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UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND



UNIVERSITY OF THE
WITWATERSRAND,
JOHANNESBURG

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS IN IMPROVING LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN JOHANNESBURG SOUTH DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

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2024

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALS AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS IN IMPROVING LEARNER ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN JOHANNESBURG SOUTH DISTRICT PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

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Submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa

2024

DECLARATION

I, Chuma Zuma, hereby declare that the work I am submitting for assessment contains no section copied in whole or in part from any other source unless explicitly identified in quotation marks and with detailed, complete and accurate referencing. Further, this dissertation has not been submitted in part or whole to another university. This dissertation is my work.

Signature: 

Date: 27/ 09/ 2024

STATEMENT BY SUPERVISORS

This thesis has been submitted with/ without our approval.

Supervisor: Dr. G. Motilal Date: 6 September 2024

_____

Supervisor: Dr. E. Charamba Date: 6 September 2024

_____

September 2024

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It gives me great pleasure to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following people and organisations:

- My supervisor, Dr G. Motilal and co-supervisor, Dr E. Charamba, for their professional supervision, support and insightful guidance. Through our engagements, I have gained greater insight and valuable perspectives that go beyond the requirements of this study.
- All the principals, deputy principals, DHs and teachers of the participating schools for giving me time and sharing information with me to make this study possible. Your kindness and willingness to serve are sincerely appreciated.
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- My wife for her love, understanding and patience throughout my study. Your love and support made threading this academic journey smoother.
- My son, daughter and nephews, Ahlomile, Abulele, Sihle and Avuyile, for their sincere patience at all times.
- My Creator, Almighty God, for blessing me, and for making my dreams come true.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the following persons:

My sister: Lusanda

My wife: Pamella

My son and daughter: Ahlomile and Abulele Alinamda.

My mother, Zukiswa Zelpha Zuma and my grandmother, Nobhejile Evelyn Zuma, all blessed memories.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of the principal as an instructional leader in four successful primary schools in the township. It examines instructional strategies used by principals of the four schools that may help to raise learner achievement and explores how these successful leaders use leadership styles and management approaches to improve learner academic performance in their schools.

Sixteen participants were involved in this study. They include: four principals, four deputy principals, four departmental heads (DHs) and four teachers from the four schools. Data was collected using qualitative approaches; this being achieved through individual semi-structured interviews.

The study found that the critical instructional leadership approaches used by these principals were promoting teamwork, active participation, collective decision making, sharing of responsibilities, collaboration and distribution of tasks amongst multiple leaders. The teachers and members of the school management team (SMT) confirmed the claims made by the principals.

Data also indicated that the principals relied on a combination of different leadership styles and efficient and effective management approaches with their subordinates to save the enthusiastic implementation of instructional approaches that help to yield good learner results.

The study suggests that there might be a strong link between leadership styles and learner performance. The data also suggests that the relevant leadership styles can contribute to institutional spirit against the main challenges which tend to depress performance in many schools in similar circumstances. The study makes specific recommendations for a broad-based research agenda to examine factors which contribute to success in schools operating in challenging circumstances.

KEYWORDS: leadership, management, instructional leadership, learner outcomes.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

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PROJECT TITLE	Exploring the role of school principals as instructional leaders in improving learner academic performance in Johannesburg South district primary schools
INVESTIGATOR(S)	Mr C Zuma
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	Wits School of Education/
DATE CONSIDERED	22 July 2022
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved Risk Level: Minimal
EXPIRY DATE	17 October 2025

DATE 18 October 2022 **CHAIRPERSON** (Professor J Watermeyer)

cc: Supervisor : Prof G Motilal and Prof E Charamba

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR(S)

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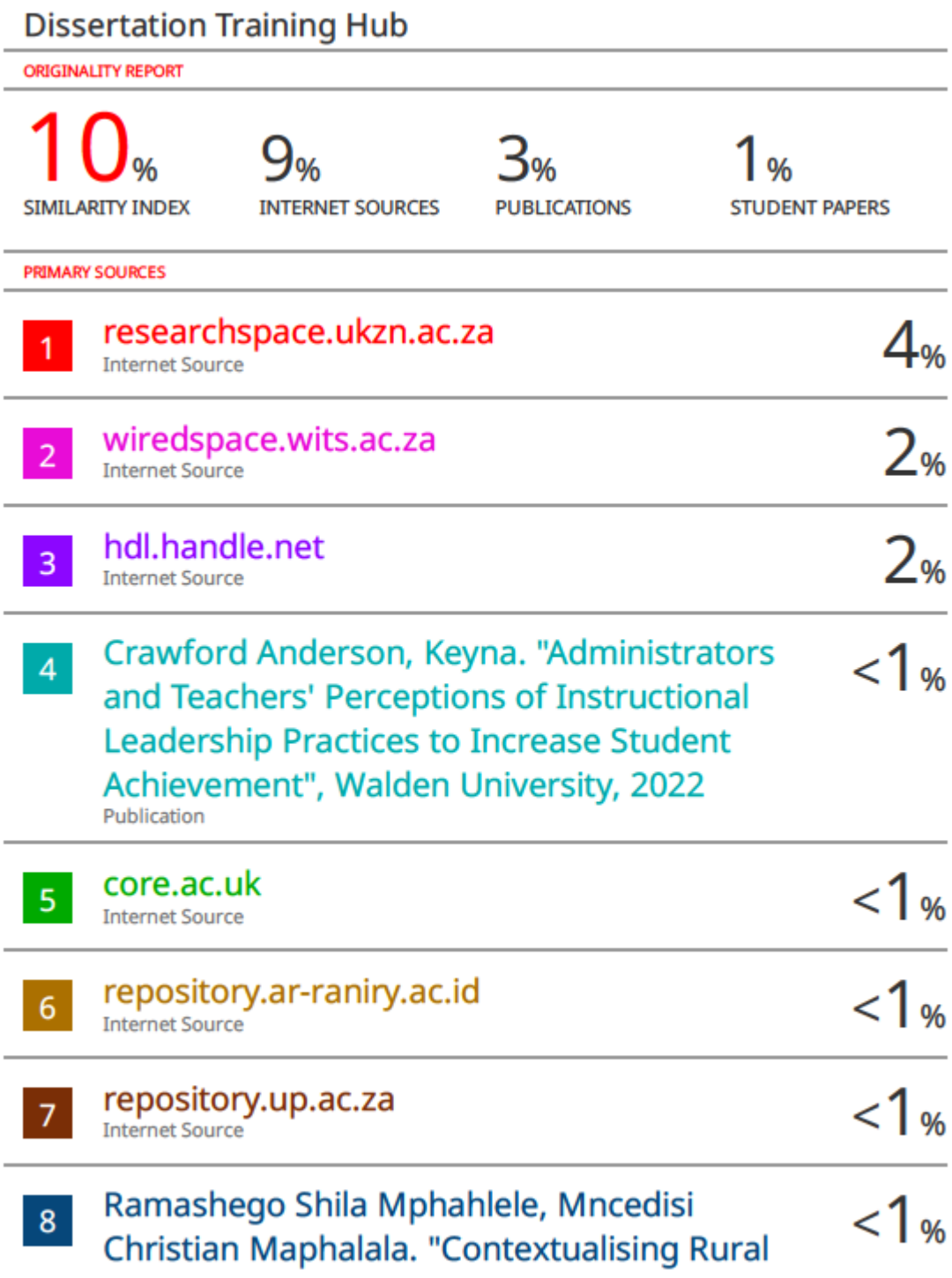

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACE: Advanced Certificate in Education

ATP: Annual Teaching Plan

BEd Hons: Honours Bachelor of Education

C2005 Curriculum 2005

CAPS: Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement

DoBE: Department of Basic Education

DH: Departmental Head

LoLT Language of Learning and Teaching

LSEN: Learners with Special Educational Needs

NCS National Curriculum Statement

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

NEPA: National Education Policy

OBE: Outcomes Based Education

PIMRS: Principal Instruction Administration Rating Scale

PIRLS: Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

PLC: Professional Learning Communities

RNCS: Revised National Curriculum Statement

RSA: Republic of South Africa

SASA: South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996

SASAMS: South African School Administration Management System

SGB: School Governing Body

SMS: Short Messaging Service

SMT: School Management Team

SIP: School Improvement Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS PAGE

Declaration …….…….……. (i)
Statement by supervisors ……..… (ii)
Acknowledgments …….…..…… (iii)
Dedication …….. (iv)
Abstract ……..……..……..... (v)
Ethical clearance certificate ……...…….…..…… (vi)
Turnitin Report …….....…..… (vii)
List of acronyms ……..... (viii)

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. …….……... 65

Table 2. ……..... 65

Table 3. …….…...… 66

Table 4. ……..…..……. 66

LIST OF APPENDICES..... 199

APPENDIX A: GDE approval letter ……. 199

APPENDIX B: Permission letter to Gauteng Department of Education …….…. 201

APPENDIX C: Permission letter to the school principals ….……..... 203

APPENDIX D: Declaration of consent from the school principals …..……....… 205

APPENDIX E: Permission letter to the deputy principals …….……..... 206

APPENDIX F: Declaration of consent from the deputy principals ……..... 208

APPENDIX G: Permission letter to the DHs ……..... 209

APPENDIX H: Declaration of consent from the DHs ……..…..... 211

APPENDIX I: Permission letter to the teachers ……..... 212

APPENDIX J: Declaration of consent from teachers ……..…… 214

APPENDIX K: Interview schedule of the school principals……..... 215

APPENDIX L: Interview schedule of the deputy principals, DHs an teachers ….. 216

APPENDIX M: Language editor certificate ……..……. 217

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION/ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction/Background to the study …….……..... 1

1.2. Purpose and rationale for the study ……..…….….. 6

1.3. Problem Statement/ Statement of the problem …….……..... 9

1.4. Significance of the study …….……... 11

1.5. Aims/Objectives of the study ……..……..…….……..……. 13

1.6. Key/critical research questions ……..……..….. 13

1.7. Discussion of key concepts/terms used in the study ……....…….. 13

1.8. Delimitations/demarcation of the study ……..……..…….. 15

1.9. Organisation/outline/structure of the study/thesis ……..……..…. 16

1.10. Chapter summary …….. …….…….. 18

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction ...…….…….…… 19

2.2. Leadership and management ……..……...……..… 19

2.3. Leadership …….……...……...… 20

2.4. Instructional, Transformational and Distributed Leadership Models …….…… 21

2.5. The principal as instructional leader ……..…...…….. 24

2.6. A principal's leadership in professional development ……....….... 25

2.7. The role of principals in the creation of Professional Learning Communities ... 26

2.8. Models of Instructional Leadership ……..……...… 27

2.9. Measurements of Instructional Leadership ……..……...… 34

2.10. Findings from International and South African Empirical Studies …..…...… 39

2.11. Conclusion ……..……..……...…. 44

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1. Introduction ……...……...…. 45

3.2. Conceptual framework ……..…… 46

3.3. Theoretical framework …….. 49

3.4. Conclusion ……..….. 52

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction ……...…… 53

4.2. Research paradigm ……..…. 53

4.3. Research design ……..…….. 55

4.4. Research Methodology ……..... 56

4.5. Research Population/Sampling …….……..….. 58

4.6. School profiles ……..…… 60

4.7. Data generation method ……..…….…..... 65

4.8. Data analysis ……..... 66

4.9. Issues of trustworthiness ……..……. 68

4.10. Ethical issues …….…….. 70

4.11. Demarcation of the study …… 71

4.12. Limitations of the study ……..…….... 71

4.13. Chapter summary ……..……..… 73

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE PRINCIPALS

5.1. Introduction …….……..…. 74

5.2. Presentation of findings …….……..….. 75

5.2.1. Principals' conceptualisations of their roles in supporting instructional leadership practices …….……...75

5.2.1.1. Modelling good practice …….……. 77

5.2.1.2 The school's vision …….……..…… 79

5.2.1.3. Creating an appropriate positive school environment ……...…….. 79

5.2.2. Principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools ……...… 81

5.2.2.1. Distributed instructional leadership ……...…….. 83

5.2.2.3 Monitoring teaching and learning …….…… 85

5.2.2.4 Promoting teacher professional development …….…….. 87

5.2.2.5 Understanding of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) ……... 89

5.2.2.6 Rewards and recognition ……..…… 90

5.2.3 Barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices …….….. 92

5.2.4 Principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership Practices ……...…… 95

5.3. Chapter summary …….…. 97

CHAPTER SIX

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

6.1. Introduction ……...…… 98

6.2. Presentation of findings ……..……...…….…… 98

6.2.1. Deputy Principals' understanding of the principals' roles in supporting instructional leadership practices ……. 98

6.2.1.1. The school's vision …….…… 100

6.2.1.3 Creating an appropriate positive school environment ……. 102

6.2.2. Principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools ……. 103

6.2.2.1 Distributed instructional leadership …….…… 105

6.2.2.3 Monitoring teaching and learning ……...…. 107

6.2.2.4. Promoting teacher professional development …….…… 108

6.2.2.5 Understanding of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) …….. 110

6.2.2.6 Rewards and recognition ……. 112

6.2.3 Barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices……. ……. 114

6.2.4 Principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership Practices …….……. 115

6.3. Chapter summary ……..… 117

CHAPTER SEVEN

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

7.1. Introduction …….……. 118

7.2. Presentation of findings ……...… 118

7.2.1. Departmental Heads' understanding of the principals' roles in supporting

instructional leadership practices ……..…….. 119

7.2.1.1. The school's vision ……..…….. 120

7.2.1.3 Creating an appropriate positive school environment …… 122

7.2.2. Principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools ……..…… 124

7.2.2.1 Distributed instructional leadership ……..…….. 125

7.2.2.3 Monitoring teaching and learning ……...……. 127

7.2.2.4. Promoting teacher professional development ……..… 128

7.2.2.5. Understanding of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) ……. 130

7.2.2.6. Rewards and recognition ……...…. 131

7.2.3. Barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices …….…… 133

7.2.4. Principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership Practices …….…….. 135

7.3. Chapter summary …….…… 136

CHAPTER EIGHT

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE TEACHERS

8.1. Introduction …….……. 137

8.2. Presentation of findings …….……..… 137

8.2.1. Teachers' understanding of the principals' roles in supporting instructional leadership practices …….……..…. 137

8.2.1.1. The school's vision …….…….. 139

8.2.1.3. Creating an appropriate positive school environment …….…..…… 141

8.2.2. Principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools ……..……. 143

8.2.2.1. Distributed instructional leadership ……. 144

8.2.2.3. Monitoring teaching and learning ……...……. 146

8.2.2.4. Promoting teacher professional development …….. 148

8.2.2.5. Understanding of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) ……..… 149

8.2.2.6. Rewards and recognition …….…… 150

8.2.3. Barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices …….. 152

8.2.4. Principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership Practices …….…….. 153

8.3. Chapter summary ……..…… 155

CHAPTER NINE

KEY ISSUES/THEMES EMERGING FROM THE DATA

9.1. Introduction …….…. 156

9.2. Principals' conceptualisations of their roles in supporting instructional leadership practices …….……..……. 156

9.2.1. Modelling good practice …….……..…… 157

9.2.2. The school's vision …….……..…….. 158

9.2.3. Creating an appropriate positive school environment ……..……..…… 159

9.3. Principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools …….. 160

9.3.1. Distributed Instructional Leadership ……..… 161

9.3.2. Monitoring Teaching and Learning ……..……. 162

9.3.3. Promoting teacher professional development …… 164

9.3.4. Understanding of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) …… 164

9.3.5. Rewards and recognition …….…….. 165

9.4. Barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices …….....…..... 166

9.5. Principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices …….…… 167

9.6. Chapter summary..……...……..... 168

CHAPTER TEN

STUDY SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

10.1. Introduction …….. 170

10.2. Study summary …….…… 170

10.3. Conclusions ……..… 172

10. 4. Contributions of the study ……... 175

10.5. Recommendations …….……... 176

10.6. The implications of the study ……..……. 178

10.7. Chapter summary ……..…….. 179

11. Conclusion to the study ……..… 180

REFERENCES ……...… 181

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

If you poke around in a top-notch school, you'll probably find a top-notch principal. Examine a failed school and you'll discover ineffective leadership. At the very least, that is accepted wisdom. (Page 1 of Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). If the aforementioned statement is accurate, it establishes a consensus on the principals' guiding leadership. The question that lingers about a leader's fundamental responsibility for the calibre of education they generate is also fascinating.

1.1.1. Introduction

This study report was designed and completed as a doctor of philosophy (PhD) candidate qualitative research project. The study focuses on how four public primary schools in Johannesburg South District, Gauteng, South Africa, are able to improve learner academic performance through the utilisation of school principals as instructional leaders. Additionally, it seeks to investigate how school principals modify the application of historically successful instructional leadership practices to improve learner achievement. The premise behind the emphasis is that better teaching and learning may result from such instructional leadership methods. Anecdotal data from my own observations and observational evidence from the literature indicate that several issues that schools experience impact the leadership styles of school principals. The data used in this study was gathered from principals, deputy principals, Departmental Heads (DH) and teachers of four public primary schools. The principals of the educational institutions were the primary respondents; nevertheless, in order to gather information for triangulation, interviews were also done with Departmental Heads (DH), Deputy Principals and teachers to learn more about their opinions regarding the principals' performance in their capacities as leaders in education. Consequently, there was an improvement in dependability (Naicker, Chikoko, & Mthiyane, 2013).

Researchers studying educational leadership and management have differing opinions about how to define, discuss, and emphasise the concept of instructional leadership. Bush (2013) claims that the idea of instructional leadership has long been utilised to make the connection between leadership and teaching and learning. There are a variety of other words that are used to describe the relationship between leadership and teaching and learning. These terms frequently denote various degrees of emphasis on instruction and learning. Examples of terms that are used are "curriculum leadership" and "pedagogic leadership" Bush (2013). According to Bush (2013), the most popular word in the United Kingdom is "management for education," however in the Republic of South Africa, the term "controlling education and instruction" is used. Guiding learning and instruction at the level of school seems to be the central premise of all the aforementioned conceptualisations. The term "instructional management" is selected in the present research because it highlights the importance of teaching as well as learning as the primary goal of a leader in education to achieve learner achievement.

This acts as the study's introduction, setting the context for the examination of its main concerns. It presents the backdrop of the investigation and creates an official statement of the topic. Other pertinent information is also included, including the significance of the study, its goal and justification, its three research purposes, and the three research questions that served as its compass. In addition, this section explains some important terminology.

1.1.2. Background to the study

I conducted this study to find out if school principals are aware of their responsibilities and the function of instructional leadership. The role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learner academic performance of learners in primary school is the central focus of this study, growing out of the poor performance of the learners in township primary school. The aforementioned issue therefore piqued my interest and inspired me to conduct this study to determine what strategies may be used in classrooms to raise learners' academic achievement.

Mestry (2017) agrees that many principals lacked the necessary knowledge and abilities to lead their schools successfully because of the legacy of apartheid, and that this deficiency has had detrimental effects on learner achievement. He goes on to say that although research from South Africa is increasingly in agreement that school leaders are essential in establishing the environment for better instruction, it is not clear as to how principals may help create these conditions.

Although the relationship between teaching and learning and instructional leadership has been the subject of numerous studies, this one is unique because it looked at the connection between principals' roles in instructional leadership and the enhancement of learner performance in township primary schools (Hallinger, 2018). Research indicates that most developing nations still have a relatively small body of literature on leadership and leadership practices (Harris, 2020); even fewer studies have examined principals' instructional leadership skills in primary schools (Mestry, Moonsammy-Koopasammy & Schmidt, 2013).

Access to education is a hot topic of discussion both in South Africa and globally. For many years, the issue of school access dominated the educational conversation before South Africa attained democracy in April 1994. Thus, it was not surprising that the 1994 elections saw a focus on this crucial issue by the newly elected democratic administration. Education is recognised as a fundamental human right in Section 29 (1) (a) of the South African Constitution, Act 108 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). The majority of learners are being deprived of their fundamental right to an education and of specialised skills that are especially important in the context of the globalised economy, because of the growing concern about the underperformance of many South African schools (DoBE, 2018). Most of the learners that are deprived this right are the learners who attend township schools, because townships schools are the most schools that are underperforming (van Dyk & White, 2019). This exacerbates previously existing inequality. Parret and Budge (2016) argued that learners from poor performing schools migrate to better schools to acquire skills that will make them earn more and be economically empowered in the future. Neuman (2018) also contended that parents complain about the declining quality of education their children receive and therefore need to find schools that are providing quality education. In order to correct the mistakes made by the apartheid government of

South Africa, restore a sense of identity for all South Africans, and most importantly, provide quality education for all and crack the injustices of the past that still pervade South African society, the schooling system must make a deliberate effort to enhance basic education outcomes on a continuous basis (DoBE, 2018).

South Africa has prioritised resolving the country's academic legacy following the first democratically elected government took office in April 1994 (Pattman & Carolissen, 2018). Since then, the Department of Education has implemented several new regulations in an attempt to enhance instruction. A wide range of curricular adjustments were covered by these policies. The enactment of Outcomes Based Learning (OBE), Curriculum 2005 (C2005), the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), and the most recent National Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS) show how these improvements have evolved gradually and how the South African education system has undergone significant changes to address the deficiencies identified during the course of implementation of OBE (Pattman and Carolissen 2018).

It is imperative that principals are knowledgeable about the new curriculum and their role in its implementation, as they are the ones in charge of curriculum implementation at the school level. According to Onuma (2016), the principal's main responsibilities include demonstrating good instructional leadership methods to enhance a varied curriculum and the calibre of instructional programs to successfully meet the school goals. This will enable principals to better assist teachers and members of School Management Teams (SMTs) in carrying out the curriculum. Teachers find it challenging to carry out the curriculum effectively if they do not receive strong support from their principal.

The lack of support from the principals has resulted in inadequate curriculum execution, particularly in many economically marginalised schools that face resource constraints such as a shortage of books and other learning resources, high class sizes, and overall poor school conditions, which can include a lack of furniture, doors, and even rooves (Du Plessis & Mestry, 2019). Apart from these drawbacks, research on effective management and leadership from South Africa indicates that a large number of serving principals are underqualified for leadership positions (Manaseh, 2016; Mestry, 2017; Linda, Nkadimene, Modiba & Molotja, 2019). As to the South African

Schools Act of 1996, particularly article 16A and its subsequent changes, a school principal must be a good manager and leader (RSA, 2007). Furthermore, in compliance with this legislation, the principal of a public school is required to devise, carry out, and record strategies aimed at enhancing the educational performance of the establishment (RSA, 2007). Furthermore, as stated in the Action Plan to 2014 - Towards the realisation of education 2025 (Action Plan) (RSA 2011, p. 47), by 2025, the principal will need to ensure" educating in the institution of learning happens as it ought to, in line with the national curriculum, as well as understands what they do as a figure of authority whose responsibility is to promote balance, innovation, and an unwavering determination to achieve superiority within the context of the school as well as beyond." Conversely, the educational system is far too large and intricate to be contained under a single strategy. It is difficult to have a "golden rule-book or recipe for good leadership," claim Macbeath and Myers (1999, p. 67). Moreover, these regulations overlook the subtleties of the learning environment, which presents challenges for some principals of schools. For example, while meeting demands from both the inside and the outside, school principals must balance conflicting stakeholder opinions, ethical concerns, and control challenges.

The information presented above calls into doubt the function of school principals. It has also raised several serious concerns regarding the standard of primary school education. The aim of this research was to determine how learner academic accomplishment and instructional leadership are related. Underachievement among learners, in my opinion, is mostly caused by inadequate instructional leadership.

Study location

The purpose of this study was to determine whether principals in Johannesburg South district, Gauteng province, are aware of their role in enhancing learner academic performance in prospering township primary schools through instructional leadership.

Every child may attend public educational institutions for free or at a little fee to receive an education in primary and secondary school. Under the provisions of subsection 5 (3) (a) of the South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996, no learner may be refused entry to a public educational institution on the grounds that their guardians have no money to pay or fail to pay the cost of education as determined by the board

of directors. According to Chapter 2 Section 29 (1) (a) of the laws of the Republic of South Africa, all people have an entitlement to a fundamental education 1996, which is incorporated by Section 5 (3) (a) of the South African Schools Act No 84 of 1996. According to Duma (2018), the 1996 South African Constitution requires that all learners in the country have access to equal educational opportunities, comparable facilities, and instruction of the same calibre. As a result, unpaid school fees cannot cause a child to be sent home or prohibited from participating in specific extracurricular activities or sports. They are entirely or partially supported by taxes since the state or federal government controls and finances them. The state sets the curriculum for public schools.

Participants in this report were principals, deputy principals, departmental heads (DH) and teachers. I applied the qualitative approach.

1.2. Purpose and rationale for the study

This study was motivated by three different factors: academic (theoretic), professional (practical), and personal (experiential). I work as a primary school teacher and have experience working with learners from underprivileged backgrounds. I have been a teacher for the past seven years at my present school. I have observed and experienced numerous education related challenges. The low reading and numeracy standards at our school and the nearby schools are a big worry of mine.

According to statistics from the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS, 2016) aligned with numeracy and literacy tests, reading competence in the latter part of South Africa showed dissatisfactory performance and outcomes in the townships and rural areas, respectively. The study involved 45 other countries and 16073 fourth graders from 429 schools in South Africa and 14 657 fifth graders from 397 schools. South Africa performed poorly as compared to learners from other nations, as evidenced by their lowest score. When compared to learners in other nations, South Africans do poorly in mathematics (Bosman & Schulze, 2018). According to Motilal (2021), South African learners still do poorly on national, regional, and local literacy tests. This indicates that further efforts are required to enhance the academic performance of learners in South Africa.

At my school, the principal serves mostly as a management and less as an instructional leader. Her lack of involvement in classroom instruction makes it challenging for her to comprehend the difficulties we face when teaching and learning in our classrooms. She never shows up to our invitations to witness us in action when we are teaching a lesson in our classrooms. We invite her with the intention of helping her comprehend the difficulties we face so that she may offer solutions, yet she consistently cancels our visits. Setting high standards for both teachers and learners is the responsibility of principals to foster a healthy learning environment in schools (Mestry, 2017). Thus, to improve learner accomplishment results, the principal—who serves as the main educational leader—should establish an advantageous impact on instruction in the classroom. However, it appears that the reverse is occurring, as our learners continue to score poorly in tests and assessments. I believe that teachers should carry out their duties as educational principals by fostering settings that are secure, caring, and conducive to successful education and instruction to raise the achievement of pupils.

I think that a school's learner improvement is directly impacted by the leadership style that the principal employs. According to Seobi and Wood (2016), principals can act as instructional leaders and make sure that their schools always have a productive culture of learning and teaching. This leads to successful learning and teaching. As recognised instructional leaders in their institutions, principals are responsible for giving teachers access to the most recent data on technological advancements in education and innovative teaching strategies, along with other tools that support a productive learning environment. Sebastain, Allensworth, and Huang (2016) claim that by fostering a supportive learning environment in the classroom, instructional leadership has the greatest energising effect.

The idea of instructional leadership is by no means novel. According to Hallinger (2018), instructional leadership received more attention in the 1980s. As researchers concentrated on other facets of the principal, this seemed to be decreasing with time (Mitchell & Castle, 2005). Hallinger (2018), who asserts that the focus of research shifted from instructional leadership to transformative leadership, distributive leadership, and teacher leadership between 1992 and 2002, concurs with this point of view. As a result, the research base on leadership in South Africa is quite thin, as

Hoadley (2012) notes in their evaluation of South African leadership studies. As a result, little is known about how school principals in South Africa oversee instruction. School heads, whose role is usually administrative, are unexpectedly being asked to take on the role of instructional leaders (Hallinger, Hosseingholizadeh, Hashemi, & Kouhsari, 2017). This lack of research on leadership in education has presented challenges in developing countries when there is a lack of empirical evidence to inform practice.

Recent changes in expectations for principals' roles as instructional leaders have left gaps in the academic literature. Since most developing nations rely on data produced outside of their own national context, a lack of empirical evidence on instructional leadership issues also makes it difficult for indigenous conceptualisation and contextualisation of instructional leadership in most of these nations (Hallinger et al., 2017). For this reason, Dimmock and Tan (2016) advocate for the indigenisation of research to produce context-based evidence that guides practice. Moreover, Mestry (2017) notes that it is unclear in South Africa how instructional leadership fits into the organisation management of schools, what principals do daily, how they conduct instructional leadership, and what kind of educational outcomes they are responsible for. This made me want to look more closely at instructional leadership as it is used in schools today.

In their many educational contexts, leaders and practitioners use instructional leadership, a complex and socially constructed phenomenon (Tan, 2018). The advocates of this paradigm contend that contextualised knowledge should be established to impact teaching and learning for the particular learner group they cater to (Tan, 2018). Moreover, instructional leadership differs from place to place since it is a socially-constructed phenomena. Rather than seeking a single, comprehensive explanation for the heterogeneous character of leadership, Southworth (2002) suggests a pluralistic approach. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine whether or not principals are aware of their responsibilities and role in instructional leadership. It aims to find how primary school principals might help learners perform better in difficult situations. Above all, I want my research to contribute to the body of knowledge about the subject and help school principals enhance their instructional leadership strategies.

1.3. Problem statement

Wallin, Newton, Jutras, and Adilman (2019) conducted an empirical study on the management of curriculum and teaching in South African schools and discovered that many principals lack the time and flexibility necessary to effectively serve as instructional leaders. Wallin et al. (2019) argued that the numerous demands placed on principals have taxed their ability to be present in the classroom to supervise, support, and encourage the execution of the curriculum. This proves that principals are ignorant of the challenges teachers encounter in the classroom. In order to support teachers in overcoming obstacles related to teaching and learning, principals, in their capacity as instructional leaders, must have a thorough understanding of what goes on in classrooms during instruction. Principals, teachers, and learners interact more when an instructional leader oversees keeping a high profile in classrooms and schools (Sibomana, 2020). This will assist teachers in identifying strategies that they might use to raise learners' academic performance. The fact that individuals in charge of monitoring instruction and learning appear to be unaware of their responsibilities raises concerns. This demonstrates the gap between theorised philosophy and actual practice, as studies reveal that instructional leadership is critical to learners' achievement but many principals do not believe they have this duty.

Since administrative duties make up most of their job, many school principals no longer teach (Wallin et al, 2019). Principals see themselves as managers rather than instructional leaders, according to a South African study (Mestry, 2017). Hence, principals are out of touch with "how learners learn, which problems they have with gaining knowledge and what pedagogical improvements teachers require to help their learners achieve greater outcomes and discipline issues" (Wallin et al., 2019, p. 112). Teaching context realities are what principals are missing. Principals' time spent overseeing and assisting with education is cut down by their workload and administrative responsibilities (Matsepe, & Maluleke, 2019). Whether or not principals recognise their responsibility as instructional leaders is a critical subject. If principals are to effectively lead teachers, they must acknowledge their own part in the development of all curriculum fields, comprehend them, and have the specialised knowledge and abilities needed to support teachers' professional growth in both curriculum and instruction. According to Jayaweera, Karunathilake, and Weligamage

(2021) the literature highlights the significance of professional development and excellent qualifications for principals.

When a new, non-racial parliamentary South Africa emerged in 1994, the school curriculum was adopted and the school system was completely redesigned. These changes can be seen in the curriculum's natural order, which started with the adoption of OBE (Outcomes-Based Education) and went on through the 2005 Curriculum (C2005), the National Curriculum Statement (NCS), the Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS), and the most recent the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). A study of C2005 was requested by the Ministry of Education in 2000 in response to issues that principals and teachers were having implementing the new curriculum (Department of Education, 2018; Mestry, 2017). The RNCS for grades R–9 was developed in response to this study, and it was adopted as policy in 2002 (Department of Education, 2018). Since then, South Africa's general policies have seen significant advancements in the delivery of education, particularly for the disenfranchised people (Pillay, 2012).

Furthermore, South Africa has become a leader among developed nations in terms of the level of innovation displayed in the design of broad policy, particularly with regard to the growth of democratic policies. The transition from OBE to CAPS represents a progressive break from the previous educational framework within the educational system. Nonetheless, a lot of work needs to be done in the educational system because efficiency is still quite poor, especially in underprivileged schools. High rates of dropout, repetition, and failure persist in poorer schools, and these inefficiencies have a detrimental effect on both the district and school levels (Department of Education, 2018). Underperforming schools frequently have poor leadership and management (Setlhodi-Mohapi & Lebeloane, 2018). The aforementioned difficulties demonstrate the instability of the curriculum reform process and the difficulty schools are having putting the plan into practice on a school-by-school basis. The case of low-resource schools is particularly strong. As OBE was adopted and implemented, well-resourced schools with highly qualified teachers benefited, while under-resourced schools experiencing a crisis in education due to a breakdown in the teaching and learning culture—as is the case in many township schools—were further disadvantaged, according to Spaull and Jansen

(2019). Most of these schools operate under difficult circumstances, as is widely known, and only the wealthiest schools appear to be able to make use of any of C2005's anticipated advantages (Spaull & Jansen, 2019). Because of this, many township public schools are unable to adequately assist learners in learning, and many of them show clear signs of structural collapse. There is a lack of enthusiasm and a loss of authority between principals and teachers. According to Harris (2020), principals ought to foster a feeling of community, work to build relationships inside the school, and give clear instructions to both teachers and learners.

For the reasons listed above, I made the decision to look into how principals of prospering schools in the Johannesburg South District may act as instructional leaders to improve learner academic achievement. These schools manage to succeed despite the challenging circumstances they encounter. One of the main questions of this study is whether or not principals are aware of their responsibilities as instructional leaders and their part in it.

1.4. Significance of the study

It is crucial that a study carves out a space in which it may amply illustrate its knowledge-based contribution. In order to enhance learner performance, I argue in this section that research like this one, which aims to comprehend how school principals implement instructional leadership in primary schools, is vital. According to Boyce and Bowers (2018), instructional leadership is a form of educational leadership in which school principals participate routinely and actively in a variety of initiatives designed to enhance teaching and learning. Therefore, it is imperative that scientists closely monitor this phenomenon and identify the ways in which it presents itself under different conditions. For several reasons, including the belief that the body of research on instructional leadership is overly prescriptive, this study is crucial (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Hallinger, 2018). According to me, such an approach is likely to fall short of providing descriptions of how the phenomenon appears when scholarship specifies how it should be seen (Tan, 2018). This study, which focuses on how school principals could improve learner performance in township schools, adopts an open-minded methodology as a result. This is true even though all principals follow the same standards and policy frameworks as other schools in affluent

communities. Consequently, an understanding of the factors that shape their decisions and an account of their actions can provide valuable context for the application of instructional leadership.

Since the demands of leadership are constantly changing, more research is needed to improve our current understanding of the phenomenon. School principals are expected to modify their leadership approaches to better meet the requirements of their learners by raising the standard of instruction in their institutions to boost learner achievement. According to Ebuk and Bankole (2019), proficient instructional leaders are preoccupied with the calibre of instruction and learning, and consequently, with the degree of learner achievement. According to Tan (2018), current literature is more prescriptive, making it insufficient for understanding shifting educational policies and contextual imperatives. Considering these increased demands, school principals must re-evaluate how they may best use instructional leadership to provide teachers with the resources they need to enable learners to acquire these skills efficiently and rapidly (Tan, 2018). It is anticipated that this study will be able to theorise about instructional leadership strategies used in township primary schools. Considering the aforementioned situations, I expect that this study will advance knowledge on how principals might serve as instructional leaders in primary schools to improve learner performance. The implementation of strategies that seem to be effective in these South African schools is crucial to raising the standard of basic education. I think that this study will significantly advance our understanding of how to improve learner performance in the classroom. In the context of raising learner performance in primary schools, I also anticipate that this research will help close knowledge gaps in instructional leadership theory and practice. Additionally, I think it will contribute to the creation of more varied perceptions of leaders operating in various contexts. Principals in similar circumstances to those outlined in the current research can benefit from this.

1.5. Aims/Objectives of the study

The major goal of this project is to investigate how the principal, acting as an educational leader, may raise learner achievement in Gauteng Province's Johannesburg South District's primary schools.

The following are study objectives:

- To explore the school principals' understandings of their roles as instructional leaders in improving learner academic performance in their schools.
- To investigate how school principals enact their instructional leadership as they support teaching and learning in their schools.
- To explore the challenges that school principals experience in discharging their instructional leadership practices and how do they overcome them.

1.6. Key/critical research questions

How does the principal of the Johannesburg South District of the Gauteng Province's primary schools improve learner performance in their capacity as instructional leaders?

There are several sub-divisions within this study question:

- What do school principals understand to be their roles in improving learner academic performance in their schools?
- How do school principals enact their instructional leadership as they support teaching and learning in their schools?
- What are the challenges that school principals experience in discharging their instructional leadership practices and how do they overcome them?

1.7. Discussion of key concepts/terms used in the study

The two key terms that will dominate this study are learner performance and instructional leadership. These serve as the foundation for this investigation and are therefore essential to understanding it in its whole. In this thesis, their thorough

justifications and the ways in which they communicate with one another were succinctly explained and expanded upon as necessary.

1.7.1. Instructional leadership

The concept of instructional leadership, according to Glanz, Shaked, Rabinowitz, Shenhav, and Zaretsky (2017), originated in North America, England, and Australia in the 19th century. All this took place under an inspection system that they developed. The concept gained significant traction in the 1970s, when there was an increasing focus on the aspect of education that was in line with the principal's function. Principals' inclusive actions to improve instruction helped create this concept in the 1960s (Horner, 2016). School principals' continuous and profound commitment in enhancing instruction and learning for all learners is reflected in instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Neumerski et al., 2018). According to Ganz, Shaked, Rabinowitz, Shenhav, and Zaretsky (2017), instructional leadership is the practice of effective teaching with the goal of advancing classroom procedures, learner learning, and engagement.

The idea of instructional management originates from the research on the subject of educational administration, according to Fowler and Walter (2020, p. 465). It describes the part that a principal at a school plays in assisting principals in becoming better principals in the classroom, putting the learning of learners at the centre of the instructional process, and assisting in the establishment of an educational materials and evaluation society in the institution of learning. The idea that the principal fosters learner learning progress by emphasising delegating and exercising the chain of command is highlighted in commentary on instructional leadership from the most recent centuries (20th and 21st). According to Dimmock and Tan (2016), principals are responsible for defining the purpose of education, drawing a clear line, setting goals for the entire school, and outlining a strategy for achieving those goals. In addition to being held accountable for their academic performance, the principal is responsible for giving teachers and learners the tools they need to continue learning successfully under supervision, organising staff activities, and fostering collegial relationships amongst them. In their capacity as instructional leaders, principals assist teachers and learners in their pursuit of

academic achievement by directing instruction for effective learning (Shava & Heystek, 2018). The principal's main responsibility is to demonstrate leadership in the classroom. Overall, the idea is that instructional leadership is a kind of leadership that ought to direct and oversee enhancements that go hand in hand with learner performance.

1.7.2. Learner performance

According to Boyd (2002), factors that influence how well learners perform also have an impact on one another. Changes in ability, temperament, motivation, conduct, attitude, and circumstance are all included. Learner performance is closely related to the instructional program; after completing it, learners start to see the world more enlightened and start acting more responsibly or in line with their lessons, putting them into practice.

1.7.3. Academic performance

The primary goal of education, according to Peters and Biesta (2009, p. 98), is found in its qualification role. Learners must be evaluated by tests and exams to be deemed competent or to be understood to have acquired a certain body of knowledge, abilities, and dispositions. The test findings will be contrasted with the benchmarks established by the Basic Education Minister. Thus, an institution's educational achievement will be classified as poor, good, or exceptional based on how well it meets the "a minimum outcomes and requirements and evaluation processes" set by the Minister of Basic Education (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Principals are required by law to draft a plan of action for the institution's academic achievement each year at the beginning of the school year and submit it to the Head of Department (HD) (Republic of South Africa, 1996). Taole (2017, p. 77) asserts that regardless of the principal's chosen leadership style, the learners' academic achievement always comes first.

1.8. Delimitations/demarcation of the study

The features that define the parameters and restrict the study's scope are known as delimitations. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2010), delimiting elements include the population one chooses to study, the research questions chosen, variables of

interest, and the theoretical views chosen (as opposed to what may have been chosen). Delimitation is the selection of the problem itself, which suggests that there are similar problems that may have been selected but were turned down or hidden. In addition to providing a clear grasp of the goals to be achieved, the purpose statement makes clear what the study will and won't cover (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010).

Interviews that were semi-structured were used for collecting the data, which was one of the study's distinguishing characteristics. There could only be four primary schools involved at a time. The main objective of this study, which took place in Orange Farm township educational institutions, was the everyday responsibilities of primary school principals.

I was studying the management strategies and leadership philosophies employed by prosperous yet "resilient schools" that function well in the challenging circumstances of the Orange Farm townships in the Johannesburg South region. My main area of interest is how the principals may enhance learner performance at the primary school level by acting as an instructional leader. The focus of my qualitative research is on the participants' personal experiences (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011).

1.9. Organisation/outline/structure of the study/thesis

To fully understand the results and address the research topics, the thesis is divided into ten chapters.

1.9.1. Chapter One

This chapter outlined the study's history and emphasised its main findings to introduce the thesis. The problem statement, the study's objective and justification, its significance, and its main research questions are some of these elements. The chapter also outlined the research questions that needed to be answered by the investigation and defined some of the fundamental ideas that formed the basis of the study, including its boundaries and limitations.

1.9.2. Chapter Two

This chapter's primary focus is on the literature review. It reassesses data on how principals in the Johannesburg South District's kindergartens might improve learner

success by acting as instructional leaders. It provides an overview of the corpus of studies demonstrating how instructional leadership affects learners' improved performance as a whole.

1.9.3. Chapter Three

This chapter presents and discusses the theoretical framework that served as the investigations guide. These include the Principal Instruction Administration Rating Scale (PIMRS) model created by Hallinger and Murphy in (1985) and the dispersed leadership idea put out by Spillane (2006).

1.9.4. Chapter Four

This chapter covers the study design and technique that were used to gather data to answer these objectives. The investigation's design, investigation technique, and study paradigms were all examined, along with a justification for each choice. A plan for gathering and analysing data was given, in addition to a description of the study sites.

1.9.5. Chapter Five

This chapter provides and analyses the information gathered from school principals. In order to enhance the academic performance of learners, this chapter provides insights from the viewpoints of school principals regarding how they conceptualised and implemented instructional leadership in their institutions. The main questions that shaped the research and, consequently, the principal interviews, serve as the foundation for this chapter. The main points that came up in the semi-structured interviews are explained in detail. The analysis incorporates the frameworks described in Chapter Three and the literature studied in Chapter Two to bolster the conclusions drawn from the data.

1.9.6. Chapter Six

The results of this chapter's discussion of the deputy principals' observations about their principals' implementation of instructional leadership are presented. With the exception of the findings reported in this chapter, which represent the deputy principals' viewpoints, all other methodologies outlined in the preceding section above are valid here.

1.9.7. Chapter Seven

The results of DHs' observations of their principals' instructional leadership methods are presented and discussed in this chapter. This chapter also made advantage of the strategies covered in Chapter Five.

1.9.8. Chapter Eight

The results of the teachers' viewpoints of their principals' instructional leadership methods are presented and discussed in this chapter. This chapter also made advantage of the strategies covered in Chapter Five.

1.9.9. Chapter Nine

The findings are analysed descriptively and then evaluated in this chapter. It recognised, examined, and evaluated the results from the preceding four chapters. Finding important themes that surfaced from the examination of the data from the four participant categories was the aim of the study.

1.9.10. Chapter Ten

The conclusions drawn following an analysis of the data from the various participants are presented in this chapter. The chapter starts with a summary of the entire study, then discusses the conclusions, organising the presentation with the help of the research questions. Finally, it discusses recommendations for future research and how schools can improve learner performance.

1.10. Chapter summary

I gave an overview of the entire thesis in this first chapter. In order to provide the reader with a broad perspective of the entire investigation, this was done. I began by giving some background information regarding the study before quickly going over the main points of the thesis. I introduced the problem statement and talked about the motivation for this study as well as its goal. I discussed the study's objectives and guiding questions. To make clear to the reader how these concepts are utilised in this study, I briefly addressed them here. A synopsis of the thesis' overall structure was provided. To offer a theoretical understanding of the phenomenon, I explore the instructional leadership literature in the upcoming chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), p. 73, the goal of this section is to provide "useful details concerning the approach that might be incorporated into a fresh investigation, in addition to links among previous expertise and the subject matter being studied, which increase relevance." It is a compilation of information about instructional leadership from multiple researchers and different sources. The next part discusses how various academics have conceptualised accountability in instructional leadership.

An introduction to the study and a synopsis of the entire thesis were provided in the preceding section. The review of relevant literature on instructional leadership and the theoretical frameworks supporting this investigation are the main topics of this part. I looked at research that guides instructional leadership in this chapter. I make an effort to elucidate the notion of instructional leadership as well as the real procedures that affect learners' academic progress. This was created with special consideration to the principal's role as an instructional leader in raising learner achievement in township schools. The purpose of the literature review is to gain an understanding of the contextual circumstances that instructional leaders face in different places. I talked about the research on instructional leadership and how it relates to raising learner academic achievement. There was talk on strategies that could be used to raise learner performance. Research on instructional leadership will be used to highlight patterns and advancements throughout this review.

2.2. Leadership and management

Leadership and management "involve a process wherein intentional impact is exerted by a single individual over other people to direct, structure, and promote interactions and connections in a group or organization," states Yukl (2006, p. 3). Second, since personal and professional values are anticipated to be predominant, leadership is becoming more and more linked to values (Bush, 2003; Fullan, 2009). Thirdly, a

realistic, trustworthy, and upbeat organisational vision is typically linked to leadership (Nanus, 1992).

Management, the sister idea of leadership, is related to it. According to Clarke (2009), the operational effectiveness of the school is ensured by three managerial techniques. First and foremost, organising systems, policies, processes, and timelines to guarantee effectiveness is the goal of planning and budgeting. It also entails assessing the financial, human, and physical resource needs of the schools (Clarke, 2009). Second, by staffing, delegating, and organising, you can make sure that all parties involved are aware of what is expected of them. Thirdly, according to Clarke (2009), schools must to have particular procedures in place to keep an eye on learners' performance on a variety of tasks.

This research defines leadership as the strategies used by school principals to persuade principals, pupils, and the surrounding community to attain the school's goal of raising learner success and enhancing school progress. However, to accomplish its goals, management must make use of both people and material resources inside the organisation. The terms management as well as leadership are frequently used synonymously, and in this study, management takes precedence over leadership.

2.3. Leadership

In order to establish understanding of the concept of instructional leadership, a leadership concept has been added to the definition. Leadership is the capacity and skill to motivate an organisation to accomplish established goals (Education. D. o.E, 2018). According to Niyazi (2009), leadership is the ability to accomplish goals through working with appropriately assembled people and motivating them to achieve predetermined targets. According to Raelin (2016), leadership is a team effort that seeks to achieve a shared objective; it is not just about an individual's actions and thoughts. At the educational level, the leader assumes the role of principal, whose duty it is to realise the goals of the school by motivating teachers, parents, and learners to work toward them. Hallinger, (2018) asserts that clear goals

can help school leaders ensure the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process by teachers.

The capacity to increase academic boundaries through learner education under the direction of a principal and in accordance with their leadership style is a measure of a school's efficiency. According to Wing (2013), academics studying educational leadership concur that distributed leadership represents a contemporary interpretation of conceptual growth. How would this aid in the analysis and comprehension of the research?

2.4. Instructional, Transformational and Distributed Leadership Models

A successful educational institution requires a blend of leadership philosophies. It might be difficult for principals to come across leadership ideas that align with their job as leaders in education. The two leadership philosophies were chosen because they promote educational instruction and learner engagement, which makes them fundamental to the discussion of leadership in education. Although some academics contend that the most effective strategy for bridging this gap is transformational management, Hallinger and Murphy (1987) have pointed out that educational leadership does not have a coherent conceptual structure.

The various duties that principals must perform in their schools make it difficult for them to focus when teaching. In order to efficiently carry out their duties, distributed leadership might assist them in sharing their tasks among their subordinates. Bush (2018a) claims that distributed leadership offers a chance to help teachers become more capable of taking on leadership roles. Hoadley (2012) places instructional leadership at the core of distributed leadership. The inclusion of the other two models was justified by their ability to demonstrate their impact on instructional leadership.

2.4.1. Instructional leadership

The idea of instructional leadership is "strongly concerned with teaching and learning, encompassing the ongoing professional development of teachers as well

as learner growth," according to Southworth (2002, p. 79). Additionally, instructional leaders create a school vision that calls for learners and teachers to meet high standards and achieve greatness (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Barth, 1990). To improve learner accomplishment results, the ultimate goal is to provide high-quality instruction and learning experiences (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Rhodes & Brundrett, 2010).

Teaching and learning are the cornerstone of any school. This study is therefore focused on determining the degree to which principals' manipulation of activities improves learner achievement—a form of alignment. Therefore, an instructional leader must inspire and assist each teacher in that specific school to have an impact on learning and teaching. Creating a supportive environment for teaching and learning to achieve academic and social school goals is known as instructional leadership (Ahmed, 2016). The instructional leader promotes teamwork and equally distributes the organisation's duties (Cuban, 2020). According to Maree (2007), a principal, in their capacity as instructional leaders, must work to improve teachers' pedagogies to promote learners' academic performance. From this vantage point, leaders aim to impact learners' learning through teachers.

Murphy, Neumerski, Goldring, Grissom, and Porter (2016) state that instructional leadership is beneficial in reaching the objectives of improving schools and raising learner achievement. Ahmed (2016) goes on to say that establishing the ideal environment for teaching and learning is closely related to principals' instructional leadership methods. Instructional leadership helps principals create a goal and vision statement and prepares teachers to use cutting-edge strategies that could enhance teaching and learning (Mestry, 2017). A leader must make sure that teachers and learners have access to the necessary tools and materials to put learning into practice and increase learner achievement as measured going forward. Principals also start and oversee internal staff development initiatives so that everyone is aware of what's going on in the school. The DBE (2018, p. 20) states that the principal is in charge of setting up or facilitating different professional development, orientation, and induction programs to improve and enhance teachers' ability to teach. This indicates

that principals have a big part to play in instructional leadership and that they ought to improve the way they teach learners.

Since the goal of instructional leadership is fundamental to education in general, I suggest that it be implemented at the primary school level. In the same sentence, I would advise instructional leaders in schools to intentionally link school activities to teaching and learning.

2.4.2. Transformational leadership

Bush and Glover (2009) state that the goal of transformational management is to "create an atmosphere of shared purpose among executives and followers" (p. 62). According to Bush and Glover (2009), transformational leadership assumes that its central focus should continue to be on the responsibility and skill of organisational members. Effective instruction is ensured by teachers through ongoing development under transformational leadership. It is possible to include transformational leadership into instruction to raise learner performance. Additionally, both transformational and instructional leadership promote an environment that is conducive to effective teaching and learning.

Teachers can obtain the necessary information and abilities to help them achieve high learner accomplishment through their ongoing professional development. The key to effectiveness is the combination of leadership methods, of which a transformational approach also plays a significant part in raising learner achievement. Combining leadership philosophies can also be used to improve learner achievement; the instructional and transformational methods are one example of this. As a result, the strategy used by leaders to raise their accomplishment ratings by combining transformational and instructional leadership is the main emphasis of this study. In summary, this study shows that principals' use of strategies to improve learner achievement has an impact on their line of work and the status that goes along with it. For this reason, a combination of leadership techniques—instruction and transformation—is used to help schools succeed both academically and in other areas.

2.4.3. Distributed leadership

Instead of being individualistic, this leadership structure makes use of a network of specialists who come together to create a creative space (Bush & Glover, 2009). Distributed leadership is a viewpoint that acknowledges that a school's resources and abilities belong to more people than simply the principal; they also belong to other stakeholders. According to the distributed leadership architecture, a school's competence is not a single, exceptional person—the principal—but rather a network of talented people (Tienken, 2010). According to Bush and Glover (2009), intellects can clearly see that a solitary leadership strategy is being curtailed. As a result, they embrace distributive leadership, which is achieved via active teamwork and collaboration. This indicates that the appropriate mix of distributed, transformational, and instructional leadership can improve learners' performance. According to Hoadley (2012), instructional leadership revolves around the concept of distributed leadership.

2.5. The principal as instructional leader

As an instructional leader, the principal has a critical responsibility to play in sustaining high standards. Instructional leadership becomes crucial to guarantee that the teaching and learning of school subjects improve (Zuze & Juan, 2018). In addition, the principal must fulfil the responsibilities of an instructional leader by serving as a resource for teachers on matters pertaining to or impacting the school. They would get motivation from this and realise how much their work is valued.

As instructional leaders, principals primarily assist teachers in facilitating successful learning and support learners in their quest of academic achievement (Shava & Heystek, 2018). The principal is positioned as the head of the school and its main pillar through instructional leadership. Principals are encouraged by instructional leadership to support teachers and learners, which enhances instruction and learning as well as learner accomplishment. Mestry (2017) found that effective instructional leadership is shaped and created by principals, who

encourage learners and teachers to reach their maximum potential in both learning and teaching.

A school's ability to succeed depends on how well its administration's concepts are implemented and how effective the way it leads is. Good school principals foster a positive atmosphere that helps the school continue to produce high-quality work. Day, Gu, and Sammons (2016) state that instructional management by teachers is "essential for achievement" and a vital for "a contributor to better instruction" (p. 251). To put it briefly, the job of managing a school is assigned to principals, who must be careful with the strategies they use to establish their competence and successfully navigate any challenges that educational institutions may face. For this reason, the use of instructional leadership is encouraged and implemented as a tool for success.

2.6. A principal's leadership in professional development

According to Akcaoglu (2013), teachers are the ones who actually carry out the curriculum, so they should give the principal's professional growth and development top priority to guarantee that high-quality instruction is delivered in the classroom. The principal may employ strategies for teacher empowerment, like peer coaching and mentorship, or strategies to assist recently hired or underperforming teachers in enhancing their instructional knowledge and skills (RSA, 2016, p. 23). In order to improve learner performance, teachers must be developed to gain the information and abilities required.

Professional development, in accordance with Syomwene (2018), helps principals to gain new abilities and to boost their competence and confidence, which results in the successful implementation of curricula. To enhance the impact of management on studying, educational methods for leadership should prioritise helping teachers get a deeper grasp of the curriculum, which includes teaching and learning (Moorosi & Bantwini, 2016). As an instructional leader, the principal has an obligation to assist teachers in enrolling in classes for professional development. The most crucial instrument for educational administration is continuing education since it enables

principals to do their jobs more effectively. To consult, supervise, evaluate, and manage the principals in their capacity as instructional leaders, the principal must possess knowledge in the subject of education. Stronge (2018) contends that to guarantee that every learner receives the best instruction possible every day and to be actively involved in the curriculum and instruction improvement process, the principal must transform into a learning-focused instructional leader.

2.7. The role of principals in the creation of Professional Learning Communities

Professional Learning Communities, according to Wongyai and Patphol (2019), are gathering places for teachers to back up professional competency and raise learner quality through cooperative learning, sharing of lessons learned, and learning for ongoing improvement. Professional learning communities are crucial because they give teachers the chance to directly enhance their instruction, foster strong bonds among team members, keep them up to date on new developments in education technology, and encourage critical thinking (Serviss, 2021). In addition to improving learner quality in terms of understanding, thinking, behaviour, and other skills and competences, professional learning networks assist teachers in developing their pedagogies (Wongyai and Patphol, 2019). According to Bafadal et al. (2020), an effective teaching ecology can be created by fostering the growth of a professional learning community, developing creative classroom strategies, emphasising learner-centred education, and creating a welcoming school atmosphere. In a similar vein, DuFour (2004) suggests that professional learning communities consist of three elements. First, according to DuFour (2004), an organisation's culture plays a significant role in fostering good professional learning. This implies that there is a high level of teamwork, as evidenced by the teaching staff's efforts to meet frequently and receive additional training on pedagogy improvement techniques. Secondly, a culture of methodical cooperation exists that prioritises professional practice over fellowship. In the end, professional learning communities spend much of their time analysing data from learner assessments to enhance learning outcomes (DuFour, 2004). Teachers' disciplinary and pedagogical content knowledge increases because of participating in professional learning communities (PLCs), which in turn helps teachers shift from traditional to more inquiry-based teaching methods (Jacob et al.,

2017). According to DuFour (2004), teacher collaboration fosters the acquisition of new skills, abilities to solve problems, and content understanding.

According to Schildkamp and Datnow (2020), the development and maintenance of professional learning communities depend heavily on leadership behaviours including creating an environment that is conducive to learning, stimulating the mind, and providing support for learning. Establishing Professional Learning Communities is mostly dependent on the leadership of the principal. Collaboration is essential in Professional Learning Communities, as everyone must cooperate and participate in all collaborative activities to achieve the optimal learning outcomes, claim Prenger, Poortman and Handelzalts (2017). Principals are required to make the time, space, and resources necessary for collaboration to take place in this regard. Therefore, in order for Professional Learning Communities to function, logistical concerns must be taken into account. Principals must also foster relationship environments that support professional learning, such as those that foster trust, respect, risk-taking, and reflective discourse. Furthermore, the collaborative aspect of professional development enriches the principal's methods of instructional leadership.

2.8. Models of Instructional Leadership

A representation is an observed fact which is simply shown from a give and take viewpoint, as evidenced by its link to the main appearance, according to Salo, Nylund, and Stjernstrøm (2014). The leadership of instruction mode is a territorial paradigm that considers how leaders influence a result inside a company.

Numerous instructional leadership models can be found in both national and international literatures. It is generally acknowledged, based on an analysis of these models, that instructional leadership is multifaceted. It includes collections of several professional activities carried out in parallel (Salo, et al., 2014). The three broad dimensions that cut across these models are the focal points of attention, behaviour, and time for instructional leaders. These include establishing goals, concentrating on instruction and learning, and establishing the framework for better instruction and learning.

Setting direction

Setting specific guidelines that will be followed is necessary for the implementation to be successful. Thus, the topic of the necessity of direction-setting to enhance learners' academic performance in schools is the main subject of this section. For instructional leaders, determining the objectives, a crucial component of their work is understanding the educational institution's goal, meaning, demands, and future plans (Hallinger, 2018; Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012). The first pillar of instructional leadership in the Hallinger and Murphy (1985) Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) model is articulating the school's mission. It provides a general overview of the course the school intends to follow to accomplish certain goals (Hallinger, 2018). According to Nguyen, Hallinger, and Chen (2018), it is the principal's duty to develop, distribute, and arrange support for achieving the institution's objective. The approach's ongoing objectives include effective education and instruction (Bush, 2013).

According to Manaseh (2016), there are beneficial outcomes that are relevant to learner accomplishment when the principal concentrates both time and money on the company's overall success and establishes a strong, unambiguous common vision. Creating a shared vision where the learner is the centre of attention fosters confidence among an otherwise independent teaching staff since all decisions and discussions are centred around what is best for the learning of the learners, not what is best for the individual teachers (Carreau, 2008).

To improve teaching and learning, it is crucial to have clear objectives and guidelines (Hallinger & Heck, 1998, Robinson, 2007). Determining and upholding the school mission as well as influencing the school atmosphere and culture are all influenced by effective goal communication (Huong, 2020). One of the five leadership qualities that significantly impacted learners' academic achievement was setting school goals and expectations, according to Robinson's (2007) comparative research of transformational and instructional leadership. "The environment, expressing and assessing educational goals, specifications, as well as requests, and involving of employees and others in the procedure so that people have understanding and agreement regarding objectives" is the way Robinson (2007, p. 14) describes goals. When choosing what needs to get done, people can prioritise their list thanks to goals.

According to Khan, Khan, and Saeed (2020), the key to instructionally successful schools is having well-defined goals that are communicated to stakeholders and are geared toward raising learner accomplishment.

The greatest constant influence on learner outcomes comes from the principal's efforts in establishing, conveying, and upholding the school's mission and goals, according to Hallinger and Heck's (1998) meta-analysis of the relationships between principal leadership and learner achievement. According to their description, the principal's work in this area affects the faculty's academic expectations for learners as well as the school's goal and vision. They discover that this work indirectly affects learner outcomes. According to Leithwood (2012), establishing a clear set of goals for the organisation and persuading members to make changes in that direction are two crucial goals for organisational performance. It has been discovered that a leader's influence is mostly attributed to those leadership behaviours that entail direction-setting. These particular leadership techniques call for a leader to establish a clear vision, encourage support for group objectives, and set high standards. As per Ozdemir et al. (2020), school vision and goals represent the second most effective means by which principals can enhance learner performance in their institutions.

According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2012), a leader's ability to improve learner performance depends on the specific classroom practices that they inspire, support, and encourage. As an educational leader, the principal plays a major part in supporting teachers in implementing the goals that the school has decided upon for their practices in the classroom. As an instructional leader, the principal has a responsibility to make sure that all educational programs, including financial management and oversight procedures, help the school achieve its objectives. Put differently, the principal ought to curtail any extracurricular activities that appear to interfere with the school's academic goal.

Anderson, Leithwood, Louis, and Wahlstrom (2004) recognised one of the three essential elements of school leaders as being the ability to provide directions. Establishing a common goal, laying forth high standards, and giving instructions are all part of setting directions. In order to provide current accurate feedback on progress, communication is crucial during the establishment, monitoring, and assessment of goals (Leithwood & Jantzi 2012). The aforementioned literature

emphasises and supports the need for instructional leaders to take an active role in developing school goals. It shows how crucial it is to include other stakeholders in its evolution in addition to just formulating it. Other stakeholders are considered to be vital for the development of learning processes because they take ownership of the process and make a commitment to achieving predetermined objectives.

Focusing on instruction

Shaked (2020) endorsed the duties of educational leadership put out by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and said that the subsequent part of overseeing the educational programme consists of curriculum cooperation, pupil advancement monitoring, and monitoring and assessment of teaching. Effective principals are devoted to and informed about best practices in teaching and learning, according to Ross and Cozzens (2016, p. 162). Additionally, instructional leaders raise the calibre of instruction while working within the constraints of the resources already available to the schools. The research on successful schools also demonstrates that successful principals have more influence than ineffective ones over choices about curriculum and instruction (Robinson, 2011). The key ideas put out by researchers regarding the instructional focus as a practice dimension for instructional leaders are covered in the section that follows.

Coordinating curriculum

Numerous studies have shown that one of the key activities a principal should undertake in their capacity as an instructional leader is organising the curriculum. According to Sebastian et al. (2016), curriculum planning and coordination, teacher learning promotion (Liu et al., 2020), sharing a common goal in line with a culture of high expectations for learner learning, and enhancing the calibre of instructional practices are all ways that instructional leaders affect school outcomes. Sim (2011) makes a similar argument, saying that principals encourage and motivate teachers to organise their lessons and carry them out in a way that is consistent with the school's mission. It is the principal's duty to oversee the implementation of the curriculum and make sure that principals are following the right procedures.

Marzano (2005) conducted a study that highlighted multiple duties of principals that were under the purview of overseeing the educational program. Being actively

involved in curriculum design activities and supporting teachers in resolving assessment and instructional concerns typified the first role related to curriculum, teaching, and assessment. As a key component of educational management, Robinson (2007) emphasises the significance of the idea of engagement in a variety of instructional domains. The second duty, or understanding of curriculum, teaching, and evaluation, is characterised as having expertise in educational procedures and educational in nature, educational, and evaluation. (Marzano, 2005). Through meetings, class visits, assessments, and interactions with teachers and learners, school leaders supervise and manage instruction (Hou, Cui, & Zhang, 2019). In addition, proficient instructional leaders typically engage in conversations with teachers regarding instructional strategies, offer assessments that facilitate teachers' professional development, promote the implementation of diverse instructional strategies, and regularly monitor classroom activities. It is imperative that principals, in their capacity as instructional leaders, set up their calendars so they have time to devote to instructional matters and classroom visits.

Taking care of the educational program also entails using human and material resources efficiently (Robinson, 2011). Effective principals, for instance, select teachers who are effective and offer professional development centred on changing teachers' practices to raise learner accomplishment. Kulophas and Hallinger (2020) claimed that through improved teacher attributes that affect high-quality instruction, the school climate, and ultimately learner achievement, principals' professional development programs for teachers have a positive impact on teachers' knowledge, skills, effectiveness, and productivity. Principals who work in settings that support professional learning are effective leaders who value their job as instructional leaders over that of principals, according to Glanz, Shaked, Rabinowitz, Shenhav, and Zaretsky (2017).

Managers in high-achieving businesses, according to Harris (2010, p 65), form creative learning teams that assist members in "turning one's biggest inadequacies into major victory". Principals thus are more likely to promise to actively and effectively help with developing and strengthening possibilities for high-quality and effective learning if they obtain ongoing professional growth. Mestry (2017) defines instructional management as the ability of the principal to actively involve teachers in

reciprocal learning and development to achieve the ultimate objective of improving their ability to teach and learn.

Monitoring learner progress

The body of research suggests that principals, in their capacity as instructional leaders, have an obligation to assist teachers and keep an eye on learners' academic progress. Principals must figure out how to inspire and motivate learners to do better in the classroom. A few of the principals recognise and celebrate exceptional work. Sim's (2011) findings demonstrated that Malaysian principals were doing a fantastic job of identifying and rewarding exceptional learners who were achieving academic success. To encourage them, these principals gave these learners prizes or certificates. These successes were announced at assemblies, which also served as a means of inspiring other learners. In this sense, the principal either directly or indirectly keeps an eye on and assesses the progress of the learners.

The process of tracking learner progress involves evaluating and responding to learners' performance through formative and summative assessments, as well as having firsthand experience with instructional strategies, learning objectives, and the atmosphere of the classroom (Bush, 2013). As per Thessin's (2019) findings, the instructional leadership task is an essential and proactive principal's duty that is carried out on a regular basis to assess the progress of learners in terms of observing, encouraging, supervising, and evaluating teacher educational activities in the school. Taylor (2006) states that studies have demonstrated the need of quality assurance procedures and results monitoring for management variables related to better learner outcomes. These findings are utilised to help parents understand how their children are doing as well as to encourage teachers and learners in becoming better teachers and learners (Kruger & Van Deventer, 2003). To assess learners' level of knowledge, instructional leaders concentrate on their work and learner explanations. They also create procedures that hold teachers accountable (Thessin's, 2019). In order to accomplish the academic goals of the school, instructional principals provide help and direction to learners who are not meeting expectations. Here, it is assumed that the

primary goal of formal education is to guarantee that all learners are making progress rather than just that they are being taught.

According to Grobler (2013), ensuring that there is consistency between principals' instruction and learners' learning is a key component of the instructional leadership concept. Effective instructional leaders participate actively in the curriculum, evaluation, and practice-related conversations with teachers (Robinson, 2011). Every school principal has a responsibility to make sure that instructional leaders are also concentrating on the oversight of instruction.

Creating and sustaining conditions for improved learning

According to the literature, the third aspect of instructional leadership practice is about establishing and maintaining environments that promote better learning (Hallinger, 2018; Bhengu & Mkhize, 2015). These prerequisites cover the work's relational and environmental dimensions as well. Stated differently, the physical environment plays a significant role in setting up the classroom for successful instruction. In a similar vein, connections are crucial since motivated individuals perform better at work when they feel satisfied with their jobs. As such, it is imperative that the school's administration consider a variety of these variables.

Principals should assist principals in implementing successful teaching practices and programs, as well as in promoting learner learning, according to Wang and Goldberg (2017). These principals are aware of the demands of the teachers and encourage their success. The principals motivate and acknowledge the hard work of their teachers, which boosts their morale and encourages them to put in more effort to improve learner achievement (Wang & Goldberg, 2017).

Bush (2018a) promoted the idea that instructional leaders should make sure that principals have the resources they need to support their teaching and improve learner performance. They argued that both teachers and learners are directly and indirectly motivated by the availability of educational resources. Good instructional resources directly motivate teachers to plan and pace their content presentations more confidently. Bush (2018a) goes on to say that high-quality resources help teachers

increase learner performance and help them make powerful presentations, especially for the less skilled teachers.

2.9. Measurements of Instructional Leadership

Many school principals in South Africa, particularly those in rural and township schools, lack the intellectual preparation necessary to assume leadership roles. Many scholars, including Mestry (2017), Mestry, Naidu, Joubert, Mosoge, and Ngcobo (2018), agree that a large proportion of South African school principals lack the abilities necessary to lead and provide instructional leadership in their institutions. As a result, the majority lack the necessary abilities to help teachers raise learner performance. Principals should have conversations with teachers on instructional improvement as one of the key strategies for raising learner performance. This will help the teachers better grasp the difficulties that come with both teaching and learning. By creating channels and procedures via which they can confer with teachers on subjects pertaining to teaching during school-level decision-making and encourage informal leadership inside the school, principals can attain instructional leadership (Tuytens & Devos, 2018). With the exception of issuing directions, the majority of principals avoid speaking with principals, which results in a lack of communication between the two parties and subpar work. According to Kirori & Dickinson (2020), poor leadership is just one of the elements that lead to low academic achievement in South African public schools. Good communication is essential for improving learner performance because it enables the principal and teachers to talk about how to better understand learner performance and what strategies may be used to achieve it.

2.9.1. Talking with teachers to promote learner achievement

The ability for the administrator and teachers to discuss strategies for improving teaching and learning is one of the main roles that communication between the two plays in learner performance. Five essential communication strategies are included in dialogue, according to Blasé & Blasé (1999, p. 360): creating recommendations,

giving feedback, simulation, using inquiry and seeking ideas and opinions in addition to giving praise. However, this relies on the approach and frame of mind employed to address specific issues. It does not, however, ensure instant success; instead, what counts are the fundamentals of successful interaction. Southworth (2002) mentions Blasé & Blasé's five conference strategies for active instruction and learning. Below is a summary of these strategies.

2.9.1.1. Making suggestions

As an instructional leader, a principal should offer advice to teachers in casual everyday encounters as well as during and after observation sessions. This is so that they may comprehend the difficulties that teachers face while they are instructing learners and provide recommendations based on those difficulties, expanding to new ones using the foundation of the established ones. According to Naidoo and Mestry (2019, p. 265), principals must possess adequate teaching experience and first-hand knowledge of the difficulties principals encounter in the classroom to get the respect of the teachers. To inspire teachers, a principal should offer recommendations that are relevant, useful, and non-threatening. Giving positive feedback is one of the most crucial steps in improving teaching and learning. "Successful instructional principals help with building an educational setting by giving helpful suggestions to teachers or raising critical inquiries concerning their classroom practices," according to Park and Ham (2016, p 5). This gives teachers confidence and motivates them to learn more and evaluate how they teach, approach, and deliver their lessons. Feedback gives you more chances to make recommendations. Teachers can also benefit from hearing constructive criticism without losing hope since it makes them more willing to take risks and improve their instruction. Most principals in township and rural schools don't interact with their teachers.

2.9.1.2. Giving feedback

One of the most important components of improving teaching and learning is providing positive feedback. "Successful instructional principals help with building a

learning environment by giving helpful suggestions to teachers or asking constructive queries regarding their classroom practices," according to Park and Ham (2016, p. 5). Teachers gain confidence from this and are inspired to study more and reflect on their own instruction, approach, and delivery. More opportunities to offer suggestions are presented by feedback. In order to enhance their teaching, teachers can also benefit from accepting unfavourable criticism without losing hope, and it fosters a risk-taking mind-set in them.

In township and rural schools, most principals don't communicate with their principals. They are similar to office-based leaders who prioritise bureaucratic tasks over teaching. According to Kiat, Tan, Heng, and Lim, principals must be trained to understand that one of their main jobs is directing instruction while their management obligations are secondary. Ratnam (2017). Principals ought to observe classrooms in addition to providing informal coaching and mentoring. Regretfully, conditions vary in many South African schools, which forces the principals to re-evaluate their approach to managing staff to enhance learner performance. All in all, the atmospheric context must be updated in line with communication.

2.9.1.3 Modelling

Leading by example is a prerequisite for modelling; it's akin to practicing what one preaches. In order for teachers to learn from their example, principals ought to model effective teaching methods in the classroom. By using their demonstration, teachers can enhance their methods and meet the goals of their lessons. If a teacher is using an approach for addition, for example, the principal may arrange an instructional lesson so that the instructor may see how it may be done differently. When the administrator demonstrates a lesson, they ought to go through it in detail to emphasise that the instructor needs to go beyond what is required to ensure that learners comprehend the subject if they are to do well on exams. Differentiating teaching and learning styles gives learners the freedom to choose the approach that works best for them, which will improve learner performance. Principals should do more than just make observations and comments during observations to help

teachers improve their instruction. Teachers can enhance their pedagogy by using feedback from observations in the classroom (Hoque, et al., 2011).

2.9.1.4 Using enquiry and soliciting advice and opinions

Principals must be motivated to carry out their duties in an efficient manner. According to Blasé and Blasé (1999), praising principals raises their motivation, sense of self, and level of performance. Teachers are encouraged and it demonstrates the principal's trust in them when they are asked for guidance. When it comes to instructional matters, effective principals constantly seek the advice of their teachers, utilising an inquiry-based approach with them. When their principal interacts with them and asks for their advice, teachers feel inspired. Most principals simply tell their teachers what to do by pointing them to policy; they don't use inquiry or ask for suggestions from them. The principal and teacher don't have a conversation in which they talk about issues related to instruction. Some principals lack a strong concept of instructional leadership and programme management, according to Kalman and Mustafa (2016) and Manaseh (2016). In order to enhance teacher effectiveness and learner results, this requires principals to modify their attitudes and beliefs about teachers and to implement an effective communication plan.

2.9.1.5. Giving praise

When principals provide feedback to teachers, they ought to acknowledge the teachers' accomplishments in a particular area while still being constructive in their approach. Praise has a beneficial impact on teachers that includes, but is not limited to, enhancing specific teaching behaviours, bolstering creative teaching approaches, and improving focused teaching behaviours. According to Blasé and Blasé's (1999) experimental study, teachers use talking strategies as a way to increase their self-esteem and become more motivated to work more efficiently. The principal's commendation incentivises teachers to explore novel pedagogical approaches, as it acknowledges their outstanding performance. When monitoring classroom principals, Andrews and Smith (1989) claim that a principal's presence is felt in both formal and informal communication because the principal gives verbal and written

appreciation. Particularly in underperforming primary schools, this strategy can be beneficial in township and rural schools.

According to Kruger and Van Deventer (2003), leaders may improve teaching and learning in specific ways that are appropriate for the South African setting. These strategies include:

• Clearly stating and communicating the purpose, goals, and objectives: This section supports the notion that the goal, objective, and mission should be developed in conjunction with the staff to accomplish effective educational activities. This can help teachers understand what is expected of them. It enables children to provide input on things that are happening in the school.

• Overseeing the curriculum and instruction: Effective learning and instruction depend on preparation. The principal is in charge of making sure that education and learning never stop. Principals need to support the curriculum and provide the resources teachers need for them to do their jobs effectively.

• Teaching supervision: This component encourages principals to assist teachers to enable them to carry out their responsibilities efficiently. It is the principal's duty to see to it that principals get the direction and assistance they need to teach learners successfully. This part is less concerned with performance review and more with staff development.

• Tracking learner progress: Keeping track of and assessing the progress of learners is crucial to determine if they are making progress or whether they require an intervention plan. If the learners' progress is tracked, it becomes simple to determine which areas want development. Principals utilise the diagnostic tool to analyse data and create intervention plans for both themselves and their learners. In order to assist the areas that require attention, this component demands the administrator to keep an eye on the growth of the learners. Principals could identify teachers and classrooms that need more support by using the information gleaned from the examination of learners' performance, according to Naidoo and Mestry (2019).

• Encouraging the instructional climate: A conducive atmosphere that makes both teachers and learners feel at ease is necessary for good teaching and learning. In order to accomplish this, principals must foster a supportive learning environment

in their schools. Mestry (2017) emphasises the principal's responsibility in enhancing best practices in instruction among the teaching staff, which could start conditions that are conducive to teaching and learning and inspire both principals and learners. Additionally, he emphasises that the principal's job is to support the creation of a welcoming school environment and efficient resource management. To ensure that learning is not challenging, they should establish a setting where learning is made attractive, where principals and learners are supported, and where there is a common goal. A principal's instructional leadership is more likely to positively affect learners' academic achievement when the principal prioritises the quality of learning, teaching, and teacher development (Hou, Cui, & Zhang, 2019).

2.10. Findings from International and South African Empirical Studies

2.10.1. International

A research by Andrews and Smith (1989) examined how much time principals actually spend at work in the United States of America (USA). According to their research, principals of high schools and intermediate schools work longer hours than principals of primary schools. As the data breaks down, it becomes clear that principals use their extra time at work to manage learners and the curriculum. This tells us something about principals of primary schools. In our situation, principals of primary schools receive less resources than those of high schools because of the emphasis placed on matriculating learners. In contrast, Gupton's (2004) study, which included 500 Illinois principals in the USA, identified the following behavioural patterns as being extremely important to success in the role of principal:

"The tasks involve building an internal communication structure, conducting interviews applicants for positions as teachers, following to required educational initiatives, describing an orderly and secure atmosphere, keeping beneficial connections with others, creating and upholding a vision, mission, and objectives, setting high expectations for teachers, and creating a strategy for improvement for the institution (Gupton, 2004, p.2).

In reference to the behavioural structure proposed by principals in Illinois, leadership in education has been conceived in a way that is specific to the roles that are assigned to it. Therefore, it is a link that focuses on the South African context rather than revealing the reasons why learners in our nation perform below average when evaluated using international standards. There is a flaw in the process whereby instructional leaders are not recognised for their achievements as noteworthy principals.

Another important finding by Andrews and Smith (1989) came from principals' responses to the following questions: Why do school principals attach priority to specific elements of their jobs? Moreover, why do they believe that being instructional leaders is difficult for them? As a result of the aforementioned, the following sources were cited, explaining the obstacles that stand in the way of instructional leadership—that is, the portion of their work that is impeded by the school's organisational context, professional standards, and the principal's deficiency of abilities in relation to district expectations. To create an exponential rise in the number of skilled and strong leaders in education, Hallinger and Murphy (1987) proposed moving these similar obstacles.

Three unifying facets towards active Instructional Leadership conduct are proposed by Blasé and Blasé (1999, p 1) in response to a study conducted in America on "how outstanding principals promote teaching and learning" communicating with teachers, 2) supporting teachers' professional development, and 3) encouraging teacher introspection. Six themes emerged from a study done in the USA by Southworth (2002) with ten principals of schools: 1 working hard; 2 commitments; 3 positive attitudes; 4 approach abilities; 5 teamwork; and 6 school promoters. This evidence developed because of small-scale, in-school study. It is noteworthy that Southworth (2002) conducted study on this topic using data from both major and minor schools.
According to Agunloye (2011), ineffective leadership results from a lack of a defined goal, intentional guidance, and quantifiable instructional initiatives. He goes on to argue that it shows itself in the leadership, who lacks understanding of the school's background, its environment, the demands it has, and other general information. This

is often associated with the ability, aptitude, and disposition of the school's leadership group, particularly the principal (DBE, 2018).

2.10.2. South Africa

The following conclusions drawn by Hoadley (2012) are a direct reflection of the teaching and learning environment found in South Africa's primary schools: there was an apparent low demand for cognition, oral discourse predominated, chorusing in interactions followed a celebrated pattern, delivery and feedback paced to accommodate the slowest learner, and print material was conspicuously lacking. In a similar vein, Hoadley (2012) reported that slow tempo was still bad for syllabus exposure. Alongside this catastrophe, the degradation of contact lessons—whether through official or oppositional activities—was also brought to light. As a result of the situation, there will probably be less curriculum coverage. This ultimately causes harm since learners will then be assessed under the presumption that instructions regarding Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs) have been followed and thoroughly covered. Principals aren't challenging or bringing attention to the significant issues facing instructional leadership, therefore the status quo is still in place. In the end, if this continues, there will be ramifications for the pass rate as well as a downward spiral in overall discontent.

The principal's advice on educational outcomes is seen by Hallinger and Heck (1998) as affecting the process of establishing its visions, missions, and objectives. It implies, implicitly, that principals must create an environment in which the possibility of instruction and learning creates a kind of containment within the school's façade, allowing it to create an expectation-setting atmosphere.

Before asking principals to assume the position of leader in education, they should make sure they meet the standards outlined by Hallinger and Murphy (1987), viz., 1 The district makes the decisions, which restricts principals' capacity to carry out their responsibilities as instructional leaders. 2 Principals are capable of putting into practice the observable behaviours and activities that instructional leadership defines. 3 Principals may utilise the information derived from the evaluation

method—which must be authentic and dependable—for their own professional growth. According to Jenkins (2009), principals must set aside bureaucratic responsibilities and concentrate their energies on enhancing teaching and learning if they are to take the job of instructional leader seriously.

In the South African context, principals struggle to understand their responsibilities and how to move forward with their daily tasks considering the incredibly complex policies and manuals governing school operations. This is all part of a larger conspiracy that is supported by those in higher positions who have little to no experience as principals. Policies such as the South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 and the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) 27 of 1996, among others, impose various obligations on principals, some of which hinder their ability to facilitate efficient teaching. According to literature, principals' daily work routines have not changed significantly to accommodate more time for instruction despite increased accountability; pressure to manage school budgets and facilities has persisted despite the need for more instructional leadership (Bottery, 2016). Furthermore, in this situation, proper support frequently becomes an impediment, burdening the principal with an intolerable workload. Consequently, bringing about or even implementing change in this area is sometimes an "Achilles heel."

Many leadership studies conducted in South Africa indicate that most principals lack adequate professional training, particularly in instructional leadership, and that this is the direct cause of the underperformance of most South African schools. According to Naidoo and Mestry (2019), most South African principals have not received sufficient training to develop their management and leadership abilities, skills, and competencies to have an impact on many schools. Since they lack the necessary abilities to support successful teaching and learning, principals, as the leaders of the school, are unable to assist their principals in raising learner performance.

According to Aldridge and Fraser (2016), a positive school climate encourages positive attitudes among teachers for improved instruction, hence it is crucial for school principals to improve aspects of the school climate that impact school performance. To enhance learner achievement in their respective schools, principals

must possess the knowledge and skills that are in line with their areas of specialisation.

It is more challenging to apply the leadership style with efficacy and complete excellence in the South African context of education, because of the constraints associated with the subject matter. Because inexperienced school principals fail to provide support when and where it is needed, teachers are left to rely on their subordinates, who are inexperienced in the areas assigned to them, and who focus primarily on administrative tasks, which undermines their capacity to lead effectively. The Department of Education believes that by providing principals with knowledge, they will be more empowered to find creative solutions that will enhance their skill set and increase their effectiveness in applying instructional leadership to the betterment of their schools from all angles.

The literature piece's synopsis illustrates the need expressed by relevant stakeholders and subordinates for school principals to possess knowledge that can be transferred to strengthen the network of knowledge and competence within the school, so that stakeholders can accomplish their tasks with complete proficiency and efficiency, in addition to the principal. The application of instructional leadership has not been sufficiently realised in South Africa overall, and given the demographics of the nation, it appears to be an enormous undertaking to realise it from the ground up without the aid of new recruits and an educational perspective. But from a practical standpoint outside of South Africa, instructional leadership has been established over a longer period of time and is, as a result, ingrained in the leadership motto that is employed by international schools. Thus, looking back, S.A. has an increasing amount of literary publications, and information about this subject is becoming very accessible.

According to Bush (2013), instructional leadership necessitates that leaders make teaching and learning their top priority every day. As mentioned by Bush and Oduro (2006), I also concur and support the claim that strong leadership and successful schools are closely related (Bush & Glover, 2003). In order to sustain favourable outcomes, I recommend that all school principals implement instructional leadership

in their institutions. This is because instructional leadership fosters an environment that makes it possible for teachers and learners to collaborate effectively during instruction. According to this body of research, principals are essential to the success of any school.

2.11. Conclusion

In this chapter, I've looked at studies examining techniques that describe how leadership in education is implemented both locally and abroad. After reviewing the evidence, I suggest that the combination of dispersed management and instructional management would be an effective way to boost academic expectations and increase learner achievement in our schools. This section aims to discuss the conceptual and theoretical frameworks that I used as a lens with which to look at how principals of primary schools in the Gauteng South district may act as teachers to raise their pupils' performance in school.

CHAPTER THREE
THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORKS

3.1. Introduction

In order to showcase the information that researchers in the subject have produced, the preceding chapter evaluated the literature. This part presents and discusses the instructional leadership framework that will serve as my guide as I examine, analyse, and clarify the principals' instructional leadership methods.

Choosing and positioning the study into the theoretical and conceptual frameworks

According to Imenda (2014), it is essential for any researcher to determine and explain how a suitable theoretical or conceptual framework fit into his or her field of study. Imenda (2014) emphasises that a framework is utilised in research as a tool to help the investigator focus their data search and assess how the results relate to the framework. In addition to determining if the results corroborate or contradict the framework, the researcher also determines whether the results can be explained by the framework. It directs the researcher in providing context for each phase and associated study component. It serves as a roadmap for comprehending what is seen and helps in making defensible decisions considering those observations (Imenda, 2014).

Imenda (2014) makes more distinctions between conceptual and theoretical frameworks. According to her explanation, a theoretical framework is the use of a theory, or a collection of ideas derived from a single theory, to provide insight into a specific phenomenon or research issue, or to provide an explanation for an event. However, she goes on to say that a conceptual framework is the outcome of combining several related concepts to provide a more comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon of interest or to explain or forecast a specific event. I also need to select and determine which theoretical or conceptual framework is best for my research using these conceptualisations of frameworks.

I decided to use Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership model and Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) model for this study. The study's selected theoretical and conceptual frameworks offer a preferred method for examining how principals at Johannesburg South District Primary Schools might serve as instructional leaders to improve learners' academic achievement. They serve as a road map to give my empirical investigation clarity and help the reader see how I intellectually anchored my methodology. The frameworks will assist in identifying the strategies that principals of primary schools might use to raise learner academic achievement. Below, I go over these frameworks, emphasising their creation, assertions, and study application.

3.2. Conceptual framework

When many related ideas are combined to predict or explain a particular occurrence or to give a more thorough grasp of the subject being studied, the result is a conceptual framework (Imenda, 2014). For this inquiry, I have chosen to employ the Principal Instructional Administration Rating Scale (PIMRS) paradigm, which was created by Hallinger and Murphy in 1985. This framework offers a recommended method for investigating how principals at Johannesburg South District primary schools might serve as instructional leaders to enhance learners' academic performance. I was able to identify strategies that primary school principals might use to raise learner academic achievement thanks to the framework.

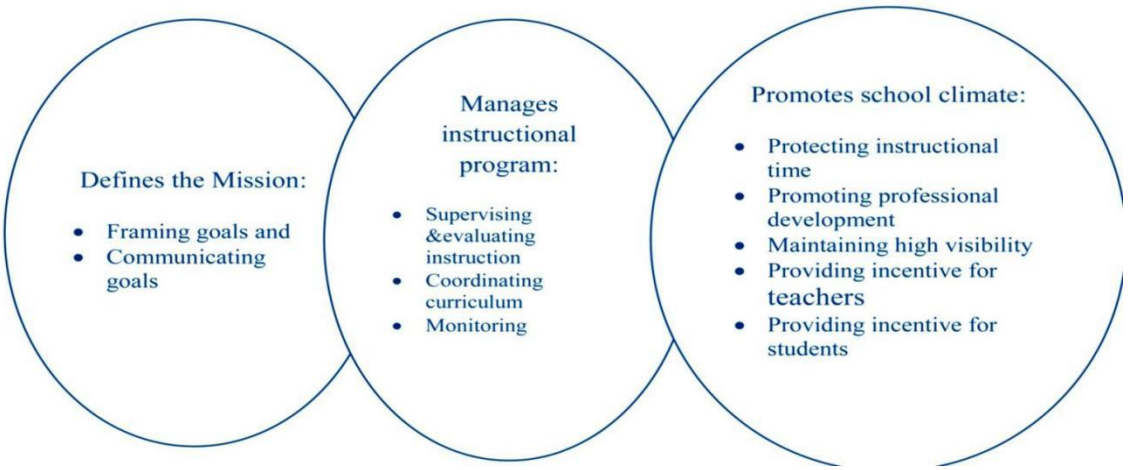
Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) model

The study aims to provide further insight into the use of the instructional management paradigm developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) by principals in primary schools within a township school division. The reason I chose the approach developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) is that it provides township principals of schools with strategies for raising learner success. The strategies used by resilient school leaders to run successful institutions provide the conceptual foundation for my

study. The PIMRS approach, created by Hallinger and Murphy, provides principals at educational institutions with techniques to think about when addressing difficulties related to learning and instruction. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) presented a three-pronged approach to the role of a headmaster in educational leadership, which had three elements: establishing the purpose and mission of the school, overseeing educational initiatives, and cultivating a pleasant school environment. As a result, I recommended that principals at schools experiencing issues with educational instruction utilise a modified version of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) model developed by Hallinger and Murphy.

Hallinger and Murphy's model conceptualisation of instructional management is illustrated in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: PIMRS



Hallinger, and Murphy, (1985).

Defining the school vision and mission

Every organisation needs a mission statement because it outlines the specific goals and objectives of that organisation. As a result, it is the duty of the school leader to clearly state the mission of the institution so that everyone is aware of it. Establishing measurable, attainable academic goals for the school is one of the things that aids the principal in fulfilling the aim of the establishment (Dwiyono, 2022). This dimension covers two tasks, such articulating and expressing the school's objectives. In order to ensure learner achievement, principals play a crucial role in framing school goals and creating a clear mission. Through this role, principals identify the areas

of emphasis in the school where staff members must concentrate their attention, energy, and resources (Hallinger, 2018). In her capacity as an educational leader, the principal must also communicate these objectives to ensure that the entire school community is aware of and supportive of them. The school's efficiency and learner accomplishment will both increase if the principal sets clear objectives and shares them with the personnel.

Managing curriculum and instructional programme

The administration and regulation of the curriculum and instruction are the main topics of the instructional program. This dimension includes three leadership duties, such as monitoring and assessing learner progress, directing instruction, and coordinating the curriculum, according to Hallinger and Murphy (1985). Hallinger and Murphy (1985) defined managing the educational programme component as working directly with teachers on curricular and instruction-related issues. According to Sebastian, Allensworth, and Huang (2016), school principals should supervise continuing education, guarantee program continuity, and engage teachers in improving the learning atmosphere of their schools. This will help principals determine what needs to be altered in the school's curriculum to improve the achievement of learners.

Managing the school's curriculum or instructional program is directly related to the principal's position in instructional leadership. To improve learner accomplishment, the principal's main duty is to make sure that effective teaching and learning occur. According to Ahmed (2016), principals' instructional leadership strategies have a direct bearing on setting up the ideal environment for learning and teaching. As an educational leader, the principal should be familiar with the curriculum and instructions, oversee and assess the learners' progress, and be able to pinpoint areas that require additional support.

According to Daresh (2007), the curriculum is "what" teachers and schools decide to do when they interact with learners. As an instructional leader in curriculum management, the principal should facilitate intentional interactions between learners and the knowledge and skills they are supposed to master. As a leader in

education, the principal has a responsibility to facilitate this contact as efficiently and effectively as feasible.

Promoting a positive school learning climate

Effective teaching and learning necessitate a supportive atmosphere that gives teachers the confidence to carry out their duties. By promoting a positive educational climate, the head of the school may influence the social order and create an atmosphere that supports teaching and learning. Protecting instruction time and promoting professional growth are the main steps in creating a pleasant school learning environment, keep a high profile, give teachers incentives, create and uphold academic standards, and give learning incentives (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). Because instructional leadership places a strong emphasis on teaching instruction and learner learning—two essential components of fostering learner academic achievement—protecting instructional time is one of its responsibilities, and it has a significant impact on how well learners learn (Shaked & Benoliel, 2019). By safeguarding instructional time, encouraging professional growth, keeping a high profile, and offering rewards to both teachers and learners, a successful instructional leader may foster a pleasant learning environment in the classroom. The quality of instruction in schools and learner accomplishment are significantly impacted by the principal's incentive program policies (Mbiti, Muralitharan, Romero, Schipper, Manda, & Rajani, 2019).

Mullen (2007, p. 100) contends that while a principal can influence the existing climate in the school, they are unable to establish a completely new one. The principal must be aware of the school's past and present to change the school's atmosphere. Subsequently, the principal ought to ascertain the core principles of the institution and pinpoint its strong and weak points. The principal will then be in a position to highlight the positive features and deal with the drawbacks.

3.3. Theoretical framework

According to Vithal and Jansen (2010), "a strong, coherent account for an occurrence" is what constitutes a theory or conceptual structure. I decided to use

Spillane's (2006) distributed leadership theory for my research. This framework offers a recommended method for investigating how principals at Johannesburg South District primary schools might serve as instructional leaders to enhance learners' academic performance. I was able to identify strategies that primary school principals might use to raise learner academic achievement thanks to the framework.

Distributed leadership theory

The concept of dispersed management has acquired traction in research on leadership in education (Harris, 2010; Spillane, 2006). As per Hallinger (2018, p. 13), an exhaustive discourse on leadership in schools must consider "not only the procedures and consequences of management, but additionally the foundations of leadership." Thus, the effectiveness of the educational institution may suffer if the principal is the only person who provides direction (Southworth, 2002; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2012). Stated in various ways, teachers should take ownership of the procedure and share leadership. Furthermore, Fullan (2009) contends that since improving learner achievement is the ultimate aim, the concept of long-term improvement offers a compelling defence for decentralised leadership in schools.

The fundamental goal of distributed management is to demolish the idea of the "hero leader," which is perceived unfavourably for businesses because it places too much emphasis on one person. Fullan, Cuttress, and Kilcher (2009) assert that an effective principal is exemplified by a cohort of prospective principals who have autonomy and have a positive impact on children' performance in school. Therefore, it is ideal for teachers to collaborate in a dispersed position of leadership with school principals, deputy principals, teachers, and DHs.

A dispersed theory of leadership consists of many different characteristics. It recognises the existence of several leaders as opposed to just one (Harris, 2010; Spillane, 2006). Harris (2010) asserts that managerial duties are shared widely both inside and across companies, and that each person's contribution is respected (Fullan, 2009). A scattered strategy prioritises connections above the actions of leaders and takes into account formal as well as informal leadership roles. Its primary focus revolves around the behaviours of leaders and how management influences organisational and educational progress (Spillane, 2006). Furthermore, Harris (2010)

contends that structure reconfiguring requires distributed leadership since it demands a flatter, laterally approach to decision-making. Stated differently, there are a lot of individuals involved.

Because it enables us to examine "how" and "why" school leaders operate in a certain way in alongside "what" they do, I employ Spillane's (2006) dispersed view on leadership (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Spillane's (2006) distributed management paradigm may be examined using the leader-plus element and the management practice aspect.

Second, the focus of the leadership practices element is on how leaders, followers, and their surroundings connect about specific tasks related to leadership (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). To be clear, I examined each of the three sections separately. Usually, when we contemplate management, we think of the deeds or behaviours of particular leadership. When we choose a scattered perspective, we are taught to view management as relationships among leaders as well as following. The next paragraph addresses the context element.

Interactions between individuals and the context are closely intertwined. According to Spillane and Diamond (2007, p. 6), practice is the "actual doing of management in particular places and times". This perspective is based on the distributed cognition as well as activity theory. The basic tenet is that social context influences both mental and behavioural processes (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). Thus, context determines and both impacts leadership behaviours. Considering this, context has the power to support or undermine leadership. The third component is the way leaders and followers engage when faced with specific responsibilities (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). The leadership tasks are related to learning and education since my focus is the instructional leadership strategies used by school principals. Thus, educational management techniques should address the link between leadership in instruction and learning. The involvement of teachers, deputy principals, DHs, and the educational institution in the management practice aspect are the three mentioned earlier components.

Spillane's (2006) scattered theory of leadership is relevant to this study since school growth should be achieved through the dispersion of educational leadership strategies among a school's personnel composition.

This section highlighted the fundamental ideas of the study. The next conceptual frameworks to be discussed and examined were the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) model created by Hallinger, a Murphy, and Spillane's (2006) dispersed leadership theory.

3.4. Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, I can say that instructional leadership is the actions and attitudes of principals who make every effort to connect with teachers and learners in a clear and understandable way so that the latter's performance can improve. It is obvious that principals should organise, make an effort to influence, offer direction, and support teachers and learners to develop and improve teaching and learning initiatives. This involves making sure that initiatives to improve education are implemented successfully. The conversation above demonstrates how, when used skillfully, instructional leadership and distributed leadership can enhance learners' academic success. These frameworks appear to be thorough and provide a clear picture of the leadership in education strategies that schools must implement to raise learner academic achievement. The study's methodology and research design will be covered in detail in the next section.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1. Introduction

I introduced and covered the theories and models that offered the basis for this study in the preceding chapter. This chapter explains the research strategy and methodology I used for this qualitative case study, which examines how the principal of the school can act as an instructional leader to raise learner achievement in primary school. I start by stating and outlining the paradigmatic positions taken on the nature of reality (ontology), the knower-knower connection (epistemology), and methodological presumptions (Neuman, 2011). After that, I outline my research strategy and methodology, including the steps I'll take to collect and process data to help me find answers to the study questions. I describe the study site and the sampling strategy I will employ to illustrate how my study's research design came to be. After that, I'll discuss access concerns and then go over the data production process. There will be a discussion of each method's justification. Finally, I will go over the study's shortcomings as well as the difficulties of reliability and ethical considerations.

4.2. Research paradigm

Maree (2011, p. 47) describes a framework as "a set of beliefs or beliefs regarding the basic components of reality that give rise to a specific worldview." This suggests that every researcher is going to approach their work with an overabundance of related—and occasionally incongruous—philosophical presuppositions and viewpoints.

The first stage in the research design procedure, according to Creswell (2012), is the theoretical presumptions that investigators adopt before deciding to perform a study. This implies that researchers start their work with preconceived notions and worldviews that colour the way the investigation is carried out and reported. Creswell (2012) states that while identifying one's paradigmatic viewpoint as a researcher, the relationship between metaphysical and epistemic assumptions, meta-theoretical underpinnings, research issues, and study methods become evident.

The investigator's ontological views center on the nature of reality, and they are explored through the investigator's answers to questions about what constitutes the world's basic terms, including social events; whether actuality is orderly or legitimate; whether or not a natural social order exists; whether or not reality is unified or diverse; and how much actuality is stable or ever-changing (Creswell, 2012). The epistemological views of the researcher concern how one might know the investigator's connection to the subject of the inquiry.

The focus of research is on our perceptions of the world and the actions we take to comprehend it. It relates to our conception of the world and how we perceive it to be constructed (ontology), which influences our belief that we can know the universe.

One's technique and perspective on the world (epistemology) shape what they can observe. I concur that research aims to comprehend the world, and that my observations of it inform this understanding (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 3).

I employed an interpretive paradigm in this investigation. Within the field of sociology of regulation, an interpretive paradigm seeks to comprehend the world from the perspective of the individual. This paradigm holds that scientists observe processes to understand human behavior and the esoteric character of the cosmos (Burrel & Morgan, 2005). This viewpoint affected my approach choice. The qualitative method is, in my opinion, suitable for this sort of study. In this study, I applied the social the concept of constructivism (interpretive) paradigm, which employs inductive analysis and qualitative methods for study (Maree, 2011).

According to my perspective, this paradigm made it easier for me to comprehend the various realities regarding the world (ontology) that I heard and saw from various people in the research setting. As a result, the researcher must interact with the researched to create a single reality (epistemology), thereby closing the gap between the investigator and the researched.

I selected social constructivism because it enables researchers to create subjective interpretations of their experiences that are focused on certain items or things to gain a knowledge of the environment where they live and work. The goal of social constructivism study is to make sense of the interpretations that people have of the world (Creswell, 2012).

4.3. Research Methodology

Schwardt (2007, p. 195) defines research technique as an idea of how an inquiry should be carried out. It involves breaking down the fundamental assumptions, rules, and procedures of a certain investigation process. Therefore, rather than focusing just on the final product, it is evident that the study's methodology's purpose is to help both the audience and the investigator better comprehend the scientific inquiry process (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 49). According to Schwardt (2007), techniques offer insight into the types of challenges that are worthwhile researching, what constitutes feasible theories, how to organise a problem so that it can be investigated using specific approaches and processes, and how to select and develop appropriate methods for gathering data.

4.3.1. Qualitative research methodology

Denzin and Lincoln (2012) define qualitative study as an action that situates the person who observes in the world. In order to arrive at a sense of or understand events in light of the meaning people assign to them, qualitative investigators study phenomena in their natural settings. This is a natural interpretation of the universe.

Qualitative approaches include observing participants, personal observation, document review and evaluation, and unorganised, open-ended conversations. These methods are meant to help investigators comprehend how individuals interpret social situations and to make sense of the mental processes that underpin behaviors. The benefit of qualitative methods, according to Weinreich (2009), is their capacity to provide rich, comprehensive data while preserving the viewpoint of the participants and providing a context for the event being studied. The qualitative approach of data collection has the potential to be labor-intensive and time-consuming.

4.3.2. Qualitative approach

In this study, a qualitative research approach was applied. I collected data in person by interacting with a selected sample of participants in their natural settings, as confirmed by McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 315). (e.g., conducting

interviews). I personally visited selected schools to collect data and interact with selected respondents to understand their real-life situations. In my study the collected data was presented in the form of words. Qualitative study relies on word-based data, and descriptions are used by investigators to communicate data (McMillan & Schumacher 2010, p. 315).

Understanding social phenomena and the meanings that individuals ascribe to daily life is the primary goal of a qualitative approach, which is idiographic and hence holistic in nature. It originates from an anti-positivistic, interpretative perspective (McMillan & Schumacher 2010, p. 79). My goal was to comprehend human phenomena and look into the significance of respondents' contributions to learner achievement-related occurrences. The goal of qualitative research is to comprehend individuals through their own interpretation of reality (McMillan & Schumacher 2010, p. 130).

Instead of focusing on a big number of participants in a quantitative technique, I opted for a small number of participants using a qualitative approach. Thus, four teachers, four deputy principals, four DHs, and four principals were the main subjects of attention.

4.4. Research design

A research design can be defined as a collection of rules and directives that the investigator must adhere to when tackling the study challenge. This includes the purpose of the study, the choice and layout of the specific research methodology, the participant selection process, and the assessment of the study's credibility and generalisability, according to Mouton (1996, p. 107). Because of this, the reader must understand the research design, including how, when, for whom, and under what circumstances the data are collected in schools (McMillan & Schumacher 2010, p. 30-31).

For this study, a qualitative research design was selected. This method is helpful because it helps the researcher comprehend people's attitudes, behaviours, perceptions, and opinions (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). By gathering data from key participants based on their individual points of view, I hope to gain a deeper

understanding of the principal's function as an instructional leader in enhancing learner performance in a subset of primary schools in the Johannesburg South District (Bless, Smith & Sithole, 2013, p. 16). This will be accomplished using a qualitative research design. The approach taken would depend on the study challenge and questions (Bloomberg & Volpe 2014, p. 30). Research designs provide distinctive means of gathering information on individuals and societal phenomena (Abbott & McKinney, 2013, p. 35).

4.4.1. The qualitative research design

Qualitative research is "a set of interpretive, tangible methods that make the world visible," according to Denzin and Lincoln (2012, p. 6-7). With these techniques, the actual world is reduced to a repository of representations, including conversations, field notes, memos, recordings, and images. This level of qualitative inquiry adopts an interpretative, naturalistic perspective on the world. Considering this, qualitative investigators look at occurrences in their natural settings and attempt to comprehend things in terms of the meanings that people give them.

I chose to employ the method of qualitative study because it would help me understand the principal's role as an instructional leader in raising learner achievement in primary schools. For my studies, I employed a case study technique.

4.4.2. A case study

Under the qualitative framework, the subject of the study is a wide topic that may be considered both the method of study and its result (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2011, p. 275). A case study is definitely primarily concerned with the qualitative method (Edmonds & Kennedy 2013, p. 113). The definition of a case investigation according to Edmonds and Kennedy (2013) is "the comprehensive examination of a few examples of an event in its actual life setting that reflects the viewpoint of those who are involved in the phenomena" (p. 114).

In order to define the parameters of the study and determine the causes of the phenomenon in the context, I employed the descriptive case study. My goal was to gain a comprehensive understanding of how principals, acting as instructional leaders, can enhance learner performance in primary schools by creating a unique, natural environment. My attention was drawn to the examination and depiction of the research subjects. Because of this, I was able to analyse the case study in real time without attempting to extrapolate the results to different groups or situations. In the framework of its genuine circumstances, the descriptive case study attempts to offer a thorough comprehension of a current subject of study (Biggam 2011, p. 141).

Through a case study, I was able to examine principals' roles as instructional leaders in enhancing learner performance in primary schools from several perspectives and to focus on various aspects of the strategies they employed. This made it possible for me to interview teachers, DHs, principals, and deputy principals to gather comprehensive information. In an effort to analyse the different occurrences that represent the unit's life cycle, I employed the interview approach to delve extensively (Biggam 2011, p. 140). In order to draw reliable findings, this assisted me in developing a comprehensive grasp of the study subject through the examination and interpretation of the multidimensional data obtained throughout the investigation.

4.5. Research Population/Sampling

I chose the sample for this study using the research design, study issue, and research questions as a guide. Sampling is "the process used for choosing a portion of the population for study," according to Maree (2007, p. 79). There are two main categories of sampling techniques. While non-probability sampling only claims to represent a certain group, probability sampling uses a sample that is comparable to the entire population (Cohen, et al., 2011).

This study used a sort of non-probability sampling called purposeful sampling to get pertinent information from the group of participants with expertise. The researcher utilises intentional sampling, in which the sample is selected based on the experience of the group to be sampled, to get the appropriate data for that particular study. "This method of sampling is used in special situations where sampling is performed with a

specific objective in mind, such as whenever the investigation pertains to married women's views toward abortion among the ages of 21 and 30" (Maree, 2007, p 178). Four schools were utilised as a sample in this investigation. The educational institutions in the district were divided into four groups: four principals (one from each school), four assistant principals (one from each school), four DHs (one from each school), and four teachers (one from each school). The district was chosen based on convenience to where I live and work (Creswell, 2012). All these stakeholders were suitable participants as the research concerned with the role of the principals as instructional leaders in improving learner performance in schools. They were picked due to their expertise in teaching.

Four public primary schools with strong performance over the previous three years were purposefully chosen for this study. The system that the schools use to keep track of their performance is called South African School Administration Management System (SASAMS). After examining the Johannesburg South District's schools' performance, I selected four that were doing particularly well. These schools were selected for convenience whilst keeping in mind that they all should have principals who are hands-on in many school activities that aimed at enhancing teaching and learning in these schools. Convenience sampling is defined by Bertram and Christiansen (2014) as the researcher's decision to select a sample that is convenient for them to obtain. The individual interviews included all the sampled schools' principals. According to my research, teachers were the next in line of communication after deputy principals and DHs, then principals.

I utilised snowballing sampling to obtain one teacher, one deputy principal, and one DH from each school. Snowballing is a useful sampling technique in qualitative research, according to Cohen et al. (2011). It involves using informants or other people to link investigators with other persons who meet the criteria for inclusion, who then identify other people. To reach people, the researcher depends on the participants' personal connections and social networks (Noy, 2008). By doing this, individuals take on the role of gatekeepers for other participants and manage who else is included in the study.

Since this group of participants—deputy principals, DHs, and teachers—was difficult for me to get to, snowballing was selected and judged appropriate for this study

(Cohen, et al., 2011). Through the principals, I was able to enter the schools, and I depended on them to find and enlist potential volunteers who would be willing and knowledgeable enough to take part in this study. For me, this was the most practical and straightforward way to obtain the participants.

I studied the strategies used by prosperous township school principals to improve learner performance even in the face of difficult obstacles. Using this sampling technique made it easier for me to identify the performance-enhancing strategies these schools employ. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), techniques aid in the justification of decisions made by researchers on the methodologies employed for sampling. Therefore, the sampling strategies used can be used to measure the objectivity of views presented by researchers or participants.

A letter authorising study at these schools was received by the Gauteng Department of Education in the Johannesburg South District. When I was given authorisation to conduct the research, I made sure to clearly explain the purpose of the study and any ethical implications to the participants. After that, the principals and principals signed permission papers certifying that they were not coerced into taking part in the study as well as that they understood all the researcher's requirements.

I conducted interviews as part of this study. As a result, one department head, one teacher, the principal, and the academic deputy principal of each school were interviewed.

4.6. School profiles

4.6.1. Profiling the four schools

Scholars like Yin (2003) refer to the four schools as case study sites, and each of them created the data that is given and debated in this study. To provide an improved comprehension of the schools' contextual backdrop, a profile of the four schools is presented in the first section.

Fruit Primary School

In 1992, Fruit Primary was founded. The school is around 41 kilometres from Johannesburg and situated in the Orange Farm community. Its learners come from Orange Farm and the Evaton settlements that surround it. The school is surrounded by

informal settlements housing. Numerous socioeconomic issues, including poverty, violence, high unemployment, households led by single parents, exist in the surrounding area. Furthermore, the majority of families rely on societal assistance to survive.

There are 34 teachers and 1214 learners at Fruit Primary. One deputy principal and four departmental heads (DHs) are present. The ratio of teachers to learners is 1:42. With eleven years of expertise, the principal is a woman. Black learners make up all the learner body. The Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is English, even though Sesotho and IsiZulu are the home languages for the vast majority of learners. Quintile 3 is the school's classification, and it is a no-fee paying school. To augment its resources, the school launches multiple fundraising campaigns for this reason. The salaries of one cleaning staff member and two teachers employed by School Governing Body (SGB) are mostly covered by these monies. The government also provides a feeding scheme for the learners. The physical infrastructure of the school is relatively well maintained and there are 24 classrooms that are utilised. A contemporary library exists. In addition, the school offers extracurricular sports including netball and soccer. To further enhance the abilities of the learners, remedial reading and numeracy lessons are provided. The vision and mission statement of the Gauteng Department of Education, which was on display in the office and foyer, had been adopted by the school. The requirement of producing knowledgeable, competent, and well-developed citizens was emphasised in the school's vision statement. Its mission statement also sought to give the people it represented equitable access to high-quality education.

Vegetable Primary School

The Orange Farm community is home to Vegetable Primary School as well. In 1990, it was constructed. Black learners currently make up the whole learner body. There are 44 teachers and 1342 learners at Vegetable Primary. There are two deputy principals and five DHs. The ratio of teachers to learners is 1:45. For ten years, a male has served as the school's principal. The school is classified as Quintile 3 with the no-fee paying status. The physical infrastructure of the school is relatively well maintained and there are 26 classrooms that are utilised. The school features a state-

of-the-art library that serves learners' needs as well as a science lab that is non-functional. To satisfy the learners' physical and recreational demands, a variety of sports codes are provided. It has well maintained sports fields. Additional classes for English and Mathematics are offered to the learners with barriers.

A large banner in the foyer prominently showed the school's goal and mission. The commitment to provide modern academic instruction was emphasised in the vision statement. Learners were urged to pursue personal greatness to benefit their nation and community. Through the dedication of both community members and school personnel, the school hoped to accomplish this. Vegetable Primary also sought to offer the best possible atmosphere for teaching and learning. This would facilitate the learner's whole development on all levels, including social, emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual.

Shape Primary School

Orange Farm's core is home to Shape Primary School. It can hold learners in grades R through 7. It began operations in 1994. Black learners make up all the learner body. About 45 km separate the school from Johannesburg. Its learners come from Orange Farm as well as the nearby villages of Palm Springs and Evaton.

There are 31 teachers and 1141 learners at Shape Primary School. One deputy principal and four DHs are present. The ratio of teachers to learners is 1:42. A man has held the role of principal for eight years. English is the Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT). The school is classified as Quintile 3 with the no-fee paying status. The physical infrastructure of the school is relatively well maintained and there are 25 classrooms that are utilised. The school is tidy, and the gardens are well-kept. It has a scientific lab, a library, and the necessary computer centre with internet access. A wide variety of extracurricular activities, including chess, music chorus, athletics, and more, are available at the school. Learners in need of remediation are also enrolled in a remedial class. The improvement of reading techniques and literacy are the main concerns here.

The school's vision and mission statements were prominently displayed in the office and foyer, and they were well stated. The vision statement describes a welcoming

atmosphere where good instruction and learning will eventually produce law-abiding individuals. The mission statement also promotes the creation of pertinent policies, practices, and initiatives. Encouraging employees and offering a secure and wholesome work environment were the goals. Trust, respect, and human dignity would also be ingrained in the educational community.

Colour Primary School

Colour Primary School is situated in Orange Farm's township. It was founded in 1991. Black learners make up all the learner body. About 46 km separate the school from Johannesburg. The school's catchment region includes Palm Springs, Evaton, and Dreieziek.

There are 1203 learners at Colour Primary and 35 teachers working there. Two deputy principals and five HoDs are present. The ratio of teachers to learners is 1:43. The female principal is a seasoned professional in her role. The Language of Learning and Teaching (LoLT) is English. There are 26 classroom units in use at Colour Primary. To support teaching and learning, there is a state-of-the-art computer centre, library, and science laboratory. Needless to say, the buildings and facilities were in good condition. The school provides a wide range of extracurricular activities, including athletics, to support a child's overall development. Also, Colour Primary offers extra English and math sessions to learners in Grades 4 through 7.

The vision and mission statements of the Gauteng Department of Education, which were on display in the office and corridor, had been adopted by the school. The dedication to producing knowledgeable, competent, and highly educated citizens was emphasised in the school's vision statement. Furthermore, the mission statement pledged to offer every learner a public education that is both relevant and of the highest calibre. The school sought to accomplish this by placing a high priority on instruction and learning, helping teachers advance their careers, educating learners to be contributing members of society, and working with the local community to enhance the school.

4.6.2. Profiling the participants

The participant profiles from each of the four primary schools are summarised in this section. The racial and gender composition, age, professional background, and teaching experience of the principals, deputy principals, department heads, and teachers are all displayed in these profiles. We can gain a better grasp of the participants' professionalism thanks to their profiles. Following are the profiles of the four school principals, deputy principals, HDs, and teachers: Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Table 1: Principals' profile **Categories**	**Ms. Plum**	**Mr. Oval**	**Ms. Blue**	**Mr. Potato**
Race	African	African	African	African
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male
Age category	50 - 60 years	50 - 60 years	40 - 50 years	50 - 60 years
Professional qualifications	Advance Certificate in Education (ACE).	Higher Diploma in Education.	M.Ed. - Management.	ACE
Teaching experience	28 years	31 years	27 years	33 years
Experience as a principal	9 years	12 years	8 years	10 years

Table 2: Deputy Principals' profile **Categories**	**Ms. Apple**	**Mr. Square**	**Ms. Pink**	**Mr. Onion**
Race	African	African	African	African
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male
Age category	50 - 60 years	40 - 50 years	40 - 50 years	30 - 40 years
Professional qualifications	ACE	ACE	ACE	B.Ed. – Honours in Leadership and Management.
Teaching experience	25 years	22 years	20 years	18 years
Experience as a DP	7 years	9 years	6 years	4 years

Table 3: DHs' profile **Categories**	**Ms. Banana**	**Mr. Circle**	**Ms. Red**	**Mr. Garlic**
Race	African	African	African	African
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male
Age category	30 - 40 years	50 - 60 years	30 - 40 years	50 - 60 years
Professional qualifications	ACE	B.Ed.	ACE.	Higher Diploma in Education.
Teaching experience	12 years	21 years	9 years	27 years
Experience as a DH	5 years	8 years	3 years	11 years

Table 4: Teachers' profile **Categories**	**Ms. Pear**	**Mr. Kite**	**Ms. Green**	**Mr. Spinach**
Race	African	African	African	African
Gender	Female	Male	Male	Male
Age category	30 - 40 years	40 - 50 years	40 - 50 years	30 - 40 years
Professional qualifications	B.Ed.	ACE	B.Ed.	PGCE
Teaching experience	15 years	13 years	22 years	9 years

4.7. Data generation method

There are numerous methods available in qualitative research for gathering data. De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2005) provide a variety of methods for gathering data, including as questionnaires, observations, interviews, and reviews of documents and artifacts. Nonetheless, individual interviews were carried out for this investigation. The procedure of creating the data took five weeks to finish.

Open-ended questions were used in individual interviews to gather information about participant meanings, how they conceptualise the world, and how they explain significant life experiences. The participants' interviews took place on the school's grounds. It was at the time convenient to them and lasted for approximately 40-45 minutes. I recorded the interviews using a digital voice recorder since it made taking notes easier (Kvale, 2008). I was able to pay close attention to the interviewees'

comments and follow up with them thanks to the digital voice recorder. Recording the interviews was done so that "all nuances of the responses can be preserved and the richness of individual statements is not lost," according to Briggs, Coleman, and Morrison (2012, p. 262).

The principals' experiences, as articulated in their own words, as instructional leaders in enhancing the achievement of pupils in their schools were better understood thanks to the interviews held at these specific schools.

These interviews were facilitated in such a way that will make participants to feel comfortable. In order to give the participants the freedom to participate with no fear, sensitive questions were avoided. I made sure they understood why the research was being conducted and why their schools were being used. To ensure that the appropriate data was collected, open-ended questions were used in the interviews.

4.8. Data analysis

The process of organising, accounting for, and interpreting data is known as data analysis (Cohen, et al., 2011). Important textual elements are extracted and simplified to break down raw data. The researcher can then clearly derive inferences from this data by condensing and organising it into a more readable and compact form (Creswell, 2012). Content analysis is defined by Krippendorff (2013, p. 24) as "a method of inquiry to derive accurate and reliable conclusions about writings (or other significant matter) to the settings of their use". Creating categories, themes, and patterns pertaining to school principals' roles in instructional leadership is part of this process. The text was coded first. This indicates that the words, sentences, and phrases were categorised. To create a connection between these categories, a comparison was then made. I was able to deduce theoretical implications from the text thanks to this technique (Cohen, et al., 2011). Finally, I wrote up an explanation of the findings to address my research questions. Teachers, DHs, and deputy principals all went through the same procedure. This aided in my data interpretation and helped me explain a particular experience that caught my attention.

Triangulation

According to Denzin (2009), triangulation entails using a variety of outside methods for both data collection and analysis. Triangulation is crucial for guaranteeing the authenticity and trustworthiness of the data and findings, and its significance cannot be overstated. Denzin (2009) classified four types of triangulation for social research to improve objectivity, truth, and validity: (1) the investigator triangulation, which involves comparing the findings of multiple researchers in a study; (2) theory triangulation, which involves applying and comparing multiple theoretical strategies; and (3) methodological triangulation, which involves comparing data from numerous data collection methods; and (4) data triangulation, which involves comparing people, time, and space.

Researcher triangulation

Denzin (2009) asserts that multiple researchers are engaged in the phenomenon's investigation using researcher triangulation. According to Denzin (2009), this kind of triangulation involves the people closest to the data who have the best abilities rather than coders, graduate assistants, or data analysts. Additionally, Denzin (2009) contends that by taking into account the latter action, bias is lessened by several researchers who could disagree on how to interpret the same data. This kind of triangulation was used in this study.

Theory triangulation

According to Denzin (2009), one interprets the gathered data using conflicting hypotheses and a theoretical framework. In keeping with this, Denzin (2009) says that another way to look at a strategic approach is to enable the researcher speak to the raw data to: (1) come up with a new theory; (2) broaden a theoretical perspective; and (3) gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied. In this investigation, I also employed a similar kind of triangulation.

Methodological triangulation

According to Denzin (2009, p. 88), methodological triangulation can occur "between method" or "within method”. In relation to this assertion, Denzin (2009) asserts that methodological triangulation is commonly associated with the use of numerous data

sources, including focus groups, interviews, and observations included inside a single design. Conversely, Denzin (2009) contends that within-method triangulation would be appropriate in a qualitative case study or ethnography research, while between-method (or across-method) triangulation is appropriate when combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies. According to Denzin (2009), between-method triangulation is the best kind of triangulation since it offers two advantages. It first makes allowances for shortcomings. Second, to overcome each form of triangulation's shortcomings, the best of both must be used. However, Denzin (2009) contends that while the between technique offers a comprehensive comprehension of the phenomenon being studied, the study's validity is not always improved. In this investigation, I employed this kind of triangulation.

Data triangulation

Denzin (2009) claims that learners frequently conflate data triangulation with methodological triangulation when talking about triangulation. Researchers should consider what Denzin (2009) regards to as people, time, and space so as to avoid this mistake. Denzin (2009) asserts that data triangulation entails four characteristics in this regard. First, there is a relationship between the data points, which are persons, time, and geography (not the technique of generating data). Second, distinct data from the same occurrence are represented by each data point. Thirdly, similarities within disparate contexts are found through the utilisation of the data points. Fourthly, a certain time span—days, weeks, months, or years—is covered by the data points. In this study, I used this kind of triangulation.

4.9. Issues of trustworthiness

The worth of qualitative studies is determined by the level of confidence that can be placed in the study technique and findings. Bless, Smith, and Sithole (2013, p. 238) provide four criteria—credibility, trustworthiness, adaptability, as well as confirmability—that may be used to assess the reliability for qualitative investigations.

Credibility is the degree to which the study findings are demonstrated to be credible. It places more emphasis on the quality of the information obtained than the quantity. One can assess the veracity of the findings once the data has been gathered.

It was made clear to participants that there were no right or incorrect responses to the questions posed, and they were urged to be candid. It was encouraged for participants to speak up and share ideas without worrying about losing their credibility. Iterative questioning and data-gathering probes were included. Additionally, member-checking—in which transcripts, field notes, data analysis, and conclusions were given back to the participants for verification—improved credibility. According to Mutch (2005), member-checking enables participants to verify that the information they have provided is truthful and accurate and to alter any information they believe to be inaccurate to reassure readers that the study is legitimate and trustworthy.

The present study assured transferability by providing comprehensive details on the number of participating schools and their locations, the number of participants, the data generating method used, and the number and duration of data generation sessions. This was done so that readers may apply the findings to their own circumstances if they thought their circumstances were similar to the one this study detailed. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), qualitative investigators should provide enough details about the phenomenon for other investigators to use if they think the findings are acceptable for the current situation. The fact that each phase of the study process was thoroughly described guaranteed that these procedures were explained in detail. These explanations help to provide a clearer image of the research process and a better grasp of the setting.

Dependability tackles the basic issue that a study's technique ought to be true for different researchers, periods of time, and analytical philosophies. For an approach to be considered reliable, it must be as clear and reproducible as possible.

The operational details of data generation that addressed fieldwork were described, as was the research design and its implementation for this study. This was done to provide the research report's readers with a comprehensive grasp of the methodology and its efficacy.

The foundation of confirmability is the understanding that research is never objective. It tackles the fundamental problem that research findings should, to the greatest extent that is (humanly) possible, reflect the situation under investigation rather than the researcher's personal opinions, pet theories, or biases. I made sure the interviews in this study were appropriately formatted.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), the degree to which the researcher acknowledges their own biases is a crucial factor in confirmability. Several methods were employed to improve the findings' confirmability. For example, I performed member-checking to make sure I didn't impose my personal view of what was emerging from the discussions. In cases where there was miscommunication, each member would restate or clarify their perspective. As an additional strategy, I showed the participants the transcripts to ensure that what was written there accurately reflected the events that had place during the interviews.

4.10. Ethical issues

It is the duty of a researcher to keep his subjects safe. The rights and welfare of study participants, who may experience bodily or mental discomfort, harm, or danger, are the responsibility of the researcher, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 16). This implies that it is the duty of the researcher to guarantee that the intended research complies with appropriate standards and values and is ethically responsible. It is imperative to guarantee both the participants' safety and their rights. Considering this, I concentrated on three ethical precepts: beneficence, non-maleficence, and autonomy and informed consent (Cohen, et al., 2011).

In terms of ethics, I started by adhering to the principals of informed consent and autonomy. According to Cohen et al. (2011), "the participants can decide when to take part (or not) in the research and ensures that their exposure to risks takes place fully and freely" (p. 78) is what is meant by informed permission. I was given permission by the principals of the selected schools in Gauteng to conduct research at the schools that met these requirements, after requesting permission from the ministry of education in that province. I formally requested ethical approval from the University of the Witwatersrand Ethical Office as well, and I was granted permission

to proceed with the experiment. I was able to visit the schools once those who took part in the research filled out informed permission forms. Furthermore, subjects were informed of the purpose of the study and allowed to withdraw at any time (De Vos, et al., 2005). In the end, individuals were assigned pseudonyms and schools were made anonymous.

I have made sure that there were no study questions or components that might put participants in danger. According to Cohen et al. (2011), the subjects suffered no harm in this sense, either physically, psychologically, emotionally, or personally.

My study's goal was not to provide solutions, but to comprehend how school principals implement instructional leadership. Nonetheless, by giving school principals more authority to raise learner achievement and establish model schools, the study's conclusions may be advantageous to the Gauteng Department of Education.

4.11. Demarcation of the study

Dividing the issue, according to Hoberg (1999, p. 190), is defined as "creating the outer limits of the issue's area where the investigation progresses". Define the problem such that it is easier to deal with. Within the framework of this investigation, four primary school principals in Gauteng's Johannesburg South District were the subjects of the research on instructional leadership methods. Because I live and work in the area, I restricted my research to primary schools in the Johannesburg South District. As this study was not intended to be a generalisation, I deliberately chose schools where the available data sources were judged sufficient and informative. This aligns with the principles of qualitative research.

4.12. Limitations of the study

"Limitations are potential flaws or problems the researcher found in the study, according to Creswell (2012, p. 199). An ethical and superior research project must include a statement detailing the study's limits (Rule & John, 2011). Therefore, the

interpretative and qualitative design of this study was the main source of its drawbacks.

This study only covered a very small percentage of the primary schools in the Johannesburg South District. The small sample size and responses provided by the respondents imply that the replies were restricted to the individuals' own viewpoints. The study solely focused on four primary schools, therefore the views of other schools were left out. The fact that this research only included primary schools from one township also meant that it was devoid of representative from remote or other township educational institutions, each of which might have had a unique set of contextual variables influencing the actions of principals.

Important aspects of the school's climate and culture as experienced and noticed by the researcher were eliminated because the research method, which relied solely on interviews for data collection, did not allow me to watch the principals in the setting in which they carry out their role as instructional leaders. Because the data came from school participants' self-reports, care was taken in interpreting their biases and comments on their own work. Self-report tools have limitations, such as problems with validity and reliability. Furthermore, there's no assurance that the participants accurately expressed their respective opinions. Researchers worry about how their biases may affect the data they evaluate and the papers they write when conducting qualitative investigations (LeCompte, 1987). They try to deal with their biases by taking them into consideration (LeCompte, 1987).

The study has limitations related to validity, generalisability, and reliability. For example, my research relies on four schools with a small number of participants—a total of sixteen (16). Time and accessibility constraints also affected my investigation. Understanding the study's limitations is crucial for identifying any gaps that might call for additional research. Due to constraints, I was able to analyse the results while taking into account the things that prevent more in-depth study. Additionally, it allows readers and researchers to comprehend the underlying aspects that could result in the generalisation of research findings about the ongoing study (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

4.13. Chapter summary

This chapter included a description of the study's methods and research strategy. First, the study's technique and the study's paradigm were discussed. The case study design was then explained, along with the factors that led to its adoption. The study's context, which included the subjects and the location, was given. Additionally, the processes for data analysis and data generation were described. The importance of reliability and research ethics were also emphasised. Ultimately, the boundaries of the investigation and its constraints were examined. The data display and discussion are the main topics of the upcoming chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE PRINCIPALS

5.1. Introduction

I present, assess, and discuss the findings in this chapter concerning the instructional leadership methods employed by five principals in the city of Johannesburg South District. The methodology and design of the research employed in this study were explained in the preceding chapter. The analysis of data carried out through interviews with teachers, departmental heads (DHs), principals at schools, and assistant principals has been reviewed in detail in this section and the three chapters that follow. Participants were free to speak during the interviews, with the interview schedule serving as a framework for the conversation. Semi-structured interviews involving department heads (DHs), teachers, deputy principals, and school principals produced the data. I restate my main research questions for the reader's convenience:

- How do principals of schools perceive their roles in enhancing the academic achievement of their learners?
- How do principals of schools assist teaching and learning in their schools by exercising their instructional leadership?
- What obstacles do principals of schools face when implementing instructional leadership methods, and how do they get beyond them?

Owing to the vast amount of data produced, the presentation and discussion of the material was split into four chapters. The data analysis from the principals of the four participating schools is presented in this chapter. The opinions of the deputy principals are presented and discussed in Chapter 6, the department heads' (DHs') perspectives are shown and discussed in Chapter 7, and the teachers' perspectives are presented and discussed in Chapter 8.

Results from data generated in the field are displayed under themes and sub-themes. Thematic analysis techniques were used to inductively construct these topics from the data. In order to analyse the results, I also consult the literature and the conceptual

frameworks that are discussed in Chapters Three and Four. I present and go over the results of my interviews with four principals of schools regarding their perceptions of their duties as instructional leaders. To safeguard both their identities and the identities of their schools, they utilised pseudonyms. Ms. Plum from Fruit Primary School, Mr. Oval from Shape Primary School, Ms. Blue from Colour Primary School, and Mr. Potato from Vegetable Primary School are the participants in the school principal competition.

5.2. Presentation of findings

Chapter Three covers the thematic portrayal of the research findings using the data from the content-based evaluation of the transcripts of the interviews. Four primary themes emerged: principals' perceptions of their roles in encouraging leadership in education procedures; principals' execution and enhancement of these practices in schools; obstacles to implementing these practices; and principals' attempts to overcome these obstacles. The section that follows delves into these four themes.

5.2.1. Principals' conceptualisations of their roles in supporting instructional leadership practices

Marishane and Botha (2011) define instructional leadership as any activity taken by a principal, or activities delegated to others, with the goal of fostering growth in learner learning, including teacher professional development. The focus of instructional leadership is on the principal's role in organising, managing, overseeing, and creating the curriculum and instruction for the school (Hallinger, 2003). As curricular leaders, principals oversee the entire functioning of their schools and are expected to guide, support, and assist teachers in identifying, choosing, and creating curricula and resources that meet the needs of learners while adhering to the school's vision and mission.

The principals of the four participating schools underlined how important it is for them to promote teaching and learning in their particular settings. This highlights their dedication to making teaching and learning the central purpose of the school, with

teachers expected to impart knowledge and learners expected to acquire it. According to their job descriptions, principals are responsible for overseeing the delivery of the curriculum and establishing a conducive learning environment. For example, Fruit Primary's principal emphasised the importance of his tasks in overseeing and facilitating instruction and learning:

> *Teaching and learning revolve around the principal. Thus, it is our duty to encourage efficient instruction and learning. Therefore, the principal cannot be an outsider looking in; instead, they must be active in the process to enhance teaching and learning.* (Ms. Plum)

The principal of Shape Primary expressed similar sentiments on this issue. This is what he said:

> *Being a curriculum leader is vital, but it also requires having a plan on how to make sure that instruction and learning occur. The Department Heads are in charge of overseeing the curriculum (DHs). In order to ensure that appropriate teaching and learning occur in the classroom, I have set up procedures and resources through the deputy principal and DHs*. (Mr. Oval)

The principal of Colour Primary defined her job as providing guidance and assistance.

> *In accordance with my job description, I am accountable and responsible, she declared. For successful teaching and learning to occur, I have to make sure that everyone is encouraged and supported.* (Ms. Blue)

The Vegetable Primary principal went on to say,

> *"It is crucial to use a variety of strategies to support teachers in delivering the curriculum." I make certain that appropriate human resource planning, organising, individual leadership, control, and accountability mechanisms are in place.* (Mr. Potato)

The results appear to indicate that school principals viewed their positions as crucial to overseeing and facilitating instruction. Ms. Plum seems to have given teaching and learning a lot of weight, as seen by her belief that the principal is a key role in the school. According to Mr. Oval, leadership need to be distributed and engage many

people. Mr. Potato and Ms. Blue both demonstrated administrative and leadership abilities to enhance instruction and learning in their respective classrooms.

Scholars like Maponya (2020) and Hallinger (2009), to name a couple, promote the idea that principals should be instructional leaders. According to Maponya (2020), principals who successfully apply instructional leadership are at the core of instructional delivery and have a significant impact on inspiring teachers to carry out instruction to the required standards, which enhances learner performance. In the school, instructional leaders assume managerial and leadership responsibilities, according to Hallinger (2009). As a result, they are in charge of organising, managing, and overseeing the curriculum and training. According to the findings, the principals believed that overseeing and promoting high-quality instruction in their schools was their main responsibility.

When this subject was summed up, the most important finding was how crucial school principals are to overseeing and promoting instruction. Greater learning outcomes and school improvement are the ultimate goals.

5.2.1.1. Modeling good practice

Leading and assisting teachers to improve their teaching and learning is known as instructional leadership. Setting clear standards, giving constructive criticism, encouraging a collaborative culture, supporting professional growth, and matching strategies with learning objectives are all examples of good practice in instructional leadership. The principal's instructional leadership, which includes setting clear expectations for learners' academic success, guiding and monitoring teachers to improve curriculum and instruction, and driving an impactful learning culture, has been repeatedly associated with positive outcomes such as higher student achievement, increased teacher motivation, and a favorable school climate (Shaked, 2023).

The results demonstrated that the principals behaved professionally and had a significant role in curriculum delivery. Mr. Potato, from Vegetable Primary, claimed

that he behaved in a professional manner by being on time and having outstanding attendance at school.

Additionally, Ms. Blue of Colour Primary stated that:

> *When it comes to giving instructions, being on time, making sure my work is completed on time, and guaranteeing that the calibre of my work is great, I always set an example in all I do. This inspires others to follow my techniques and styles.* (Ms. Blue)

Ms. Plum of Fruit Primary also mentioned being very interested in school activities in a similar manner:

> *The head of the school must be a teacher who inspires others and whose methods they can emulate. I attempt to conduct myself appropriately when I am teaching a class so that I may set a positive example for other teachers to follow*. (Ms. Plum)

The passages above seem to imply that Ms. Plum was actively involved in teaching in the classroom, which enabled her to comprehend all the challenges that teachers face in the classroom. This implies that since teaching and learning constitute a school's primary function, principals who abstain from classroom instruction risk losing touch with local realities. Since the principals might not be aware of the reality that the principals are facing, this could potentially have a negative impact on the learners' performance. Additionally, Mr. Potato and Ms. Blue tried to provide an example of proper professional conduct. Since principals are a storehouse of information to give, their modelling acts as an example for other teachers to follow.

The instructional leader encourages and supports the employees in achieving both their personal and the organisation's objectives (Cuban, 2020). Ms. Plum mentioned that he was a classroom teacher. One important characteristic of an instructional leader, according to Hallinger and Murphy (1985), is Ms. Plum's high visibility throughout the school, which she maintains through her classroom instruction. This relates to setting an example for teachers and keeping one's finger on the pulse. Furthermore, Ms. Blue and Mr. Potato stated that they set an example of proper

conduct for others to follow, including punctuality and outstanding attendance at school. The idea is that people would try to emulate this admirable behaviour.

The primary discovery that arose from this sub-theme's summary was that school principals served as role models for professional conduct and instructional strategies in the classroom. It is assumed that other people would try to imitate these beneficial behaviours.

5.2.1.2 The school's vision

The organisation's vision drives and guides others' activities toward its objectives (Bush, 2007). Education places a high value on vision. Together, the leader and followers work toward shared objectives. According to Leithwood, Strauss, and Anderson (2007), it's about making sure that others have the authority to contribute to the attainment of the organisation's objectives.

Most importantly, each of the four speakers emphasised how critical it is to have a vision for the school. A vision gives principals and their schools a clear picture of what they hope to accomplish in the end, which gives them a feeling of direction. The mission of the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) to provide high-quality instruction and learning opportunities for all was espoused by Ms. Blue, Mr. Oval, and Ms. Plum. Mr. Oval of Shape Primary effectively captures this, stating that:

> *Our goal aligns with the Department of Basic Education's (DoBE) goal of delivering high-quality instruction and learning*. (Mr. Oval)

A strong basis for later functions is provided by well-crafted school vision and goals (Maponya, 2020; Ozdemir et al., 2020). This means that the administrator must make sure that the goals and objectives of the school are reflected in the goals and objectives of the classroom as well as in the learning activities, assessments, tests, and exams (Maponya, 2020). Here, the principal collaborates with others to establish the school's vision and goals, which are continuously centred on strategies and procedures that enhance learner accomplishment results. The goal of Fruit Primary, Shape Primary, and Colour Primary was to raise the standard of instruction and learning.

The most important conclusion that came out of analysing this sub-theme was how crucial it is to have a vision to provide the school a feeling of direction. As a result, the vision is always predicated on offering top-notch instruction and learning opportunities to raise learner achievement.

5.2.1.3. Creating an appropriate positive school environment

Ensuring a safe and secure learning environment that fosters great teaching and learning for both principals and learners is a crucial responsibility of the principal. According to Leithwood et al. (2008), a supportive school atmosphere is necessary for efficient teaching and learning to occur.

Regarding the school environment, each of the four participants stated that to support efficient teaching and learning, the school leadership must establish a pleasant school atmosphere. In their day-to-day work, the four participating principals employed various leadership philosophies. Commented by Ms. Blue of Colour Primary:

> *Teachers have autonomy over the curriculum and methods of instruction, enabling learners to feel confident in the classroom and aware of what is expected of them.* (Ms. Blue)

Mr. Oval of Shape Primary said:

> *I constantly want us to pull in the same direction and operate as a team, therefore I promote teamwork. This lessens the workload that an individual has in the absence of a support system. All the procedures go without a hitch when we collaborate effectively.* (Mr. Oval)

The principal of Colour Primary shared this opinion, saying:

> *We establish a conducive learning atmosphere for teachers in the school. In our school, there are collaborative activities for principals.* (Ms. Blue)

According to Mr. Potato of Vegetable Primary, his school took an inclusive approach. What he had to say was this:

> *To put it simply, an invitational method involves involving all stakeholders in every decision made at the school. We appreciate the opinions of the parties involved to encourage everyone to voice their own opinions.* (Mr. Potato)

The aforementioned voices emphasised the significance of the various leadership philosophies employed by school principals. Mr. Oval and Ms. Blue used collegiality in their day-to-day work. This required collaborating as a cohesive team to meet the school's objectives. Conversely, Mr. Potato employed an invite strategy. This implied that all interested parties were welcomed to participate in school activities and were urged to make valuable contributions to the institution. These leadership philosophies foster an environment in the classroom where each person may do their responsibilities with efficiency. Both approaches contribute to lessening the burden of principals and establishing the teaching and learning environment in schools.

The creation of a supportive learning environment in schools is recommended by literature to provide effective teaching and learning. The opinions of the school principals actually align with those of other academics (Cuban, 2020; Ahmed, 2016 & Mestry, 2017), who argue that a supportive school environment is necessary for efficient instruction and learning.

The school principals understood the value of fostering a healthy school atmosphere, as represented by Dimension three of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model of instructional leadership. According to this dimension, learner achievement outcomes are positively impacted by a positive school climate. In order to create a pleasant learning atmosphere, the principals in this situation concentrated on several leadership philosophies.

Conclusively, the sub-theme underscores the principal discovery that surfaced, stressing the significance of fostering a pleasant school climate. The school principals placed great emphasis on employing diverse leadership styles to achieve this goal.

The first theme examined how principals saw their duties in assisting with instructional leadership practices, highlighting the significance of setting an example of best practices, advocating for the school's mission, and fostering a suitable and supportive learning environment. The next theme explores principals' active efforts to implement and enhance instructional leadership practices in their local schools. It is

titled Principals' Enactment and Enhancement of Instructional Leadership Practices in Schools.

5.2.2. Principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools

The results of the interviews highlight principals' dedication to implementing and improving instructional leadership techniques in a variety of ways, which enhances teaching and learning. The participants also showed how to use organisational management techniques to improve the learning environment. For instance, Vegetable Primary's principal stressed the significance of developing timetables effectively, guaranteeing curriculum delivery, and managing the evaluation program:

> *For us, the CAPS program is already set up. We still need to create the schedule, have enough supplies, and make sure that every class is attended to carry it out efficiently. This means that we have to keep an eye on how the curriculum is being delivered, manage the assessment program, and make sure that instruction and learning happen every day.* (Mr. Potato)

Similarly, Ms. Blue of Colour Primary said:

> *We have planned the schedule, assigned lessons, and made sure that learners receive feedback from teachers and are kept under observation.* (Ms. Blue)

Ms. Plum of Fruit Primary added that:

> *Teachers adhere to a line role within our organisational framework to facilitate teaching and learning.* (Ms. Plum)

Shape Primary's principal said that crucial information and instructions came from the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) through his office. He declared:

> *In order to connect the department and the school's objectives, the principal's office makes sure that the principals receive departmental communications on time.* (Mr. Oval)

According to the study, Mr. Potato and Ms. Blue both made a concerted effort to implement and improve instructional leadership methods in their schools. They did this by employing strategies including effective scheduling, supervision over curriculum delivery, and management of assessment programs. Ms. Plum also highlighted Fruit Primary's organisational structure, which includes a line function intended to facilitate efficient instruction. Furthermore, Vegetable Primary and Colour Primary demonstrated organisational management techniques, such as resource provision. Lastly, Mr. Potato implemented instructional leadership methods in Vegetable Primary by skilfully communicating the Department of Basic Education's objectives. The information presented here shows that principals in various schools—Mr. Potato, Mr. Oval, Ms. Blue, and Ms. Plum, among others—participated in a variety of activities aimed at implementing and improving teaching and learning.

Conceptually speaking, the results are in line with Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) paradigm, especially in the second dimension that deals with controlling curriculum and instructional programs. This dimension includes overseeing instruction, monitoring and assessing learner achievement, and coordinating the curriculum. The findings and Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model consistently agree, highlighting the proactive attention of school principals on managerial procedures, resource provision, and good stakeholder communication.

In conclusion, the theme's primary finding highlights how actively school principals participate in the implementation and improvement of instructional leadership practices, placing a strong emphasis on administrative procedures, the availability of resources, and effective stakeholder communication.

5.2.2.1. Distributed instructional leadership

According to the data's conclusions, each of the four principals demonstrated a high degree of distributed instructional leadership in their respective institutions. The principals emphasised that distributed instructional leadership is critical to their schools' efficient operation. Shape Primary's Mr. Oval said:

> *In a school, distribution plays a crucial role since it is not an isolated institution. As a result, in your role as a principal and leader, you must assign responsibilities to teachers, DHs, and deputy principals while also keeping an eye on and encouraging each of them.* (Mr. Oval)

A similar response came from the principal of Fruit Primary, who said:

> *The principal cannot run the school by themselves. The management team at our school is a crucial part of the instruction and learning process. Because of this, we mostly depend on our DHs to closely monitor the topics under their supervision.* (Ms. Plum)

The principals also talked about the strategies they used to implement distributed instructional leadership techniques. This is made evident in the sections from the principals that follow. Ms. Blue of Colour Primary states that:

> *We've created a democratic environment where individuals are at ease having lively discussions. We give others the confidence to lead. I put people to work on chores. Reviews and feedback are therefore completed on a regular basis.* (Ms. Blue)

Mr. Oval of Shape Primary added that:

> *Distribution timing is important, but the principal is still ultimately responsible. The principal must keep an eye on the allocation and assign tasks in accordance with each person's skills and interests.* (Mr. Oval)

Mr. Vegetable of Fruit Primary added that:

> *It is necessary to think about the duties that can be assigned and make sure that someone is keeping an eye on the proceedings.* (Mr. Potato)

According to the results of the interviews, the principals thought distributed instructional leadership was a crucial practice in their schools. It was widely believed that having a "hero leader" at the top was out of date and impractical in a big, diversified school system. Mr. Oval's opinion that many people take on leadership responsibilities in the school captures this. Furthermore, the proverb "two heads are better than one" perfectly captures Ms. Plum's opinion that he mostly relied on DHs

as first line managers. This is so that they may address any issues pertaining to teaching and learning since DHs are experts in their subject areas.

The excerpts above imply that the principals of the schools used specific strategies when assigning leadership responsibilities. While assigning tasks to individuals, Ms. Blue and Mr. Oval encouraged and kept an eye on them. In addition, the responsibilities were held accountable to both principals. This seems to imply that Mr. Oval and Ms. Blue took on responsible and nurturing roles in their schools. Parallel to this, Ms. Plum supported the idea of delegation but thought that principals were to be actively involved in it. The improvement of teaching and learning is the common goal served by all these strategies.

In this work, I theorise dispersed instructional leadership in schools using Spillane's (2006) approach. First, the leader-plus element recognises that several individuals, both in official and informal responsibilities, take on leadership roles inside the school. According to the study's findings, principals employed teachers, deputy principals, and DHs in various leadership capacities. The second part of the leadership practice element is concerned with how followers, leaders, and their environments interact when performing particular leadership duties.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this sub-theme is that distributed instructional leadership methods were prevalent in each of the four schools that were the subject of the research.

5.2.2.3 Monitoring teaching and learning

The results of the study indicate that the principals of each of the four schools under investigation successfully oversaw instruction. In order to keep an eye on the curriculum, teachers' methods, and learners' progress, the principals concentrated on these areas. The process of tracking learner progress involves evaluating and responding to learners' performance through formative and summative assessments, as well as having firsthand experience with instructional strategies, learning objectives, and classroom dynamics (Bush, 2013). Regarding the observation of instruction, Colour Primary's principal declared:

> *We keep an eye on how the curriculum is being delivered, as well as how well teachers are carrying out their tasks and how well learners are doing in the classroom. I make sure the principals follow the curriculum, and I keep an eye on the remediation plan for the teachers who don't.* (Ms. Blue)

Similarly, Mr. Oval of Shape Primary said:

> *SMT gather monthly to talk on the tracking of instruction and learning. Thus, we receive reports on each subject's teachers' performance. SMT gather monthly to talk on the tracking of instruction and learning. Thus, we receive reports on each subject's teachers' performance.* (Mr. Oval)

Mr. Potato of Vegetable Primary also mentioned that:

> *We can determine whether teachers have covered the curriculum for the term by looking at the curriculum coverage. This guarantees continuous teaching and learning.* (Mr. Potato)

Ms. Plum of Fruit's curriculum said:

> *I use the Annual Teaching Plan to check learners' books and keep an eye on the curriculum delivery. This aids in my assessment of whether the teachers are meeting expectations.* (Ms. Plum)

According to the voices above, Ms. Blue and Mr. Oval were quite involved in keeping an eye on the curriculum and giving teachers insightful input. Additionally, Ms. Plum used book reviews to determine whether the curriculum content was covered, and Mr. Potato used the curriculum coverage to track the development of teaching and learning. These proactive strategies imply that the principals were able to positively impact teaching and learning practices in their schools because they had an overview of the curriculum.

The literature supports the importance of instructional leadership practices like teaching and learning observation. As per Thessin's (2019) findings, the instructional leadership task is an essential and proactive principal's duty that is carried out on a regular basis to assess the progress of learners in terms of observing, encouraging, supervising, and monitoring teacher instruction and learning in the school. Therefore,

raising learner academic performance is the intended outcome of continual monitoring of teaching and learning.

The instructional leadership approach developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) includes monitoring teaching and learning. According to Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) theory, principals must watch principals in action, provide guidance on issues, and identify areas for improvement.

The main finding that arose from this sub-theme summary was the widespread use of teaching and learning monitoring in the schools under investigation. It is an essential practice for instructional leadership that has a direct effect on education.

5.2.2.4 Promoting teacher professional development

According to Steyn (2000), the goal of providing teacher professional development is to bring about improvements in professional practice and professional learning, which will ultimately affect learner accomplishment. For the purpose of improving their ability to facilitate teaching and learning, teachers must constantly update their knowledge.

The results imply that principals were actively involved in teachers' professional development in each of the four schools under investigation. As a result, a lot of focus was placed on teacher mentoring, workshops, and Quality Management Systems (QMS) assessments. The principal of Colour Primary reacted as follows in relation to QMS evaluations:

> *Through the QMS program, we assist in the professional development of teachers. We start by identifying the obstacles that teachers have in pursuing their professional development goals, and we then devise a year-long strategy for teacher preparation.* (Ms. Blue)

In a similar vein, Mr. Potato of Vegetable Primary also spoke about the QMS process:

> *We include specific requirements from the QMS program in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). After that, a requirements analysis is created using the data from the SIP. We prioritise our areas of staff development based on*

> *our requirements analysis. In order to keep them up to date on the newest developments in curriculum, I also strongly advise teachers to attend departmental seminars and cluster meetings.* (Mr. Potato)

Mr. Oval of Shape Primary added that:

> *I urge teachers to participate in departmental workshops. They give the personnel comments after they get back from the workshops. This facilitates the teachers' access to the most recent data.* (Mr. Oval)

Ms. Plum from Fruit Primary gave an example of how to mentor a new teacher. What he stated was this:

> *We provide the teachers with improvement plans that list the areas in which they find it difficult to teach and learn. Then, using that knowledge, we plan a workshop to address the issues.* (Ms. Plum)

The aforementioned excerpts imply that the schools under investigation actively supported teacher professional development. The QMS evaluation results were used by Ms. Blue and Mr. Potato to create the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Additionally, Mr. Oval and Mr. Potato used workshops to inform staff members about the newest trends and to empower teachers. Finally, Ms. Plum identified areas in need of improvement by using improvement plans. Most importantly, this demonstrates that the principals took the initiative to support teacher professional development inside their own schools. Ultimately, these proactive actions support the development of a teaching and learning culture in the classroom.

The opinions expressed by school principals about the professional development of teachers align with the findings of existing literature. The DBE (2018, p. 20) states that the principal oversees setting up or facilitating different professional development, orientation, and induction programs to improve and enhance teachers' ability to teach. According to Kumari (2022), the principal's instructional leadership is one of the most crucial instruments for fostering teachers' successful professional development. Furthermore, Syomwene (2018) states that professional development helps teachers to gain new abilities and boost their competence and self-assurance, all which contribute to the successful implementation of curricula.

Using the instructional leadership paradigm developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), these principals actively supported the professional development of their teachers in their institutions. Here, the principal supports continuous improvement in instruction by offering chances for professional growth and assistance.

The primary discovery that arose from this sub-theme's summary was that the principals actively supported teacher professional development in their schools. As a result, workshops, improvement plans, and Quality Management Systems (QMS) evaluations received a lot of attention.

5.2.2.5 Understanding of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

According to Hirsh (2005, p. 38), effective PLCs increase principals' sharing of best practices and are more likely to result in higher learner performance. According to Lunenburg (2010, p. 1), principals are supposed to be facilitators and change agents that enhance learning environments by developing school cultures that support PLC operations.

The data's conclusions imply that the principals supported the establishment of Professional Learning Communities among their staff members. For example, Colour Primary's principal stated:

> *Teachers hold regular subject meetings to talk about the methods they employ to teach various subjects. They advise one another on how to handle a certain topic during these discussions.* (Ms. Blue)

Mr. Oval of Shape Primary commented:

> *The teachers get together in stages twice a month or more frequently if there is an urgent need to talk about the difficulties they have faced recently and come up with answers. These groups support and nurture one another as they advance their respective fields.* (Mr. Oval)

Mr. Potato of Vegetable Primary said:

> *The DHs lead topic and phase meetings in which they provide mutual assistance based on input from book controls and class visits.* (Mr. Potato)

Compared to the individuals stated before, Ms. Plum from Fruit Primary demonstrated a deeper comprehension of a Professional Learning Community. What he stated was this:

> *Within the cluster, there is a Professional Learning Community for principals. We all get together and essentially exchange information about our struggles and tribulations. We pick up knowledge from others and come up with suggestions on how to help the teachers in our schools. I make an effort to implement a few of these concepts at our school.* (Ms. Plum)

From a literary standpoint, professional learning communities are crucial because they give teachers the chance to directly enhance their instruction, foster close bonds among team members, keep them informed about new developments in education technology, and encourage critical thinking (Serviss, 2021). In addition to improving learner quality in terms of knowledge, thinking, behaviour, and other skills and competences, professional learning communities assist teachers in developing their pedagogies (Wongyai & Patphol, 2019). Furthermore, according to Bafadal et al. (2020), the establishment of a welcoming school atmosphere, creative classroom development, learner-centred instruction, and a professional learning community can all contribute to the creation of an effective teaching ecology. This makes it quite evident that creating Professional Learning Communities would improve education in classrooms.

The principals value the function that PLCs serve in their schools, according to the summary of this sub-theme. Additionally, they advise teachers to participate in Professional Learning Communities so that they can stay up to date on the latest developments in the field.

5.2.2.6 Rewards and recognition

The data's conclusions imply that all four principals employed incentives and recognition as a strategy to improve their schools' instructional leadership procedures.

In fact, according to Mr. Potato of Vegetable Primary, incentives and prizes encourage learners to perform better academically. Mr. Potato captured this in the comment that follows.:

> *At our school, learners who achieve academic excellence are given certificates each term. Additionally, it inspires and stimulates the learners to raise their level of performance. Therefore, we do offer learning rewards.* (Mr. Potato)

Furthermore, according to three principals, it's critical to recognise principals. The principal of Colour Primary made the following statement, which amply demonstrated this:

> *I work to foster an environment in the classroom where teachers are content and, consequently, effective. I commend the teachers who go above and above in the course of their work. I also urge other people to follow my example.* (Ms. Blue)

Similar sentiments were echoed by Mr. Oval of Shape Primary who stated that:

> *I am in constant communication with my professors, and I respect their viewpoints. Since I want them to be happy and this helps me create a conducive environment, I treat them fairly.* (Mr. Oval)

Ms. Plum of Fruit Primary had this to say about this issue:

> *Teachers adore being acknowledged. I thus give them my attention and endorse their views. They now feel comfortable approaching me for help whenever they need it. Teachers therefore appreciate knowing that you genuinely care about their well.* (Ms. Plum)

According to the results of the interviews, the principals who took part in the study employed incentives and recognition to improve their methods of instructional leadership. Mr. Potato encouraged learners to perform well by giving out academic awards. This creative approach contributed to the school's academic excellence culture. However, Ms. Blue, Mr. Oval, and Ms. Plum commend the teachers for their hard work, which improved their spirits and psychological health. This demonstrates

that the principals tried to motivate teachers to enhance their methods of instruction. The ultimate objective of using rewards and recognition is to improve learner success outcomes and establish schools that are models for excellence.

The idea that rewarding and recognising teachers might improve instruction and learning in classrooms is supported by literature. The quality of instruction in schools and learner accomplishment are significantly impacted by the principal's incentive program policies (Mbiti, Muralitharan, Romero, Schipper, Manda, & Rajani, 2019). Furthermore, according to Blasé and Blasé (1999), praising principals raises their motivation, sense of self, and level of performance.

Based on the instructional leadership model developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), the principals of the schools recognised the value of rewarding and recognising both teachers and learners. In Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) paradigm, the third dimension is about creating a favourable environment for learning. It entails offering rewards to teachers and learners to encourage positive behaviour.

To summarise this sub-theme, the main conclusion was that school principals praised principals and gave awards to learners to improve instructional leadership practices in their institutions.

The implementation and improvement of instructional leadership methods in schools by principals was the subject of the second theme. As a result, a lot of focus was put on things like professional learning communities (PLCs), incentives and recognition, distributed instructional leadership, monitoring teaching and learning, and teacher professional development. My next section, covers the obstacles to using instructional leadership techniques.

5.2.3 Barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices

It's evident that every participating principal faced a variety of difficulties daily, which can have a detrimental effect on their ability to carry out their instructional leadership role—which is to ensure that teaching and learning are of the highest calibre and are a school's primary goal. The results imply that school principals faced several obstacles in carrying out their instructional leadership responsibilities.

Mr. Potato of Vegetable Primary commented:

> *The learners' backgrounds present the most obstacle to my school. Although English is the language of teaching in schools, most learners speak IsiZulu or Sesotho at home. Therefore, the learners' level of English proficiency is below what is required. The learners find it challenging to work independently as a result.* (Mr. Potato)

Ms. Blue of Colour Primary stated that:

> *A large number of our learners are from low-income families. Many households are headed by a single parent, and they lack access to wholesome food and appropriate clothing. These elements do have an effect on how well learners are taught and learn.* (Ms. Blue)

Mr. Oval of Shape Primary stated that:

> *When it comes to visiting the school and interacting with us, parents are not following the rules. More parental involvement in their children's schooling would be wonderful for us.* (Mr. Oval)

Ms. Blue of Colour Primary added that:

> *Our overcrowding in classes is the problem we are having. It is difficult for teachers to walk around the classrooms and help the struggling learners. Furthermore, the number of principals listed in the Department of Basic Education's (DoBE) database places restrictions on us, and the SGB is principally in charge of hiring and choosing teachers.* (Ms. Blue)

Regarding the obstacles they encountered while trying to assist their schools' efficient teaching and learning, the participants shared their thoughts with the teacher unions. In response, Ms. Plum from Fruit Primary said:

> *Teacher unions interrupt the curriculum with their activities, which leads to a great deal of disruption in the classroom. Principals utilise these activities as a justification for skipping curriculum-based lessons. Thus, this hinders both teaching and learning.* (Ms. Plum)

Mr. Oval of Shape Primary asserted that when teacher unions took up labour action, they lacked professionalism and observed the proper procedures improperly. What he stated was this:

> *The teacher unions frequently fail to provide out timely notice of their labour activities so that we can organise appropriately to make up for the time lost on that specific day.* (Mr. Oval)

The principals' voices imply that they encountered several obstacles when attempting to implement their instructional leadership techniques. According to Ms. Blue, the children's capacity to learn was directly impacted by environmental factors including poverty. Mr. Potato agreed, but he also said that teaching English to those who were speaking it as a second language was a significant obstacle that had an impact on their capacity to learn new information. According to Mr. Oval, learning was not adequately reinforced at home when parents were not active in their kids' education. It appears that Mr. Oval and Ms. Plum did not have the best interests of the learners at heart when they expressed their concerns about the disruptive and unprofessional behaviour of certain teacher unions. The Department of Basic Education (DoBE) was not practicing what it preached when it came to assisting with teaching and learning in the Johannesburg South District, as demonstrated by Ms. Plum's dissatisfaction with staffing concerns.

The findings of the literature substantiate the challenges faced by school principals in their endeavours to facilitate efficient teaching and learning within their institutions. According to Bush (2020), in many South African schools, teacher unions provide a significant barrier to the delivery of high-quality instructional leadership and instruction. Furthermore, some South African teacher unions, according to Naicker et al. (2013), are unprofessional and interfere with the educational process. According to Naicker et al. (2013), there reflects school principals' voices in the literature.

Conceptually speaking, the model developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) aligns with the results obtained on the obstacles encountered by instructional leaders. Safeguarding instructional time is the third dimension. In this sense, teacher unions are a major obstacle to good instruction and learning.

When this subject was summarised, the main conclusion that became apparent was that school principals found it challenging to implement their instructional leadership techniques because of a few obstacles. As a result, the issues raised by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE), parents, teachers, and teacher unions received a lot of attention.

The obstacles to implementing instructional leadership methods were the subject of the third theme. I will now move on to my fourth and last subject, which is the efforts made by principals to remove obstacles from instructional leadership practices.

5.2.4 Principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices

The data's conclusions imply that all four school principals used proactive strategies to get beyond obstacles to instructional leadership practices. In this sense, the strategies concentrated on the obstacles that learners, teachers, and teacher unions presented.

The participants discussed the various approaches they took to address the obstacles that learners presented. This fundamentally meant enhancing teaching and learning through the application of several improvement methodologies. Concerning the strategies for improvement, Vegetable Primary's principal declared that:

> *In the school, we offer two programmes. The remedial programme selects learners who perform averagely but have specific gaps, and we work to fill those gaps. For instance, we emphasise reading skills in our remedial English lessons. The learners with special educational needs (LSEN) program, on the other hand, caters to the needs of slow learners.* (Mr. Potato)

Ms. Blue of Colour Primary stated that:

> *We spend more time in-person interacting with learners in our Saturday classes. During the holidays, learners receive additional booklets in areas like English and mathematics. Additionally, our school offers programs to address learners with special educational needs (LSEN).* (Ms. Blue)

Mr. Oval of Shape Primary added that:

Every year, at the start of the school year, we host a parenting skills session where parents are invited to enhance their skills. In addition, we have a parent information meeting at the beginning of the year where parents and teachers get together to talk about important topics. To keep parents updated, we also employ letters, a WhatsApp group, and the Short Messaging Service (SMS) system. (Mr. Oval)

Ms. Blue of Colour Primary stated that:

> *We collaborate with Imperial and Motus, a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) that offers additional English and math education. After we started working with organisation, I have since seen an improvement.* (Ms. Blue)

Ms. Plum of Fruit Primary was rather forthright in his dealings with teacher unions. He asserted that:

> *I overcome obstacles by abiding by the rules. I therefore follow the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document when managing the school. I avoid using common sense since doing so could get you into danger. Thus, teachers have to give me three days' notice before starting union-related activity. On the other hand, they won't be dropping out of school if they don't give a circular.* (Ms. Plum)

The results imply that the principals who took part employed a variety of strategies to try and remove obstacles to instructional leadership practices. Remedial lessons were one of the improving strategies that Mr. Potato and Ms. Blue put into practice. This indicated that they gave instruction and learning in their classroom’s top priority. According to the LSEN program, Ms. Blue's and Mr. Potato's schools came to the realisation that not all learners had the same intellectual capacity and required specialised assistance to advance. The utilisation of cutting-edge communication techniques by Mr. Oval, like parent information meetings and the SMS system, demonstrates the efforts made to have an impact on learners' lives outside of the classroom. Moreover, the fact that Ms. Plum's company deals with uncooperative teacher unions implies that the Fruit Primary curriculum was not severely disrupted.

The principals' efforts to remove obstacles to instructional leadership practices are bolstered by literature. According to the South African Standard for Principalship (DoBE, 2014), principals should employ techniques to improve learner achievement and excellence as well as to create a learning culture in the classroom. In order to establish excellent schools, Ms. Blue, Mr. Oval, and Mr. Potato employed turnaround techniques. Furthermore, networking with the larger community for better school improvement is an objective of The South African Standard for Principalship, which is aligned with Ms. Blue and Mr. Potato's usage of social resources (DoBE, 2014). Furthermore, according to Hoadley et al. (2009), improving learner achievement results requires a stronger partnership between the home and the school. Good school principals, in the opinion of Naicker et al. (2013), maintain little disruption to teaching and learning by standing firm against refractory teacher unions. This is in line with Mr. Oval's behaviour about this matter. Furthermore, Naicker et al. (2013) assert that schools must take the initiative to make things happen because they receive very little help from the Department of Basic Education (DoBE).

The fourth subject centred on the initiatives taken by principals to get over obstacles to instructional leadership strategies. In order to get beyond the numerous obstacles, put up by learners, teachers, and teacher unions, the principals employed a variety of proactive strategies.

5.3. Chapter summary

Each interview topic was covered in this chapter's presentation and analysis of interview data from four Johannesburg South District school principals. Themes that were examined included distributed instructional leadership, tracking learner progress, encouraging professional growth for teachers, comprehending professional learning communities, incentives and acknowledgment, obstacles to instructional leadership practices, and principals' initiatives to get past these obstacles. The amalgamation of results advances a thorough comprehension of instructional leadership methodologies within the scrutinised milieu.

CHAPTER SIX

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE DEPUTY PRINCIPALS

6.1. Introduction

I outlined and covered the data from the principals in the last chapter, which showed how they perceived and applied instructional leadership to raise the academic performance of their learners. After dividing the data into four sections, this is the second portion that delivers the information. This section presents and discusses the results of my interviews with four deputy principals regarding their perceptions of the roles that principals play as instructional leaders. To safeguard both their identities and the identities of their schools, they utilised pseudonyms. Ms. Apple from Fruit Primary School, Mr. Square from Shape Primary School, Ms. Pink from Colour Primary School, and Mr. Onion from Vegetable Primary School are the participants in the deputy principal role.

6.2. Presentation of findings

Like in the preceding chapter, verbatim quotes are utilised to present the findings to preserve the integrity of the participants' "voices" in the research. The conversation incorporates the literature that was examined in Chapter Two. Four themes came to light: deputy principals' perceptions of principals' responsibilities in promoting instructional leadership practices; principals' implementation and improvement of these practices in schools; barriers to implementing these practices; and principals' endeavours to get beyond these barriers. The ensuing sections go into greater detail on these subjects.

6.2.1. Deputy Principals' understanding of the principals' roles in supporting instructional leadership practices

The four deputy principals who took part in the discussion all thought that supporting teaching and learning was a major responsibility of the principals. They demonstrated

that a principal who prioritises instruction is necessary for the school to function effectively. In order to ensure that teaching and learning occur every day, the principal is crucial.

School principals are expected by their job descriptions to be at the forefront of curriculum delivery to facilitate effective teaching and learning. Fruit Primary's deputy principal stated:

> *In order for teaching and learning to be effective, I believe that the principal's job is to guide principals and make sure that everyone is receiving proper support. What will keep them motivated is the support they receive from him/her.* (Ms. Apple)

The deputy principal of Shape Primary expressed similar sentiments on this issue. This is what he said:

> *The principal should constantly promote a positive learning environment. He or she should build relationships with parents, teachers, and learners to create a supportive community. He or she should provide resources and support as well to enhance teaching and learning.* (Mr. Square)

When asked about the role of the principal in promoting teaching and learning, Colour Primary's deputy principal responded as follows:

> *Policies and procedures pertaining to education should be familiar to the principal. He or she is responsible for making sure the school follows these rules. The principal should establish procedures that promote learner accomplishment, distribute resources wisely, and make well-informed decisions that advance teaching and learning*. (Ms. Pink)

The deputy principal of Vegetable Primary further added:

> *The principal should constantly make sure that there are adequate resources available for each subject and should encourage efforts that improve instruction.* (Mr. Onion)

The results seem to indicate that controlling and promoting teaching and learning is a major responsibility of principals. According to Ms. Apple, the principal should

advise the teachers, implying that the principal should have a significant role in assisting teachers in order for teaching and learning to be successful. According to Mr. Square, the principal ought to establish a conducive learning atmosphere. As demonstrated by Ms. Apple, Ms. Pink, and Mr. Onion, principals must make sure that their schools have adequate resources to support instruction and learning.

Leithwood and Louis (2021) claim that principals should allocate adequate resources to facilitate both teaching and learning. They argue that when teaching staff is equipped with adequate resources, they can perform at a higher level. Yusra, Citra, and Rosnita (2023) state that principals should make an effort to involve every member of the school community, face pedagogical challenges, and mobilise the resources required to promote the transformation of teaching and learning.

When this subject was summed up, the main conclusion that became apparent was that the principals make sure their schools have adequate resources and foster a positive atmosphere. They see to it that teachers receive the assistance they need to facilitate efficient teaching and learning.

6.2.1.1. The school's vision

Crucially, each of the four panelists emphasised how crucial it is to have a school vision. A vision gives everyone a clear picture of what the school hopes to accomplish, which gives all the schools a feeling of direction. Mr. Square of Shape Primary did a good job of capturing this, saying that:

> *Our school's vision is in line with teaching and learning, which fosters a feeling of purpose among teachers, learners, and parents. The application of efficient teaching techniques that complement the school's overarching objectives is guided by this alignment.* (Mr. Square)

The deputy principal of Fruit Primary expressed similar sentiments on this issue. This is what she said:

> *The curriculum and instructional design are influenced by the school's vision. This makes it easier to make sure that learning and teaching activities have a*

> *purpose, are pertinent, and are focused on producing the intended results*. (Ms. Apple)

This is what the deputy principal of Colour Primary said when she was asked about the vision her school:

> *Our school's vision serves as the cornerstone for determining the factors that must be taken into account to produce high learner outcomes. This gives everyone a sense of what is expected of them to meet the school's objectives.* (Ms. Pink)

The deputy principal of Vegetable Primary further added:

> *Our school's vision guarantees that teaching and learning activities are informed by the collective ambitions and views of the school community and fosters a shared understanding of the school's vision among all stakeholders.* (Mr. Onion)

The results appear to indicate that a school's vision has a significant role in facilitating effective teaching and learning. According to Ms. Apple, the school's mission and vision should be in line with teaching and learning so that everyone is aware of what is expected of them at the end of the day. According to Mr. Square, the instructional design and curriculum are shaped by the school's mission. As demonstrated by Ms. Apple, Ms. Pink, and Mr. Onion, the school's vision serves as the cornerstone for coming up with ideas for how to raise learner academic achievement.

Defining the school's vision and mission is the first step in Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership approach. Here, the schools establish the goals and objectives for the institution, which are always centred on methods and procedures to raise learner accomplishment levels. Merritt and Wang (2022) found that principals who act as instructional leaders must establish school goals with student learning as the primary focus. The goal of Fruit Primary, Shape Primary, and Colour Primary was to raise the standard of instruction and learning.

The most important conclusion that came out of analysing this sub-theme was how crucial it is to have a vision to provide the school a feeling of direction. As a result,

the vision is always predicated on offering top-notch instruction and learning opportunities to raise learner achievement.

6.2.1.3 Creating an appropriate positive school environment

Regarding the school environment, each of the four participants stated that to support efficient teaching and learning, the school leadership must establish a favourable school atmosphere.

The four deputy principals who took part in the discussion noted that their principals employed various leadership philosophies on a regular basis. As said by Ms. Pink of Colour Primary:

> *Teachers have autonomy over the curriculum and methods of instruction, enabling learners to feel confident in the classroom and aware of what is expected of them. (Ms. Pink)*

Mr. Square of Shape Primary said:

> *The principal always wants us to pull in the same direction and operate as a team, thus he promotes teamwork. This lessens the workload that an individual has in the absence of a support system. All the procedures go without a hitch when we collaborate effectively. (Mr. Square)*

The deputy principal of Fruit Primary shared this opinion, saying:

> *We establish a conducive learning atmosphere for teachers in the school. Teachers can come together and collaborate during certain school-sponsored activities. (Ms. Apple)*

Mr. Onion of Vegetable Primary indicated that his school used an invitational approach. This is what he had to say:

> *Every stakeholder is involved in whatever our school does, thanks to the principal. In order to encourage everyone to feel free to share their opinions, he values the opinions of the stakeholders. (Mr. Onion)*

The aforementioned voices emphasised the significance of the various leadership philosophies employed by school principals. Collegiality was a daily practice for Colour and Shape Primary's principal. This required collaborating as a cohesive team to meet the school's objectives. Conversely, Vegetable Primary's principal employed an invitational strategy. This implied that all interested parties were welcomed to participate in school activities and were urged to make valuable contributions to the institution. These leadership philosophies foster an environment in the classroom where each person may do their responsibilities with efficiency.

The creation of a supportive learning environment in schools is recommended by literature to provide effective teaching and learning. The deputy principals' opinions actually align with those of Aldridge and Fraser (2016), who contend that school principals should work to improve aspects of the school climate that affect learner achievement because a happy classroom environment motivates teachers to provide better instruction. In order to foster an environment that supports the shared objective, a leader must be able to inspire, motivate, and mentor the people of the organisation (Junaidi & Fadillah, 2022).

The importance of fostering a positive school atmosphere appeared as the main finding when summarising this sub-theme. The principals therefore gave distinct leadership philosophies a lot of weight.

The first theme was principals' conceptions of their roles in assisting with practices in instructional leadership. The results imply that the principals were aware of the need of establishing a suitable and supportive learning environment and of the school vision. I'll now go on to my next issue, which is the implementation and improvement of instructional leadership techniques in schools by principals.

6.2.2. Principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools

The results showed that all the principals worked hard to implement and improve their instructional leadership strategies, which are covered in more detail below. Regarding this, Vegetable Primary's deputy principal said the following:

> *The principal is essential to improving teaching methods. He keeps an eye on how the curriculum is being delivered, pinpoints the unique requirements of the teachers, and plans teacher-focused training sessions.* (Mr. Onion)

Similarly, Ms. Pink of Colour Primary said:

> *Our principal makes sure that every learner shows up for class, keeps an eye on the teachers, and gives them comments and direction. This encourages teachers to use cutting-edge and successful teaching strategies, which eventually improves classroom education throughout the institution.* (Ms. Pink)

Ms. Apple of Fruit Primary added that:

> *The principal improves teaching practices by fostering a culture that promotes ongoing development. He creates a welcoming atmosphere where teachers are at ease exchanging ideas and soliciting criticism.* (Ms. Apple)

Further, the deputy principal of Shape Primary said:

> *In order to guarantee that instructional practices are carried out successfully, our principal establishes clear expectations for teaching and learning, effectively communicates those goals to teachers, and offers the support and feedback they need.* (Mr. Square)

The results of the interviews seem to indicate that by observing and providing feedback to the teachers, the principals of Vegetable and Colour Primary implemented and improved instructional leadership techniques in their institutions. Additionally, Ms. Apple mentioned that the principal aims to create a welcoming atmosphere for all learners in the school. Furthermore, Shape Primary School has very defined expectations.

The conceptual framework proposed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) pertains specifically to the implementation and improvement of instructional leadership techniques in schools by principals. The management of the curriculum and instructional program is the emphasis of the second dimension. These include managing the curriculum, overseeing the teaching staff, and keeping an eye on and

assessing the development of the learners. As a result, the results seem to support the paradigm proposed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985).

When this theme was summarised, the principals' implementation and improvement of instructional leadership methods in schools stood out as the major finding. As a result, the principals of the schools concentrated on supervising and giving feedback to the teachers in addition to establishing clear guidelines and offering assistance to them.

6.2.2.1 Distributed instructional leadership

The data's conclusions imply that distributed instructional leadership techniques are used in the schools by all four principals. Regarding distributed leadership, Shape Primary's deputy principal said that their principal supports it to ensure that their schools run well. Mr. Square of Shape Primary stated:

> *"Our principal makes sure to keep an eye on us and provide support when necessary, assigning tasks to grade leaders, department heads, and deputy principals." This strategy encourages staff members to take responsibility for their work, which enhances teaching strategies and learner performance.* (Mr. Square)

A similar response came from the deputy principal of Fruit Primary, who said:

> *I think it's great that my principal uses distributed instructional leadership. She promotes a climate of group accountability and shared leadership. She fosters teamwork and creativity, including teachers in decision-making processes, and offers possibilities for further assistance and professional growth. This strategy has enhanced learner achievement, enhanced teacher collaboration, and given staff members greater authority and motivation. (Ms. Apple)*

Ms. Pink of Colour Primary has differing opinions on the distributed instructional leadership approach used by their principal. She admits that middle-level leaders are given specific responsibilities by their principal. She does, however, believe that the

principal occasionally falls short in offering the dispersed leadership team enough support and direction. What she stated was as follows:

> *Although our principal encourages distributed leadership, I believe that after assigning responsibilities, she does not provide us with adequate assistance. The execution of educational projects is uneven because of this lack of direction.* (Ms. Pink)

A similar response came from the deputy principal of Vegetable Primary, who said:

> *The division of responsibilities for instructional leadership by our principal is merely surface level, with an emphasis more on administrative than on instructional matters. In order for us to devote more time to education, I would like him to concentrate more on the learning activities.* (Mr. Onion)

According to the results of the interviews, the principals thought distributed instructional leadership was a crucial practice in their schools. Individuals were given responsibilities by the Shape and Fruit primary principals, who also provided support and oversight during their work.

The excerpts above imply that the principals of the schools used specific strategies when assigning leadership responsibilities. Mr. Onion and Ms. Pink held divergent opinions on how their principals applied distributed leadership. They think the principal might improve the efficacy of distributed instructional leadership with additional strategic direction and assistance. The improvement of teaching and learning is the common goal served by all these strategies.

In this work, I theorise dispersed instructional leadership in schools using Spillane's (2006) approach. First, the leader-plus element recognises that several individuals, both in official and informal responsibilities, take on leadership roles inside the school. The results of this study imply that principals employed HoDs, deputy principals, and teachers in various leadership capacities. The second part of the leadership practice element is concerned with how followers, leaders, and their environments interact when performing particular leadership duties.

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this sub-theme is that distributed instructional leadership methods were prevalent in each of the four schools that were the subject of the research.

6.2.2.3 Monitoring teaching and learning

The results of the study indicate that the principals of each of the four schools under investigation successfully oversaw instruction. In order to keep an eye on the curriculum, teachers' methods, and learners' progress, the principals concentrated on these areas. Concerning the observation of instruction, Colour Primary's deputy principal declared:

> *Learner assessments and data are utilised by our principal to monitor advancement and pinpoint areas requiring enhancement. She makes sure that the methods of education are efficient and in line with the objectives of the institution.* (Ms. Pink)

Similarly, Mr. Square of Shape Primary said:

> *Every term, our principal urges teachers to do baseline assessments so they can monitor learner development. He tracks patterns in learner performance and pinpoints areas of strength and weakness using data analytic tools.* (Mr. Square)

Mr. Onion of Vegetable Primary also mentioned that:

> *To make sure that lesson plans, curriculum materials, and assessments are in line with educational standards, our principal reviews them. He can stay up to date on the calibre and efficacy of training by keeping lines of communication open and going over the course materials.* (Mr. Onion)

Ms. Apple of Fruit Primary said:

> *Working closely with teachers, our principal keeps an eye on both teaching and learning. She talks about their struggles and experiences. Through these exchanges, teachers can talk about difficulties they have faced, exchange*

experiences, and look for advice on how to help learners perform better academically. He makes use of this data to give the teachers specialised assistance. (Ms. Apple)

According to the aforementioned voices, the Shape, Colour, and Vegetable Primary principal was involved in overseeing the curriculum and giving teachers constructive criticism. Additionally, Fruit Primary's principal used conversation to assess how well teaching and learning were going. These proactive strategies recommend that all principals give curriculum monitoring top priority to raise learners' academic achievement.

The literature backs up the importance of instructional leadership practices like teaching and learning observation. For continuous school improvement, the South African Standard for Principalship (DoBE, 2014) stipulates that learning outcomes should be continuously monitored and evaluated. Additionally, Turkoglu and Cansoy (2018) assert that principals of schools have a duty to oversee learners' learning and take appropriate measures to assist them in resolving any challenges.

The instructional leadership approach developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) includes monitoring teaching and learning. According to Hallinger and Murphy (1985), it is critical for principals to see principals in action, provide guidance on issues, and identify areas for improvement.

The main finding that arose from this sub-theme summary was the widespread use of teaching and learning monitoring in the schools under investigation. It is an essential practice for instructional leadership that has a direct effect on education.

6.2.2.4. Promoting teacher professional development

All the deputy principals who took part in this study had the opinion that their principals encouraged and made sure the deputy principals attended professional development events. Regarding professional growth, Colour Primary's deputy principal stated:

> *The principal consistently promotes lifelong learning and development. She makes sure to give us timely notice of the training sessions and seminars, as well as data in the event that the training is conducted online. She understands that continued professional development improves instruction, enriches learners' learning opportunities, and advances school improvement as a whole.* (Ms. Pink).

In a similar vein, Mr. Onion of Vegetable Primary School stated that the ever-changing Annual Teaching Plans (ATP) forced them to attend an excessive number of in-person and virtual sessions. What he stated was this:

> *The principal evaluates the school's objectives and needs, pinpoints areas in need of development, and matches professional development options with those requirements. In order to effectively mentor teachers in their professional development, model lifetime learning, and stay up to date on current trends in education, he also attends the trainings.*

Ms. Apple of Fruit Primary emphasised how time-consuming she found some virtual sessions to be and why she was reluctant to attend them. It seems that the principal was the one who urged the deputy principals to attend meetings and who held the opinion that they ought to. As stated by Ms. Apple:

> *The principal actively informs teachers about these opportunities, offers advice on choosing pertinent trainings, and assists in obtaining funds or other resources to encourage involvement.*

In a similar vein, Shape Primary's Mr. Square echoed that he had numerous meetings to attend. He emphasised the importance of attending workshops, stating that they help people advance their careers. What he stated was this:

> *Teachers are encouraged by the administration to offer professional development seminars in the school and share their knowledge with others. In addition, the principal encourages a culture of peer cooperation and learning by providing chances for teachers to exchange expertise, know-how, and life lessons.*

The overall conclusion that emerged from this theme was that the principals in this study provided formal leadership that encouraged deputy principals to collaborate in their communities of practice, as well as cluster meetings, seminars, and other means of encouraging deputy principals to become more professional. The reasons that principals seemed to hang on in favour for professional development were that deputy principals needed to develop and upgrade themselves continuously to improve the quality and performance of deputy principals' instruction.

This result is consistent with the body of research showing that schools can enhance teacher professional development and enhance learner outcomes by putting an emphasis on instructional leadership and fostering collaborative professional development opportunities (Kilag, 2023).

The opinions expressed by school principals about the professional development of teachers align with the findings of existing literature. According to the South African Standard for Principalship (DoBE, 2014), to meet the development requirements of teachers and raise the calibre of instruction, principals should provide chances for continuous professional development to their personnel.

Using the instructional leadership model developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), the principals of the four schools took the initiative to actively support teacher professional development inside their institutions. By offering chances for professional development and continuing support, the principal contributes to the improvement of education.

The primary discovery that arose from this sub-theme's summary was that the principals actively supported teacher professional development in their schools. As such, much emphasis was placed on meetings and workshops.

6.2.2.5 Understanding of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

The data's conclusions imply that the principals supported the establishment of Professional Learning Communities among their staff members. As an example, the Colour Primary deputy principal stated:

> *By encouraging a culture of cooperation and shared learning, our principal cultivates a professional learning community. Every cycle, she pushes Departmental Heads to hold subject meetings so teachers can exchange their knowledge, insights, and creative approaches.* (Ms. Pink)

Mr. Square of Shape Primary commented:

> *In order to establish a professional learning community, the principal stresses the need of introspection and self-improvement. In order to create a supportive and guidance-oriented culture, he starts a mentoring program where seasoned teachers guide new principals. In order to increase teachers' expertise, he also promotes their involvement in outside professional development programs like departmental workshops.* (Mr. Square)

Mr. Onion of Vegetable Primary said:

> *The principal forms specialised professional learning teams, such curriculum development teams, where teachers work together and take responsibility for their own professional development. Additionally, he exhorts teachers to offer their knowledge to the school community.* (Mr. Onion)

Ms. Apple of Fruit Primary said:

> *Our principal is in favour of teachers using online platforms where they can provide coaching and peer learning using video observations and feedback tools. Technology integration improves the professional learning community as a whole, increases resource availability, fosters collaboration, and promotes access to knowledge.* (Ms. Apple)

From a literary standpoint, the creation of Professional Learning Communities in schools is the primary duty of principals and the SMT, according to The South African Standard for Principalship (DoBE, 2014). It also suggests that to guarantee high-quality teaching and learning, the principal should uphold quality, win over commitment, and improve the performance of all stakeholders. A Professional Learning Community also contributes to continuous professional growth since it fosters empowerment, teamwork, and skill development (DoBE, 2014).

The principals value the function that PLCs serve in their schools, according to the summary of this sub-theme. Additionally, they advise teachers to participate in Professional Learning Communities so that they can stay up to date on the latest developments in the field.

6.2.2.6 Rewards and recognition

According to the opinions shared by every deputy principal involved in this research, their principals encourage and reward excellent work because they think it inspires teachers and learners to do better. Stated differently, the act of acknowledging and recognising exceptional work functioned as a means of inspiring both high-achieving individuals and underperforming ones, ultimately convincing the latter to enhance their output. Diverse techniques were provided to inspire learners. Mr. Onion of Vegetable Primary, for instance, said the following:

> *Teachers feel intrinsically motivated when their accomplishments and efforts are recognised by the principal. The school community as a whole is inspired to pursue greatness, and the principal's praise and awards serve as a catalyst for ongoing development and morale.* (Mr. Onion)

Ms. Pink of Colour Primary School shared similar view that their principal was passionate about recognising and rewarding good performance. This is what she had to say:

> *The principal offers helpful criticism and recognises accomplishments. This promotes self-reflection, professional development, and skill improvement among teachers, which eventually enhances learner learning.* (Ms. Pink)

According to the following passage from the interview, Mr. Square of Shape Primary held similar beliefs that his principal recognised and acknowledged good achievement by both the learners and the teachers:

> *Teachers and staff are given opportunities by the administration to discuss their successes and efficient methods with their peers. The principal cultivates*

> *an environment of gratitude by publicly recognising exceptional accomplishments.* (Mr. Square).

Ms. Apple of Fruit Primary said:

> *The principal is aware of how important it is to recognise and value the work that teachers and learners put in. She puts into action a thorough recognition program that incorporates several expressions of gratitude, including rewards, diplomas, and public acknowledgement.* (Ms. Apple)

The discovery that principals, in their capacity as instructional leaders, acknowledged and rewarded excellent work is consistent with Sim's (2011) findings, which demonstrated how effective principals recognised and encouraged exceptional teachers and learners. The purpose of doing this was to inspire them to work harder and to inspire others to follow suit. This demonstrates that the principals tried to motivate principals to enhance their methods of instruction. The ultimate objective of using rewards and recognition is to improve learner success outcomes and establish schools that are models for excellence.

The idea that rewarding and recognising teachers might improve instruction and learning in classrooms is supported by literature. The principals' views are consistent with those of other academics (Hallinger, 2009), who argue that effective instructional leaders reward learners for their high performance.

To summarise this sub-theme, the main conclusion was that school principals praised principals and gave awards to learners to improve instructional leadership practices in their institutions.

The implementation and improvement of instructional leadership methods in schools by principals was the subject of the second theme. As a result, a lot of focus was put on things like professional learning communities (PLCs), incentives and recognition, distributed instructional leadership, monitoring teaching and learning, and teacher professional development. I'm going to go on to my next topic, which is obstacles to using instructional leadership techniques.

6.2.3 Barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices

The results imply that school principals faced several obstacles in carrying out their instructional leadership responsibilities.

Commented by Mr. Onion of Vegetable Primary:

> *Some of the teachers' opposition to change is one of the issues our principal is dealing with. Teachers who are accustomed to their current procedures may find it difficult to implement new instructional strategies. This makes it challenging for him to apply fresh strategies successfully*. (Mr. Onion)

Ms. Apple of Fruit Primary stated that:

> *Our principal faces a difficulty in striking a balance between the differing demands and expectations of different stakeholders. Learners at our school come from a variety of backgrounds. In order for all the learners to feel accepted, the principal must make an effort to accommodate them all.* (Ms. Apple)

Mr. Square of Shape Primary stated that:

> *One issue that our principal deals with is learners arriving late and some of them missing the first period.* (Mr. Square)

Ms. Pink of Colour Primary added that:

> *The absenteeism of teachers and learners presents a problem for our principal in the practice of instructional leadership. As a result, teachers had to schedule afternoon classes and catch-up programmes to tackle the material that had fallen behind.* (Ms. Pink)

The deputy principals' voices imply that their principals encountered several obstacles when attempting to implement their instructional leadership techniques. According to Ms. Pink, low attendance rates among teachers and learners have an adverse effect on how the curriculum is implemented. Mr. Onion went on to say that some teachers are reluctant to use innovative teaching techniques that could raise learners' academic achievement. According to Mr. Square, learners who arrive late for class miss out on

a crucial lesson that day. Because of Ms. Apple's worries about the learners' backgrounds, the administrator should come up with plans that can work for every learner.

The findings of the literature substantiate the challenges faced by school principals in their endeavours to facilitate efficient teaching and learning within their institutions. According to Van der Merwe (2018), time wasters such as teachers' unprepared lessons, learners' tardiness, and teachers' absenteeism affected the amount of time that learners spent in class.

Conceptually speaking, the model developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) aligns with the results obtained on the obstacles encountered by instructional leaders.

When this subject was summarised, the main conclusion that became apparent was that school principals found it challenging to implement their instructional leadership techniques because of a few obstacles. As a result, the issues raised by principals and learners received a lot of attention.

The obstacles to implementing instructional leadership methods were the subject of the third theme. I will now move on to my fourth and last subject, which is the efforts made by principals to remove obstacles from instructional leadership practices.

6.2.4 Principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices

The data's conclusions imply that all four school principals used proactive strategies to get beyond obstacles to instructional leadership practices. In this sense, the strategies concentrated on the obstacles that both teachers and learners presented.

The participants described the various approaches their principals took to address the obstacles principals and learners presented. This fundamentally meant enhancing teaching and learning through the application of several improvement methodologies. Concerning the strategies for improvement, Vegetable Primary's deputy principal declared that:

> *Strong bonds and open channels of communication are encouraged between the principals and our principal. He places a high priority on holding frequent, official and informal sessions with teachers to learn about their expectations, concerns, and ideas. This allows him the chance to listen, ask for input, and deal with any difficulties or obstacles that come up.* (Mr. Onion)

Ms. Apple of Fruit Primary stated that:

> *The collaborative approach is the method our principal uses to tackle instructional leadership issues. She seeks the opinions and participation of all parties involved in the decision-making process to shape educational programs and plans.* (Ms. Apple)

Mr. Square of Shape Primary added that:

> *The principal keeps an eye on learners' arrivals and keeps track of those who arrive late. In order to improve the learners' arrival time at school, he extends an invitation to the parents to learn more about the situation and participate in the decision-making process.* (Mr. Square)

Ms. Pink of Colour Primary stated that:

> *In order to overcome obstacles in instructional leadership, our principal ensures that teachers give catch-up plans, keeps an eye on the workflow, and keeps track of curriculum coverage.* (Ms. Pink)

The results imply that the principals who took part employed a variety of strategies to try and remove obstacles to instructional leadership practices. The principals of Mr. Square, Ms. Pink, and Ms. Apple devised initiatives for improvement, including enlisting parents to assist in their children's education and implementing catch-up programs. This indicated that they gave instruction and learning in their classrooms, top priority. The principal of Mr. Onion promotes teamwork and includes everyone in decision-making for the advancement of the learners.

The principals' efforts to remove obstacles to instructional leadership practices are bolstered by literature. According to the South African Standard for Principalship

(DoBE, 2014), principals should employ techniques to improve learner achievement and excellence as well as to create a learning culture in the classroom.

The school principals tried to remove obstacles to instructional leadership practices by utilising Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership model.

The fourth subject centred on the initiatives taken by principals to get over obstacles to instructional leadership strategies. In order to get over the numerous obstacles that learners and principals presented, the principals employed a variety of proactive strategies.

6.3. Chapter summary

The results and data analyse from the interviews conducted with four deputy principals in the Johannesburg South District were covered in this chapter. It examined the results for every question asked throughout the interview. This was done to confirm the conclusions drawn from the principals of the individual schools that were interviewed. The results mainly support the conclusions made by the school principals.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE DEPARTMENTAL HEADS

7.1. Introduction

In the preceding section, I showcased and deliberated about the information obtained from the Deputy Principals regarding their professors' comprehension and implementation of educational leadership in enhancing the academic performance of learners. After dividing the data into four pieces, this is the third portion that provides the information. The results of my interviews with four departmental heads about their perceptions of the roles that principals play as educational leaders are presented and discussed in this section. They employed fictitious names to safeguard both their private information and the secret identities of their schools. Ms. Banana from Fruit Primary School, Mr. Circle from Shape Primary School, Ms. Red from Colour Primary School, and Mr. Garlic from Vegetable Primary School are those taking part in the Departmental Head programme.

7.2. Presentation of findings

Like in the preceding chapter, verbatim quotes are utilised to describe the findings to preserve the integrity of the respondents' "voices" in the research. The conversation incorporates the work of literature that was examined in Chapter Two. Department Heads' perceptions of principals' responsibilities in promoting educational leadership procedures; principals' implementation and improvement of these procedures in schools; barriers to implementing these procedures; and principals' endeavours to surmount these barriers were the four main themes that surfaced. The next sections go into further detail about these issues.

7.2.1. Departmental Heads' understanding of the principals' roles in supporting instructional leadership practices

The four department heads who took part in the discussion all believed that principals' duties were crucial in promoting learning and instruction. They demonstrated that the principal must prioritise education if the school is to be successful. Ensuring that educational activities and instruction occur daily is a major responsibility of the principal.

The principal must be well aware of their responsibilities as an instructional leader in assisting with education and instruction. According to Fruit Primary's department head:

> *In order to facilitate instruction and learning, the principal is crucial. In order to support the curriculum, the administrator should make sure the school has an adequate supply of textbooks and instructional materials. This would facilitate the principals' ability to successfully present the material.* (Ms. Banana)

Regarding this matter, Shape Primary's department head had similar opinions. What he stated was this:

> *The annual teaching plan should be closely observed by the head of school to verify that principals are adhering to it. The head of school must also examine learner outcomes to pinpoint areas in need of improvement and recommend workable solutions.* (Mr. Circle)

When questioned about the role the principal plays in assisting with teaching and learning, the Department Head of Colour Primary stated the following:

> *The principal, in my opinion, ought to foster an environment at the school that respects and encourages teachers as a profession. He or she actively hears the worries and needs of the principals and offers assets to meet those requirements.* (Ms. Red)

Additionally, the Vegetable Primary Department Head stated:

> *The principal need to promote collaboration among teachers, cultivating an environment where ideas, materials, and optimal methodologies are exchanged. In order for us to support and grow from one another, he or she should provide principals the chance to participate in professional development events.* (Mr. Garlic)

The results appear to indicate that principals are crucial in overseeing and facilitating instruction. For the opportunity for learning and instruction to be effective, the principal should give enough materials to assist teaching and learning, according to the opinions of Ms. Banana, Ms. Red, and Mr. Garlic. This indicates that it is the responsibility of principals to provide uninterrupted instruction. According to Mr. Circle, the head of school should employ many techniques to keep an eye on how the curriculum is being delivered.

Kumari (2022) supports the idea that principals should be instructional leaders, saying that to improve learner learning outcomes and academic achievement, principals must be capable mentors who may encourage, guide, and offer advice to principals. According to Meador (2019), principals can help principals in the manners that follow: make time for gaze cooperation; interaction significant assessments; ask inquiries and look for guidance; give their back; be uniform; motivate principals to bring issues to you; get acquainted with them; provide guidance or help; and offer appropriate professional growth.

When this subject was summarised, the most important conclusion that became apparent was that principals must make sure their schools are adequately resourced while ensuring a positive atmosphere is fostered. Additionally, they must guarantee that they give teachers the assistance they need to foster effective instruction and learning.

7.2.1.1. The school's vision

Crucially, each of the four panellists emphasised how crucial it is to have a school vision. A vision offers everyone a clear image of what the institution hopes to

accomplish, which gives every institution a feeling of purpose. Mr. Circle of Shape Primary did a great job capturing this when he said,

> *"In my opinion, the school's vision should be closely related to learning and instruction." Our school's vision guides methods of instruction and is in line with educational objectives. Additionally, it guarantees that teachers and learners are pursuing the same objective.* (Mr. Circle)

Regarding this matter, Fruit Primary's department head had similar opinions. What she stated was as follows:

> *The educational techniques in our school are framed by our school vision. It directs the choice of instructional materials that align with the school's overarching objectives. This results in a concentrated and structured method of education and instruction that is advantageous to both principals and learners.* (Ms. Banana)

When questioned about the vision for her school, the department head of Colour Primary stated the following:

> *To the best of my knowledge, education and instruction should be guided by the school's vision. Our institution's vision serves as a roadmap for curriculum creation, giving learners a clear understanding of the information and learning objectives the school seeks to impart in them.* (Ms. Red)

The Department Head of Vegetable Primary went on to say:

> *"Building a purposeful educational environment requires that the school's vision and instructional methods are aligned." Our school's vision reflects its guiding principles and its objectives for learning and instruction. It highlights how crucial it is to offer top-notch instruction.* (Mr. Garlic)

The results appear to indicate that a school's vision has a significant role in facilitating effective instruction and learning. Every participant acknowledges the critical role that goal plays in teaching and learning. It outlines the specific objectives of every school and provides guidance to principals on how to implement the curriculum.

Together with other teachers, the principals of these institutions establish the school's vision and goals, which are always centred upon strategies and procedures that increase learner accomplishment results. Merritt and Wang (2022) assert that in order to guarantee that teachers employ top-notch curricula, instruction, and evaluation, principals who serve as instructional leaders must develop school goals with student learning as the main priority. The goal of Fruit Primary, Shape Primary, and Colour Primary was to raise the standard of education and instruction. As he has the authority to oversee school instruction in line with the institution's vision, purpose, and goals, the principal serves as the cornerstone of school administration efforts to accomplish the organisation's objectives (Khosyi'in, 2021). Teachers may perform better and motivate learners to put in more effort to enhance their academic achievement if the institution's mission and goal are clear (Dowd, 2018).

The most important conclusion that came out of analysing this sub-theme was how crucial it is to have a vision to provide the school a feeling of direction. As a result, the goal is always predicated on offering top-notch educational opportunities to raise learner achievement.

7.2.1.3 Creating an appropriate positive school environment

Regarding the school surroundings, each of the four people surveyed stated that to support efficient teaching and learning, the school leadership must provide a favourable school atmosphere. The four department managers who took part in the discussion noted that their principals employed various leadership philosophies on a regular basis. Ms. Red of Colour Primary made the following observation:

> *"I think the principal is very important in making sure that the right environment is created to support learning and instruction." A supportive and encouraging school culture that appreciates and uplifts both teachers and pupils is promoted by the principal. He fosters an atmosphere of safety and decency where everybody is appreciated and inspired to actively engage in the process of learning. (Ms. Red)*

Mr. Circle of Shape Primary stated:

> *By encouraging a good and encouraging school culture, the principal makes sure that the right environment is established to promote teaching and learning. She sets forth unambiguous standards for behaviour and consistently implements equitable and open disciplinary measures. (Mr. Circle)*

The Fruit Primary Department Head had a similar opinion, saying:

> *It is crucial for the principal to play a part in fostering an environment that will support teaching and learning. By encouraging cooperation and respect, our principal creates a great learning environment. Everybody's opinions are valued. (Ms. Banana)*

Vegetable Primary's Mr. Garlic said his school used an inclusive approach. What he had to say was this:

> *The principal fosters an atmosphere that is suitable for instruction and learning, as well as one that is polite and safe. (Mr. Garlic)*

The aforementioned voices emphasised the significance of the various leadership philosophies employed by school principals. To make the teachers feel comfortable and respected in the classroom, the principal of Colour and Vegetable Primary School encouraged these values. However, everyone at Shape Primary knows exactly what is expected of them because to the clear expectations set by the school's principal. To ensure that all the teachers at Fruit Primary are working towards the same objective, the principal promotes collaboration. These leadership philosophies foster an environment in the classroom where each person may do their responsibilities with efficiency.

The creation of a positive atmosphere for learning in schools is recommended by literature to provide successful teaching and learning. The opinions of the school principals actually align with those of Hallinger et al. (2017), who contend that a strong principal would foster a teaching and learning environment in the classroom. As per Saad (2021), the principal's responsibility is to sustain a favourable learning atmosphere by fostering a good atmosphere.

The necessity of fostering a pleasant school atmosphere appeared as the main finding when summing this sub-theme. The principals therefore gave distinct leadership

philosophies a lot of weight. The first subject was principals' conceptions of their duties in assisting with practices in leadership of education. The results imply that the principals were aware of the need of establishing a suitable and supportive learning environment and of the institution's vision. I'll now go on to my next issue, which is the implementation and improvement of leadership in education techniques in schools by principals.

7.2.2. Principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools

The results showed that all the principals worked hard to implement and improve their instructional leadership strategies, which are covered in more detail below. According to the Departmental Head of Vegetable Primary, in this regard:

> *The principal attends pertinent seminars to keep current on curricular concerns and provides us with comments and helpful recommendations for improving teaching strategies. Additionally, this aids in streamlining our processes and enhancing the outcomes for learners.* (Mr. Garlic)

Ms. Red of Colour Primary stated in a similar manner:

> *"Our principal encourages a shared leadership culture within the school." He advises us to provide principals more assignments so they can grow. He creates a distinct vision for education and successfully conveys it to the staff.* (Ms. Red)

Ms. Banana of Fruit Primary added that:

> *We receive continuous assistance and mentoring from our principal, who also offers advice on curricular symmetry, evaluation processes, and teaching strategies. She promotes a culture of ongoing development in which teachers are inspired and empowered to experiment with novel teaching strategies.* (Ms. Banana)

Further, the Departmental Head of Shape Primary said:

> *To assist everyone, comprehend what is required of them, the administrator collaborates with principals to create educational objectives and techniques that are in line with the mission of the institution.* (Mr. Circle)

Based on the results of the interviews, it appears that the principals of Vegetable, Fruit, and Shape Primary implemented and improved instructional leadership practices in their schools by keeping abreast of curriculum developments, collaborating with teachers, offering support, and motivating them to try out novel teaching strategies. Additionally, Ms. Red said that their headteacher pushes managers to provide work to other teachers so that they can grow. Teachers that practice distributed leadership have more possibilities for involvement and cooperation as well as a culture of trust (Nawab & Asad 2020).

When this subject was summarised, the principals' implementation and improvement of educational management methods in schools stood out as the major finding. As a result, the heads of the schools concentrated on encouraging and evaluating the principals.

7.2.2.1 Distributed instructional leadership

According to the data's conclusions, each of the four principals use distributed instructional leadership techniques at their respective institutions. The Shape Primary Department Head said that their principal supports distributed instructional leadership to ensure that their schools run smoothly. Mr. Shape Circle Primary stated:

> *Distributed leadership in education is a useful tool that our principal uses. He makes sure that everyone's expertise is respected, promotes cooperation across departments, and cultivates a culture of shared accountability. (*Mr. Circle)

A similar response came from the Departmental Head of Fruit Primary, who said:

> *In addition to guiding and supporting us, the principal assigns department heads specific duties related to leadership in education. She lays down roles,*

duties, and standards in detail so that everybody knows what is expected of them. (Ms. Banana)

Ms. Red of Colour Primary said:

Sharing decision-making and working together to solve problems are among the principal's main priorities. She takes the time to consult with principals and department leaders and pushes us to be accountable for our own learning projects. (Ms. Red)

A similar response came from the Departmental Head of Vegetable Primary, who said:

More chances to exchange best practices and work together to overcome educational problems are provided by our principal to deputy principals and teachers. (Mr. Garlic)

According to the results of the interviews, the principals thought distributed instructional leadership was a crucial practice in their schools. The Shape, Colour, Vegetable, and Fruit primary school principals gave their department heads and principals assignments so they could assume responsibility for their respective areas and raise learner success. This demonstrates that the school principals assigned leadership responsibilities using specific strategies. The improvement of teaching and learning is the common aim served by all these strategies.

The results of this study imply that principals employed their staff members in various management capacities. Sibanda (2018) asserted that dispersed leadership behaviours and enlisting followers in making choices, together with fostering trust, have a good impact on academic attainment. When the principal is prepared to cede ultimate authority and provide staff members with opportunity to exercise management inside the school, distributed leadership may have a significant impact (Sibanda, 2018).

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this sub-theme is that dispersed educational leadership methods were prevalent in each of the four educational institutions that were the subject of the research.

7.2.2.3 Monitoring teaching and learning

The results of the study indicate that the principals of each of the four schools under investigation successfully oversaw instruction. In order to keep an eye on the curriculum, principals' methods, and learners' progress, the principals concentrated on these areas. The Department Head of Colour Primary provided the following information on the monitoring of teaching and learning:

> *The principal keeps an eye on learners' books, gives principals helpful input based on the results, and supports them in enhancing the way the curriculum is delivered.* (Ms. Red)

Similarly, Mr. Circle of Shape Primary said:

> *In order to guarantee that learners receive top-notch training in the classroom, principals are essential in overseeing learning and instruction. After analysing learner accomplishment data, our principal recommends actionable options for intervention in areas of concern.* (Mr. Circle)

Mr. Garlic of Vegetable Primary also mentioned that:

> *In order to make sure that curriculum planning, educational resources, and assessments are in line with the goals of learning, the principal works in conjunction with the Departmental Heads and principals.* (Mr. Garlic)

Ms. Banana of Fruit Primary said:

> *Our principal discusses how learners perform in conversations with department heads and principals. A quarterly curriculum report is also created by the department heads, who additionally note any areas that require improvement.* (Ms. Banana)

The aforementioned voices imply that distinct approaches were employed by each school administration to oversee the implementation of the educational programme. Leaners' books were utilised by the principal of Colour Primary to keep an eye on curriculum completion. The curriculum was monitored by Shape's principal using learner accomplishment outcomes analysis. By examining curriculum planning and quarterly curriculum accounts, Vegetable and Fruit Primary contributed to curriculum

supervision. These proactive strategies recommend that all principals give curricular supervision top priority to raise learners' academic achievement.

The monitoring of instruction as a crucial instructional leadership strategy is supported by the literature. According to Thessin (2019), instructional leadership is a crucial active principal duty that is carried out regularly to assess learner progress in watching, encouraging, supervising, and monitoring teacher instruction and learning in the school.

In summing this sub-theme, the most important discovery was that the investigated schools routinely monitored learning and instruction. It has a direct influence on learning and instruction and is an essential educational management strategy.

7.2.2.4. Promoting teacher professional development

According to the opinions shared by each department head involved in this survey, the principals of those departments encouraged and made sure that their heads attended professional development events. The Department Head of Colour Primary stated the following on continuing education:

> *We participate in a variety of departmental seminars and online conferences these days. It's this now, that tomorrow, and occasionally you have to attend multiple virtual meetings every day.* (Ms. Red).

Similarly, Mr. Circle of Shape Primary stated that since the Annual Teaching Plans (ATP) are often shifting, they are required to go to an excessive number of in-person and online conferences. She stated as follows:

> *ATPs are always shifting. There are too many in-person and virtual encounters. More so than in the classrooms, we are in them.* (Mr. Circle)

Fruit Primary's Ms. Banana mentioned the length of time she found some of the virtual sessions to be and how reluctant she was about going to them. It appeared that the principal was the one who promoted teachers' attendance at conferences and held the opinion that they ought to.

> *She remarked, "I would be selective about what events I attend if it weren't for the principal who wants us to attend these many meetings." A few of the presenters fail to address the issues we face.* (Ms. Banana)

Mr. Garlic from Vegetable Primary also expressed his opinion that he was required to attend an excessive number of distance-learning meetings. It was the school administrator who was pushing them to come to the meetings. Mr. Garlic stressed the importance of taking seminars, stating that they help people advance their careers. This is what he said:

> *I go to meetings for the three subjects I instruct. We are urged by the headmaster that we attend all the meetings. Attending conferences and training sessions is really beneficial. They support our professional development and enable us to use the curriculum as needed.* (Mr. Garlic)

The DH's opinions on teacher development align with what the literature has to offer. In order to enhance teachers' subject matter, abilities, and expertise and help them deliver lessons more effectively, the principal should provide chances and support for teachers to further their professional and academic credentials (Naidoo, 2019). Participating in and supporting teachers' pedagogical growth is, according to Ozdemir et al. (2020), the most effective way to attain successful professional growth.

This subject generally revealed that school principals supported teachers in becoming more competent by organising seminars and cluster meetings. Principals appeared to be clinging to the idea that professional development was important because it would allow teachers to better themselves and the calibre and effectiveness of their instruction. Groenewald, Kilag, Cabuenas, Camangyan, Abapo, and Abendan, (2023), state that principals who prioritize instructional leadership practices, such as curriculum alignment, data-driven decision-making and professional development, have a significant impact on student learning outcomes.

The primary discovery that arose from this sub-theme's summary was that the principals actively supported teacher professional development in their schools. As such, conferences and training sessions were given a lot of importance.

7.2.2.5. Understanding of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

The data's conclusions imply that the principals supported the establishment of Professional Learning Communities among their staff members. The Departmental Head of Colour Primary, for example, stated:

> *The school's principal uses several techniques to establish a learning community. She promotes cooperative teacher gatherings where we may exchange ideas, talk about teaching strategies, and consider how we are doing. She also exhorts teachers to participate in cluster meetings.* (Ms. Red)

Mr. Circle of Shape Primary commented:

> *Our principal supports teacher collaboration in planning and the purpose of discussion. including subject- and grade-specific team conferences. We have the chance to exchange efficient procedures at these gatherings, which will help us raise learner accomplishment.* (Mr. Circle)

Mr. Garlic of Vegetable Primary said:

> *The principal supports this approach, in which teachers evaluate learner achievement together and talk about teaching strategies to meet the needs of the learners. By setting up coaching programmes, the principal encourages a culture of discussion and input so that teachers may share knowledge and experience with one another.* (Mr. Garlic)

Ms. Banana of Fruit Primary said:

> *The administrator gives teachers the tools and encouragement they need to take advantage of outside possibilities for professional growth.* (Ms. Banana)

According to Bafadal et al. (2020), a successful classroom ecology may be created through the establishment of a professional education community, creative classroom development, instruction that prioritises learners, and a welcoming school climate. In order to improve education and instruction in schools, this clearly advocates the creation of professional communities of learning.

The principals respect the function that PLCs serve in their schools, according to the summary of this sub-theme. Additionally, they urge teachers to participate in Professional Learning Communities so that they may stay up to date on the latest developments in the field.

7.2.2.6. Rewards and recognition

According to the opinions shared by each department head involved in this research, their principals encourage and recognise high performance because they think it inspires teachers and learners to work more. Principals must be dedicated to influencing and enhancing student outcomes (Leithwood et al., 2020). Stated differently, the act of acknowledging and recognising exceptional work functioned as a means of inspiring both high-achieving individuals and underperforming ones, ultimately convincing the latter to enhance their output. A variety of techniques were provided to inspire learners. For example, Mr. Garlic of Vegetable Primary had this to say:

> *Top learners have a form of rewards system in place where they are called up in class and given tokens to encourage them and inspire other learners to follow suit. To motivate others, we also put pries on display in the lobby and offices. Teachers receive rewards as well for their accomplishments. Those who do poorly are not to be shamed, but rather encouraged.* (Mr. Garlic)

Fruit Primary's Ms. Banana had a similar opinion, saying that their principal was devoted to praising and recognising excellent work. Additionally, they were getting gift cards from the nearby mall, which were given to winners in several categories. This was carried out to inspire teachers and learners to work harder. This is what she had to say:

> *We honour our accomplishments by putting trophies on display. This motivates others to put in extra effort so that we can collaborate to support learners in achieving successful outcomes.* (Ms. Banana)

Mr. Circle of Shape Primary agreed that his principal should identify and celebrate both teachers' and learners' excellent work, as this passage from the interview demonstrates.

> *Those who achieve good achievements are commended by the principal. He thinks that to promote excellent performance and instil that mindset in others as well, good achievement must be acknowledged and made public.* (Mr. Circle).

Ms. Red of Colour Primary, had the same view about how her principal motivate learners. This is what she said:

> *The principal inspires learners to work harder. He gives credit for a job well done. He gives out certificates to learners who meet high standards as well as books that will motivate them to becoming better readers.* (Ms. Red).

The idea that rewarding and recognising teachers may improve instruction and learning in classrooms is supported by literature. The opinions expressed by school principals align with those of Armstrong (2022), who argues that to improve the performance of teachers, a strategy must be put in place. This strategy includes enforcing discipline at work, mentoring teachers, providing sufficient resources for instruction, sanctioning principals who infringe the law, and rewarding teachers. Additionally, school principals can support teacher performance by motivating teachers and overseeing them. This was done to inspire others to follow suit and to push the teachers to work more.

The main conclusion that arose from this sub-theme was that school principals acknowledged principals and gave incentives to learners to improve instructional leadership practices in their institutions.

The second issue was instructional leadership methods in schools and how principals implemented and improved them. Integrated leadership in education, professional discourse and interaction, evaluating learning and instruction, encouraging professional growth for teachers, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and awards and recognition were thus given a lot of weight. I will now address the second

topic I want to discuss, which is obstacles to using educational management techniques.

7.2.3. Barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices

The results imply that several obstacles prevented school principals from carrying out their leadership in education responsibilities.

Mr. Garlic of Vegetable Primary commented:

> *The principal is dealing with several issues. One of the things that prevents methods of instruction from being implemented is the lack of financing and resources.* (Mr. Garlic)

Ms. Banana of Fruit Primary stated that:

> *One issue is that learners often arrive late. Some learners skip the first period due to the fact they have to drop off their siblings at creche before they can attend class.* (Ms. Banana)

Mr. Circle of Shape Primary stated that:

> *One issue is the learners' absenteeism. A portion of the learners come from households where their elder siblings are the primary carers. The principal must follow up with these learners and make an effort to assist them in raising their level of attendance.* (Mr. Circle)

Ms. Red of Colour Primary added that:

> *One issue is that professors are often absent and arrive late. The head of the school must make sure that the learners are catered to because some of the principals come an hour late. Teachers will occasionally leave early to attend union meetings.* (Ms. Red)

According to department head voices, principals encountered several obstacles while attempting to implement leadership in education methods. Ms. Red, Ms. Banana, and Mr. Circle all mentioned how late arrivals and low attendance by principals and

learners have an adverse effect on how the curriculum is implemented. Mr. Garlic went on to say that one of the issues preventing them from successfully implementing the curriculum is a lack of resources.

The research on the challenges faced by school principals in their role as instructional leaders in promoting quality teaching and learning in their institutions is supported by published works. The difficulties faced by instructional leaders in many schools include a lack of opportunities for professional growth for the management, resistance to accepting pedagogical roles, inadequate resources and facilities, a lack of funding and low financial backing, low stakeholder involvement, and a lack of support from local political leaders (Hussien, 2019). Teachers encounter several challenges, including timetable restrictions, large class numbers, insufficient government financing, and stringent requirements associated with government subsidies that restrict the purchase of instructional materials (Changala & Muzyamba, 2019). Scott (2017) notes that among the difficulties principals have while practicing IL are those related to funding and educational resources. In many South African schools, teacher unions provide a significant barrier to the delivery of high-quality instruction and leadership (Bush, 2020).

When this subject was summarised, the main conclusion that became apparent was that school principals found it challenging to implement their instructional leadership techniques because of a few obstacles. As a result, the issues raised by principals and learners received a lot of attention.

The obstacles to implementing educational leadership methods were the subject of the third theme. I will now go on to my fourth and last subject, which is the efforts made by principals to remove obstacles from leadership in educational practices.

7.2.4. Principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices

The data's conclusions imply that all four school principals used proactive strategies to get beyond obstacles to instructional leadership practices. In this sense, the strategies concentrated on the obstacles that both principals and learners presented.

The participants described the various approaches their principals took to address the obstacles principals and learners presented. This fundamentally meant enhancing education and instruction via the application of several improvement methodologies. Concerning the strategies for enhancement, the Department Head of Vegetable Primary declared that:

> *In order to prevent a lack of instructional materials, the principal makes sure that the group responsible for instruction and support materials retrieves the LTSM each term and completes the necessary analysis on schedule.* (Mr. Garlic)

Ms. Banana of Fruit Primary stated that:

> *To eliminate late arrivals among pupils, there is a registry for late learners. Letters inviting families to resolve the issue are sent to learners who arrive more than three days late.* (Ms. Banana)

Mr. Circle of Shape Primary added that:

> *The learners' parents are invited by the principal to discuss the issue. Additionally, they outline their plans to raise their kids' participation, which might have an impact on their schoolwork. Every day, the principal keeps an eye on the attendance of the pupils to ensure that it is improving.* (Mr. Circle)

Ms. Red of Colour Primary stated that:

> *Teachers provide catch-up strategies for subjects that were neglected in the allotted time. The principal and the deputy principal oversee the remediation plan's execution to ensure that everything on the syllabus is covered.* (Ms. Red)

The results imply that the principals who took part employed a variety of strategies to try and remove obstacles to leadership in education practices. The principals of Ms. Red, Ms. Banana, and Mr. Circle put improvements into practice, including catch-up programmes and integrating parents in the education of their kids. This indicated that they gave instruction and learning in their classrooms top priority. The LTMS group

is encouraged by Mr. Garlic's principal to oversee the teaching resource on a term basis.

The principals' efforts to remove obstacles to methods of educational leadership are bolstered by literature. As a result, to promote the teaching-learning transformation, principals should work to include all members of the school personnel, face instructional challenges, and mobilise the required resources (Hadi et al, 2021; Yusra et al, 2023).The principal must be current on the newest developments in education, the finest assessment strategies, the newest teaching approaches, and the most recent resources (Mestry, 2017). It is essential for school principals to make sure they promote parental participation in their learners' education (Van Wyk, 2020). Sibanda (2017) demonstrates that parents of kids in underperforming schools frequently don't participate in their kids' education.

The fourth subject centred on the initiatives taken by principals to get over obstacles to leadership in education strategies. In order to get over the numerous obstacles that learners and principals presented, the principals employed a variety of proactive strategies.

7.3. Chapter summary

The results and data analysed from the conversations conducted with four department heads in the Johannesburg South District were covered in this chapter. It examined the results for every question asked throughout the interview. This was done to confirm the conclusions drawn from the principals of the individual schools that were interviewed. The results mainly support the conclusions made by the institution's principals.

CHAPTER EIGHT

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE TEACHERS

8.1. Introduction

I gave and reviewed the Departmental Heads' statistics in the previous chapter, which showed how the principals perceived and used instructional management to raise learner academic achievement. I have separated the data into four portions, and this is the fourth one to give the information. The results of my interviews with four teachers on their perceptions of the principals' duties as instructional leaders are presented and discussed in this section. They employed fictitious names to safeguard both their private information and the secret identities of their schools. Mr. Spinach from Vegetable Primary School, Ms. Green from Colour Primary School, Mr. Kite from Shape Primary School, and Ms. Pear from Fruit Primary School are the teacher participants.

8.2. Presentation of findings

Like in the preceding chapter, verbatim quotes are utilised to describe the findings to preserve the integrity of the participants' "voices" in the research. The conversation incorporates the literature that was examined in Chapter Two. Four main themes came to light: teachers' perceptions of principals' support roles in fostering leadership in education practices; principals' implementation and improvement of these practices within schools; barriers to implementing these practices; and principals' efforts to get past these barriers. The next sections go into further detail on these subjects.

8.2.1. Teachers' understanding of the principals' roles in supporting instructional leadership practices

> *The four participating teachers all thought that supporting teaching and learning was one of the principals' key responsibilities. They demonstrated that a principal who prioritises instruction is necessary for the school to*

function well. In order to ensure that teaching and learning occur every day, the principal is crucial.

In order to enhance teaching and learning, the principal must have a clear knowledge of their position as an instructional leader. Fruit Primary's teacher stated that

The principal's job is to collaborate with teachers to create the ideal atmosphere for teaching and learning. He or she should offer advice on curriculum creation and instructional techniques to ensure that education and learning are conducted successfully. (Ms. Pear)

The Teacher of Shape Primary expressed similar sentiments on this issue. This is what he said:

By fostering a climate that is favourable for both principals and learners, the principal should promote teaching and learning. He or she needs to deal with any obstacles to learning. (Mr. Kite)

The Teacher of Colour Primary this is what she said when she was asked about the role her principal in supporting teaching and learning:

The principal need to act as a coach and mentor who offers advice and assistance to the principals. He or she should offer opportunities for learning inside the school and have constant connection with principals. (Ms. Green)

The Teacher of Vegetable Primary further added:

All parties involved in the process of learning should be able to communicate effectively with one another, and the principal should be a collaborator in this regard. He or she builds trusting bonds with parents, learners, principals, and the larger community. (Mr. Spinach)

The results seem to indicate that controlling and promoting teaching and learning is a major responsibility of principals. According to Ms. Pear, the principal should offer advice since teachers need someone to point them in the proper way if they are to engage in active teaching and learning. According to Ms. Green, the administrator ought to act as a coach and mentor to assist and mentor the teachers. According to Mr.

Spinach, good communication is crucial for promoting learning and teaching. This demonstrates the need for principals to make sure that instruction occurs without interference. According to Mr. Kite, a supportive atmosphere fosters strong bonds among all parties involved and enables them to collaborate to raise learner accomplishment.

Hou, Cui, and Zhang (2019), who argue that school leaders should supervise and guide instruction through class visits, class assessments, meetings, and contact with pupils and teachers, support the idea that principals should be instructional leaders. Excellent interpersonal skills and sound decision-making are prerequisites for the role of instructional leader (Cuban, 2020). According to Kumari (2022), the primary goal of taking on an instructional leadership role is to assist teachers in enhancing their pedagogical abilities, which will immediately contribute to the high academic achievement of pupils.

When this issue was summed up, the main conclusion that became apparent was that principals mentor teachers and foster an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. They also make sure that all stakeholders are included in the decision-making process.

8.2.1.1. The school's vision

All four panellists emphasised the critical need of establishing a school vision. A clear understanding of the school's goals is supplied by a vision, which offers all the schools a feeling of direction. Mr. Kite of Shape Primary effectively captures this, stating that:

> *"The school must have a clear vision in order for teaching and learning to be effective." This gives instruction and learning a feeling of direction and purpose. Our school's vision and mission statements function as guiding concepts that mould the aims and objectives of the learning process. Everyone can better comprehend the goals of the school since the vision and purpose are in line with teaching and learning.* (Mr. Kite)

The Teacher of Fruit Primary expressed similar sentiments on this issue. This is what she said:

> *Every school needs a vision statement because it outlines the goals the institution has for itself. Because our school's goals and objectives make explicit the skills as well as desired results that learners ought to develop, it is simple for teachers to know what is expected of them.* (Ms. Pear)

The Teacher of Colour Primary this is what she said when she was asked about the vision her school:

> *The promotion of inclusive practices is significantly aided by the vision and purpose being in line with education and instruction. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are given top priority in our institution's goals and objectives. This fosters an environment of learning where all learners are valued and celebrated. Additionally, it fosters a welcoming atmosphere where everybody is appreciated. It makes effective teaching and learning possible.* (Ms. Green)

The Teacher of Vegetable Primary further added:

> *The school's vision and mission statements ought to encourage an ongoing culture of learning and instructional development. Our school's vision and objectives place a high priority on continual professional development to ensure that teachers are knowledgeable about cutting-edge teaching techniques.* (Mr. Spinach)

The results seem to indicate that good teaching and learning are significantly influenced by the school's vision. Every participant is in agreement that vision is crucial to the way the programme is delivered. In addition to providing principals with guidance on how to present the curriculum, it outlines the specific aims of each school.

According to academics like Boyce et al. (2018) and Alsaleh (2018), the principal should review and discuss the reasoning behind the school's vision and goals at employee gatherings, parent seminars, school functions, staff seminars, professional growth workshops, and other forums.

Nguyen, Hallinger, and Chen (2018) assert that the principal of the school has the responsibility of formulating, disseminating, and organising assistance in carrying out the school's objective. Naturally, a school administrator needs a variety of talents to

support his essential job as a leader, including communication skills, vision and purpose alignment, staff expertise in education, and personality traits (Alsaleh, 2018). According to Khan, Khan, and Saeed (2020), the key to instructionally successful schools is having well-defined goals that are conveyed to participants and are geared towards raising learner accomplishment.

The most important conclusion that came out of analysing this sub-theme was how crucial it is to have a vision to provide the school a feeling of direction. As a result, the goal is always predicated on offering top-notch instruction and learning opportunities to raise learner achievement.

8.2.1.3. Creating an appropriate positive school environment

Regarding the school surroundings, each of the four participants stated that to support effective instruction and learning, the management of the school must provide a favourable school atmosphere. The four contributing teachers discussed the various leadership philosophies that their respective principals employed daily. Ms. Green of Colour Primary commented:

> *The friendly and upbeat school atmosphere is given top priority by the principal. He models teamwork and respect for all learners, setting an example for the whole school community. Any disputes or difficulties are handled by the principal. This fosters an atmosphere that is conducive to effective teaching and learning. (Ms. Green)*

Mr. Kite of Shape Primary said:

> *Clear expectations for academic success are set by our principal. She makes sure that everyone is aware of the requirements that support an enjoyable educational atmosphere by sharing these requirements with parents, teachers, and learners. (Mr. Kite)*

This view was echoed by the Teacher of Fruit Primary who said:

> *In order to enable teachers to plan and execute classes with effectiveness, the administrator makes sure that they have access to sufficient resources. In*

> *addition, he offers instruction coaching, mentorship, and direction to teachers.* (Pear, Ms.)

According to Mr. Spinach of Vegetable Primary, his school used an inclusive approach. What he had to say was this.:

> *The principal supports collaborative planning, learning communities, and teacher cooperation.* (Mr. Spinach)

The aforementioned voices emphasised the significance of the various leadership philosophies employed by school principals. In order to foster a good atmosphere, the principal of Colour and Vegetable Primary encouraged teamwork and collaboration. However, everyone at Shape Primary knows exactly what is expected of them because to the clear expectations set by the school's principal. In order for the teachers at Fruit Primary to efficiently teach the curriculum, the principal gave them adequate resources. These leadership philosophies foster a supportive learning atmosphere where each person may do their responsibilities to the best of their abilities.

The creation of a supportive learning environment in schools is recommended by literature to provide successful teaching and learning. According to Saad (2021), the school leader bears the obligation of fostering a pleasant learning environment, since it has the potential to impact learners' trust, values, and conduct. Establishing amicable relationships between teachers and staff, teachers and other teachers, and teachers and learners is the first step towards developing a pleasant school atmosphere (Darmadi, 2018). According to Aldridge and Fraser (2016), school principals should work to improve aspects of the school climate that have an impact on the efficacy of the institution since happy principals are more likely to feel that their lessons will be better. According to Iqbal (2021), it is the responsibility of the school leader to formulate a clear vision and objective for the institution.

The necessity of fostering a pleasant school atmosphere appeared as the main finding when summing this sub-theme. Every principal of the participating schools works to provide a supportive learning environment.

The first subject was principals' conceptions of their duties in assisting with practices in instructional leadership. The results imply that the principals were aware of the

need of establishing a suitable and supportive learning environment and of the school vision. I will now go on to my next issue, which is the implementation and improvement of leadership in education techniques in schools by principals.

8.2.2. Principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools

The results showed that all the principals worked hard to implement and improve their instructional leadership strategies, which are covered in more detail below. Regarding this, the Vegetable Primary Teacher declared that:

> *Opportunities for teachers' professional development are given top priority by our principal. He offers assistance and materials to teachers so they may keep current on the newest teaching practices. This aids in providing teachers with the information and abilities they need to enhance the learning outcomes for learners.* (Mr. Spinach)

Similarly, Ms. Green of Colour Primary said:

> *The principal actively participates in group planning and offers helpful criticism. She promotes frequent teacher meetings where they talk about curriculum, teaching strategies, and learner development. This supports the development of teaching strategies and fosters a continual improvement culture in the educational institution.* (Ms. Green)

Ms. Pear of Fruit Primary added that:

> *The precise communication of expectations by principals enhances the effectiveness of leadership in education. Our head of school communicates educational goals and creates a common vision for teaching and learning. He makes sure that all teachers are on the same page and pursuing the same goals, encouraging uniformity and coherence in teaching methods.* (Ms. Pear)

Further, the Teacher of Shape Primary said:

> *Teachers are inspired to implement these strategies in their own classrooms by our principal, who models them for them.* (Mr. Kite)

The results of the interviews tend to indicate that the principals of Vegetable, Fruit, and Shape primary schools implemented and improved instructional leadership methods by offering resources, articulating clear expectations, and making suggestions for successful strategies. According to Ms. Green, the administrator of their school promotes idea-sharing gatherings for teachers.

According to Swarniti (2021), the principal needs to be able to give instructions, boost the willingness of the teaching staff, and facilitate two-way communication. In their capacity as instructional leaders, principals ought to visit classrooms, offer input to teachers and learners, and encourage professional development across the entire school (Shava, Heystek & Chasara, 2021).

When this subject was summarised, the principals' implementation and improvement of educational management methods in schools stood out as the major finding. As a result, the principals of the schools concentrated on collaborating closely alongside the teachers and helping them to enhance their approaches.

8.2.2.1. Distributed instructional leadership

The data's conclusions imply that dispersed instructional leadership techniques are used in the schools by all four principals. The principal's approach to dispersed leadership empowers and supports Shape Primary's teacher, which improves their instructional strategies and improves learner learning results. Mr. Kite claimed that to keep their schools running well, their principal supports dispersed instructional leadership. What he stated was this:

> *Distributed instructional leadership is implemented successfully by our principal. The head of the school respects the experience of teachers, solicits their feedback on curriculum and teaching techniques, and offers chances for growth as professionals.* (Mr. Kite)

A similar response came from the Teacher of Fruit Primary, who said:

> *In order to foster a greater feeling of teacher ownership and better teaching methods, the principal establishes mechanisms for gathering and incorporating teacher suggestions. (Ms. Pear)*

Ms. Green of Colour Primary said:

> *All the principals participate in decision-making procedures, and the principal cherishes their opinions.* (Ms. Green)

A similar response came from the Teacher of Vegetable Primary, who said:

> *The principal encourages teamwork, shared accountability, and career advancement. He solicits feedback from teachers, promotes creativity, and offers assistance in putting innovative teaching techniques into practice. Everyone feels empowered, encouraged, and appreciated in their work, which enhances the educational experience and improves learner results.* (Mr. Spinach)

According to the results of the interviews, the principals thought distributed instructional leadership was an essential technique in their schools. The principals of Shape, Colour, Vegetable, and Fruit Primary assign assignments to their staff members, and they collaborate closely with each other to oversee and enhance instruction. This demonstrates that the teachers were assigned leadership responsibilities using specific strategies. The improvement of learning and instruction is the common aim served by all these strategies.

Bush (2018a) claims that dispersed management offers a chance to help teachers become more capable of taking on positions of authority. According to Boyce et al. (2018), with dispersed leadership, teachers and principals take on instructional leadership responsibilities, making both of their actions, components of school leadership practices. Sibanda (2018) asserted that dispersed leadership activities and enlisting followers in decision-making, together with fostering trust, have a good impact on academic attainment. By fostering leadership potential and enhancing the school's ability to enhance learner achievement, distributed management influences learner performance (Boyce et al., 2018).

The main conclusion that can be drawn from this sub-theme is that dispersed educational leadership methods were prevalent in each of the four schools that were the subject of the research.

8.2.2.3. Monitoring teaching and learning

The results imply that the principals in each of the four schools under investigation successfully oversee green teaching and learning. In order to keep an eye on the curriculum, principals' methods, and learners' progress, the principals concentrated on these areas. The Colour Primary Teacher provided the following information on the monitoring of teaching and learning:

> *The principal keeps an eye on the curriculum covered by overseeing learners' workbooks on a term-by-term basis and giving principals constructive feedback that highlights their strengths and areas for development.* (Ms. Green)

Similarly, Mr. Kite of Shape Primary said:

> *Using assessment data analysis, the principal keeps an eye on instruction and learner progress. Test results, formative evaluations, and learner work examples are just a few of the information he gathers and examines on learner performance. He makes use of such data to pinpoint his areas of strength and growth. They then collaborate with teachers to create treatments and strategies that improve instruction.* (Mr. Kite)

Mr. Spinach of Vegetable Primary also mentioned that:

> *Planning meetings and collaborative reflection are encouraged by the principal. He arranges conferences on a regular basis so that teachers may talk about best methods in education, exchange triumphs and setbacks, and consider the results of their learners.* (Mr. Spinach)

Ms. Pear of Fruit Primary said:

> *The head of the school ensures that the curriculum is aligned and offers support to monitor learning and instruction. She makes certain that lesson plans correspond with the yearly teaching schedule. Additionally, he offers resources and support materials, consults with principals to make required revisions, and evaluates instructional papers.* (Ms. Pear)

The aforementioned voices imply that distinct approaches were employed by each school administration to oversee the implementation of the curriculum. Learners' books were utilised by the principal of Colour Primary to keep an eye on curriculum coverage. The curriculum was monitored by Shape's principal using learner accomplishment outcomes analysis. According to Mr. Spinach, subject meetings, planning sessions, and cooperative reflection are crucial for keeping an eye on teaching and learning. This aids in keeping them informed about how the content is being delivered. Through the examination of curriculum plans, the principal of Fruit Primary participated in curriculum supervision. These proactive strategies recommend that all principals give curriculum supervision top priority to raise learners' academic achievement.

The literature backs up the importance of instructional leadership practices like teaching and learning observation. According to Naidoo (2019), the school principal must possess extensive knowledge of the method of instruction and learning to share that knowledge with teachers while supervising, assessing, and tracking the advancement of pupils. Turkoglu and Cansoy (2018) state that a significant portion of principals of schools monitor their learners' progress using assessment tools, such as written exams and tests. Directors must periodically supervise classroom instruction, engage in a conversation with teachers on ongoing professional growth, and assist teachers in carrying out instructional activities (Imron et al., 2021).

The primary result that arose from this sub-theme summary was the widespread use of teaching and learning tracking in the schools under investigation. It is an essential method of leadership in education that has a direct effect on learning and teaching.

8.2.2.4. Promoting teacher professional development

All the teachers who took part in this research said that their principals encouraged and made sure that teachers attended professional development events. Regarding professional development, the Colour Primary teacher stated:

> *"Every term, the department plans workshops and virtual meetings to help teachers get better at the subjects they will be teaching." Attending these workshops and meetings is encouraged by our principal as they provide us with the necessary expertise to properly teach the topics.* (Ms. Green).

Similarly, Mr. Kite of Shape Primary said:

> *In order to stay up to date on the latest strategies the department is employing to raise learner accomplishment, the principal strongly advises us to attend departmental meetings and subject trainings.* (Mr. Kite)

Ms. Pear of Fruit Primary said:

> *In order to develop staff members and address issues experienced by teachers based on their areas of need, the SMT organises seminars for teachers and the principal holds discussions with them. The goal of these workshops is to enhance both instruction and learning to raise learner performance.* (Ms. Pear)

Similarly, Mr. Spinach of Vegetable Primary said:

> *Our principal hosts team-building seminars, and throughout the sessions, we spoke about practical solutions for the problems we have in the classroom. Also, he extends an invitation to district representatives to visit and work with us on classroom materials that we find difficult.* (Mr. Spinach)

The overarching perspective that emerged from this issue was that the principals of the study's participating schools pushed teachers to become more professional through seminars and cluster meetings. Principals appeared to be clinging to the idea that professional development was important because it would allow teachers to better themselves and the calibre and effectiveness of their instruction.

The opinions expressed by teachers about professional development for teachers align with the findings of the research. Chabalala and Naidoo (2021) assert that the principal, in their capacity as educational leaders, bears the responsibility of furnishing the teachers with ongoing professional growth. This is achieved through the provision of specialised liable training, workshops, conferences, and subject meetings, all which enable the teachers to enhance the academic achievement of the learners. Learner performance is positively impacted by professional development, a subdomain of capacity building for individuals (Naidoo, 2019). According to Bush (2019), professional development has a favourable effect on learner achievement when the principal participates in staff development initiatives.

The primary discovery that arose from this sub-theme's summary was that the heads of school actively supported teacher development in their schools. As such, conferences and training sessions were given a lot of importance.

8.2.2.5. Understanding of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

The data's conclusions imply that the principals supported the establishment of Professional Learning Communities among their staff members.

> *The principal of Colour Primary, for example, encourages teachers to meet on a regular basis to discuss learners' academic progress. He contributes to the establishment of a professional learning community where teachers may share knowledge and enhance one another's teaching methods.* (Ms. Green)

Mr. Kite of Shape Primary commented:

> *The principal funds training sessions after taking into account the goals of the school and the needs of the teachers. He exhorts teachers to take part in cluster meetings as well as online training programmes.* (Mr. Kite)

Mr. Spinach of Vegetable Primary said:

> *Teachers are given the authority to spearhead in-school professional development by our principal. He establishes forums for teachers to share*

their knowledge and experiences because he values their expertise. (Mr. Spinach)

Ms. Pear of Fruit Primary said:

Department heads are urged by our principal to collaborate closely with teachers to assist them in enhancing their methods of education. Through monitoring sessions, she makes sure that teachers receive regular feedback, direction, and assistance. (Ms. Pear)

From a literary standpoint, professional learning communities are crucial because they give teachers the chance to directly enhance their instruction, foster close bonds among team members, keep them informed about new developments in education technology, and encourage critical thinking (Serviss, 2021). In addition to improving learner quality in terms of knowledge, thinking, behaviour, and other skills and competences, educational networks assist principals in developing their pedagogies (Wongyai and Patphol, 2019). According to Sasan (2021), encouraging the formation of PLCs and offering teachers continual growth opportunities and support are also crucial components of leadership in education.

The principals respect the function that PLCs serve in their schools, according to the summary of this sub-theme. Additionally, they urge teachers to participate in Professional Learning Communities so that they may stay up to date on the latest developments in the field.

8.2.2.6. Rewards and recognition

All the teachers who took part in this survey stated the opinion that their principals should identify and commend outstanding work because they feel that this will inspire teachers and learners to perform better. Diverse techniques were provided to inspire learners. For instance, Mr. Spinach of Vegetable Primary stated:

"We have a rewarding kind of set up for top learners in which they are called in front of the assembly and given tokens to uplift their spirit and motivate other learners to imitate the same thing." (Mr. Spinach)

Mr. Kite of Shape Primary shared similar views that his principal recognised and rewarded good performance by both the learners and the teachers. This is what she had to say:

> *The principal gives learners who achieve well-deserved recognition. This encourages other learners to put in extra effort to raise their academic standing.* (Mr. Kite).

Ms. Pear of Fruit Primary said:

> *The principal has set aside a spot to showcase the awards given to learners who do well. To demonstrate his appreciation for their accomplishments, he places prizes there.* (Ms. Pear)

Ms. Green of Colour Primary, had the same view about how her principal motivate learners. This is what she said:

> *The principal understands achievement. For learners who are doing well, he awards certificates. (*Ms. Green).

The idea that rewarding and recognising teachers may improve instruction and learning in classrooms is supported by literature. According to Turkoglu and Cansoy (2018), principals of schools use reward programmes to recognise and value their most successful pupils in the classroom and at school. According to Salleh (2018), one way to draw teachers to their tasks is by paying them for their diligent work. In order to enhance teacher performance, a plan must be put in place that includes work discipline, coaching teachers, providing sufficient space for instruction, punishing teachers who don't follow the rules, rewarding good behaviour, and motivating and supervising teachers (Armstrong, 2022). According to Salleh (2018), there are several methods to show kids how much they have learned, like giving them compliments on their work, letting them have lunch, planning field excursions, and much more.

To summarise this sub-theme, the main conclusion was that school principals praised principals and gave awards to learners to improve instructional leadership practises in their institutions.

The implementation and improvement of instructional leadership methods in schools by principals was the subject of the second topic. As a result, a lot of focus was placed on things like professional discourse and communication, dispersed instructional leadership, professional learning communities (PLCs), monitoring teaching and learning, and incentives and recognition. I'm going to go on to my next topic, which is obstacles to using leadership in education techniques.

8.2.3. Barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices

The results imply that school principals faced several obstacles in carrying out their leadership in education responsibilities.

Mr. Spinach of Vegetable Primary commented:

> *One of the principal's concerns is dealing with principals who are unwilling to accept new teaching strategies, which makes it challenging for him to put novel ideas into effect.* (Mr. Spinach)

Ms. Pear of Fruit Primary stated that:

> *Inadequate personnel are a big concern facing our principal. Because there are not enough personnel, several of the classrooms are overcrowded.* (Ms. Pear)

Mr. Kite of Shape Primary stated that:

> *Learners who arrive late and some who skip class provide a challenge to the administration and have a detrimental effect on learners' academic achievement.* (Mr. Kite)

Ms. Green of Colour Primary added that:

> *The principal has difficulties when teachers come late; some of them leave early, which reduces the amount of time available for instruction and learning. According to the perspectives of teachers, principals encountered many obstacles when attempting to implement instructional leadership approaches (Ms. Green).*

According to Ms. Green, Ms. Pear, and Mr. Kite, principals' and learners' absences and tardiness have a detrimental effect on how the programme is implemented. Ms. Pear said, "One of the issues that makes the principals struggle to ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively is the inadequate staffing".

The findings of the literature substantiate the challenges faced by school principals in their endeavours to facilitate efficient teaching and learning within their institutions. According to Hussien (2019) and Scott (2017), the proper implementation of instructional leadership practices is hampered by inadequate facilities and resources, a tight budget, and a lack of financial assistance. Parental participation is hampered by several factors, including a lack of time, communication difficulties, parents' personal educational experiences, and the school's incapacity to connect with parents (Nisbet, 2021).

When this subject was summarised, the main conclusion that became apparent was that school principals found it challenging to implement their instructional leadership techniques because of a few obstacles. As a result, the issues raised by principals and learners received a lot of attention.

The obstacles to implementing instructional leadership methods were the subject of the third theme. I will now go on to my fourth and last subject, which is the efforts made by teachers to remove obstacles from leadership in educational practices.

8.2.4. Principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices

The data's conclusions imply that all four school principals used proactive strategies to get beyond obstacles to instructional leadership practices. In this sense, the strategies concentrated on the obstacles that both principals and learners presented.

The participants described the various approaches their principals took to address the obstacles principals and learners presented. This fundamentally meant enhancing

teaching and learning via the application of several development methodologies. Regarding the strategies for enhancement, the Vegetable Primary Teacher declared:

> *To address teachers' concerns and promote buy-in, the principal fosters an environment of open discussion, supports their professional development, and gives clear explanations.* (Mr. Spinach)

Ms. Pear of Fruit Primary stated that:

> *To lessen the teachers' burden, the principal and the institution's governing body recruit temporary principals. She applies for the growth role in the district office as well.* (Ms. Pear)

Mr. Kite of Shape Primary added that:

> *The administrator actively communicates with parents and attempts to increase learner attendance, since it may have a detrimental effect on the learners' academic achievement.* (Mr. Kite)

Ms. Green of Colour Primary stated that:

> *The teacher attendance is being tracked by the principal using late arrival and early departure registers. Additionally, the teachers provide a catch-up plan to make up for the classes they were unable to deliver.* (Ms. Green)

The results imply that the principals who took part employed a variety of strategies to try and remove obstacles to instructional leadership practices. The principals of Ms. Green, Ms. Pear, and Mr. Kite devised measures for improvement, including enlisting parents to assist in the education of their kids and implementing catch-up initiatives. This indicated that they gave instruction and learning in their classrooms top priority. The LTMS group is encouraged by Mr. Spinach's principal to oversee the teaching material on a term basis.

The principals' efforts to remove obstacles to instructional leadership practices are bolstered by literature. According to Leaf and Odhiambo (2017), the principal must safeguard instructional time by making sure that disruptions are eliminated or kept to a minimum. Van der Merwe (2018) proposed intervention techniques, such as lesson preparation and planning, regulating teacher and learner absence, and arranging extra

courses, to counteract the detrimental effect of timewasters on available teaching time. According to Hunter, Sonnemann, and Haywood (2022), focusing on a limited number of distinct goals and effectively allocating resources are crucial to save instructional time and concentrate on accomplishing the main objective of education, which is effective instruction and learning.

The fourth subject centred on the initiatives taken by principals to get over obstacles to instructional leadership strategies. In order to get over the numerous obstacles that learners and principals presented, the principals employed a variety of proactive strategies.

8.3. Chapter summary

The results and data analysis from the conversations with four teachers in the Johannesburg South District were covered in this section. It examined the results for every question asked throughout the interview. The principals' statements were supported by the opinions of the teachers. As a scholar, this was significant because it allowed me to see trends in what actually was occurring in the field.

Using the data from DHs, assistant principals, and principals, I created a map of trends using this data. The insights gained from the study are covered in the upcoming chapter.

CHAPTER NINE

KEY ISSUES/THEMES EMERGING FROM THE DATA

9.1. Introduction

The viewpoints of the participants regarding how they perceived the role of the principals as instructional leaders in enhancing the academic performance of learners were described in detail in the preceding four chapters. This chapter next analyses the data by identifying trends in the data and connecting them to the conceptual frameworks and books that were discussed in this thesis's two and three chapters, respectively. I begin by summarising the patterns that reflect how principals see their duties in assisting with instructional leadership practices. I then go on to talk about how principals are implementing and improving instructional leadership approaches in their schools. We then spoke about the challenges in implementing leadership in education approaches. The last half of the paper talks about how principals are trying to get beyond barriers to leadership in education.

9.2. Principals' conceptualisations of their roles in supporting instructional leadership practices

The four participating school principals expressed a deep comprehension of the significance of their responsibilities in advancing education. This demonstrates their unwavering dedication to making teaching and learning the centrepiece of the institution's mission. They gave their teaching team constant support and made sure that the educational procedures ran well. This dedication was demonstrated by Ms. Plum, Fruit Primary's principal, who said:

> *"The principal is central to teaching and learning." Thus, it is our duty to encourage efficient instruction and learning. Therefore, the principal must be active in the procedure to assist learners and principals; he or she cannot be an outsider looking in.* (Ms. Plum)

Ms. Apple, the Fruit Primary deputy principal, emphasised the importance of the principal's direction and the role it plays in offering crucial support for efficient

teaching and learning. Ms. Apple claims that this support is a major source of motivation for teachers. Principals have a crucial role in leadership of education, as all principals agreed, highlighting the need of their active participation in teaching and learning activities.

> *According to the position description, I am liable and accountable, stated Ms. Blue of Colour Primary. It is my responsibility to make sure that everyone is inspired and assisted to facilitate efficient instruction and learning.* (Ms. Blue)

This statement is consistent with academic discourse, as noted by Maponya (2020), who emphasises the critical role that principals who engage in successful instructional leadership play in driving teachers to meet expectations, which in turn improves learner performance. These principals' dedication to leadership in education is evident in their constant observation, encouragement, and support.

9.2.1. Modeling good practice

The principals of Vegetable and Fruit Primary agreed that it is essential for them to set a good example by actively participating in teaching activities. Principals must be role models for others, according to Ms. Plum of Fruit Primary, who said that

> *The principal should be a teacher that others may aspire to be like and emulate. I aim to conduct myself appropriately when I teach a class so that I may set a positive example for other teachers to follow.* (Ms. Plum)

By personally instructing a class, Ms. Plum further demonstrated her dedication to this goal and served as a suitable example for other teachers to follow.

This viewpoint emphasises how important it is for principals to see classroom dynamics firsthand to better understand the difficulties principals confront. Principals are then more equipped to provide practical methods for raising learners' academic achievement. Ms. Plum's commitment to teaching is consistent with the notion that high visibility is an essential component of instructional leadership, as emphasised by Hallinger and Murphy (1985).

9.2.2. The school’s vision

All the study's participating schools generally agreed that the principals were acting as instructional managers by putting the goals and ambitions of the schools at the front and centre. The principals have to continually shift their attention back to teaching and learning while keeping their mission and objectives in mind. A strong basis for later functions is provided by well-crafted school objectives and vision (Maponya, 2020; Ozdemir et al., 2020). The principals had a distinct idea of how their schools should best carry out their goals. Mr. Square of Shape Primary did a great job capturing this, saying that:

> *Our school's vision is in line with teaching and learning, which fosters a feeling of purpose among teachers, learners, and parents. This alignment directs the application of efficient instructional techniques that uphold the school's overarching objectives.* (Mr. Square)

The DH, Mr. Circle of Shape Primary, and the instructor, Mr. Kite of Shape Primary, both attested to the fact that their schools' visions are crucial in helping them to accomplish their goals. Notably, the goals and objectives of the schools have to take into account the needs and passions of the neighbourhood. Teachers may perform more effectively and motivate learners to put in more effort to enhance their academic achievement if the institution's mission and goal are clear (Dowd, 2018). The results also showed that principals should make sure that the purpose and vision are reflected in operational strategies and objectives that are set out to support effective instruction and learning. Mr. Kite of Shape Primary effectively captures this, stating that:

> *The school must have a clear vision if it is to have successful teaching and learning. This aids in giving instruction and learning a direction and a feeling of purpose. The purposes and objectives of the process of learning are shaped by the mission and vision statements of our institution. Everyone can better comprehend the goals of the school since its mission and vision are in line with teaching and learning.* (Mr. Kite)

It is becoming apparent that written statements of purpose were present in all the participating schools. Each learner acknowledges the critical role that vision plays in curriculum delivery. It outlines the specific objectives of every school and provides guidance to principals on how they can carry out the curriculum. According to Khan, Khan, and Saeed (2020), the key to instructionally successful schools is having well-defined goals that are conveyed to stakeholders and are geared towards raising learner accomplishment. Defining the purpose and vision of the institution is the first step in Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) leadership of instruction approach.

9.2.3. Creating an appropriate positive school environment

Participants in each of the four schools under examination emphasised how important it is for school leadership to create an environment that is favourable to effective instruction and learning. According to Mr. Oval, the principal of Shape Primary, a pleasant environment acts as a catalyst for inspiration, encouraging teachers to work together as a team to accomplish shared goals.

The body of research supports the beliefs held by school principals, as emphasised by several academics (Cuban, 2020; Ahmed, 2016; Mestry, 2017), who stress the critical role that a supportive school environment plays in promoting successful teaching and learning. Principals take an active role in fostering a positive atmosphere and empowering teachers to openly share their thoughts, which eventually helps learners do better academically. The deputy principal of Colour Primary, Ms. Red, emphasises the significance of creating a courteous, safe environment that appreciates both teachers and learners.

Teachers who took part, including Mr. Spinach from Vegetable Primary, acknowledged the beneficial effects of a supportive learning environment on learners' performance. Principals have identified the development of learning communities, cooperative planning, including teamwork as critical strategies for improving teaching techniques.

The assumption that enhanced instruction and learner outcomes are a result of good school settings is further supported by the literature (Aldridge & Fraser, 2016). To

foster positivism in the school atmosphere, principals like Ms. Blue and Mr. Potato use leadership philosophies like collaboration and an inviting attitude. This highlights the necessity for principals to encourage, lead, and mentor people of the organisation in establishing a favourable atmosphere to accomplish shared objectives (Junaidi & Fadillah, 2022).

9.3. Principals' enactment and enhancement of instructional leadership practices in schools

The results of the interviews show how committed all principals are to putting instructional leadership strategies into practice and making them better because they understand how important they are to raising the academic achievement of their learners. For the CAPS programme to be implemented successfully, Mr. Potato of Vegetable Primary underlined the significance of careful planning, resource allocation, and curricular monitoring.

The deputy principal of Colour Primary, Ms. Pink, praised her principal for his dedication to seeing to it that all teachers are observed, observed, given feedback, and guided. This strategy encourages teachers to use cutting-edge and successful teaching techniques, which improves classroom management throughout the institution. Regarding this, she stated:

> *Our principal makes sure that every learner shows up for class, keeps an eye on the principals, and gives them comments and direction. This encourages teachers to use cutting-edge and successful teaching strategies, which eventually improves classroom education throughout the institution.* (Ms. Pink)

The literature, as articulated by Swarniti (2021), emphasises the principal's role in providing directions, fostering willingness among educational staff, and maintaining open two-way communication. This highlights the importance of principals in monitoring teaching and learning, setting clear expectations for teachers, and subsequently improving learner academic performance.

Every principal understood that it was their duty to help teachers and learners to promote good teaching and learning. Shape Primary's Mr. Oval underlined the importance of the principal's office in connecting departmental goals with school objectives and sharing crucial information from the Department of Basic Education.

Participants from a variety of educational institutions confirmed that principals use a range of strategies, such as giving instructions, giving feedback, and assigning tasks, to support efficient teaching and learning. Fruit Primary's Ms. Pear underlined how important it is to build a common vision for teaching and learning and to communicate objectives clearly.

9.3.1. Distributed Instructional Leadership

The study's conclusions attest to the fact that every principal in each school demonstrated a high degree of dispersed instructional leadership. This cooperative method, which is based on shared decision-making, mutual trust, and curricular expertise, empowers teachers and develops their leadership potential, which has a favourable impact on learner achievement.

Shape Primary's Mr. Oval emphasised the value of distribution, emphasising that running a school is a team effort. With ongoing oversight and assistance, principals are encouraged to assign responsibilities to managers of departments, teachers, and deputy principals. According to Bush (2018a), distributed management gives teachers more freedom to hone their leadership skills.

Fruit Primary's deputy principal, Ms. Apple, praised her principal for implementing dispersed instructional leadership, encouraging shared leadership, group accountability, and teacher participation in decision-making. Improved learner attainment, more teacher cooperation, and a more engaged staff were the outcomes of this cooperative strategy. Ms. Apple of Fruit Primary effectively captures this, stating that:

> *I think it's great that my principal uses distributed instructional leadership. She promotes a climate of group accountability and shared leadership. She fosters teamwork and creativity, including teachers in decision-making processes, and offers possibilities for further assistance and professional growth. This strategy has enhanced learner success, enhanced teacher cooperation, and given staff members greater authority and motivation. (Ms. Apple)*

According to Sibanda (2018), learning attainment is positively impacted when dispersed leadership endeavours are combined with trust and involving followers in making choices. The results highlight how important it is for principals to provide their staff members different leadership responsibilities to foster a cooperative and empowered learning environment.

9.3.2. Monitoring Teaching and Learning

Based on participant replies, it was clear that principals kept a close eye on learner achievement, teacher effectiveness, and curricular alignment while monitoring teaching and learning. Participants' satisfaction with their principals' monitoring procedures revealed how well these practices had impacted teacher development and, in turn, the academic success of their learners.

According to Mr. Onion of Vegetable Primary, principals' participation in evaluating lesson plans, curricular materials, and assessments guarantees conformity with academic standards. As stressed by Ms. Red, the Department Head of Colour Primary, keeping an eye on learners' books gives principals helpful criticism that points out their strong points and places for development. Regarding this, she stated:

> *Every term, the principal oversees the learners' workbooks to ensure that the curriculum is covered. Additionally, the principal gives principals constructive feedback that identifies their areas of strength and growth.* (Ms. Green)

The benefits of monitoring teaching and learning for learner achievement are highlighted in the research. Effective teaching strategies and classroom activities are supported when principals engage in regular discussions with teachers and provide

ongoing professional growth (Imron et al., 2021). This study's proof of principals' active participation in the monitoring process shows their dedication to comprehending the dynamics of teaching and learning and creating an atmosphere that supports ongoing development. According to Naidoo (2019), principals' knowledge of the teaching and learning process makes it possible to effectively monitor learners' progress, which enhances instructional activities. Participants' agreement upholds principals' direct supervision of teachers' and learners' work, creating a procedure consistent with good leadership in education.

9.3.3. Promoting teacher professional development

The information from the four schools under investigation shows that principals are actively involved in supporting teachers' professional development. All the participants believed that the school should foster an atmosphere that supports teachers' professional development. As previously said, professional development gives teachers the tools they need to improve the quality of their education. Principals took great care to make sure principals attended training courses and seminars to improve their knowledge and abilities, which in turn improved learner achievement. The Colour Primary Deputy Principal, for instance, highlighted the principal's dedication to lifelong learning, prompt notification of training sessions, and recognition of the critical role that continuous development for teachers plays in improving teaching methods and the overall quality of the school. Regarding this, she stated:

> *The principal consistently promotes lifelong learning and development. She takes sure to provide us timely notice of the training sessions and seminars, as well as data in the event that the training is conducted online. She understands that continued professional development improves instruction, expands learners' learning opportunities, and advances the education system as a whole. (*Ms. Pink).

The importance of professional development for teacher progress and school improvement was emphasised by the participants. It acts as a stimulus for teachers to investigate cutting-edge techniques, encouraging enthusiasm, expanding their

knowledge base, and refining the delivery of successful education. It was recommended that principals give teachers the chance and support to further their professional and academic credentials to strengthen their grasp of the subject matter and their pedagogical expertise. Vegetable Primary's principal agreed, explaining that continuing education should be prioritised to keep teachers up to date on modern teaching techniques and enable them to improve learner results.

All these viewpoints support the idea that principals value professional development in their schools and that all staff members actively participate in it. The Principal of Colour Primary described their role in supporting professional development through the Quality Management System (QMS) programme, which includes identifying teachers' challenges for professional growth and creating an annual plan for teacher development. Teachers agreed, emphasising that principals encourage them to attend workshops, exchange ideas, and grow together. The primary objective, as principals have stressed, is still improving learner achievement. This is consistent with literature, which highlights the principals' instructional leadership as a crucial tool for impact. Syomwene (2018) and Kilag (2023) have provided scholarly contributions that elaborate on the transforming effect of professional development on teachers. This leads to greater competence and confidence, which in turn favourably influences the implementation of curriculum and learner outcomes.

In summary, the principals' deliberate efforts to improve learner achievement can be seen in their support of professional growth, the construction of a pleasant educational environment, and the provision of opportunities for collaboration growth as professionals. This pledge is consistent with the leadership in education paradigm developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985).

9.3.4. Understanding of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

All the participants understand the importance of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), and principals play a crucial role in motivating their staff members to participate in PLCs to improve their academic performance. PLCs give teachers the chance to grow personally by enabling efficient problem-solving and information exchange. Fruit Primary's Ms. Plum demonstrated a deep comprehension of PLCs by

highlighting the principals' involvement in a PLC cluster that prioritises information sharing, cooperative solving issues, and absorbing new ideas. This is what she said:

> *Within the cluster, there is a Professional Learning Community for principals. We all get together and essentially exchange information about our struggles and tribulations. We pick up knowledge from others and come up with suggestions on how to help the teachers in our schools. I make an effort to implement some of these concepts at our school.* (Ms. Plum)

This understanding is consistent with the body of existing literature, which depicts PLCs as essential for raising learner achievement through direct improvements in instruction and learning, the development of strong teacher-learner relationships, and ongoing instructional reflection (Serviss, 2021). Shape Primary's deputy principal reaffirmed this idea by stressing the need of introspection and self-improvement, the creation of mentorship programmes, and the encouraging of involvement in outside opportunities for professional growth.

Participants generally agree that principals, using a variety of strategies, including as actively promoting Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and facilitating professional development for teachers, have a critical role to play in improving the performance of learners. PLCs' collaborative structure shows promise as a powerful tool for teacher development, since it enhances learners' knowledge, critical thinking skills, behaviours, and general competences (Wongyai and Patphol, 2019). Essentially, in order for a school to succeed, principals need to sincerely urge teachers to participate in PLCs.

9.3.5. Rewards and recognition

Every responder emphasised that their principals' use of incentives and recognition is a calculated strategy to support instructional leadership. This strategy was crucial in inspiring teachers and learners to work hard to meet a variety of learning objectives. This was a strategy used by principals to inspire motivation among the learner body. Acknowledgments for exceptional pupils not only act as personal boosters but also create an atmosphere that is favourable to efficient instruction. For instance, the

principal of Vegetable Primary confirmed that academic excellence certificates are awarded each term, encouraging learners to always strive for progress.

Deputy Principals concurred, highlighting the internal drive fostered by the principal's acknowledgement of teachers' accomplishments. This recognition encouraged everyone in the school community to pursue greatness, boosted morale, and acted as a motivator for ongoing progress.

> *He said, "The principal instills a sense of intrinsic motivation by acknowledging the accomplishments and contributions among teachers." The educational institution as a whole is inspired to pursue greatness, and the headmaster's praise and awards serve as a catalyst for ongoing development and morale.* (Mr. Onion)

Enhancing total learner attainment was stated as the main goal of rewarding and recognising principals as well as learners. According to Turkoglu and Cansoy (2018), principals use reward schemes to recognise pupils who perform well in the classroom and at the school. The study's principals were crucial in encouraging teachers and learners and creating an atmosphere that helped learners do better academically. Principals all agreed that motivation is essential to the functioning of the organisation because it helps everyone involved understand their duties and objectives and makes it easier for different objectives to be accomplished.

A variety of methods were used to administer acknowledgment and incentives, such as awarding trophies, distributing diplomas, and praising people at assemblies.

9.4. Barriers to discharging instructional leadership practices

The results show that there are several obstacles preventing school principals from putting instructional leadership methods into practice successfully. Principals showed that they could recognise and identify these obstacles, which enabled them to identify specific areas where successful implementation of instructional leadership methods is impeded. For example, Ms. Blue of Colour Primary outlined the socioeconomic obstacles that many learners encounter, originating from low-income families and

underprivileged backgrounds, and how they affect the standard of instruction and learning.

Ms. Plum of Fruit Primary added that:

> *Teacher unions interrupt the curriculum with their activities, which leads to a great deal of disturbance in the classroom. Principals utilise these activities as a justification for skipping curriculum-based lessons. Thus, this hinders both teaching and learning. (Mrs. Plum)*

Teacher unions are disruptive forces, according to Ms. Plum of Fruit Primary, who linked their actions to interruptions in the curriculum. Mr. Garlic of Vegetable Primary identified budget and resource constraints as a barrier to the use of instructional practices.

The main conclusion is that these obstacles seriously hinder school principals' capacity to carry out their instructional leadership duties, with an emphasis on the difficulties presented by teachers and learners.

9.5. Principals' attempts to overcome barriers to instructional leadership practices

Every member agreed that they would handle internal issues and disagreements in a professional way. Various approaches were utilised to address obstacles presented by learners, such as providing more time for learners who needed it and working with outside partners to expand educational initiatives. For instance, Colour Primary's principal spoke of their partnership with the non-profit organisation "Imperial and Motus" to offer additional English and math sessions, which led to a discernible improvement.

The participants placed a strong emphasis on using fair solutions and following set procedures to resolve internal issues. In order to prevent issues, Ms. Plum of Fruit Primary stressed following the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document and avoiding common sense. This strategy is demonstrated by the period set aside for notification and circulars about union operations.

The results highlight the participants' dedication to putting teaching and learning first by utilising a variety of techniques meant to get over obstacles to instructional leadership practices. In order to reduce disruptions to teaching and learning, Naicker et al. (2013) support principled positions against disrupting teacher organisation campaigns. The principal's emphasis on timely resource provision to prevent interruptions during educational activities was emphasised by the department head of Vegetable Primary. The department head also emphasised the significance of the Learning and Teaching Support Material (LTSM) committee's involvement in resource retrieval.

Overall, the results point to a multimodal strategy that principals should use to get past obstacles. This strategy is consistent with research that highlights the need to safeguard educational materials time and strategically manage resources to achieve successful teaching and learning (Leaf and Odhiambo, 2017; Hunter, Sonnemann, and Haywood, 2022).

9.6. Chapter summary

Emerging trends that were discovered to be prevalent in six case schools have been identified and explored in this section. These trends showed that principals' conceptions of educational management were impacted by their lived experiences, expertise, principles, and beliefs. The literature is supported by the principals' perceptions of instructional leadership as a multifaceted, cooperative, non-linear, and complicated construct. The chapter covered new trends in the instructional leadership practices used by primary school principals to raise learner achievement in the classroom.

Any school's success is a direct result of its leadership. Learner performance is determined by how well each school's leadership performs. Everything goes well at a school with excellent management and an effective strategic plan because everyone is aware of their roles and expectations. Everyone is aware of the person to contact in case of difficulty, and the objectives are well-defined. In order to provide instructional leadership, a principal must establish objectives, oversee the curriculum, and keep an eye on all activities pertaining to learning and instruction that take place in the school

(Bhengu & Mkhize, 2013). Effective schools and excellent learning environments are created via the use of leadership styles as essential instruments. The way the leadership handles issues is one of the elements that makes any organisation effective since improper handling of obstacles may have a detrimental effect on the institution's progress. Leaders are crucial to the advancement of the institution. Since instructing and learning are the primary functions of educational institutions, leaders who prioritise instruction above all else in their schools consistently see improvements in pupil achievement. Effective school heads prioritise curriculum and instruction over administrative duties, according to Akcaoglu and Gumus (2013), which makes instructional management the predominant paradigm for school leaders.

CHAPTER TEN

STUDY SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY AND FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

10.1. Introduction

The data presentation, evaluation, and explanation of the results gathered from interviews conducted with representatives from four different schools were covered in the preceding chapter. The study's summary is the main topic of this chapter. Based on the research findings presented in the preceding chapter and the study's conclusions, this study has provided suggestions for further consideration.

This study has shown that, despite facing difficult operational environments, some schools are nevertheless performing effectively. Additionally, it has offered suggestions for strategies that principals might use to raise the achievement of learners. According to Hoadley (2007), "resilient schools" are those that thrive under trying circumstances. Because of the circumstances in which they function, the four primary schools that made up the study's sample seem to possess some resilience. The findings of this study indicate that principals are critical to raising learners' academic achievement. These schools continue to function successfully because of the commitment of the principals and their staff members.

As a result of the principals' comments that their usage of various leadership philosophies has improved learner accomplishment in their schools, this study has also demonstrated the significant correlation that exists between effective leadership and learners' academic success. Leadership, according to Hoadley (2007), is essential to enhancing learner outcomes. Relationship building elements including dedication, collaboration, teamwork, and an atmosphere of encouragement all play a significant role in the four schools' outstanding results.

10.2. Study summary

I will review the important points from each chapter to provide a summary of the chapters in this part. "What is the role of the principal as instructional leader in improving the performance of learners in primary schools in the Johannesburg South

District, Gauteng Province?" was the major study question posed. Sub-questions were posed to elicit answers to the primary topic, which was: What are the responsibilities that school principals believe they have in enhancing the academic achievement of their learners in their schools? How principals of can schools assist teaching and learning in their schools by exercising their instructional leadership? What obstacles do principals of schools face when implementing leadership in education methods, and how do they get beyond them?

The first chapter of this paper addresses the introduction, which states the nature of the study topic. The research was given direction by this chapter. It provides the study's background, goals, and objectives as well as its justification, reasoning, and importance. It also discusses the research assumptions, constraints, and delimitations.

The Literature Review was the main topic of Chapter Two. The literature on the principal's role as a teacher leader in raising learner achievement in Johannesburg primary schools has been reviewed. Additionally, the research on the impact of instructional leadership on the performance of learners and the role of the principal as an instructional leader in enhancing learners' academic achievement has been discussed. Finally, the study's conceptual structure was established and explored.

The frameworks that support this study were the subject of Chapter 3. The frameworks supporting the study were provided and explored in this chapter. These are the Principal Instruction Management Rating Scale (PIMRS) model developed by Hallinger and Murphy in 1985 and the dispersed leadership theory proposed by Spillane in 2006.

The approach was covered in Chapter 4. The research design and methodology are covered in this chapter. The research design comes first, and is followed by procedures for gathering data, standards for choosing participants, questions of reliability and accuracy, sampling strategies, participant profiles, data analysis and interpretation, qualitative data, ethical issues, and the limitations of the study.

The focus of Chapter Five was on the data analysis that was produced by speaking with school leaders.

The presentation of data analysis produced by speaking with the deputy principal was the main focus of Chapter 6.

The presentation of data analysis produced by interviewing department heads (DHs) was the main focus of Chapter 7.

The presentation of the data analysis produced by questioning the teachers was the main focus of Chapter 8.

The presentation of the data analysis produced by questioning the department heads (DHs), teachers, school principals, and assistant principals was the main focus of Chapter 9. It has given the results and conclusions of the practical inquiry with an emphasis on the presentation. It has been applied to the analysis and interpretation of data. The strategies used by the heads of school of four different schools to raise learner academic performance in their institutions have been covered. Additionally, it has discussed many approaches to instructional leadership that school principals have used in their capacities as leaders of teaching.

Chapter Ten focuses on the summary, which begins with an introduction summarising the main points of the study, and continues with suggestions for improving pupil achievement in schools, inferences derived from the results, and implications for future research.

The research questions presented in Chapter 1 have been addressed by this study. A few of the results of the research corroborate what has been written in the literature. This demonstrates how crucial management is to learners' academic success. Enhancing pupil achievement primarily requires collaboration and a variety of leadership approaches.

10.3. Conclusions

Making results and drawing conclusions is the ultimate objective for researchers when evaluating data, according to Maree (2011). Maree (2011) goes on to say that to shed light on new information or support already held beliefs, each conclusion drawn from the data must be supported by verifiable results and considered in light

of existing information. Thus, conclusion function as a last assessment or remark on a certain study. Maree (2011) contends, however, that the study's findings are particular to the individuals and their particular circumstances and cannot be extrapolated to a broader population. The phrase "bounded conclusion" refers to this (Maree, 2011, p.113). The goal of this study was to investigate how a principal may serve as an instructional leader to enhance learners' academic achievement in the classroom. In order to wrap up the empirical investigation, this section presents conclusions based on the findings of the preceding chapter about the role of the principal as instructional leadership and the strategies used by school principals to support high-quality education in their institutions.

The study came to the conclusion that principals of schools must develop their own conceptions and perspectives on leadership in education. The principal of the school can use instructional management to support high-quality teaching and learning. School principals are instructional leaders who provide expert support to teachers, guide them, and make critical contributions to their teaching and learning processes (Baker, John & Jana, 2020). Principals must comprehend the notion of instructional leadership to support good teaching and learning, since doing so will enable them to behave in ways that advance educational leadership.

This study has shown that for the school to be successful, the principal must exhibit leadership qualities that enable for everyone to participate in decision-making and that they can all learn from. It has also demonstrated how critical it is to assist and advance teachers.

The principal's primary responsibility is to guarantee that learners get high-quality instruction and that teaching and learning occur efficiently. Principals who are effective educational leaders develop and establish an atmosphere that encourages teachers and learners to reach their maximum potential in teaching and learning, as found by Mestry, Moonsammy-Koopasammy, and Schmidt (2013). Therefore, the principal must adopt techniques that will increase learner accomplishment in order for teaching and learning to be effective. There is a connection between learner performance and leadership since high-performing schools also have outstanding leadership.

The things that must be done to improve learners' academic performance in schools were made clear by the research findings. Additionally, it has highlighted the areas that require more focus to help schools raise learner academic performance. The strategies recommended in this study can assist other schools facing difficulties in improving learner success. The participants' concerns must be taken into consideration by the Department of Education in order for numerous schools to enhance learner achievement. These four institutions have performed well because of their strong leadership.

According to the study, leaders at the school must use a variety of leadership philosophies in order for it to function well. The blend of leadership philosophies aids the school in improving learner performance. A school is designated as performing if it generates high learner outcomes. Thus, it is important for leaders to be aware of the strategies they might use to improve learners' performance. The results of this study show that all four selected schools' principals are instructional leaders because they improve the educational achievement of their learners. Their commitment to preserving instructional time and putting into practice strategies that will enhance teaching and learning has enhanced their positions as instructional leaders. Additionally, they acknowledge and include their subordinates in decision-making, which has fostered a pleasant environment that supports efficient teaching and learning.

Every principal understands that without the support of other stakeholders, they cannot effectively manage the entire school. In order to assign them part of the tasks and function as a team, they incorporate other stakeholders in whatever they do. As a result of the principals of the four schools working closely and consistently with those below them to accomplish the school's objectives, this study also demonstrated the importance of cooperation. This is one of the strategies that these four schools use to ensure that teaching and learning are carried out effectively and to generate excellent results.

In order to enhance learners' academic achievement, all the principals demonstrated a firm awareness of their leadership duties as instructional leaders. These schools' success can be attributed to the many approaches that their leaders employ. The fact

that these principals prioritise instruction above all else and make sure that teaching and learning occur successfully demonstrates that they are instructional leaders. According to Southworth (2002), educational leadership is proactively focused on education and instruction, encompassing both teacher professional development and learner advancement.

Participants from four different schools all discussed comparable strategies they employ to improve learners' academic achievement. Enhancing learner performance is their shared objective. They take instruction into consideration for all they do. Because of their ability to collaborate with people of various types, a great work atmosphere has been established, enabling everyone to operate with freedom. Everyone in their schools is inspired by their leadership. High levels of academic success among their learners are the reason they provide their staff members the chance to participate in making choices. These four educational institutions employ comparable methods in the same setting. Due to their comparable backgrounds and the learners' excellent performance, they were selected.

According to this research, using a variety of leadership philosophies is the key to running a successful school. Positive effects on learners' academic achievement have been formed by the mixtures of leadership styles that four principals have used. I believe that this approach of utilising many leadership philosophies is beneficial as these principals are effectively implementing these philosophies. All these statements were verified by several individuals both throughout the data collection and analysis phases. According to the study's findings, every school should have a principal who employs principles of leadership that support efficient instruction and learning.

10. 4. Contributions of the study

The aim of this study was to investigate how principals in Johannesburg South District primary schools may act as instructional leaders to enhance learners' academic achievement. While many studies have looked into the connection between educational instruction and leadership in education, this one is special because it looked into the connection between principals' roles in instructional leadership and the enhancement of learners' academic performance in township primary schools.

According to this study, principals ought to prioritise instruction and learning while utilising different approaches to leadership. This may contribute to raising learners' intellectual achievement in the classroom. The research's findings will contribute to a better understanding of the role principals play in overseeing curricula and assisting teachers and learners to raise academic achievement in the classroom.

The research's conclusions and recommendations add to the body of information on how leadership in education may be incorporated into the principalship concept more broadly.

10.5. Recommendations

Following consideration of the data and the aforementioned results, I came to the following inferences, which I believe can aid in enhancing learner performance.

Recommendation One

The study's conclusions demonstrated that the principals who took part in it were capable instructional leaders who successfully oversaw and assisted instruction in their schools. In addition, they positioned instruction and learning at the centre of the school, with principals expected to impart knowledge and learners expected to absorb it. This implied that their approaches to instructional leadership were commendable. They served as good role models for professionalism in most cases, but only one administrator actually taught in an educational setting. Therefore, in order to become proficient in the refreshed Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) curriculum and remain up to date with current practices, it is advised that all principals teach topic courses.

Recommendation Two

One important inference drawn from the study's findings was the prominence of organisational management techniques in the schools under investigation. This included offering resources and concentrating on organisational frameworks to provide Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSM). In order to guarantee that

there are adequate teaching resources, it is advised that LTSM committees be active in every school. Successful learning and instruction will be possible as a result.

Recommendation Three

High levels of dispersed instructional leadership techniques were found in the schools under investigation, according to study findings. It was highly successful in promoting pedagogical techniques and spreading knowledge and abilities throughout the school and featured many role players, including teachers, department heads (DHs), deputy principals, and the principal. It is also proposed that dispersed instructional leadership methods be broadened to encompass additional stakeholders like parents, community members and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) to further improve teaching and learning.

Recommendation Four

In order to train new teachers, it is also advised that all schools implement a strategic development strategy. In order for new teachers to advance in their field, this would mean that SMTs and more seasoned teachers would collaborate with them to share their expertise. In contrast, there is little time or opportunity to participate in instructional techniques during the omnipresent "once-off" Department of Basic Education (DoBE) seminars.

Recommendation Five

The study's conclusions demonstrated the existence of Professional Learning Communities at the investigated institutions. Thus, it is advised that all principals investigate the advantages of establishing professional learning communities inside their educational institutions. DuFour (2004) asserts that doing so will guarantee improved instructional strategies and learner learning results in their educational institutions.

Recommendation Six

Regarding incentives and recognition, it is advised that principals of all schools employ this strategy to improve their practices as leaders in education. To improve the morale and mental health of their human resources teachers and learners—principals

must essentially concentrate on these areas. This would lead to increased support for overall school development from these groups of people.

Recommendation Seven

The principals listed several obstacles that prevented them from carrying out their instructional leadership activities. First, they enhanced learning outcomes by implementing a variety of turnaround strategies. In addition to using these effective strategies, schools must to make use of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). In addition, schools must to establish connections with social service providers to enhance learners' overall wellbeing. Second, to foster an environment of learning, schools must communicate with parents. They should also use the Whatsapp group structure, emails, and short messaging services (SMS) to do this. Finally, while interacting with uncooperative teacher unions, all school principals have to stay up to date on the most recent educational policies and follow the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM) document.

10.6. The implications of the study

In four primary schools, this study examined how the principal might enhance learner academic achievement through instructional leadership. The study only looked at one Gauteng school district, and its conclusions could not be applied to other districts. The results provide further light on how principals might serve as instructional leaders to raise learner achievement in the classroom.

As they reflect on their educational leadership techniques and the challenges, they encounter in promoting education and instruction in their schools, school principals may find great significance in the study's results. The results might also prompt teachers to reflect more deeply on their professional practices and provide them with tools to enhance their teaching methods. The results may also alert teacher unions to the disruptive role they play in schools and encourage them to reflect on their own behaviour to make necessary corrections. Furthermore, the outcomes might prompt the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) to reconsider the tactical assistance they offer educational institutions in their pursuit of enhancing the calibre of instruction

and learning. In the end, the results could motivate parents to support a learning culture, which would raise learner accomplishment levels.

Lastly, this study's narrow focus must be broadened. Undertaking a comprehensive quantitative investigation into school principals' instructional leadership techniques would be prudent. In order to demonstrate a statistical association between methods of instructional leadership and obstacles to learner success outcomes, this study would primarily focus on data on learner achievement results in relation to those barriers. Thus, more study would help principals of schools improve their leadership of instruction techniques.

10.7. Chapter summary

The culture of teaching and learning is the main emphasis of instructional leadership. The performance of the learners at that specific school serves as a gauge for the principal's efficacy as an instructional leader. Thus, to enhance learner achievement, the administrator must encourage and assist teachers and learners to work in a supportive atmosphere. To establish a conducive atmosphere, the principal must comprehend the responsibilities of his or her position as a leader in education. For this reason, the administrator must constantly support learning and instruction and push teachers to take part in professional development. In order to provide methods for execution in areas that require attention and to actively participate in their execution, the principal, in their capacity as a leader in education, must be hands-on in things pertaining to teaching and learning. When the principal assists the principals in their instructional duties, learner achievement is also improved.

The research study's overall summary was provided in this chapter. The data generated by those who took part influenced the conclusions. These results then produced findings and recommendations that matched. The study's implications were presented in summary form.

CONCLUSION TO THE STUDY

This study was motivated by the research problem of exploring the role of school principals as instructional leaders in improving learner academic achievement in Johannesburg South District primary schools. To address this issue, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four selected primary schools. The findings revealed that principals must place greater emphasis on their instructional leadership responsibilities, such as overseeing the work of both teachers and learners, promoting staff development, and managing resources. These activities are crucial for the effective implementation of the curriculum.

Moreover, the study indicated that the instructional leadership role of principals requires more attention, as it significantly influences the organisational culture of the school and, consequently, the culture of teaching and learning. This research emphasises that principals play vital leadership roles not only in terms of managerial duties, but also as instructional leaders, creating positive and dynamic environments that enhance learner academic performance.

The study concludes that strong instructional leadership is essential for improving teaching and learning at the primary school level. Additionally, the instructional leadership practices of school principals were found to be closely linked to teachers' commitment, professional engagement, and the overall improvement in learner academic performance.

The study finds that effective instructional leadership is central to enhancing teaching and learning in a primary school level to improve learner academic performance and that the instructional leadership behaviours of school principals were significantly related to teacher's commitment, professional involvement and to the overall improvement of learner academic performance.

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APPENDICES

APPENDEX A

GAUTENG PROVINCE
Department: Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

8/4/4/1/2

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	**05 September 2022**
Validity of Research Approval:	**08 February 2022– 30 September 2022** **2022/415**
Name of Researcher:	**Zuma C**
Address of Researcher:	**16609 Ext 9, Phase 2**
	Orange Farm
	Stretford
Telephone Number:	**081 3549 9221**
Email address:	**Chumazuma88@gmail.com**
Research Topic:	**Exploring the role of school principals as instructional leaders in improving learner academic performance in Johannesburg South District Primary Schools**
Type of qualification	**PhD**
Number and type of schools:	**6 Primary Schools**
District/s/HO	**Johannesburg South**

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved to conduct the research. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to both the School (both Principal and SGB) and the District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted.

05/09/2022

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below are met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

1. *The letter would indicate that the said researcher/s has/have been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
2. *The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s must be approached separately, and in writing, for permission to involve District/Head Office Officials in the project.*
3. ***Because of the relaxation of COVID 19 regulations researchers can collect data online, telephonically, physically access schools, or may make arrangements for Zoom with the school Principal. Requests for such arrangements should be submitted to the GDE Education Research and Knowledge Management directorate.***
4. ***The Researchers are advised to wear a mask at all times, Social distance at all times, Provide a vaccination certificate or negative COVID-19 test, not older than 72 hours, and Sanitise frequently.***
5. *A copy of this letter must be forwarded to the school principal and the chairperson of the School Governing Body (SGB) that would indicate that the researcher/s has been granted permission from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct the research study.*
6. *A letter/document that outlines the purpose of the research and the anticipated outcomes of such research must be made available to the principals, SGBs, and District/Head Office Senior Managers of the schools and districts/offices concerned, respectively.*
7. *The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and cooperation of all the GDE officials, principals, and chairpersons of the SGBs, teachers, and learners involved. Persons who offer their cooperation will not receive additional remuneration from the Department while those that opt not to participate will not be penalised in any way.*
8. *Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school program is not interrupted. The Principal (if at a school) and/or Director (if at a district/head office) must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.*
9. *Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded before the beginning of the last quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.*
10. *Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.*
11. *It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written parental consent of all learners that are expected to participate in the study.*
12. *The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilising his/her research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes, and telephones, and should not depend on the goodwill of the institutions and/or the offices visited for supplying such resources.*
13. *The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers, and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research report without the written consent of each of these individuals and/or organisations.*
14. *On completion of the study, the researcher/s must supply the Director: Knowledge Management & Research with one Hard Cover bound and an electronic copy of the research.*
15. *The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings, and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned.*
16. *Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director concerned must also be supplied with a summary of the purpose, findings, and recommendations of the research study.*

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards

.....

Mr. Gumani Mukatuni
Acting CES: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 05/09/2022

Office of the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management
7th Floor, 17 Simmonds Street, Johannesburg, 2001
Tel: (011) 355 0488
Email: Faith.Tshabalala@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

APPENDIX B

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

University of the Witwatersrand, School of Education, Tell: 011 717 3996

16609 Ext 9, Phase 2

Stretford

1841

Cell: 081 359 9221

12 August 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to conduct research at Gauteng department of education (Johannesburg South District) schools.

My name is Chuma Zuma. I am studying for a PhD in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am seeking permission to do research at Johannesburg South District Schools. The title of my study is **Exploring the role of school principals as instructional leaders in improving learner academic performance in Johannesburg south district primary schools**.

This study aims mainly to explore the role of the school principal as instructional leader in improving learner academic achievement in primary schools in Johannesburg South District, Gauteng Province. The planned study will focus on primary school principals. The study will use semi-structured interviews with principals, deputy principals, HoDs and teachers. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 30-40 minutes at the times convenient to them which will not disturb teaching and learning. Each interview will be voice-recorded.

Participants will be asked to give their written consent before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities (their names and the name of the organisation) will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated.

Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

The research participants will not be advantaged or disadvantaged in any way. They will be reassured that they can withdraw their permission at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating in this study. The participants will not be paid for this study.

All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at your organisation. The permission letter should be on your organisation's headed paper, signed and dated, and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of my study.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Chuma Zuma

081 359 9221

1139034@students.wits.ac.za

Supervisors: Dr. G. Motilal and Dr. E. Charamba,

Email: Geeta.Motila@wits.ac.za, erasmos.charamba@wits.ac.za

Tel: 011 717 3296

APPENDIX C

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

University of the Witwatersrand, School of Education, Tell: 011 717 3996

16609 Ext 9, Phase 2

Stretford

1841

Cell: 081 359 9221

12 August 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Permission to conduct research at school.

My name is Chuma Zuma. I am studying for a PhD in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. I am seeking permission to do research at your school. The title of my study is **Exploring the role of school principals as instructional leaders in improving learner academic performance in Johannesburg south district primary schools**.

This study aims mainly to explore the role of the school principal as instructional leader in improving learner academic achievement in primary schools in Johannesburg South District, Gauteng Province. The planned study will focus on primary school principals. The study will use semi-structured interviews with principals, deputy principals, HoDs and teachers. Participants will be interviewed for approximately 30-40 minutes at the times convenient to them which will not disturb teaching and learning. Each interview will be voice-recorded.

Participants will be asked to give their written consent before the research begins. Their responses will be treated confidentially, and identities (their names and the name of the organisation) will be anonymous unless otherwise expressly indicated. Individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study.

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All research data will be destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

I therefore request permission in writing to conduct my research at your organisation. The permission letter should be on your organisation's headed paper, signed and dated, and specifically referring to myself by name and the title of my study.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Chuma Zuma

081 359 9221

1139034@students.wits.ac.za

Supervisors: Dr. G. Motilal and Dr. E. Charamba,

Email: Geeta.Motila@wits.ac.za, erasmos.charamba@wits.ac.za

Tel: 011 717 3296

APPENDIX D

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Principal's Consent Form

Title of project: Exploring the role of school principals as instructional leaders in improving learner academic performance in Johannesburg south district primary schools

Name of researcher: Chuma Zuma

I, …….., agree to participate in this research project.

I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report/ manuscript	YES	NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript)	YES	NO
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	YES	NO

…… (signature)

…… (name of participant)

…… (date)

…… (signature)

…… (name of researcher/person seeking consent)

…… (date)

APPENDIX E

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Deputy Principal's Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Chuma Zuma. I am a PhD student in School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My supervisor is Dr. G. Motilal. I am conducting a research study about improving learner academic performance in primary schools. The study title is **Exploring the role of school principals as instructional leaders in improving learner academic performance in Johannesburg south district primary schools**.

I am inviting you to take part in an interview.If you decide to take part, your participation in this research study will last about 30 minutes. The interview will take place at your school, after school.

With your permission, I would like to audio record the interview. This data will be stored in a locked cabinet and it will be deleted after 3 years. I will be the only one who will have access to the data.

The interview will be confidential and anonymous. When I share the results of the research study, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you.

If you decide to take part in the research study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You do not have to take part. You can stop being in the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to. You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. You will not lose any services, benefits or rights you would normally have if you decide not to join. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything. You will not be paid for being in this research study.

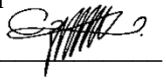
The risks for this research study are no more than what happens in everyday life.

This research study will be written up as a research report. The report will be available on the university library website. If you would like to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,

Chuma Zuma

Signature: 

Researcher:

Chuma Zuma, 1139034@students.ac.za, 081 359 9221

Supervisors:

Dr. G. Motilal and Dr. E. Charamba,

Email: Geeta.Motila@wits.ac.za,erasmos.charamba@wits.ac.za

Tel: 011 717 3296

APPENDIX F

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Deputy Principal's Consent Form

Title of project: Exploring the role of school principals as instructional leaders in improving learner academic performance in Johannesburg south district primary schools

Name of researcher: Chuma Zuma

I, …….., agree to participate in this research project.

I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report/ manuscript	YES	NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript)	YES	NO
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	YES	NO

…… (signature)

…… (name of participant)

…… (date)

…… (signature)

…… (name of researcher/person seeking consent)

…… (date)

APPENDIX G

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

DH's Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Chuma Zuma. I am a PhD student in School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My supervisor is Dr. G. Motilal. I am conducting a research study about improving learner academic performance in primary schools. The study title is **Exploring the role of school principals as instructional leaders in improving learner academic performance in Johannesburg south district primary schools**.

I am inviting you to take part in an interview.If you decide to take part, your participation in this research study will last about 30 minutes. The interview will take place at your school, after school.

With your permission, I would like to audio recordthe interview. This data will be stored in a locked cabinet andit will be deleted after 3 years. I will be the only one who will have access to thedata.

The interview will be confidential and anonymous. When I share the results of the research study, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you.

If you decide to take part in the research study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You do not have to take part. You can stop being in the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to.You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. You will not lose any services, benefits or rights you would normally have if you decide not to join. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything. You will not be paid for being in this research study.

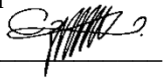
The risks for this research study are no more than what happens in everyday life.

This research study will be written up as a research report. The report will be available on the university library website. If you would like to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,

Chuma Zuma

Signature: 

Researcher:

Chuma Zuma, 1139034@students.ac.za, 081 359 9221

Supervisors:

Dr. G. Motilal and Dr. E. Charamba,

Email: Geeta.Motila@wits.ac.za,erasmos.charamba@wits.ac.za

Tel: 011 717 3296

APPENDIX H

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

DH's Consent Form

Title of project: Exploring the role of school principals as instructional leaders in improving learner academic performance in Johannesburg south district primary schools

Name of researcher: Chuma Zuma

I, …….., agree to participate in this research project.

I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report/ manuscript	YES	NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript)	YES	NO
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	YES	NO

…… (signature)

…… (name of participant)

…… (date)

…… (signature)

…… (name of researcher/person seeking consent)

…… (date)

APPENDIX I

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Teacher's Participant Information Sheet (PIS)

Dear Sir / Madam

My name is Chuma Zuma. I am a PhD student in School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. My supervisor is Dr. G. Motilal. I am conducting a research study about improving learner academic performance in primary schools. The study title is **Exploring the role of school principals as instructional leaders in improving learner academic performance in Johannesburg south district primary schools**.

I am inviting you to take part in an interview.If you decide to take part, your participation in this research study will last about 30 minutes. The interview will take place at your school, after school.

With your permission, I would like to audio recordthe interview. This data will be stored in a locked cabinet andit will be deleted after 3 years. I will be the only one who will have access to thedata.

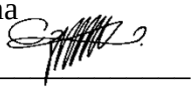
The interview will be confidential and anonymous. When I share the results of the research study, I will not include your name or anything else that could identify you.

If you decide to take part in the research study, it should be because you want to volunteer. You do not have to take part. You can stop being in the study at any time. You do not have to answer any questions if you do not want to.You will not get any direct benefits if you choose to join the research study. You will not lose any services, benefits or rights you would normally have if you decide not to join. Taking part in the research study will not cost you anything. You will not be paid for being in this research study.

The risks for this research study are no more than what happens in everyday life.

This research study will be written up as a research report. Thereport will be available on the university library website. If you would like to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research study, feel free to contact me or my supervisor on the details listed below. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical procedures of this research study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email hrecnon-medical@wits.ac.za.

Yours sincerely,
Chuma Zuma
Signature: 

Researcher:
Chuma Zuma, 1139034@students.ac.za, 081 359 9221

Supervisors:
Dr. G. Motilal and Dr. E. Charamba,
Email: Geeta.Motila@wits.ac.za,erasmos.charamba@wits.ac.za
Tel: 011 717 3296

APPENDIX J

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

Teacher's Consent Form

Title of project: Exploring the role of school principals as instructional leaders in improving learner academic performance in Johannesburg south district primary schools

Name of researcher: Chuma Zuma

I, …….., agree to participate in this research project.

I agree to the following:

(Please circle the relevant options below)

The research study was explained to me. I understand what this study is about.	YES	NO
I understand that I can volunteer to take part in the study	YES	NO
I agree that the interview may be audio recorded	YES	NO
I agree that direct quotations from my interview may be used by the researcher in their research report/ manuscript	YES	NO
I agree that my participation will remain anonymous (my name will not be used by the researcher in their research report/manuscript)	YES	NO
I agree that other researchers may use the information I provide in my interview (depending on their own ethics clearance being obtained) but my name and any personal information will not be used or passed on	YES	NO

…… (signature)

…… (name of participant)

…… (date)

…… (signature)

…… (name of researcher/person seeking consent)

…… (date)

SAMPLE QUESTIONS FOR THE SEMI STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

APPENDIX K: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRINCIPALS

1. As a school principal, what do you understand to be your role in supporting teaching and learning in your school? Please explain.

2. How do you personally enact and enhance the instructional leadership practice of modelling, as the principal?

3. How is the vision and mission of the school aligned to teaching and learning?

4. How do you ensure that an appropriate climate is created to facilitate teaching and learning?

5. How do you enact your role as an organisational manager to support teaching and learning?

6. What do you actually do to support and manage teaching and learning in your school? Please elaborate.

7. How do you involve others / collaborate with others as you support and manage teaching in your school?

8. How do you personally enact and enhance the instructional leadership practices of professional dialogue and communication as the principal?

9. How do you monitor teaching and learning in the school?

10. How do you support teacher professional development in your school?

11. What strategies have you employed to create a Professional Learning Community (PLC)?

12. What measures are in place to reward and recognise both teachers and learners?

13. What are the challenges / barriers (from learners, parents, teachers, teacher unions, DoBE) that you experience as you enact your leadership and management practices of teaching and learning in your school? Please elaborate.

14. How do you overcome the challenges / barriers that you experience as you support and manage teaching and learning in your school?

APPENDIX L: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR DEPUTY PRINCIPALS, DH AND TEACHERS

1. As a deputy principal, what do you understand to be your principal role in supporting teaching and learning in your school? Please explain.

2. How does your principal enact and enhance the instructional leadership practice of modelling?

3. How is the vision and mission of the school aligned to teaching and learning?

4. How does your principal ensure that an appropriate climate is created to facilitate teaching and learning?

5. How does your principal enact his/her role as an organisational manager to support teaching and learning?

6. What does your principal actually do to support and manage teaching and learning in your school? Please elaborate.

7. How does your principal involve others / collaborate with others as he/she support and manage teaching in your school?

8. How does your principal enact and enhance the instructional leadership practices of professional dialogue and communication?

9. How does your principal monitor teaching and learning in the school?

10. How does your principal support teacher professional development in your school?

11. What strategies have your principal employed to create a Professional Learning Community (PLC)?

12. What measures are in place to reward and recognise both teachers and learners?

13. What are the challenges / barriers (from learners, parents, teachers, teacher unions, DoBE) that your principal experience as he/she enact his/her leadership and management practices of teaching and learning in your school? Please elaborate.

14. How does your principal overcome the challenges / barriers that he/she experience as he/she support and manage teaching and learning in your school?

APPENDIX M: Language editor certificate

