03	10

The profile of School M

School M was established in 1992. The school belongs to Circuit Management Cluster called Ingwavuma, within the Sambane Circuit in uMkhanyakude District. School M has an enrolment of 523 learners, accommodated in 24 classrooms. School M has a number of newly renovated buildings and beautiful furniture. The school is endowed with various facilities and equipment such as a photocopying machine and more than 20 computers. The school has a lot of trophies

ranging from Netball, soccer, Grade 12 NSC results, municipality, Olympiads up to National Teaching Awards (NTA). The teaching staff complement is 19 educators comprising a principal, 05 Departmental Heads and 14 teachers. The language of learning and teaching (LOLT) is English as it is the case in the majority of the schools in country. The school is led by Mr Principal with 34 years of experience as a teacher and 08 years as a principal. He has received a number of management training including Continuing Professional Training Development (CPTD), Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) trainings to mentioned by the few.

The profile of School E

School E was established in 1984, but was officially opened in 1986. The school belongs to a circuit management cluster called Ubombo within Tshongwe Circuit in uMkhanyakude District. The school is small with an enrolment of 393 learners accommodated in 10 classrooms. School E has a teaching staff complement of 12, comprising a school principal, 02 Departmental Heads and 09 teachers. In addition to the teaching staff, there are also 03 non-teaching staff. Grade 12 pass percentage has been ranging between 85% and 100% for the past 03 years. The school is led by Mrs E (not her real name), a female principal who has been a principal from 1994. She is now 56 years old. The principal holds B.Ed. (Hons). In Accounting qualifications, like principal of school M, she has attended a lot of educational management development trainings like IQMS, CPTD, NTA and many other trainings that aim at developing principals.

The profile of School P

School P was established in 1982 and is located in a semi urban area. The school belongs to a circuit management cluster called Hlabisa within Hluhluwe Circuit in uMkhanyakude District. School P is also small in learner numbers with an enrolment of 1220 learners, accommodated in 22 classrooms. The school has a teaching staff complement of 30 educators comprising a principal, 02 deputies, 04 Departmental Heads and 23 teachers. There are 03 non-teaching staff comprising 01 admin clerk, 01 cleaner and 01 security guard. The language of learning and teaching is English. Grade 12 results for the past 03 years indicate that the school is performing poorly. As it is typical of rural areas, learners come from the low socio- economic groups. The school is led by Mrs P (not her real name), a very energetic female principal. Mrs P has been the principal of School P for 15 years and is now 46 years old. She holds a Bachelors Degree in education. She has never received any leadership training since she became a principal.

4.2 The role played by principals in supporting effective teaching and learning

The main thrust of this study is about understanding the role that is played by school principals in supporting effective teaching and learning. All 09 participants (principals, Departmental Heads and teachers) were asked the question, “What is the role of principals in supporting effective teaching and learning?” Their response indicated that there were 09 ways in which teaching and learning was supported in the three selected secondary schools in uMkhanyakude District. These roles are (a) Supervising the implementation of the curriculum; (b) Managing the distribution of resources; (c) Managing instructional time; (d) Planning and setting targets; (e) Networking with the outside world; (f) Capacity building; (g) Supervising assessment; (h) Developing School Vision and Mission; (i) Rewarding excellence.

4. 2.1 Supervising the implementation of the curriculum

The supervision of curriculum implementation was reported to be one of the roles of the principals in supporting effective teaching and learning. For instance, Mrs P, the Principal of School P emphasised that her role was to manage the teachers’ and the learners’ work. She did this by monitoring the work done by the Departmental Heads (DHs). This is what she had to say in this regard:

I control and monitor teachers work especially for departmental heads (Mrs P: Principal of School P).

Sharing similar views as those of Mrs P, the principal of School M (Mrs M), reported that she utilised the Annual Teaching Plans to supervise curriculum implementation. The Annual Teaching Plan (ATP) are issued by the provincial Department of Education to the schools, through Subject Advisers that are located in the uMkhanyakude District office. Schools are given the ATPs at the beginning of every year. The province also provides something called Examination Guide line. Those 2 documents assist principals and DHs to be able to supervise the implementation of the curriculum. This is how Mr M put it:

The most important one is the annual teaching plan, which comes from the district. The district took it from the province, whereby the advisors sit down and discuss the content

of that particular year but following the CAPS document, in this ATP when they reach the school they are distributed to teachers and then I do a monitoring of the implementation of the plan so that you see that each and every quarter, teachers are teaching the relevant stuff, which is part of the temp (Mr M: Principal School M).

It is clear that these participants used the documents from the education department to supervise curriculum implementation. For example, echoing similar sentiments as Mrs P, Mr M explained that he used a certain circular issued by the district in 2012. This circular prescribed a number of informal and formal tasks that should be given to learners per week. Those number of tasks differ with subjects. They were more in languages than in content subjects.

We also get a support from the DSTV district support team visits, whereby they come and check whether we are following with Circular number 41 of [2012](#), which talks about the number of test prescribed by circular number 10, which talks about the tasks that need to be administered per week (Mr M- Principal: School M).

Mr M suggested that as a way of managing teaching and learning, he had regular consultation session with his Departmental Heads every week and discussed the school work done. This assisted school to identify the problem early.

I usually sit with a departmental head, so that we discuss the work that is to be done during the week. I start by checking their work to see what they are doing. Thereafter, I request them to submit the work of the teachers that they were monitoring in that department, then we sit down and reflect if there are challenges, If I see that there are challenges there. I also intervene, I assist that particular department, I give support to the HOD, where I see it's necessary so that the HOD work easy. he does not feel inferior when he is working on his department (Mr M- Principal: School M).

It is evident that the above principal was happy about the manner in which he monitored the work done by the DHs. One may argue that his actions demonstrated strong leadership. The same cannot be said about teachers in other schools where there was less strong leadership that can design rules and regulations that promote effective teaching.

Delegation of powers to the DHs is another technique that principals used to support teaching and learning. They delegated some of the work to the DHs, especially the tasks that entailed working closely with the teachers, thus, decreasing his work load. Delegation also assisted in nurturing the talent of new leadership in the schools. It should not be taken for granted that because the schools have DHs, leadership and management will proceed smoothly as some

schools with principals and DHs, but the school is dying in their very presence. Perhaps that is why the participant comment that:

We need to have some rules that govern the school, for us to have teaching. The principal has to design together with SMT so that we will be able to work under strict supervision; so that whenever anything wrong is happening in the school, we know that we are guided by certain rules for the discipline of the school; for also knowing exactly that teaching takes place in the school. The teachers, as well as, learners need to be monitored. (Educator School P).

The above roles mentioned by the participants are the same as the ones mentioned by Glanz (2006) who drew 06 important ways in which successful instructional principals enable best practices in curriculum management. i.e. principals inspire teachers to analyse curriculum guidelines and suggested revisions to the instructional programme. Support teaching with the curriculum. Assimilate local, provincial or national standards into curriculum and instruction, evaluation testing and assessment procedures, request curriculum specialists from within and outside of the school to help facilitate curriculum revisions and development, and the principal models best practice in curriculum, as he reviews all instructional resources and materials in different content areas such as languages and mathematics.

Another important point comes from the Department of Education documents (DoE, 1996) which regards instructional leadership as the function of a collective effort under the principal who is defined as an educator appointed as the head of the school. It is for that reason that some principals delegate some functions to their DPs and Subject heads and work is done smoothly.

4.3.2 Manage the distribution of school resources

Teaching and learning is normally supported by the availability of learning support materials. The principal of School P mentioned that learning and teaching material are ordered, and that it is one of the key roles of the principal to ensure the availability of such materials in the school. Every school is expected to have teaching materials to ensure that effective teaching and learning is taking place (Glanz, 2006). Glanz (2006) suggests that effective principals support teachers by providing resources to advance instruction. Learners who do practical subjects like Life Sciences, Physical Sciences and Consumer Studies need special equipment to be at school. Such materials must be supplied correctly and also managed well because without them learners will find it hard to learn. Commenting on the importance of these materials, Mrs P remarked “*I ensure that LTSM required by both teachers and learners are in place.* On the

same issue, another principal said:

So, I also provide the necessary resources, those resources like photocopy machines, so that educators may find it very easy, when it's teaching, not spend a lot of time writing on the board, it makes work easier for him (Mr M -Principal: School M).

The above view was also shared by DH-E, a Departmental Head from School E, who emphasised that the principal's role is to ensure that teaching and learning materials are provided to school for teachers and learners to produce results. *"She monitors and spearheads the allocation of resources"*. Similarly, DH-M, a Departmental Head from School M suggested that the principal's role is to give moral support and provide needed material for effective teaching and learning. He said:

He supports teachers to go to the workshops so that when they come back they come with the knowledge that they got from the workshops and they will deliver to the class (DH-M).

None of the participants disputed the importance of resources to support curriculum delivery. What is contested though is the role that principals played in that regard. For instance, while Mrs P, the principal of School P indicated that she ensured that LTSM needed by the teachers and the learners were available in the school, a teacher from the same school, seemed to disagree by saying:

Even infrastructure must be conducive in a way that when we are teaching, the classroom must ensure that we do have electricity to use these appliances, the things that we need to do like projectors, to use electricity so that it can work, even the classrooms. Even the classrooms themselves they need to have all the windows everything must be proper so that we will be able to conduct teaching effectively (Educator: School P).

4.3.3 Manage the instructional time

The management and protection of instructional time is one of the key features of instructional leadership (Mkhize & Bhengu, 2018). Sharing a similar sentiment, Mrs P, the Principal of School P mentioned that there was a prescribed time table that she set and that is respected by all in the school, she commented *"Teachers honour their periods by following prescribed time*

tables.” One of the most important tools to ensure effective teaching and learning is to have a prescribed time table. All subjects have allocated time for teaching and learning. If the SMT visits a teacher and finds that he or she is behind in his/her teaching, they design a special time table to assist that teacher either by inviting the lead educator or the teacher himself or herself to cover the syllabus. He said:

So, what we do the most, is to make sure that I protect teaching and learning time so that we use the time most effectively. Moreover, I do class visit, class support visit so that I support an educator whom I see that he's having some challenges here and there (Mr M-Principal: School M).

Another participant gave a similar approach to protecting instructional time. This is what she said:

We monitor the curriculum coverage for each and every teacher, to see how far is that teacher is about to finish, if we see that the teacher is behind, in terms of the curriculum, then we are able to manoeuvre the time table so that we add more time to that teacher who is still behind, we organise extra classes and give support to those that need it. (Mrs E- Principal: School E).

It is clear that a combination of approaches was used by the principals in the three schools. These included designing time tables, even organising extra classes if and when curriculum coverage was threatened. In this regard, Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu and van Rooyen (2010) suggest that one of the principal's role is to create the atmosphere for effective teaching and learning, these include ensuring that instructional time is well taken care of, and establishing the environment that supports good quality teaching in the school.

4.3.4 Planning and setting targets

Principal from School M suggested that his role is to ensure that proper planning is done together with the SMT, and commented, *“I ensure proper planning with the SMT”*. Mrs E, the principal of School E expressed the same views as that of Mr M, the principal of School M by pointing to the fact that she ensured proper planning at the beginning of the year for effective teaching. She said, *“I do proper planning at the beginning of the year”*. This principal highlighted during the interviews that as a school, they have time set aside for special programmes to address issues that may disturb teaching and learning, just like the issue of Covid-19, where schools closed for three months and learners were far behind and forgot everything they were taught before. Their plan included starting teaching Grade 12 in January before schools re-opened which assisted them because by the time the country was on

lockdown, at least most chapters were already covered. When schools reopened in June, although some learners had forgotten, but they were busy with the revision.

Another important point mentioned by Mr M, the principal of School M, was that of setting subject targets which is the way in which they motivated their teachers to beat their own record of the previous years. For example, if they obtained 100% pass in Grade 12 this year, they push for another 100% pass in Grade 12, but they would for instance, fight for an increase in the percentage of bachelor passes to for example, 50% which is something they had hardly achieved previously. Therefore, in the following year they would ensure that 50% of their learners actually get bachelors in gateway subjects.

Targets are given to all educators, that at the end of the year or end of the term, they must be able to achieve these targets as they see the target. They work hard so that they achieve a set target. Also, with the learners, they are also given the target so that they work towards those target (Mr M -Principal: School M).

The idea was further supported by Mrs E, the principal of School E, saying that:

There is also a plan with a number of meetings that need to be adhered to by SMT, or department and the departments when they meet in that circular, which is circular number forty-one of 2012, which is that one that talks about a topic that need to be discussed, which is based on curriculum, most meetings curriculum, so they just were we will do the proper management of that one (Mrs E- Principal: School E).

4.3.5 Networking with the outside world

Schools are not islands, but are located within various communities and there are also other schools in other parts of the country and the world. Participants in this study highlighted that they did network with other schools to share ideas and experiences. They pushed for effective teaching support from neighbouring schools that are performing well. From the DHs' point of view, one of the principal's roles they mentioned is networking:

Making sure that he invites lead educators from different schools to come to this school and help in different subjects that are presented in school (DH from school M). The idea expressed in the extract above was shared by a DH from School E who commented that, "*The principal allows networking with other educators from other schools*". This was corroborated Mr M, the principal of School M when he commented that "*I Invite lead Educators*". In fact, the study followed the findings by Glanz (2006) who mentioned that effective school principals make efforts to hire experienced

teachers who promote student achievements. While this scholar emphasises the need for principals to solicit support from outside their schools, using their networks, other scholars suggest that many schools in this country are not successful in doing this. For example, McGuire (2001) argues about how South African principals fail to communicate with other principals, teachers and other necessary stakeholders about teaching and learning. However, the situation highlighted by this scholar may have changed in the recent past.

4.3.6 Capacity Building

The data indicates that principals adopted various strategies to build capacity amongst their teachers so that they are able to give learners effective teaching. Extracts that follow indicate a variety of methods that principals used. For example, one principal mentioned that: *I capacitate them in classroom management, and then also in subject content, content-based development, especially in those subjects that are challenging, like Mathematics and Physical Sciences. We sit down and discuss good strategies that they can use in order to perform. If their individual needs are above my powers and abilities, especially on Subjects that I am not teaching, I invite the lead educator so that he capacitates that particular teacher in order to perform more* (Mr M -Principal: School M).

Hence, Jacobson et al. (2005) as quoted by Poopedi (2011) suggest that it is the duty of the principal to develop, influence and support staff members and learners to ensure that they obtain their school goals. This idea is supported by Glenz (2006) who suggests that effective principals expand instructional practices by leading instructional conferences with teachers, providing staff development, and developing teacher reflection.

Besides the principals' personal interventions, they also use formal professional development. Therefore, engaging in formal professional development activities, was another method of capacity building. Principals in uMkhanyakude District organised staff development workshops which were meant to assist teachers to understand the curriculum even better. Here are some of the comments made by one of the principals reflecting a typical position of other principals but not all; *"Hold staff development meetings"* (Mr M -Principal: School M). Another interviewed principal mentioned a very important point about the points that teachers need in terms of compliance with SACE requirements, in terms of SACE Act Number 31 of 2000, as well as, Collective Agreement Number 8 of 2003. Such an agreement binds the Department of Basic Education as the employer and the teachers, represented by their unions, to form Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS), which is the tool used by the schools for staff

professional development. The IQMS processes play a critical role in the identification of area of need on the side of the educators and then, provide the required support.

4.3.7 Supervising Assessment

Supervising assessment is one of the tasks of the principals, and it was pointed out by Mrs E, a principal of School E when she said, *“I ensure that assessment takes place”*. Besides this comment, another principal elaborated:

There is a programme of assessment that is being followed. It is not that anytime learners are assessed, but we are following a programme of assessment for both formal and informal assessment. Monthly tests are conducted and the feedback is given back to the learners (Mrs P- Principal: School P).

Similar views were expressed by Mr M, the principal of School M when he said:

The assessment is also the one that is required by CAPS. Moreover, that is also an academic activity in school academic improvement plan that I designed to keep the SMT on their toes. But that was communicated to the staff so that they could have input when the plan was developed. So, that one is also helping us to see the improvement or to check the improvement and also to reflect after doing some SWOT analysis of that particular improvement plan (Mr M – Principal: School M).

The importance of doing evaluations of every plan was also highlighted by Mrs E when she said:

It is a very important thing to evaluate performance. There are many techniques that we are using to evaluate. We evaluate by looking at the results analysis, each and every time when we assess. So, we sit down and analyse so that we identify the weaknesses in the students’ work. After reflection, we take remedial action on that one. (Mrs E – Principal: School E).

These extracts clearly indicate that these principals understood their assessment role as principals. It was good to see the minutes of the meetings where SMTs had met with the teachers and the parents and discussed learners’ performance. Glanz (2006) suggests that it is the responsibility of the principal as an instructional leader to familiarise himself or take a lead on school curriculum implementation matters. Like effective principals ensure that formal and informal tasks are properly implemented and controlled by all teachers at school.

4.3.8 School Vision and Mission

Another important role played by the principals is that of being the visionary leaders. They are expected to be dreamers for successful schools; a principal is the one who is always ahead and invites other people to see what he or she sees. Educators' views were, "*She draws the mission and vision of the school, retorted Educator School E.* An educator from School P expressed a similar view as Educator E when she said:

If you are a thinker, it means that everything you are the first person to think about the whole institution that you are heading. If ever you as a principal, you are not thinking for the school, you cannot have that zeal of putting your institution on the map or you have to put everything in front of the people so that they will know what it is that you want for a school. (Educator School P).

Like educators from School E and School P, respectively, an Educator from School M shared the views that the principal of his school led the process of developing the school's mission and vision and also that the principal shares the vision with all stakeholders. This is what this educator said:

above all we need to know that we have a mission for the school. as the principal knows that what are the desires of the community so that it needs to be written down, so the principal has to be the first person who is going to send that mission to the teachers, to the staff, to the learners so that we make it sure that mission for the school is being accomplished for the community to be the best around the mission (Educator School M).

Various scholars emphasise the importance of the vision and the role that principals have to play in ensuring success of that vision and mission statement.

4.3.9 Rewarding Excellence

The study has also indicated that rewarding excellence is one of the ways in which principals in selected schools created conditions for effective teaching and learning. This entailed recognising teacher who had demonstrated hard work and commitment to their school work. Most participants reported that principals' role is to motivate teachers and learners by rewarding and giving credit where it is due. Teachers who are doing good are recommended and receive rewards either from the school or district or even local municipality. An educator from School E explained how they rewarded excellence:

She awards teachers in different categories and that also assists them to be motivated to do their work (Educator: School E).

The views expressed by Educator E, the principals explained:

To learners we give some rewards and prizes in order to motivate them to perform at their level best (Mrs E- Principal: School E).

While all the participants shared similar views about the importance of recognising teachers and the learners for excellence, Mr M, boasted about the calibre of teachers and learners in his school. Teachers had made the school a place where excellent performance was cherished. This is how he expressed his views:

We received more trophies based on that, site and also matric. In fact, we measure ourselves by looking at matric result that what is our output today when we/you see good performance and matric results, it is then we are seeing that we are doing well as we are doing well, in achieving this result as we get into IQMS (Mr M- Principal: School M).

It can be noted from Mr M, the principal of School M that he viewed his role as a principal, as that of acknowledging everyone who puts effort, including who scored good results and other stakeholders who support teaching and learning. An example of this can be found in this teacher's comments:

So, some of the teachers even get some positions because of the successes that they got in their subjects. Some even become leaders in clusters; they may end up being leaders (Educator: School P).

What has emerged from the participants, especially teachers are that, another way for getting recognition to be either a principal or a lead educator who is working very hard. Although others may question that because of teacher unions factor, but, the participant believed that working hard is still the gateway to promotion in the district. Overall, the participants have acknowledged the role that principals do and should play in rewarding excellence and such a practice contributes to boosting the morale of the staff. Gupton (2003) suggests that successful principals reward excellent work from learners and teachers of their schools. This is the confidence booster on the side of both the teachers and the learners as well.

4.3 How principals lead and manage teaching and learning in uMkhanyakude District

This theme, present data that explains how principals led teaching and learning in their schools which happened to be located in uMkhanyakude District. The content of this particular theme relates closely with the first which describe the role of principals in supporting effective teaching and learning in uMkhanyakude. Surely, the role that principals played is similar to the content of this theme. Nevertheless, despite the overlaps, I have identified at most four ways in which principals led and managed teaching and learning, and these are (a) Soliciting support

from the DBE; (b) Promoting teacher empowerment; (c) Walking the talk and high visibility and (d) Rewarding good performance.

4.3.1 Soliciting support from the Department of Basic Education

The data indicates that principals in this study solicited support from the officials on the education department, usually located in the district office. This does not mean that principals simply waited for support and did nothing. However, it means that they took conscious decisions to seek support after a careful analysis of the situation at school level. Usually, they used SWOT analysis as a tool to identify areas of need as I have explained in the previous sections. Usually, once they have analysed the problem and understand its nature, a team of officials from the district office visits schools to further assess the situation on the ground, and this phenomenon is referred to as District Support Team Visits (DSTV). Among the members of the team are Subject Advisors. Therefore, depending on the nature of the problem presented by the principal, the DSTV would deploy Subject Advisors so that they get closer to the situation and provide the necessary support needed. This is how some participants described the importance of DSTV for their schools:

a DSTV is a very good team that is its district support team visit, which is a team that comes from the district to support schools; it goes school by school. They go to high schools, to primary schools, and from primary to high schools; but it's a very good team. That team has different sections, and, there are people who deal with the career guidance there and they are subject specialists (Mr M – Principal: School M).

Sharing similar views as Mr M, principal of School M, the Departmental Head from the same school said:

The district support team visits us, and when they do, they always give us guidance or explain how and what to do, depending on our request. They have helped us to grow in teaching. So, the DSTV, also the lead educators from other schools, form part of the team. I think we gain a lot from them since they are teachers especially those who have experience, help more on teaching (DH: School M).

Echoing similar sentiments, an educator from School E had this to say:

We gain experience from them. The workshops they provide help us every day with supporting documents on our Maths groups, which is WTS (Where To Start). So we use these to develop us (Educator: School M).

Drawing from the two extracts above, it is evident that the kinds of support that principals in

this study solicited from the district office was helpful and all the educators testified to the kind of assistance they received from the team that is assembled after the DSTV scenario. Sherin, Jacobs and Philipp (2011) suggest that teachers obviously need support to implement the curriculum. Without the necessary support, curriculum implementation will be an elusive concept that will never be realised.

4.3.2 Promoting teacher empowerment

All principals interviewed indicated that they facilitated the development of teachers' content and professional knowledge as part of effective curriculum implementation. Here are some of their comments:

There is also an involvement of other stakeholders like subject advisors for networking and other teachers from neighbouring schools (Mrs E -Principal: School E).

Other participants emphasised that one of the principal's role in supporting curriculum delivery is to invite subjects experts to come and develop educators in their subjects. A teacher from School M said:

One of the problems we have is that the Science department, our Departmental Head, for instance, is either teaching or an expert in Maths and not good with Agricultural Sciences or Mathematical Literacy whereas he or she is supervising those subjects as well. Subject advisors as the subject experts do assist in empowering other teachers in this particular subject (Educator: School M).

Other professional development activities have been described in other sections of this dissertation.

4.3.3 Walking the talk and high accessibility

Instructional leaders always have a keen interest in teaching and learning, and one of the ways they do this is by teaching a subject in that way, they do not pay lip service about teaching, but they literally walk the talk. Here are some of the comments made by the participants about showing the way by doing teaching himself:

Our principal ensures that since we teach the same subject. He ensures that he supports me in teaching chapters where I lack. For instance, since we are a group of 2008 to 2013, the Euclidean Geometry is problematic and is new to us. So, he is helping me on teaching that subject and I help him as well where I can (Educator: School M).

Similar views were expressed by other participants who highlighted that principals accessible

to their teachers and they complement one another. For instance, some of the topics are done by the principal where they teach similar subjects. In such cases, teachers are not afraid to say that they need some help from the principal as there is team teaching. It is for that reason that their learners pass the difficult subject like Mathematics, and teachers are not intimidated by the visibility of the principal in their teaching situation, instead, they enjoy being with him. This is consistent with the views expressed by Smith and Andrews (1989), who encourage principals to be often seen out of the office and in the building talking with educators and learners. They suggest that all teachers that see the principal in their classroom on regular basis initiate conversation about student learning and best practice they can use. Similarly, Blasé et al. (2010) argue that the walk-throughs by principals are more effective than the class visits, since the principal provides a non-evaluative, constructive feedback to individual teachers.

4.3.4 Rewarding high levels of performance

Principals, Departmental Heads and teachers, in the study, were in agreement that high levels of performance were acknowledged through various incentives that the school made available on a regular basis. Careful planning which is one of the main ingredients of successful management is done whereby, Prize Giving Days are set and the criteria for awarding those prizes.” Effective year and term planning and the setting of clear objectives is a crucial activity in the beginning of the year” Commented Mrs P, principal of School P. One of the principals commented that: *To learners we give some rewards and prizes in order to motivate them to perform at their level best* (Mrs E- Principal: School E).

A Departmental Head from the same school said:

The principal is also conducting the meeting sharing the ideas, the vision and mission of the school and he also, award educators for the good work that they do, by doing the Prize Giving Day (DH: School E).

The above responses suggest that principals pushed harder to ensure that they set teachers expectations and reward good work done by teachers.

4.4 Strategies used by principals in assisting School Management Team members and teachers in promoting effective teaching in uMkhanyakude District

The data suggests that there are three main strategies that principals adopted in assisting their

SMT colleagues and teachers in promoting effective teaching and learning in the district. Some of these strategies I discuss here overlap with some I have discussed in the previous section where I was discussing, perhaps, broadly, the role that principals play in supporting effective teaching and learning. In this section I am limiting the discussion to three strategies, namely, strengthening communication with local leadership, monitoring of school work and finally, the use of social media in communication and curriculum delivery, and these are discussed next.

4.4.1 Strengthening communication with local leadership

One of the most important aspects of leadership in rural communities in South Africa is that of creating communication and close relationship with local communities where schools are located (Bhengu, 2013). Various scholars (Calitz, Fuglestad & Lillej rd, 2002; Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2005; Bhengu, 2007), have indicated that rural schools have struggled to keep local communities closer to the school despite the benefits thereof. One of the major stakeholders that have recently received attention of scholars who research rural schools and communities is traditional leadership structure. In fact, this issue started to emerge strongly through the study ‘Emerging Voices’ that was funded by the Nelson Mandela Foundation whose results were published in 2005. Later on, Mbokazi and Bhengu (2008) published an article on unexplored partnership between schools and traditional leadership.

The data generated from the three categories of participants (principals, Departmental Heads and teachers) highlighted the same issue, namely, that principals in this study decided to establish and strengthen communication between them and leaders of schools and traditional leaders, particularly, Izinduna (traditional councillors), Municipal Ward Councillors, other principals in the community, as well as other community members. Many principals can communicate their plans easily in community meetings and parents attend school meetings. The two extracts below highlight experiences of the participants about how their school principals viewed the importance of communication with stakeholders in the community. An educator from School M made the following comment:

Our school principal used to invite the principals from the best performing schools, conducts workshops in our school, and tell us what they do in their school in order to get the good results. That's also helped us a lot because we know what are the good things that we have to do in order to get the quality results and we know that we have to compete with those schools who are best so that we can also do the best in my, in our works (Educator School E).

School M is one of the schools that had received many awards for excellence in a number of areas. As you may have noted in the profiles of the participating schools, this school prided itself for having achieved various awards and trophies, including sports. It is through the principal's initiatives of enhancing networking and strengthening communication with stakeholders including the local municipality. The municipality got involved in providing awards to those schools that were performing well, especially in academic achievement. Mr M, the principal of School M had this to say:

There is also the issue of quality result. We're not just producing 100% quantity, but there's also quality; we also get the trophies, certificates for quality results that we have produced more bachelor's, and then, also for being a top school in our municipality, whereby we are given a trophy, laptops and certificates by our municipality for being the top school in the municipality with 100% (Mr M -Principal: School M).

Drawing from the extracts above, it is evident that incentives given by stakeholders helped to encourage teachers and learners to work hard in order to keep their higher levels of academic performance. The other strategy of promoting teaching and learning is that of normal monitoring of school work, discussed below.

4.4.2 Monitoring of school work

The second strategy is more typical of any school that prioritises high levels of academic performance among the learners, and that is the supervision of teaching and learning through the use of various techniques of monitoring the work of the teachers and the learners. What has emerged from the analysis of the interviews is that, while both the principals and Departmental Heads monitor progress of the learners, the principals also monitor the work of the Departmental Heads themselves. Some of these participants believed that the improvement of the NSC examinations results might be due to these strategies of close monitoring of learners' work. This is what Mrs P, a principal of School P had to say about monitoring school work:

We monitor curriculum coverage; how far is that teacher? When is that teacher about to finish? If we see that the teacher is behind in terms of the curriculum, then we are able to manoeuvre the time table so that we add more time to the teacher that is behind. We organise extra classes and give support to those efforts (Mrs P -Principal: School P).

Concurring with the views expressed above, the Departmental Head from School M had this to say:

The principal also does the monitoring of extra classes. Marking the register for extra classes. During the COVID-19 time, the principal is making sure that learners are sanitised, social distancing is observed by everyone at school (DH: School M).

The issue of COVID-19 needs principals who push hard for good results and who can monitor everything in the school as the safety of everybody is at stake. It needs schools that go an extra mile in terms of teaching and learning as more time has been lost due to school closures. The participant in the extract above mentioned that even during the extra hours when they are teaching, or maybe they invited the lead educator or subject advisor or best teacher in certain topics to assist the school through the principal's initiative and he is there to support them. The importance of this is that without close monitoring of work, the principal is in no position to know the gravity of the situation.

4.4.3 The use of social media in communication and curriculum delivery

The data has demonstrated that although COVID-19 has devastated the whole world and disturbed education locally and globally, not everything has been 'gloom and doom'. Instead, it has created space for creativity and innovation amongst everyone, including teachers in rural communities. For instance, it has taught teachers in the uMkhanyakude District to teach and to communicate with learners using social media platforms such as WhatsApp group. Schools started to form a group of parents who have children in Grade 12. In other words, means of communication has improved, and this has assisted in bringing together parents, learners and teachers. This has also enabled parents to better understand what their learners are doing at school, even those who do not attend parent meetings because they are busy. Talking about the benefits of this approach Educator from School P had this to say:

I can say 70% of the learners have benefited, because they tend to do a WhatsApp group. What they used to do is that whenever they have problems here and there, this tool has made it easier to communicate (Educator: School P).

Echoing similar views as that of Educator P from School P, another educator from School E explained how easy it has become to communicate with learners about school work.

Even if I give them homework, they are able to ask me questions. When they do homework they asked me questions, then I answer those questions in WhatsApp when they come to classroom. So it's makes things easier for me. (Educator: School E).

The two extracts from the two schools capture the sentiments that were expressed by the other

participants in all three schools that participated in this study. It has become clear that, by promoting the use of social media, school principals and teachers have ensured that curriculum delivery does not suffer because of the current Covid- 19 Pandemic.

4.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented a detailed discussion of data from principals, Departmental Heads and educators regarding the role that school principals play in supporting effective teaching and learning in three secondary schools in 3 circuits within uMkhanyakude District. The presentation of data was organised under three themes, which are consistent with the research questions. The next chapter presents the findings based on which recommendations are made.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented a detailed discussion of data regarding the role of principals in supporting effective teaching and learning at uMkhanyakude District. This chapter presents the findings based on the data that was discussed in Chapter Four. All the data that emerged from the participants' views addressed the research questions. This chapter begins a summary of the study, followed by the discussion of the findings. The recommendations mark the conclusion of the study.

5.2 Summary of the study

Through this study, I sought to understand the role that principals played in supporting teaching and learning in three secondary schools in uMkhanyakude District. Chapter One served as an introduction to the study, and as such, it provided a background to the problem, provided the rationale for the study, the research objectives, the critical questions, the significance of the study, as well as, the structure of the dissertation.

Chapter Two presented a review of relevant literature and a theoretical framework that underpinned the study. Various studies that were discussed focused on instructional role of the principal in ensuring effective teaching and learning. The reason for such a focus was based on the fact that instructional leadership has a special focus on curriculum delivery. Chapter Three detailed the methodological issues of the study. Various elements of research design and methodology were addressed, including sampling, data generation and analysis, as well as, trustworthiness and ethical considerations. Chapter Four presented a detailed discussion of the data that emerged from the analysis of interviews and documents reviews. The study concluded with the presentation of findings and discussion that are made in this final chapter of the study.

5.3 Research questions restated

The findings of the study are presented using the three research questions that guided the study. The research questions are used as headings that organise the discussion of the findings. These questions are first restated below.

- What is the role of principals in supporting effective teaching and learning in the uMkhanyakude District?
- How do principals lead and manage teaching and learning in the uMkhanyakude District?
- What strategies are used by principals in assisting School Management Team members and teachers in promoting effective teaching in the uMkhanyakude District?

5.3.1 What is the role played by principals in supporting effective teaching and learning in the uMkhanyakude District?

The findings relating to this theme can be regarded as the gist of the study as it focuses on the role played by principals in supporting effective teaching and learning in uMkhanyakude. Other themes are really adding to this theme. The findings drawn from the nine themes of the data, clearly show that principals played a multifaceted role in supporting curriculum delivery. Therefore, one can argue here that all three principals are instructional leaders and they embraced instructional leadership which they regarded as the cornerstone of their leadership activities. One of the leadership practices is that of supervising the implementation of the curriculum. Principals exercised their supervision of curriculum implementation in various ways as discussed in Section 4.3.1 of Chapter Four.

Another instructional leadership role that the participating principals played is the management of the distribution of school resources and equipment. The data has also indicated that participating schools lacked many physical resources as it is typical of schools that are located in rural communities of South Africa. The findings suggest that all three principals had acute awareness of this reality, and they took it upon themselves to ensure that they mobilised some of these resources. Other categories of participants (Departmental Heads and Teachers) confirmed this view that their principals put remarkable efforts in mobilising LTSM for their

schools. More details on this issue can be found in Section 4.3.2 of Chapter Four. The issue of protecting instructional time is one of principles of instructional leadership, especially, espoused in Hallinger and Murphy's Model of Instructional leadership. The findings clearly show that principals used a variety of techniques to protect instructional time. These included the supervision of class attendance register that is kept for both teachers and the learners. Further details on this finding are found in Section 4.3.3 of Chapter Four.

Another finding relating to the role that principals played includes setting clear targets that are SMART characteristics compliant. Details about these characteristics and other pertinent issues are discussed in Section 4.3.4 of Chapter Four. Networking with outside world, building capacities amongst teaching staff is another instructional leadership practice that principals engaged in as part of their role in supporting effective teaching and learning. Issues surrounding networking with the outside world are described in greater detail in Section 4.3.5 of Chapter Four, while those surrounding the capacity building role of principals can be found in Section 4.3.6 of Chapter Four. Supervising assessment, developing and refining an inclusive vision and mission of the school is another role that principals played, and this one of instructional leadership practices as articulated in Hallinger and Murphy's model. Recognising and rewarding excellence are another instructional leadership role that was played by school principals in the study. Further details on these can be found in Section 4.3.9. If one looks at all these leadership practices they clearly show that the principals were indeed instructional and their practices were corroborated by other categories of participants such as Departmental Heads and Teachers.

5.3.2 How do principals lead and manage teaching and learning in the uMkhanyakude District?

The findings around principals' leadership and management of teaching and learning are actually an elaboration of their roles. Therefore, the findings actually confirm that the role they played was that of instructional leadership, as measures to enhance effective teaching and learning situation. The findings show that four key practices characterised the way in which they led and managed teaching and learning. The first that I identified amongst many was that principals utilised existing tools to identify areas for growth amongst the teaching staff and thereafter, they solicited support, mainly from the district officials but also from other stakeholders with requisite expertise. More importantly, principals did not just go out to the

Department of Basic Education, but first used existing skills base within the school and also in the networks. In that way, I can argue that these principals were quite active rather than reactive in terms of receiving and/or soliciting support that will help them achieve their targets. More details on this issue can be found in Section 4.4.1 of Chapter Four.

Besides soliciting support outside the school, they exhausted available skills within the school. What is worth noting is that some of the three principals did empowerment of the teachers project themselves before inviting outside expertise. Further details are available in Section 4.4.2 of Chapter Four. Walking the talk and being visible and accessible to the teaching staff is another finding that I believe can be very helpful in supporting teaching and learning. One of the principles of instructional leadership is that of leading directly by teaching rather than supervising teachers and their supervisors. The findings have shown that all the principals taught certain subjects. In some schools, teachers prided themselves that they shared teaching with their school principals. In other words, when the principal did class visits, such an action was not misinterpreted as an act of surveillance as it happens in some cases. While this is important, I should also highlight that the three participating schools were small. For instance, School E had an enrolment of 393 learners, School P had 320 learners and it is only in School M that there was a learner enrolment in excess of 500. In most cases where the school is small, there is no luxury of having a principal who does not have a class to teach. In these schools, some principals had more than one class to teach. Clearly, the context has a big influence in determining whether principals had classes to teach or not. Therefore, when talking about walking the talk, we need to be also mindful of the context in that certain things have to happen whether one likes or not. Nevertheless, when I read extract from the teachers about how they shared teaching with their principals, I was convinced that they enjoyed doing what they were doing. A detailed discussion of these issues is found in Section 4.4.3 of Chapter Four.

5.3.3. What strategies are used by principals in assisting School Management Team members and teachers in promoting effective teaching in the uMkhanyakude District?

The findings drawn from the data presentation, indicate that there are three strategies that principals engaged in to promote effective teaching and learning. The analysis suggests that these finding also relates to the first finding that all three principals were instructional leaders who enacted their leadership in ways that supported curriculum delivery. Their strategy of

supporting their SMT members to promote teaching and learning through, for instance, strengthening communication with local leadership is consistent with embracing IQMS and SWOT analysis to identify weaknesses and areas for growth. Making connections with local leadership and other stakeholders seem to be sincere and geared toward enhancing curriculum delivery. Monitoring school work, using social media to facilitate learning are all strategies that focus on doing whatever that can be done, as long as it assisted in promoting teaching and learning. This is the essence of instructional leadership, and that kind of leadership epitomises the role that principals played in supporting teaching and learning. Further details on these issues can be found in Section 4.5.2 and Section 4.5.3 of Chapter Four.

5.4 Recommendations

One of the recommendations that can be made is that school principals need to strengthen their communication with all relevant stakeholders. As much as it is clear that schools benefited from the networks created by the principals, it appears that the relationship with traditional leaders need to be strengthened even further, especially in terms of assisting with issues of learner discipline and mobilising parents to participate more in the activities of the school. The use of social media seems to have helped mobilise parents to collaborate with the schools in supporting the learners as they grapple with their school work. However, it has not come out clearly if such collaboration whereby teachers, learners and parents have created groups is sustainable. It appears to me that for now it is working as COVID-19 is still ravaging our communities. What will happen when this pandemic is no more? This question suggests that issues of sustainability of current practices have to be explored and principals need to take a lead in this regard.

5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has presented and discussed the findings that are drawn from the data presented in the previous chapter. Research questions were used as headings to organise the discussion of the findings. These questions were meant to assist in assessing the extent to which the research questions have been addressed. From my perspective, all three research questions were adequately addressed by the data and the findings from the data. In addition, I noted that the findings are not bringing anything new as almost all literature on instructional leadership practices say the same things that this study has found. What I have found in the literature is

that, in the context of South Africa, there is an emerging discussion which seems to ask the question about how the context or rurality and other contexts of deprivation influence the practice of instructional leadership. The study of Mkhize (2017) and Mkhize and Bhengu (2018) comes to mind. The other issue which in some ways assess the extent to which research questions were answered is about the research questions themselves. My analysis indicates that the first research question was all embracing and the other two questions can be subsumed in the first. I am saying this because, the data that was discussed under the two research questions seemed to be repetitive of some if not all the issues that the first research question generated.

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7. List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Template of a letter requesting permission from Department of Education

BOX 1552

MTUBATUBA

3935

25 AUGUST 2017

ATTENTION: THE SUPERINTENDENT- GENERAL (Dr. E.V. Nzama)

Department of Education, Province of KwaZulu- Natal

P/BAG X9137

Pietermaritzburg

3201

Dear Sir

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter serves to request for the permission to conduct research in some of the schools in your district. Presently, I am a registered student for M. Ed. Degree in the faculty of Education at the University of KwaZulu- Natal. I am conducting a research study entitled: “The role of principals in supporting effective teaching and learning at Umkhanyakude Education District”.

This study seeks to explore the role played by principals in supporting effective teaching and learning in selected high schools. The interview will be conducted on school principals, HODs and level one educators to solicit their views on the issue of teaching and learning effectiveness. The study will use semi structured interviews to collect data. The participants will be interviewed for approximately 45- 60 minutes at the time convenient to them and each interview will be voice recorded.

You are assured that the study will not in any way interfere with the normal running of the school. Principals and teachers will be interviewed and will be given pseudonyms instead of actual names. Participants will be contacted well in advance for interviews and they have been purposively selected to participate in this study. Participation will always remain voluntary which means that participants may withdraw from the study for any reason, anytime if they so

wish without any penalties. The findings of this research may be forwarded to your office should you wish so.

For further information regarding this research, I bow to the authority to contact Dr TT Bhengu on 0312603499 (office) or 0839475321 (cell) or bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za or me on the following contact number: 0727208367 or email me at sidduzo31@gmail.com

I bow to the superintendent- general to approve this request and research tools are attached herewith for perusal.

Buthelezi S.R. (Student Number: 211557434)

Date

Senior Education Specialist

Recommended / Not Recommended

Mr Motha T.J.

Date

District Manager

Approved/ not approved

Dr E.V. Nzama

Date

THE SUPERINTENDENT- GENERAL

**Appendix 2: Template of consent letter requesting permission from participants.
(INFORMED CONSENT BY PARTICIPANTS – PRINCIPALS/ HODs/TEACHERS)**

**Box 1552
MTUBATUBA
3935
25 AUGUST 2017**

Dear Sir/ Madam

REQUEST FOR CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

I am S. R. Buthelezi, Masters student specialising in Educational Management and Leadership. I am studying through the University of KwaZulu- Natal (Edgewood Campus). I seek your permission to conduct research with you. The title of my study is: The role of principals in supporting effective teaching and learning at UMkhanyakude Education District.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of the principals in supporting effective teaching and learning at three secondary schools under UMkhanyakude Education District, and to alleviate the difficulties experienced by principals, HODs and educators in promoting effective teaching in a district especially in Grade 12. The study will use semi- structured interviews method with principals, HODs and teachers. Responses will be digitally recorded and will be treated with stringent care of confidentiality and pseudonyms will be used instead of actual names in the reporting of data. You will be contacted well in advance for interviews. The time and venue will be at the participant's convenience. Absolute care will be taken to avoid disruptions to teaching and learning during the school day. In further ensuring confidentiality the interviews will be conducted behind closed doors. A "do not disturb" sign will be posted outside the room. Your participation will always remain voluntary which means that you may withdraw from the study for any reason, at any time if you so wish.

For further information on this research project, please feel free to contact me or my Supervisor: Dr T.T. Bhengu at 031- 260 3534 or email at Bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za or Mr S.R. Buthelezi at 0727208367 or email at siduduzo31@gmail.com

University Research Office contact details:

HSSREC Research Office

Telephone: 0312603587

Email: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Your anticipated positive response in this regard is highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely

Mr S.R. Buthelezi

(Student Number: 211557434)

DECLARATION FOR PARTICIPANTS – PRINCIPALS/ HODs/TEACHERS

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 study:

The role of principals in supporting effective teaching and learning at UMkhanyakude Education District

I have also received, read and understood the written information about the study. I understand everything that has been explained to me and:

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

I hereby provide consent to:

	YES	No
Audio-record my interviews		
Discussion with interviewer		

For any queries and further information, you may consult my supervisors, Dr T.T Bhengu from 031 260 3534 or bhengutt@ukzn.ac.za.

NB. For queries, the following people have to be contacted:

College Research Office: HSSREC@ukzn.ac.za

Researcher’s details

Mr Buthelezi Siduduzo Ruen

Institution: UKZN (Edgewood Campus)

Qualification: M Ed. (Educational Leadership, Management, and Policy)

Email: siduduzo31@gmail.com



.....
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

.....
DATE

Appendix 3: Semi-structured interview questions for School Managers, Heads of Departments and Educators

3.1. School Managers

Questions

- ❖ As a principal what do you do in order to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place in your school?

[Probes: Does your school have an instructional implementation plan? If it does: Who are involved in the design to ensure effective teaching and learning plan?]
- ❖ Do you ensure that all your planned activities accommodate the needs of learners and staff? If YES; please explain how you do that.
- ❖ How do you ensure that HODs monitor the curriculum for effective teaching and learning process? Please elaborate!
- ❖ What administrative support does the school provide in terms of curriculum implementation management?
- ❖ How do you evaluate staff performance at your school?
- ❖ What successes have you achieved in ensuring that there is effective teaching and learning in your school?
- ❖ What challenges have you encountered in the process of managing the implementation of effective teaching?
- ❖ What steps do you think need to be taken into consideration to address these challenges?
- ❖ Who should take the above-mentioned steps?
- ❖ When do you think, should such steps be taken?
- ❖ What support (i.e. from within or outside the school) do you think is required in addressing these challenges?
- ❖ Is there anything that you would like me to know that I did not ask you about? If so, please explain

Thank you very much for your time!

3.2 Heads of Departments

Questions

- How does your principal do in order to support effective teaching and learning in your school?

[Probes: Does your school have any instructional implementation plan? If he/she does; who else was involved in drawing such a plan? What role did you play in the drawing process of this plan?

Who evaluates performance in your school? **[Probes:** as an HOD, what role do you play in evaluating staff performance at your school?

- Who ensures that the curriculum is implemented in order to ensure that there is effective teaching and learning? **[Probes:** as HOD, what role do you play in this regard? What exactly do you do?
- What successes have you achieved in ensuring effective teaching and learning takes place in your school?
- What challenges have you come across in the execution of your work?
- What steps do you think need to be taken to address these challenges?
- Who should take these steps and when?
- What support (i.e. from outside or inside) will be required to address these challenges?

Is there anything that you want me to know that I have not asked you? If there is, please elaborate!

Thank you very much for your time!

3.3 Educators

Questions

- ✓ What is the role the principal in supporting effective teaching and learning in your school?
- ✓ Does your school have an instructional implementation plan? [Probes: if it does, who is involved in designing it? As a teacher, are you involved in designing it? If you are, can you explain what exactly do you do in that process?]
- ✓ What is your contribution with regard to the promotion of teaching and learning at your school?
- ✓ What successes have you achieved in promoting teaching and learning so far?
- ✓ What developments do you receive from your school? and how do those developments contribute to effective teaching?
- ✓ What challenges have you encountered in the process of promoting effective teaching and learning at your school?
- ✓ What steps do you think are needed to address these challenges?
- ✓ Who should take the above-mentioned steps?
- ✓ When do you think, should such steps be taken?
- ✓ What support (i.e. from inside or outside the school) do you think is required to address these challenges?

Is there anything that you think I should know that I have not asked you about? If there is, please explain.

Thank you very much for your time!

Appendix 4: Instrument for document reviews

Document Title:
Review date
Type of a document published
Person Responsible for that document
Content of the document
Brief description of the document
Relationship between this document and the role of principals in supporting effective teaching and learning at uMkhanyakude District.
How does this document relate to this research study:

Appendix 5. Permission Letter from Department of Education



education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma

Tel: 033 392 1041

Ref.:24/8/1332

Mr SR Buthelezi
Box 1552
Mtubatuba
3935

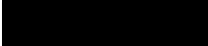
Dear Mr Buthelezi

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: "THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN SUPPORTING EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING AT UMKHANYAKUDE EDUCATION 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 September 2017 to 09 July 2020.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Connie Kehologile at the contact numbers below
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

UMkhanyakude District


Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 04 September 2017

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa

Physical Address: 247 Burger Street • Anton Lembede Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201

Tel.: +27 33 392 1004/41 • Fax.: +27 033 392 1203 • Email: Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za • Web: www.kzndoe.gov.za

Facebook: KZNDOE... Twitter: @OBE_KZN... Instagram: kzn_education... Youtube: kzndoe

...Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

Appendix 6: Turnitin certificate

Siduduzo Buthelezi First Draft.pdf - Adobe Acrobat Pro DC
File Edit View Sign Window Help

Home Tools Siduduzo Buthelezi... x

58 / 60 76,1%

Siduduzo Buthelezi First Draft

ORIGINALITY REPORT

10%	10%	2%	0%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	2 c
2	docshare.tips Internet Source	1 c
3	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	1 c
4	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	1 c
5	wiredspace.wits.ac.za	1 c

Windows taskbar: Edge, File Explorer, Mail, Chrome, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Acrobat