THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN DISTRICT-AND SCHOOL-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES FOR THE HISTORY SUBJECT IN THE ZAKA DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE

By

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Declarations

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Signature... July 2015

Mr.K.Mapetere

Acknowledgements

Dedication

To my late father and mother, Noah and Pupurai, who always called me "Teacherers".
May your souls rest in peace.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DEO :   DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER

DHMC: DISTRICT HISTORY MANAGEMENT COMMITEE

DL: DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

DI :   DISTRICT INSPECTOR

HOD :   HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

HDC: HISTORY DISTRICT COMMITTEE

HIC: HEAD IN CHARGE

HL :   HISTORY LEADER

IL: INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

OL: FONTARIO LEADERSHIP FRAMEWORK

NCLB: NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND

NASH: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SECONDARY HEADS

SH: SCHOOL HEAD

Abstract

This study investigated the interactions between district- and school-based instructional leadership practices for the subject of History in the Zaka district of Zimbabwe. The purpose of the study was to establish the nature of the relationships that exist between district- and school-based instructional leadership by exploring the research puzzle on how schools and districts interact in pursuit of instructional improvement for the subject of History in Zimbabwe, what policies and structures guide the interactions and what practices define the interactions.

Conducted against the backdrop of separate and isolated studies of district instructional leadership on the one hand and of school instructional leadership on the other, the present study sought to examine instructional leadership structures and practices at the intersection of the two agencies of education, viz. the schools and the districts. A mixed methods approach was used, with a sequential explanatory research design adopted, in which quantitative and qualitative data was gathered and presented. In the quantitative phase of the study, 28 History leaders responded to a questionnaire on the dominant practices of instructional leadership at the point of intersection by schools and districts, while in the qualitative phase, 5 purposively selected History leaders were interviewed in addition to observations of 5 key instructional leadership events within the district. Data was presented sequentially starting with qualitative analysis, then the observation and interview data, with mixing at both the analysis and synthesis stages.

Unsurprisingly, the study established that most instructional leadership practices for the History subject in Zimbabwe's Zaka district are often limited to the traditional activities of the workshop type and that these practices are often narrow in scope and circumscribed in terms of time-duration. More importantly, it emerged from the study that the most unresolved issue for district- and school-based instructional leadership interactions for the improvement of History teaching and learning lies in the coordination and control of the leadership activities for supporting teachers. There was a clear contestation between what I have called the "bottom-up" approach which most teacher leaders advocated, versus the dominant and current practice of "top-down" district leadership approach. Most leaders in the Zaka district favour an increased role of the non-formal or non-positional leaders in the coordination of instructional leadership activities.

The study concludes that instructional leadership interactions at the intersection of schools and districts have a great potential for improving classroom practice, especially if they are initiated and coordinated from the ground up, where contextual and locational conditions are taken into account. The success of instructional leadership interactions at the interface of districts and schools is strongly dependent on the level of involvement by all leaders at both levels, where leaders can become followers, interchangeably, at different times.

On the structures of leadership, the study established that districts are rather ill-prepared to lead on instructional leadership, in part because of the lack of subject specialists at that level to provide expert knowledge and skills for subject based instructional leadership and

guidance. A key recommendation is for the relocation of collaborative instructional leadership activities to the school level, in order to improve both capacity and commitment by the practitioners. More specifically for the case study district, the recommendation is for the district inspectorate to be reconstituted in terms of its composition in order to enhance its instructional leadership role. Subject specialisation should a key consideration for the inspectorate. Furthermore, it is recommended that school leaders should be continuously inducted and kept abreast on the developments in the field of subject based instructional leadership.

Further research on the provincial structures and practices of instructional leadership is recommended with a view to suggesting possibilities for alignment of all structures that have a role in subject-oriented school leadership for the improvement of teaching and learning.

Key Words: district leadership;district-school interactions; instructional leadership; distributed leadership; teacher leadership;school leadership; school inspectors.

Samevatting

Hierdie studie ondersoek die interaksies tussen distrik- en skoolgebaseerde onderrigleierskapspraktyke vir die vak Geskiedenis in Zimbabwe se Zaka-distrik. Die doel van die studie was om die aard van die verhoudings tussen distrik- en skoolgebaseerde onderrigleierskap vas te stel, deur die volgende te verken: die navorsinglegkaart van hoe skole en distrikte in wisselwerking tree in die najaag van onderrigverbetering vir die vak Geskiedenis in Zimbabwe; watter beleide en strukture die interaksies lei; en watter praktyke die interaksies definieer.

Teen die agtergrond van aparte en geïsoleerde studies van distrikte se onderrigleierskap aan die een kant en van skole se onderrigleierskap aan die ander kant, het die huidige studie onderneem om instruksionele leierskapstrukture en praktyke by die kruising van die twee agente van onderrig, d.w.s. die skole en distrikte, te ondersoek. 'n Benadering van gemengde metodes is geneem, met 'n opvolgende verklarende navorsingsontwerp wat gebruik is, waarin kwantitatiewe en kwalitatiewe data versamel en aangebied is. In die kwantitatiewe fase van die studie het 28 leiers in Geskiedenis 'n vraelys beantwoord oor die dominante praktyke van instruksionele leierskap by die kruisingspunt van skole en distrikte, terwyl in die kwalitatiewe fase 5 geselekteerde leiers in Geskiedenis ondervra is, terwyl 5 belangrike onderrigleierskapsgebeurtenisse binne die distrik waargeneem is. Data is opvolgend aangebied, beginnende met kwalitatiewe analise, gevolg deur die waarneming en onderhouddata, met vermenging op beide die analise- en sintesevlak.

Soos verwag het die studie vasgestel dat die meeste onderrigleierskapspraktyke vir die vak Geskiedenis in Zimbabwe se Zaka-distrik dikwels beperk is tot die tradisionele aktiwiteite van die werksessie en dat hierdie praktyke dikwels 'n noue bestek het en nou voorgeskryf word in terme van tydsduur. Van groter belang is dat die studie getoon het die mees onopgeloste kwessie vir distrik- en skoolgebaseerde onderrigleierskap is interaksies vir die verbetering van Geskiedenisonderrig, en dat leer bepaal word deur die koördinasie en beheer van die leierskapaktiwiteite vir ondersteunende onderwysers. Daar was duidelike konflik tussen wat ek noem die "van onder na bo"-benadering wat die meeste onderwysers voorstaan, teenoor die dominante en huidige praktyke van die "bo na onder"-benadering tot distrikleierskap. Meeste leiers in die Zaka-distrik is ten gunste van 'n verhoogde rol vir die informele of nie-posisionele leiers in die koördinering van instruksionele leierskapaktiwiteite.

Die studie kom tot die gevolgtrekking dat instruksionele leierskapinteraksies by die kruising tussen skole en distrikte groot potensiaal het vir verbeterde klaskamerpraktyk, veral indien hulle van stapel gestuur en gekoördineer word van die grond af op, waar toestande van konteks en ligging in ag geneem word. Die sukses van onderrigleierskapinteraksies by die koppelvlak van distrikte en skole is sterk afhangend van die vlak van betrokkenheid van alle leiers op albei vlakke, waar leiers wisselbaar op verskillende tye as volgelinge kan optree.

Ten opsigte van die strukture van leierskap het die studie vasgestel dat distrikte ietwat onvoorbereid is om met onderrigleierskap leiding te neem, deels weens die tekort aan vakspesialiste op daardie vlak wat kundige kennis en vaardighede vir onderwerpgebaseerde onderrigleierskap en begeleiding kan voorsien. 'n Sleutelaanbeveling is vir die hervestiging van samewerkende onderrigleierskapsaktiwiteite op die skoolvlak om kapasiteit en toewyding van die praktisyne te verbeter. Spesifiek vir die distrik in die gevallestudie is die aanbeveling dat die distriksinpektoraat hersaamgestel word in terme van sy samestelling om sy onderrigleierskaprol te verbeter. Vakspesialisering moet 'n sleuteloorweging vir die inspektoraat wees. Verder word aanbeveel dat skoolleiers deurlopend ingelig en op datum gehou word ten opsigte van die ontwikkelinge op die gebied van vakgebaseerde onderrigleierskap.

Verdere navorsing oor die provinsiale strukture en praktyke van instruksionele leierskap word aanbeveel, met die doel om moontlikhede vir die gerigtheid van alle strukture wat 'n rol speel in vakgeörienteerde skoolleierskap vir die verbetering van onderrig en leer voor te stel.

Sleutelwoorde: distrikleierskap; distrik-skool-interaksies; onderrigleierskap; verspreide leierskap; onderwyserleierskap; skoolleierskap; skoolinspekteurs.

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CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This study investigates the interactions between district- and school-based instructional leadership practices for the subject of History in the Zaka district of Zimbabwe. The problem and its setting are examined in this chapter, with the background, statement of the problem, research questions and methodology, as well as the significance of the study. It details the limitations and delimitations of the study, closing with a discussion of the theoretical framework, clarification of terms and an outline of the structure.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Educational leadership, organizational performance, leadership preparation and development are topical (Asuga & Eacott, 2013:1), as intellectual shifts and related ideological debates have set new pedagogical demands on teachers, with teamwork of particular importance (Jofre & Schiralli, 2002). In the learning area of History, such demands include the motivation of students to think like historians and the need to promote collaboration between district and school leaders. School and district leadership is essential, and without proper collaboration between the two educational systems it is unlikely to succeed. Interaction between schools and districts has been prioritized in educational circles recently as the work of improving teaching and learning cannot be left solely in the hands of principals or education officers respectively (Spillane & Diamond, 2007). In Zimbabwe, for example, the school head, called the school principal in other countries, reports to the District Education Officer who works with a team of school inspectors. It becomes imperative that the relationships of such leaders at the school and district level is such that the teaching and learning of specific subjects is promoted. The call for better interaction models has been repeated in many studies, for instance, Neumerski (2013), but the nature of the relations between district and school leadership has not been clearly elucidated, especially as it pertains to specific subject teaching. Interaction between leaders facilitates a constant interchange of information at both the formal and informal levels (Lima, 2008). Studies of school and district effectiveness suggest that high levels of achievement by students are possible when schools and the district collaborate as a coordinated unit of change (Chrispeels, Burkae & Johnson, 2008).

Despite substantial interventions to promote interactions in instructional leadership (Biancarosa, Bryk & Dexter, 2010), knowledge on how instructional leaders interact themselves is limited (Stoelinga & Mangin, 2008)and the nature of relationships is poorly documented (Gronn, 2009).

The role of district-school interactions has been the subject of debate in recent times, with accountability a buzzword associated with effective schools (Firestone & Martinez, 2007). According to Jofre and Schiralli (2002), the intersection of the official discourse in the form of policies, programmes of studies and statements with the experiences of teachers and students of History produces unintended outcomes. Interaction is a key aspect of instructional leadership as it brings with it commonality of practice through shared vision and helps create a climate vital for change in schools and whole districts, enabling the propagation of a clear and shared sense of vision. Nevertheless, districts and schools continue to function in isolation, despite the awareness of the benefits of working together. Thus, the need to examine interactions between district- and school-based instructional leadership practices remains a pressing issue especially for History which in the case of Zimbabwe is a vehicle for the promotion of national identity and the unhu/ubuntu philosophy(Mapetere, Makaye and Muguti, 2012). Mangin (2007) points out that districts may influence a principal's support level of teacher leadership, but studies of how that can be achieved have not been exhaustive. It is not clear in which practices districts have been involved or which they have been shunning, hence the need for the present study (Brazer & Baver, 2013).

There has been a call in Zimbabwe for a closer interaction processes between bodies such as the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU), a central body that deals with curriculum issues nationwide, and the Zimbabwe Examinations Council (ZIMSEC), a body that deals with examinations, and the schools. The call has gone largely unheeded, partly because districts, which should coordinate such activities, lack research-based guidance on how to promote such interactional practices (Chitate, 2005). The success of the curriculum in History hinges on the level of interactions between the CDU, regional offices, district offices and teachers in the schools (ibid.). While attempts to secure the place of History in the school curriculum by improving teaching and learning methods are being made, little is known about what schools and districts are doing cooperatively or how they collaborate to accomplish better teaching and learning and student outcomes in the subject. It is the intention of this researcher to contribute to the literature and so bridge that gap.

In their attempt to solve the problems affecting the teaching and learning of History, such as negative attitudes of learners towards the subject and poor teaching methods, researchers have concentrated on isolated roles and practices of educational institutions, districts and schools, but failed to make a holistic examination of instructional practices and influences (Floden, Porter, Alford, Freeman, Irwin, Schmidt & Schwille, 1987). As a result of this approach, Neumerski (2013) argues that the literature concerning instructional leadership is not cohesive and fails to show how different leaders may work together to improve teaching and learning. She thus makes a plea for a paradigm change to a more comprehensive and integrated approach for examining instructional leadership. This study follows in that direction by examining interactional practices instead of concentrating on individual leadership activities of schools and/or districts.

The need to promote interactions between stakeholders to improve student outcomes has been suggested in contemporary studies (Coburn & Russell, 2008; Mangin &Stoelinga, 2008; Spillane & Diamond, 2007), but there is little consensus on the nature of interaction that should ensue between districts and schools (Neumerski, 2013). Studies by Coburn and Russell (2008) indicate that the relationship between school-and district-based leadership is determined by the policies at district level. As classroom practices of teachers are therefore linked to relationships that exist between the school and the district the need to examine school-district instructional leadership collaboration arises. Neumerski (2013) found lack of clarity on how leadership at school level is able to interact with district leadership within particular contexts. The need to broaden collaborative activities to involve national, provincial, district and school leadership has been advocated, but few researchers have investigated the utility of such interactions (Rorrer, Skrla & Scheurich, 2008). Most research has treated leadership independently at each level and thus failed to demonstrate how leaders interact among themselves (Ramey & Ramey, 2008). Consequently, little is known about the interactions between schools and districts in terms of how they interact or the impact of such interactions, especially in a country such as Zimbabwe, where the teaching of the subject of History has been highly contested.

Printy, Marks and Bowers (2009) have demonstrated that there is a serious need for interaction among principals, teachers and district leaders for strong performance in high schools. A number of countries are moving in the direction of returning educational responsibility to the local (district) level, which is closer to teachers, in order to benefit from closer interactional practices. Amongst these is the United States of America (USA),

which is loosening federal control on education, as well as Zimbabwe, which is returning control to the responsible authorities to run schools. In their study, Printy, Marks and Bowers (2009) advocate an integrated, interdependent nature of transformational instructional practice, pointing out that more studies ought to focus on the sum total of instructional interactions, rather than focusing on individual leaders, for it is this collaborative teamwork that may bring about improved student outcomes.

According to Chitate (2005), a vigorous move of syllabi changes has not produced the desired results, but rather has resulted in a crisis of expectations. In his study of the demise of syllabus 2166 in the Mashonaland East district of Zimbabwe, Chitate (2005) blamed the lack of communication between stakeholders as the major reason for the rejection of curriculum innovation. Enrolments in History within the national examinations have declined, despite the compulsory status of the subject in the curriculum. Chitate (2005) argues that the success of curriculum improvements in History is dependent on the level of interactions between the CDU, regional offices, district offices and teachers in the schools. Ramey and Ramey (2008), believes we lack information about the depth, intensity and duration of school-district interactions, especially as they pertain to teacher leaders, coaches and district leaders. Studies in other subjects, such as Mathematics at primary level, have shown that districts have vague intentions to direct instructional content but no strategy for doing so (Floden *et al*., 1987), whilst others, by scholars such as Goddard, Neumerski, Goddard, Salloum, and Berebitsky (2010), and Youngs (2007) are illustrative of the trend to link procedures at school level with measures at the district level. This study is located within these recent initiatives and seeks to examine the interactions of leaders within a subject domain context. Research is needed on how districts support instructional leadership in schools, who is involved, what policies guide their interactions, and what the consequences are for the teaching and learning of subjects such as History in schools.

1.3   STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In investigating the interactions between district- and school-based instructional leadership practices for the subject of History in the Zaka district of Zimbabwe, the study examines ideological debates, socio-economic and political changes as well as challenges created by the new curricula to the teaching and learning of History (Jofre &Schiralli,2002).The continuous decline in the number of students who register for the subject and a general

negative attitude towards it have been blamed on instructional practices of teachers and curriculum leaders (Chitate, 2005), and it becomes imperative to interrogate practices before the problem becomes irreparable. Interaction involves situations in which History leaders at school level and district level collaborate to improve the teaching and learning of the subject, including staff development workshops, test coordination seminars and content organization activities. These have hitherto not been examined in detail by researchers and despite efforts by the government and various stakeholders to improve the quality of education, the problem of an unsatisfactory quality of teaching and learning in History persists in Zimbabwe.

Although the role of district instructional leadership has gained national attention and resources in many countries (Neuman & Wright, 2010), the lack of attention to how districts improve instruction remains a major problem (Biancarosa *et al*.,2010).This is because the quality of teaching and learning does not seem to match the efforts being made to improve it. There have been many inconsistencies in the performance of schools within the same district, thus raising questions as to how districts relate to particular schools. Research has, in addition, attempted to deal with the problem using compartmentalized approaches instead of a holistic perspective through which instructional leaders' practices are viewed within the context of their interactions with each other. This scenario has resulted in a continuous call for reform, but minimal headway has been made, in particular in the subject of History, and the quality of instruction has been criticized for not matching the importance given to the subject. In the case of Zimbabwe, the History subject has been made compulsory by the government, but continuous change in the syllabi, as a result of political and ideological goals, has resulted in confusion among both practising teachers and their instructional leaders (ibid). This in turn has led to a sharp decline in the candidature of History students in Zimbabwe (Chitate, 2005).

With growing levels of accountability between districts and schools, the need for a closer and more distributed approach to interactions has been suggested (Rodgers, 2009).The failure of educationists to link instructional challenges in specific subjects to leadership practices has made curriculum innovations futile and thus led to a call for more pronounced collaboration between districts and schools for them to speak with the same voice (Chitate, 2005).Recent research suggests that district-school instructional leadership interaction practices have a significant impact on the effectiveness of schools. Ndamba

(2013) found this to be true for Language policies in Zimbabwe, but information is lacking on how such interactions are constructed, utilized and sustained for the History subject.

Debates on the role of districts in promoting instructional practices in schools abound (Roller *et al*., 2008), with some scholars regarding districts as having no role in school-based educational reform, while others take the position that involvement by districts defines the success or failure of an educational programme. Such debates have exacerbated the confusion pertaining to the kind of instructional interaction required for effective practice within districts. The debates thus remain inconclusive on the nature of the relationship that should exist between district- and school-based instructional leadership practices. Most research that explores the reasons for the poor quality of instruction tends to look at instruction itself, subject content and resource availability in the schools. While this kind of research has produced useful data and results, little of it has focused on leadership for teaching and learning, especially at the interface between districts and schools. This study is the first of its kind in the Zimbabwean context to explore the interactions between districts and schools around the issues of instructional leadership in History. The research is important for understanding the nature of the current collaborative activities between those at the school level and those in the district as it helps to suggest possible ways of building on such programmes, for the purposes of bringing instructional reform to the teaching and learning of History.

1.4   PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of the policies, structures, activities and programmes that exist between district- and school-based instructional leadership in order to improve the teaching and learning of History. It is important to examine how districts and schools work together because resource channelling and staff improvement efforts hinge on this relationship. There is an urgent need to prevent uncoordinated activities between schools within the same district, which have to date made efforts at accountability difficult. A closer examination of such interactions may proffer ways of enhancing well-networked activities for the benefit of the education system, especially in changing the teaching methods of the History subject and the attitudes thereto.

Communication is a critical component of effective educational management, therefore the present study sought to examine the extent to which interactions between district- and

school-based instructional leadership practices for the subject of History are communicative, that is the extent to which the interactions stem from a shared vision. In the past, districts would simply impose their policies on schools without considering the feasibility, so one of the purposes of my study is to explore the extent of the paradigm shift by examining how the concept of staff empowerment is being achieved through interactions in History teaching and learning. The study seeks to suggest ways of promoting high quality teaching and learning for History through shared learning activities, policies and even structures between schools and districts. This should make a contribution to the quest for school reform, school improvement and school effectiveness, all of which have been central themes of instructional leadership (Rorrer, Skrla & Scheurich, 2008).

The study will make suggestions to stakeholders, such as the CDU, central government, regional officers, district personnel and schools on how to support collaborative instructional leadership practices to achieve high quality outcomes in education. It also examines the existence of interaction between district and schools in the teaching and learning of History, how they are shared, who the key role players are, how they engage with each other around specific activities and how these are planned, carried out and routinized.

1.5   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Against the above background, the main research question is posed as follows:

How do schools and districts interact in pursuit of instructional leadership for the History subject in Zimbabwe?

- The study is guided by the following sub-questions:
- What is the nature of relationships that exist between districts and schools with respect to instructional leadership for the History subject?
- What policies and structures guide the interactions between districts and the schools for instructional leadership of History?
- What practices define the interactions between schools and districts for instructional leadership in History?
- How are the district and schools' instructional leadership practices coordinated?

- How can the existing interactions between schools and districts for History teaching and learning be explained and improved?

1.6   AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of this study was to establish the nature of district-school interactions for the subject of History in order to explain instructional leadership practices between the two. This was conducted with a view to recommending instructional leadership practices that could be able to help realize quality education for students and professional development for staff.

The objectives of the study were to investigate the nature of relationships that exist between districts and schools with respect to instructional leadership for the History subject, assess policies and structures that guide the interactions between districts and schools for History instructional leadership and explore practices that define interactions between schools and districts for instructional leadership in History. It also examines how district and school instructional leadership practices are coordinated, and suggests possible ways in which instructional leadership practices for the subject of History may be understood and improved.

1.7   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a mixed methods research approach, which involved an intentional combination of qualitative and quantitative research procedures (Cresswell *et al.*, 2011). This approach enabled the yielding of comprehensive results appealing to both qualitative and quantitative researchers as well as providing a platform for triangulation of data(Plano Clark, 2010).A sequential explanatory design was used, in which the first phase was quantitative analysis that aimed at producing broad trends on the cooperation between History leaders at the district level and those at the school level. The first phase involved a questionnaire survey administered to History leaders from each of the 24 purposely selected schools, as well as four purposively selected district leaders (Cohen *et al.*, 2008).Data from the quantitative phase is presented using tables, graphs and descriptive reports.

For the qualitative phase of the study, three conveniently selected History leaders from three purposively identified schools and two district leaders were interviewed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the interactions between schools and districts on instructional leadership. The qualitative phase was meant to provide a finer understanding of the phenomenon and was used to explain the trends established in the quantitative phase. A non-participant observation of five History instructional leadership activities in the district was made to attain a deeper understanding of the interactions. Data from the interviews was transcribed, categorized and discussed. Details about sampling procedures are explained in Chapter 3.

1.8.   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In carrying out a study on how districts and schools work together to improve the teaching and learning of History, the researcher found three major compelling factors: (i) the rapidly increasing pace with which districts and Responsible Authorities (RAs) are taking over the running of educational affairs; (ii) the need for a paradigm shift in the manner in which policies are implemented, in order to distribute instructional decision making to those closer to students; and (iii) a lack of clear guidelines as to how History leaders at school and district levels may work together to improve teaching and learning. It was envisaged that a study on the interactions between district- and school-based instructional leadership practices for the History subject may contribute to the literature on the role, nature and extent of collaborative practices of leadership. The results may be useful in alleviating the challenges of segmented leadership practices which may result in uncoordinated instructional practices. It is further hoped that the findings of this study will reveal the internal dynamics of district-school instructional leadership practices critical to the provision of quality education, and in this way be useful to schools, ministries of education and educational managers in general.

It is also intended that the study might contribute to the efforts by educational institutions and stakeholders to enhance accountability by proffering ways through which such a goal may be attained using interactional practices. In that way, accountability and interaction could be viewed as two sides of the same coin. This study seeks to elucidate the significance of participatory approaches in enhancing high quality outcomes for the History subject; as such knowledge may provide useful insights into how districts and

schools may best improve their interactions for the benefit of the system. Top-down approaches in educational approaches have been found to be problematic and it is vital to explore how measures of collaborative activities can improve instruction in the classroom.

Policymakers in education might find the thesis useful in formulating policies and activities that promote cooperation between different stakeholders in History, including teacher leaders, education officers, coaches and school principals, all of whom are critical to the transformation of the teaching and learning environment. The study proposes networking channels between school leadership and district leadership that may bring about improved leadership practices.

Another important area in which it is envisaged that this study will make a contribution is in the area of research, as little has been written on the nature of interactions that exist between districts and schools. It opens up the structures, policies and activities that have the potential to promote interactive practices between district- and school-based leadership.

1.9.   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

A number of constraints had an impact on the execution of this study, notably time and feasibility, as not all schools in the Zaka District could be involved. Participants were selected from only 30 out of a total of 40 possible secondary schools. Due to time and financial constraints, the sample was limited to the 28 schools and selected History leaders. This challenge may therefore limit the extent to which the findings are generalizable. Frequent consultations with the supervisor and timeous collection of data enabled the researcher to meet the timeframes of the study.

It was not possible for the researcher to have control over whether participants provided data in an honest and unbiased manner. Some showed uneasiness in providing data because they were not clear about the purpose of the study. Nonetheless, a letter of consent which explained the conditions of participation was reassuring to most of the participants. The researcher also explained the conditions under which they would participate, emphasizing that the information they provided would remain confidential, with no names being used in the reporting of the study. The permission letter from the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education of Zimbabwe was also

helpful in reassuring the participants. Follow-up had to be made to retrieve some of the outstanding questionnaires from the participants.

1.10. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was confined to district-school interactions in instructional leadership for the History subject, and carried out only in the Zaka District of Zimbabwe. The district sample consisted of 28 schools and was confined to History leaders only. Instructional leadership interactions for other subjects such as English, Mathematics and Science were not part of this study. Data used in this study were collected from May to November 2014.

1.11. OUTLINE OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Any research deserving of academic attention should be predicated on a sound theoretical scaffold to illuminate its argument (Masinire, Mudzanire & Mapetere, 2013).This study is informed by the Symbolic Interactions Model propounded by Max Weber between 1864 and 1920 (Kombo & Tromp, 2009), which explains human behaviour as a direct product of interaction. The practice of leadership, using this model, is thus closely linked to how people relate to each other. The Symbolic Interactions Theory informs this study on the meaning of interaction between stakeholders in instructional leadership, and is thus used as a reference point to account for the presence or lack of useful collaborative tendencies between district and school leaders in the teaching and learning of History. The centrality of the interactive behaviour in producing meaning for the current study is significant in that"…human beings do not act individually but interact with each other, thus reacting to each other" (Kombo & Tromp, 2009:57).

The central theme of interactionism, like that of distributed leadership, is interaction between various participants of leadership practices. School-based leadership often communicates with district leadership through various 'symbols' (ibid.). It is acknowledged that there is a serious need for subject specialists, heads of departments for the subject of History, heads of schools, District Education Officers, Cluster subject heads and district subject panellists to interact in efforts to improve the teaching and learning of History (Evans, 2013).

An interactionist perspective compels an interpretivist approach to this study. In a study by Blasé and Blasé (2000), the symbolic interaction theory was used to examine teachers' perspectives on instructional leadership based on its strength of providing meanings that human beings construct in their own settings. The framework helps to explain how instructional leaders support or fail to support one another. The relationship between instructional leaders was not only examined as conditional, but was also considered as interactional (Printy *et al.*, 2009).

The theoretical framework portrays some underlying traits on leadership and anticipates that an active collaboration of stakeholders is critical for the achievement of high quality student outcomes. It holds that interaction of school- and district-based leadership is fundamental in promoting system coherence, keeping a programme of focused teaching, aligning resources and in capacity building. There is strong evidence that with democratic interactions between school- and district-based leadership, learning and communicating collectively, subject-based improvements may be attained (Harris, 2004).From the framework, leadership is conceived of as a shared process which does not depend on formal authoritarian channels. The theory helps to explain who is involved in district-school collaborative activities, as well as why and how they are involved. The theoretical framework is discussed in more detail in Chapter two.

1.12.   CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

It is important at this stage to clarify key terms as they are used and understood in this study.

Instructional leadership are activities, roles and structures that relate to the creation of a conducive learning and teaching environment for students. Blasé and Blasé' (2000) defines it as the ability of teacher leaders to involve their colleagues collaboratively in mutual learning and development, with the central purpose of improving teaching and learning. In this study, instructional leadership thus implies all activities that deal with learning and teaching of History, whether at the district or school level. They involve administrative activities intended for the improvement of teaching and learning in staff development programmes meant for this purpose.

Interactional instructional practices constitute a process of coming together in fairly consistent ways and activities, in which district- and school-based instructional leadership

shares responsibilities for purposes of promoting learning and teaching processes. Such practices include meetings, workshops, supervision activities, reports and networking activities. These activities should ideally be frequent and consistent for them to be considered as a practice.

District-based instructional leadership comprises structures, policies and activities that relate to teaching and learning but emanate from district offices. District-based leadership implies those activities and roles discharged by District Education officers, District Inspectors, subject heads, panel coordinators as well as district coaches.

School-based instructional leadership involves activities and roles that relate to teaching and learning which are confined to the school set-up. This kind of instructional leadership is carried out by principals, vice-principals, teacher leaders and other teachers not formally appointed to a position within the school.

1.13.   CHAPTER OUTLINE
The chapters in the study are structured as follows:

Chapter 1: The problem and its setting
This chapter discussed the setting, with an introduction to the study, background of the research, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, aims and objectives, research questions, significance as well as delimitation and limitations of the study. Key terms were clarified.

Chapter 2: A review of relevant literature
This chapter reviews literature that is critical to this study and provides a theoretical grounding to the study. It examines the development of the concept of instructional leadership, the need and roles of school- and district-based instructional leadership and the place and nature of interactions that may ensue between practices for the History subject.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

Chapter 3concentrates on the research methodology and discusses specific procedures that were used by the researcher to collect and organize the data. It provides detailed information on the design adopted for the study, instruments used and the justifications for the choice of such instruments. Data collection and presentation procedures and ethical considerations are also examined.

Chapter 4: Data presentation, analysis and discussion

Chapter four presents data from the survey, observations and the interviews. Tables, graphs, descriptive statistics as well as narrative reports are used to present the data.

Chapter 5: Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

Findings from the study are summarized and conclusions drawn from the findings. Recommendations for instructional practices are made on the basis of findings and conclusions.

1.14   SUMMARY

The first chapter examined the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, its significance, as well as its delimitations and limitations. The background established that there is a gap on issues pertaining to what districts and schools are jointly able to do for the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in History. The background also addressed the question that although there are many studies that deal with issues of instructional leadership, few used an integrative approach to examine the practices of leaders at different levels. Many of the studies have concentrated on the 'what' of leadership. The current study departs from the observed trend by examining the practices of leaders at different levels, namely the school and the district, and how the leaders relate to each other in pursuit of quality teaching and learning in History. The study examines specifically the 'how' of instructional leadership practice for the subject. The following chapter will present the review of related literature that informs the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to examine what studies related to the collaboration of district and school-based instructional leadership have suggested in the provision of quality instructional leadership as coordinated by both district and school leaders in the teaching and learning of History. It discusses the evolution of instructional leadership as a construct, school based instructional leadership as well as district-based instructional leadership. The chapter also examines how the informing theory, interactionism, guides the study and its procedures. The review of literature is aimed at articulating scholarly perspectives on the research questions posed in Chapter 1.

2.2.   EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

The concept of instructional leadership has received attention researchers in recent times as it becomes clear that without proper guidance and supervision of learning and teaching procedures, a lot of educational resources and efforts will go to waste especially at the district and school levels (Marzano and Waters (2006). Efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning which are the essence of instructional leadership should not be segmented and uncoordinated if genuine reforms are to be implemented in school classrooms. (Ibid) views instructional leadership as composed of the support given by instructional leaders to teachers and such support may include leaders' suggestions and modelling of good instructional practices. Instructional leadership practices are therefore meant to monitor learning achievement and supervise teaching and learning and thus being of great significance to the teaching and learning of History where attitudes towards the subject are declining as a result of poor results (Chitate, 2005). It becomes clear therefore that instructional leadership is critical especially for subjects like History which are facing stiff completion for existence in the curriculum. The fundamental need for instructional leadership makes it imperative to examine how such a role is performed collaboratively between district and school –based leaders for the need to speak with the same language becomes critical to avoid discord in instructional leadership provision.

According to Blasé and Blasé (2000), literature on instructional leadership falls into several categories. Prescriptive models consider instructional leadership to mean the

integration of activities that help the teacher perform better, such as staff development and curriculum development. Instructional leadership in this sense is taken to imply an enquiry process that promotes teacher voice and discursive, critical study of classroom activities. Such efforts to promote the teachers' voice and critical study of classroom activities should best be achieved at district-school level where instructional leadership policy issues are most vivid. The question now becomes: What is the nature of district-and school-based instructional leadership relationships suitable for proper instructional leadership guidance at this level?

 The second meaning attached to it is as a set of behaviours that help to improve student progress and, in this case, mainly teacher-leader relationships. Taylor (2008) considers the setting of targets and standards as a result of instructional leadership visions and targets as critical to the improvement of student outcomes. Such targets and visions can be developed at the district level and thus apply to all schools in the district and thus making the need for interaction between district-and school-based leaders imperative for the achievement and supervision of such visions and targets. In all cases explained, the issue of relationships is emphasised (Johnson, 2008).

There is no single conceptualisation of instructional leadership, especially as it applies to the teaching and learning of History with its multiple approaches (Seixas, 2010). According to Taylor (2008), History is a discipline with its own purpose, content and modes of inquiry and it is not only content that matters but also how knowledge is imparted to students. Such a scenario calls for constant interactions amongst those involved in the provision of leadership to teaching and learning of the subject in order keep abreast of new developments in the subject. Seixas (2010) observes that there is a growing rift between what is to be taught and how it is taught for the History subject and this can only be narrowed by having a clear idea of instructional leadership, that is, strategies for improving teaching and learning.

Understanding the meaning of instructional leadership has been problematic since there have been disagreements as to what an instructional leader does, particularly for the History subject with its ideological, economic, political and cultural contestations(Whitehouse & Zajda, 2009). In order to examine what leaders cooperate on and in what ways, it is important to trace the development of the concept as depicted by various studies. Attempts have been made to distinguish educational leadership from instructional leadership, in that the former describes attempts to create favourable ethos

within the school, while instructional leadership is more specific and deals with curriculum and instruction (Firestone & Martinez,2007). An instructional leader therefore concentrates on the process of teaching and learning and cannot operate without a clear knowledge of the interaction process.

Instructional leadership is explained as those activities dealing with the improvement of teaching and learning but the limitation of the understanding was that everything was considered from a formal position of the principal or the teacher leader. Blasé and Blasé (2000) define the concept as the teacher leaders' ability to involve their colleagues collaboratively in mutual learning and teaching. From an early conception of instructional leadership it became clear that instructional leadership was not an individual's responsibility but the product of interaction with provision of feedback. Leadership is defined by this study as the delegation of duties between History leaders. It is expected that where the district leadership delegates decisions and activities pertaining to instructional improvement strategies to schools, performance by both students and teachers should be higher.

Neumerski (2013) combined different bodies of literature on what scholars know and do not know about instructional leadership. As in the case of Blasé and Blasé (2000), she takes the concept of instructional leadership beyond the school level, by integrating three distinct literatures, namely the *traditional*, which is concerned with the principal, the *teacher* and the *district*. Using a distributed approach to examine the interaction of leaders in context, she defined leadership in terms of actions or behaviours, which is critical for the purposes of this study. The position reinforced that of Spillane *et al.* (2003), who view instructional leadership as constituted by the interactions between leaders and followers. Such interactions should not be taken out of context but rather examined in the "actual doing of leadership in particular places" (Spillane & Diamond, 2007:6).District leadership should be directed by school leadership, for it is the latter that interacts with realities in the classroom, but school leaders should also be prepared to take instruction from district leaders for they possess a wider view of instructional practices.

It is through the interaction of leaders that instructional leadership practice is ensured; hence this present study also adopts a distributed view of leadership in which influence follows knowledge and skill within context. In other words instructional leadership should not just be based on theory but should be informed by practical experience and conditions obtaining on the ground. The task for this study was to determine whether or not and to

what extent History instructional leaders at the district and school levels share their intentions, policies, knowledge, activities and skills in order to improve practice and outcomes for learning and teaching. The goal of instructional leadership is to enable teachers and other leaders to reflect on teaching and learning practices in order to improve them. Reflection on teaching practice can only be genuinely carried out when there is collaboration between leaders, which is attained through interaction.

Neumerski (2013) traces the origins of instructional leadership to the 1970s and the effective schools movement during which researchers examined schools that were considered as good and meeting the standards for high quality teaching and learning. The result of the Effective Schools Movement was the enumeration of specific characteristics of the good schools, key among which was the presence of a principal as a strong instructional leader. Studies demonstrated that there were no good schools with weak leadership and, as Lima (2008) found, the term 'instructional leadership' used by many North American authors is concerned more with matters of teaching and learning. Instructional leadership became the dominant development for school leaders after it was discovered by researchers that effective schools had leadership that focused on curriculum and instruction. In their study of the Mpumalanga Secondary Science Initiative (MSSI), Jita and Mokhele (2014) found that teacher leaders considered collaboration in curriculum issues as central to enhancing the content and skills of teachers. The Effective Schools Movement was also crucial in the development of History instructional leadership in that it was a time when scholars moved away from the traditional fact-based approach to a skills-based approach with heavy reliance on instructional interactions (Whitehouse &Zajda, 2009). Researchers therefore agree that an effective teaching of History should involve constant interactions of leaders in order to ensure an exchange of ideas on practice.

School leaders were not merely managers of schools but were instructional leaders as their work was also focused on the teaching and learning processes. The principal was considered as the sole source of instructional expertise (Supovitz, 2008) as the History teacher was considered the fount of History knowledge (Joffre & Schiralli, 2002). He or she was charged with standardizing teaching practice and maintenance of high standards. During such eras, the concept of interaction or cooperation among instructional leaders was not considered important as it was simply the personal attributes of the individual that were considered critical. If there was any form of sharing of ideas or visions it was only with the school head and there were very limited opportunities for teacher leaders or

coaches to interact directly with the district leadership (Marks & Printy, 2002). Red tape existed as the district would send circulars with which the school head would be expected to demand compliance amongst the teachers, and the issue of interacting with teachers to solicit their positions and support was not given prominence. The current study examines the extent to which such traditional forms of instructional leadership interactional practices have been transformed.

The success or failure of the school was explained only in terms of the ability of the school principal (Spillane & Diamond, 2007) and it was assumed that there could be no effective school with a weak principal or head for a strong instructional leader was the most important feature of an effective school (Hallinger & Walker, 2012). Success was considered a personal attribute (ibid), of the "show me a good school and I will show you a good leader" mentality. The principal was solely responsible for classroom instruction, coordination of curricula and the monitoring of all student progress, and interactions between instructional leaders were not taken as an important aspect of leadership. It was not considered important for the subject leader at the school level to interact with district leadership, and if he or she had any issues they were communicated to the principal who would in turn communicate to district leadership. A direct line of communication from the subject leader to district leadership was not a common practice. Education literature has many studies that accept the lack of networking among school and district leaders as detrimental to high quality teaching and learning (Rodgers, 2009), and according to Hallinger (2005) this view of instructional leadership fell far below the ideal. A democratization progress of the 1980s conflicted with the hierarchical systems of schools, hence a re-examination of the concept and the birth of the distributed concept to leadership (Printy, Marks & Bowers, 2009).

A distributed view of instructional leadership suggests that people should concentrate on the *how* of instructional leadership, which is the interactional practice. Distributing instructional leadership across people, knowledge and skills recognizes the need for a shared effort in educational reform, hence calls for the establishment of structures, policies and activities in which district leaders and school leaders may come together to improve the teaching and learning scenario at secondary level(Rodgers,2009).In the opinion of Maboya (2013) it is through collective critique of teaching practices as a result of interaction with others that leaders improve their practices. When leaders interact frequently and criticise each other on instructional practices. The current study is informed

by insights into the significance of collaboration of leaders on reflection of teaching techniques for the History subject. It seeks to examine whether instructional leaders for History reflect their leadership approaches and, if so, with what results in terms of staff motivation and student outcomes. Reflective behaviour in leadership of the teaching and learning of History can therefore be achieved when leaders work together.

Modern perspectives of instructional leadership practices have now moved from regarding personal factors as key to the success or failure of educational activities (MacBeath, 2005). Leaders are thus measured in terms of their ability to identify other leaders and assign them leadership responsibilities (Lima, 2008), whilst instructional leadership can only be deemed useful if it exhibits interactionist practices. The collaborative culture that enables close 'give and take' tendencies between leaders, followers and the context constitutes instructional leadership, a way of interaction of people involved in learning and teaching. Instructional leadership is concerned with the school environment in which students learn and that environment is enriched with collaboration with district involvement. A distributed leadership framework encourages us to think of leadership as interactions between followers, leaders and the context (Spillane *et al.*, 2003), informing this study, hence it was found imperative not to confine it to one individual leader or leaders at one level but rather to utilize a holistic perspective by examining leaders in their operations at both the school and district levels.

In another study, by Rottman (2007:2), leadership is defined as "…a relational form of influence that may exist at the individual, organizational, or discursive level." At the individual level it is the old world understanding of the concept wherein the success or failure of any reform was linked solely to the personality of an individual leader. Leadership at the organizational level suggests it is highly formalized whilst the discursive type suggests a distributive approach. This definition was clearly linked by Ballantine (2013) to the meanings attached to the same by Ryan's concept of 'emergent', 'interactive', and 'provisional', which when combined portray a rich meaning of leadership as interactions that emerge among leaders, followers, and situations (Spillane *et al.*, 2004). Leadership should not be about the *what* of it, but rather the *how* (ibid.). By examining the way leaders relate to each other this study combines the organizational and the discursive views of instructional knowledge to produce wider and richer information of how leaders may work together in improving teaching and learning. When school-based

leadership affects expectations of district leadership it becomes expected that students may benefit from instructional leadership policies of subjects such as History.

Concurring with Spillane, Elmore (2006:26) explains leadership as

> …primarily about managing the conditions under which people learn new practices, creating organizations that are supportive, coherent environments for successful practice, and developing the leadership skills and practices of others-leadership of improvement.

Leadership should therefore be conceived as a practice, and a collection of patterned actions, based on a body of knowledge, skill, and habits. This concept of leadership is important for this study because it recognizes that leadership for educational reform is only possible when people work together and collaborate in their different capacities. Schools need to create shared leadership models which include students, teachers and education officials, as this will provide for learning and working with others to improve the quality of instruction. The quality of instruction is improved when those who influence decisions of teaching and learning, instructional leaders, interact and learn from each other. In assessing the level of cooperation amongst leaders in the teaching and learning of History this study differs from most previous ones in that instead of concentrating on saying what principals or teachers do on their own to improve the teaching and learning of History, and examines what a shared leadership practice can do in improving quality instruction. It is expected that when leaders work together in content selection and experimenting with teaching strategies, students benefit. The study is not limited to who the leaders are or what they do, as in most previous studies, but *how* they do it, *with whom* and *with what success*.

Current explanations of instructional leadership are richer and more expansive than the ones developed in the 1980s (Neumerski, 2013), and previously the term was confined to issues of goal-setting, resource allocation, curriculum management and the evaluation of teachers. Cooperation between leaders was not taken as important, whereas today instructional leadership involves a deeper involvement in the technology of teaching and learning (ibid). There has been a paradigm shift from just the management of resources to the actual teaching and learning, hence the need to examine instructional practices for subjects such as History. The emergence of the distributed concept of leadership has seen an acknowledgement that multiple individuals in both formal and informal positions of leadership are important. In Zimbabwe, for example formal leaders include heads of

schools and heads of departments who are written an appointment letter and usually given a responsibility allowance. Informal leaders are those individuals who take up leadership roles simply because they have abilities that naturally result in others willing to learn from them. They may include high performing History teachers in the schools. Teacher leadership became accepted as a means of addressing the isolated nature of teaching (Neumerski, 2013), whilst Spillane and Diamond (2007) argue that a distributed leadership view is an analytic tool, two aspects of which are the leader-plus aspect and the leadership practice aspect. The former describes a situation in which there are multiple leaders and this usually happens at the school level. These multiple leaders may include teacher leaders, coaches, teachers, and heads of departments (HoDs), subject specialists, vice-principals and principles. The present study sought to examine how these various instructional leaders relate to each other and hence the sample covered all these groups, building on Spillane and Diamond's (2007) idea that leadership should be viewed from a multiple perspective point and cannot be confined to heroic activities of a single individual, hence the need to concentrate on what leaders do together.

According to Spillane and Diamond (2007:77):

> …the leader-plus aspect is not a suggestion that individual leaders are unimportant, but one that states we should consider the work of "all individuals who have a hand in leadership". No one individual is the only critical factor in leadership. Networking is a critical component of educational improvement and it is between district officials and subject teachers at schools that such collaboration should be most pronounced.

The above position informs this study in sampling procedures, in that instead of considering only formally designated leaders for this study it also included even informal History leaders at both the school and district level, as it is the interaction process which was considered critical. It thus concentrated on the interactive practices, such as seminars, workshops, procedures, routines and the nature of communication between schools and districts, with an aim of finding out how leadership is distributed within such activities and how it impacts on the quality of teaching and learning. In discussing the role of collaboration between History leaders, Seixas (2010:318) argues that the improvement of teaching and learning of History would "collapse [without] collaboration between a leader who has a particular sort of expertise and myself". Instructional leadership in this regard

can be regarded as interpersonal activities that are meant to improve the quality of instruction.

Instructional leadership has been framed by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (2001) as the leading of learning communities, having identified six major roles of instructional leaders, amongst which are prioritizing student and adult learning; setting high expectations for performance; gearing content and instruction to standards; and creating a culture for continuous learning. These roles are referred to as the best practices for instructional leadership, and it is evident from the explanations that roles of different leaders are only achievable if they share their visions and efforts, albeit research has not suggested how such cooperation can be achieved. Researchers have not demonstrated the feasibility of a collaborative community as they have concentrated on school-based communities of practice.

Blasé and Blasé (2000) provided insights into instructional leadership, asking teachers to describe the behaviours they expected from those principals who had a positive impact on student learning. The two major concepts that emerged were talking with teachers and promoting professional development, whilst specific behaviours such as making suggestions, providing feedback, modelling useful instruction and collaborating were highlighted as important modern practices. Leader knowledge and the provision of autonomy were also found to be important, combining to demonstrate that no one definition can be provided for instructional leadership, hence the need for further studies to expose how different leaders relate to each other. The sample by Blasé and Blasé (2000), although producing important findings on the concept of instructional leadership, was also limited to school situations and ignored the district level. By extending research on interactions between leaders from the locality of the school environment, this study aimed at producing a more comprehensive view.

Some researchers, for example Elmore (2006),support the concept of a distributed framework of leadership in which policymakers, coaches, teachers, principals and superintendents play a complimentary role to each other in order to enhance teaching and learning. Interactions between school-based and district-based leadership fall within the leadership practice lens of distributed leadership, framed as the interactions between leaders, followers, and their contexts around particular leadership tasks (Spillane *et al.*, 2003), with leaders creating coherence in improvement through vision sharing. When a

distributed leadership framework is used the role of leadership becomes that of giving suggestions, giving feedback, modelling as well as giving praise (Blasé& Blasé, 2000).

Much of the early research surrounding the concept of instructional leadership suggests a lack of clarity on how districts and schools relate to each other, particularly the interactive processes between districts and schools. Neumerski (2013) agrees with Rorrer *et al.* (2007), that their roles and activities have failed to take into consideration the changing school climates and have failed to be integrative in their discussion of instructional leadership. According to Hornig (2012), research on instructional leadership and how it relates to student outcomes has been underscored, a position supported by Supovitz and Tognatta (2013), who argue that there are strong theoretical arguments that the education system can benefit from the interaction of leadership, hence the need for further studies to provide empirical evidence for such claims. A number of studies, such as the one by Neumerski (2013), relied heavily on theoretical propositions, so it is time to provide tangible evidence, as this study aims to do.

A study of the evolution of the concept of leadership in educational circles demonstrates that the instructional mode has gained an 'iconic status' in recent times (Storey, 2004:251), from being centred on an individual in the form of the school principal or History leader. It has ceased to focus almost exclusively on the ability of exceptional 'heroic leaders' with power and great vision (Lima, 2008) and has gradually evolved to be considered as "activities and interactions that are distributed across multiple people and situations" (Timperley, 2005:395). This study, like most recent studies, challenges the traditional notion of instructional leadership of a single strong leader and emphasizes the collective activities across districts and schools. It has thus become imperative to study and understand the nature of interactions between instructional leaders at the school and district levels, given that the role of individual leaders in instructional leadership has significantly diminished. Instructional leadership can therefore be summarised as those behaviours and activities that are designed to affect classroom instruction.

2.3. SCHOOL-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

According to Asuga and Eacott (2013:1), "School leadership preparation and development is one of the 'hot topics' in both the practice and scholarship of leadership". The two scholars argue that school leadership is a seriously contested space (ibid),and that in most

African schools, Zimbabwe included, there is no special training given to school leaders, thus making it imperative that district leadership remains in touch with school leadership to check and balance instructional practices. Quinn (2002) contends that school-based instructional leadership has a direct relationship with practice to improve student performance, and that school leaders are responsible for updating teachers about new approaches and trends, as well as supplying the tools to use in the teaching and learning process. In that vein, it becomes evident that such school leaders should be well networked if it is to provide up-to-date assistance, and thus needs to be in constant interaction with district leadership. Most studies that examine the concept of instructional leadership discuss the phenomenon in the context of school-based efforts to improve teaching and learning. One of the most quoted studies on school-based instructional leadership is that of Marks and Printy (2002), which focused on relations between principals and teachers to examine the potential of collaborative instructional leadership at school level and a number of its findings are applicable to interactions at the district level. Like this present study, it employed both quantitative and qualitative instruments and found that shared instructional leadership has the capacity to enhance the professional growth of staff and enhance students' outcomes as a result of integrated leadership. It found a relationship between, on one hand, the level of interaction and collaboration between leaders and, on the other, student outcomes. It was established in that study that where leaders' interactions were high, performance by students improved as a result of teachers developing each other. When principals consulted teachers frequently better outcomes were realized, because teachers owned the responsibility of instructional practice. Jofre and Schiralli (2002) argue that school-based interactional practices are important in the learning and teaching of History for purposes of managing pedagogical skills of teachers. If interactions between teachers at the school level were found to have a positive impact on the performance of students it is expected that interaction at the district level should produce far more positive results on students 'performance. Shared instructional leadership at school level was found to involve collaboration between principals and teachers on curriculum, instruction and assessment. The study established that instructional leadership is an inclusive concept, hence the need to expand the study of the concept to the district. It was the aim of this study to examine the extent to which collaboration and interactions at the district level could produce positive effects at the school level. It considers findings of Printy and Marks (2002), useful in that the concept of leadership is not confined to formal positions and hence non-formal leaders were considered in the sample.

According to Sherer (2008:2), "Schools are made up of a variety of individuals who act out different roles within organizational routines. These roles are sometimes formally defined… and also informally defined." Formally defined, school leaders include the principal and vice-principal, while the informal leaders may include a well-versed History teacher. School-based instructional leadership can either be transformational or instructional (Hallinger, 2005), the former providing direction to staff and aiming at innovating the organization and empower staff in decision-making (Leithwood, 2008), the latter a non-hierarchical procedure of shared leadership in which the principal is not the sole instructional leader (Hallinger, 2005; Spillane *et al.*, 2004). In instructional leadership at school level the principal is simply the leader of instructional leaders. Although transformational leadership is important in educational reform, this study is more inclined towards instructional leadership as it is more appropriate in the teaching and learning of History. Transformational leadership becomes more relevant at the district level, where schools should be prepared to take up new practices which may result in better teaching of the subject. Much has been written on educational management but there is a gap on how the quality of instruction in the classroom may be improved through the cooperation of various leaders. In most African contexts, Zimbabwe included, school leaders are not inducted after appointment and it is through staff interaction that they come to know expectations and hence collaborative activities between the district and the school may be valuable in improving school leadership (Eacott &Asuga, 2013).

In discussing school-based leadership, the sum of principal, vice-principal, teacher leader, teacher agency and teacher coaching interactions have been referred to as 'school leadership' (Biancarosa, Bryk & Dexter, 2010).The interaction of leaders and the situation constitutes school leadership practices (Neuman & Cunningham, 2009), but schools do not operate in isolated and compartmentalized ways, nor school leaders act as individuals. Rather, they should work as teams and share responsibilities (Spillane *et al.*, 2004), such as instruction, staff development, curricular development and supervision of tasks (Neumerski, 2013).Where school leaders interact at the school level and then at the district level, teaching practices should not conflict at any of the levels as leaders will be able to assist each other in acquiring requisite content and skills.

The findings of Spillane *et al.* (2004) and Neumerski (2013) are generally useful to this study as it was found to be less useful when examining leaders in isolation to each other, for it is the sum of interactions that produce a culture of instructional leadership. Spillane

et al. (2004) sought to examine the level of interaction between leaders at the school and district levels, and sharing of instructional responsibilities between the two categories of leadership in the learning and teaching of History is expected to produce a positive impact on the performance of students. The context of the school-based leadership should be taken into consideration if collaborative work is to produce desired results, as there are different environments from which school leaders operate and such differences affect the ability of leaders to relate to each other at both the school and the district level. By examining school-based leadership, this study argues that no real instructional improvement can take place if local school factors are ignored by instructional leaders.

Printy *et al*. (2009) found that principals and teachers mutually contributed to school leadership, producing greater returns than the sum of their individual outcomes. They suggested that instructional leadership can only produce positive impacts if leaders share the vision as well as the responsibilities. Leaders at the school level need to work as a team in order to share the vision or mission statement of the school and this is also true of History teaching at a district level. The vision of a district for instructional leadership can only be clearer to involved leaders if there is a consistent interaction aimed at improving teaching and learning. Their findings are in agreement with those of Blasé and Blasé (2000), namely that leadership should be about delegating each other responsibilities as well as mutual encouragement. It therefore becomes vital to extend leaders' interactions from the school to district level. If interactions in the school are known to produce good results it can be assumed that leaders' collaboration at district level should produce far better results.

Klar (2012) argues that in order to meet accountability demands it is prudent for the schools to develop proper systems of distributed leadership and initiating professional communities, whilst Jita and Mokhele (2014) argue that communities of practice are central in enhancing capacities of leaders in content knowledge and ability. Where leaders meet to develop each other on content requirements and teaching methods, new trends are likely to be taken up easily. There is however little research on the capacity building of other leaders besides the formal ones in schools. According to Fullan and Levin (2008:295), capacity building means, "any strategy that increases the collective effectiveness of a group to raise the bar and close the gap of student learning", spreading opportunities to as many people as possible. There is strong evidence that organizational capacity may be greatly enhanced by adopting distributive and collaborative approaches of

instructional leadership practices. By examining how districts and schools share in instructional leadership activities, the current study develops the concept of accountability of leaders to higher levels. It may be easy for leaders at the same station and level to be mutually accountable but it is necessary to determine how History leaders at particular schools are accountable to district coaches and district central office leaders. Through an examination of policies that guide district-school interactions, the extent to which leaders are accountable to one another is explored in this study, and it becomes expected that the level of accountability at the school level is enhanced when school leaders interact constantly with those at the district level and those from other schools. When leaders become accountable to each other, especially in the teaching and learning of History, explanations are sought on why certain methods may be used at the expense of others and methodological approaches are constantly interrogated, thus improving the teaching and learning of the subject.

School-based instructional leadership, involving school principals and teachers, influences student outcomes through enhancement and shaping the school culture and driving organizational changes(Cravens, Goldring & Penaloza, 2012).School-based instructional leadership, according to Townsend *et al*. (2013), involves supervision and evaluation of instruction, coordinating curriculum, the monitoring of student learning and the creation of a positive school environment. It is impossible for principals to carry out all instructional activities and procedures of a school, hence they distribute such activities across people, routines and tools (Sherer, 2008). School-based leadership should exhibit patterns of openness and clarity in behaviour toward others by sharing information needed to make decisions, accepting others' inputs, and disclosing personal values, motives, and sentiments in a manner that enables followers to more accurately assess the competence and morality of the leaders' actions. Studies by Cravens, Goldring and Penaloza (2012) and by Sherer (2008) are important for this study in that they take a multiple approach to understanding the concept of school leadership. The significance of supervision and evaluation of content and teaching methods is central in instructional leadership and it is hoped that when school leaders participate in the supervision of programmes at other centres their own practices will improve.

Promoting professional development and protecting instructional time are some of the fundamental school-based instructional leadership practices, referred to as the 'school mission'. These instructional roles may not be accomplished by a single element of the

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school system (Hallinger & Heck, 2011), so collaboration becomes crucial. This study sought to examine the extent to which professional development may be attained through district wide instructional leadership activities. Most literature on professional development is limited to the school situation and there is a need to expand knowledge on how school-based professional development may be linked to a district-wide coordination.

In a study by Richmon and Allison (2003:34), school leadership was understood

> …as a process of exercising influence, a way of inducing compliance, a measure of personality, a form of persuasion, an effect of interaction, an instrument of goal achievement, means for initiating structure, a negotiation of power relationships or a way of behaving.

The centrality of relationships was emphasized in that study but the study fell short of describing the real practices that produce positive outcomes for student learning and teaching. It is therefore imperative that further studies be conducted to elaborate on the interactions in which schools and districts can together engage to improve teaching and learning.

There is need for a paradigm shift from traditional approaches to the understanding of instructional leadership in order to limit the role of individual characteristics. The impact of principals' leadership is only possible through the mediation of classroom instructional leadership by teachers. In as much as schools require a degree of autonomy from districts, teachers also require some degree of autonomy from school principals (Rorrer *et al*., 2008). According to Neumerski (2013), studies should be more integrated by making close analysis of the given instructional leaderships practices at the school level in relation to those at district level. Confining school leadership activities to the school environment was found to be limited in scope. This study is one of the few studies that attempt to put into practice the suggestion by Neumerski (2013) to stop using the segmented approaches to instructional leadership literature.

Communities of practice are an important way of enhancing school-based leadership, thereby enhancing their capacity to participate in district leadership. A concept given prominence by Wenger *et al*. (2002), they improve workplace collaboration by the promotion of concern or problem sharing and deepen the knowledge and expertise of staff through a continuous process of interaction (Printy, 2008) which may therefore be expanded to the cluster or even district levels so as to promote interactions in an effort to

enhance the capacity of leaders to improve student outcomes. It was a facet of this study to examine those that exist in instructional leadership in the teaching and learning of History, not only at the school level but in the whole district.

One of the studies that elaborated on school-based leadership, by Hornig (2012), examined the time principals spent on different activities and school outcomes, which included student achievement and teacher and parent assessment of the school. The aim of the study was to show that principals affect instructional leadership practice at the school level, using observational data from a district in Miami-Dade County public schools. The study established as a cause for concern that despite research on instructional leadership, principals spent only 10% of their time on instructional matters. The study by Hornig *et al.* (2010) was similar to this study in that it linked instructional leadership practices to student outcomes, with observations an important data collection method while leaders were in context. However, this current study is not limited to the concept of the principal being the sole source of instructional leadership, as that was too segregating and formal, hence the need to widen the conception of school-based leadership. It would be interesting to find out from this study the amount of time that district and school leaders spend on instructional issues in their interactions.

On the role of interactions, Grabinger *et al.* (2007) state that interaction among people and officials creates a culture of collective effort and this solves problems related to communication. Interactions create an environment of transformative rather than acquisitive learning, with emphasis on immediate participation within the community helping develop flexible knowledge structures that facilitate problem-solving and transfer in new situations. The study by Grabinger *et al.* (2007), similar to that of Neumerski (2013), called for more inclusive studies that consider leadership at different levels of the educational system as mutually inclusive and not exclusive, hence the need to examine them in their interactions and not as stand alone entities. This study is a follow up to such calls to be more integrative in studies of instructional leadership. By examining how leaders work together, it accepts that leadership is a collective activity.

It is clear that communities of practice may be used to promote instructional leadership practices not only at the school level but even at the district level. Blasé and Blasé (2000) identify a number of activities that communities of practice at school or district level can do to achieve better teaching and learning. Among such activities are encouraging the study of teaching and learning, providing support to collaborative efforts, establishing

coaching relationships among leaders, redesigning programmes and engaging in staff development activities. Modelling, peer review and collaboration, as well as knowledge and skill-building, are all critical components of communities of practice (Rorrer *et al*., 2008), which have been found to be useful ways of promoting leadership interactions as they produce a shared instructional leadership practices in which leadership will occur in both formal and informal phenomena. Through interaction in leadership capacities, leaders assume responsibilities that are directly related to teaching and learning (Sherer, 2008).Peer review is only possible when leaders' activities are well coordinated and it is an aim of this study to find out how, through district coaching, it is impacting on the quality of teaching. In all cases it was established that collaboration amongst leaders resulted in teacher motivation and reflective behaviour.

One important way through which school-based leadership may promote interactional leadership practices is through instructional coaching (Neuman &Cunningham, 2009), developed in the 1980s with the realization that professional development was not a stand-alone activity but a collaborative context-bound instructional practice. Assuming various forms and involving activities such as helping teachers plan lessons, organizing materials, teaching lessons and analysing data, coaching is an instructional leadership practice which can easily be carried out on a district-wide scale (Neumerski, 2013).This study sought to find out the degree to which practices such as district coaching in the learning and teaching of History is a useful interactional practice.

A study by Lee and Dimmock (1999) in Asia, on the importance of a distributed approach to decision-making at secondary school level, identified principals, vice principals and teachers as critical parties indecision-making at school level. The study suggested a need to move away from figurehead instructional leadership to a context in which teachers, principals and vice-principals become critical players in school decision making processes. The findings by Lee and Dimmock (1999) are in agreement with the position advanced by Mangin (2007), who argued the need to consider the role of informal leaders in schools' instructional leadership practices (Mangin, 2007).By adopting a distributed leadership framework, this study rejects the position of some earlier researchers who confine instructional leadership to individual attributes.

According to Sherer (2008:2), "Regardless of whether defined by formal title or informal authority, all individuals in schools have agency." In her study she found that teacher leaders are the major factors between the success and failure of an instructional project,

policy or innovation, as, according to Neumerski (2013), teachers may choose to participate or to sabotage an innovation. In the case of History instructional projects in Zimbabwe, for example, failure to secure the supportive involvement of teachers resulted in the failure of syllabus 2166 (Chitate, 2005). The study by Sherer, however, concentrated on the school level and was thus wanting in terms of what teacher agency could do at district level. According to Camburn *et al*. (2008), such studies should be extended to the district level. The study by Sherer (2008), though useful to the current study, concentrated on what leaders do, while adding another dimension to how leaders work together.

In support of the proposition by Lee and Dimmock (1999), Supovitz and Tognatta (2013) state that collaborative decision-making is a central tenet of both the theory and practice of distributed leadership as it was born of the idea that the nature and complexity of schooling necessitates that decision making authority be spread across the school system. The two authors state that school teachers should be considered as instructional leaders because they make a myriad of decisions which have a profound effect on the school culture and student outcomes. Collaborative tendencies among school leaders encourage them to play a critical role in instructional leadership (Sherer, 2008).Literature has, however, not exhausted how such collaborative activities can be achieved between districts and schools. Information on activities being practiced at school and district levels to promote interactions has been lacking, hence the need for more studies in the area.

Andrews and Soder (1987:20) in Quinn (2002:448) summarise the roles of school leaders as:

1. Resource providers, whereby they take action to marshal personnel and resources within the district. They should act as brokers.

2. Instructional resource, whereby they set expectations for continual staff development to improve classroom conditions to achieve active teaching and learning.

3. Communicators, whereby they model school aims and goals towards instructional practice.

4. Visible presence, whereby they visit classrooms and hold spontaneous conversations with members of the teaching staff and students.

An analysis of the four roles articulated above indicates a clear need for school-based instructional leadership to be in constant interaction with players at the district level. In

marshalling resources school leaders will need to discuss with district leadership the kind of personnel they may want, where those may be found, and the conditions of engagement. For the History subjects, leaders may require certain personnel who have specialised in specific areas of History, for example, African, European or Asian. Such specifications will need to be made clear if the teaching and learning of the subject is to benefit students. On the second role, that of acting as the instructional resource, the school leader should be aware of staff development needs of the school and thus be able to identify the right personnel to send for critical training purposes. In Zimbabwe, for example, many History teachers faced challenges in teaching the source-based questions with their high order demands (Chitate, 2005; Mapetere, Makaye & Muguti, 2012), and such a realisation would require interaction with both school staff and leadership at the district level. The third role of the school leadership, as a communicator, is self-explanatory regarding the significance of interactional practices. In all the characteristics of school leadership outlined above, the need for networking with other leaders at the district level is evident and thus it can be stated that school leadership can only be effective if there is interaction at a district level.

2.4.   DISTRICT INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

There has been debate on instructional leadership at the district level but recent research has given impetus to multiple facets of interaction that are not based only on formal designations (Rorrer *et al*., 2008).The concept of district leadership emerged in the early 1980s in an effort to deal with challenges that were emerging in issues related to professional growth and teacher learning. Some scholars refer to district leadership as 'instructional coaching' (Neumerski, 2013), a development arising from a realization that teachers needed to learn how to meet teaching and learning standards that are rising at an unprecedented rate. According to Hornig (2012), district offices were originally established to carry out largely regulatory and basic functions and were not supporting teaching and learning improvements. In the last ten years, however, research has demonstrated a paradigm shift towards studies that demonstrate that district central offices are becoming increasingly involved in efforts to improve teaching and learning (ibid.). It was therefore found prudent to promote interactions amongst teachers in the belief that stand-alone workshops were not producing the desired results. Hornig (2012), argues that instructional practices, in which learning by teachers would take place in everyday contexts, were a necessary step. This study is one such effort to assess the extent to which

district offices support school-based instructional leadership efforts. It is evident that where district leadership is seriously engaged in issues of content selection, teaching strategies and assessment procedures, schools improve their practices in this regard.

In a study carried out by Hornig (2012), district offices were identified as key support providers, the conceptual framework having been drawn from socio-cultural and cognitive learning theories to identify practices that deepen professional practice in authentic work settings. Interviews and observations were used to collect data but the study departed from previous ones which had not empirically elaborated on district office practices. It identified specific practices of central office leadership, among them the promotion of better teaching approaches and provision of support services for staff. This current study borrowed from the instruments used by Hornig in that it used interviews and observations to gather data but went a step further to use the questionnaire survey to gather data in the first phase before employing the interview to get in-depth views of respondents. It also sought to provide empirical evidence of the nature of relationships that exist between district and school-based instructional leadership. Where a positive relationship exists, staff members are expected to benefit from the constant interchange of ideas.

According to Neuman and Cunningham (2009), district instructional coaching emerged as one method of teachers' professional development. Neumerski, (2013) argues that the phenomenon of district leadership is informed and influenced by cognitive and situational learning theories by which teacher leaders, coaches and principals are viewed as co-constructors of knowledge who can learn through interaction. In Zimbabwe, the concept of district coaching has received support through the efforts of the Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe (BSPZ), which provides teachers and students with facilities to interact and network in their teaching and learning (Makaye, 2011). In the concept of the BSPZ, constant interactions between the better resourced schools and those which are disadvantaged results in instructional leadership as schools would share what they have for the benefit of all. It is thus prudent to find out how the concept is helping improvements in the teaching and learning of History as BSPZ programmes are central to improving teaching and learning in the schools. It is anticipated that where BSPZ brings teacher leaders from different schools to staff develop them on teaching practices and provide them with both human and material resources, teaching and learning would improve (ibid).

District policymakers and education leaders are positioned to identify, prioritize and support enhanced teaching and learning as well as collaboration engagements in education

(Pickeral, Evans, Hughes & Hutchins, 2009). Such support may address barriers to learning and teaching but whilst the authors established a number of activities in which districts could engage they did not elaborate on *how*. The researchers suggested what districts should do to improve teaching and learning in schools, such as reviewing district and school mission and vision statements, examining existing instruction and assessment policies, as well as encouraging and promoting learning communities. The role of workshops in which both teachers and students would participate was strongly recommended. History, being an interactive subject in which both teachers and students rely on individual judgements, would benefit greatly from discussions by leaders and students whereby positions would be clarified and challenged. The seminar approach has taken a central position in the teaching and learning of History, with it being expected that when students and teacher leaders are given opportunities to meet frequently and discuss issues of the subject, performance should improve.

The idea of peer coaching is a facet of district instructional leadership and is based on the idea that teachers should coach one another. Knight (2004), argues that it leads teachers to practice and implement new teaching strategies and improve their methods of instruction. The study however did not determine the role or extent of interactions between district and school-based practices, which is the contribution of the current study. Structures and policies that are in place in order to ensure that district coaching activities are not put to waste require further investigation. Chitate (2005) argues that a number of curriculum innovations in History have not been successful in Zimbabwe, mainly because the concept of district coaching has not been fully implemented. Despite it being accepted that workshops and other staff development activities at the district level can bring uniform improvement in the manner in which teaching and learning takes place, empirical evidence is lacking in that regard (Hornig,2012).

Neuman and Wright (2010) argue that the concept of district leadership has been given prominence at national level in studies such as that of Biancarosa *et al*. (2010), Matsumura, Garner and Persnick (2010), but the concept has not been examined adequately in terms of its practical implementation and resource requirements at district level. Studies should focus more on the *how* of leadership (Spillane &Diamond, 2007), and this study follows the suggestions of such research.

Research on the role of districts in instructional leadership lacks consensus (Firestone & Martinez, 2007), but districts and teacher leaders are complimentary. Some scholars think

districts have no mandate or capability to bring and coordinate subject-based instructional leadership practices because they are isolated from what obtains in the classroom situation (Rorrer *et al*., 2008), however Camburn *et al*. (2008) argue that districts cannot be ignored in as far as school leadership is concerned because they influence teacher leadership by the way in which they communicate their vision of it. On one hand, school leaders depend on districts for work facilitation while on the other districts depend on school leadership for the successful implementation of instructional programmes (ibid.). Real change that brings about improved student performance has been the battle cry of many school reforms but they may not be significant unless they bring in the role of districts. Education is a public enterprise and establishing open, honest and meaningful school-district instructional leadership interactions with a variety of constituents is necessary (Printy, 2008).This study is an attempt to clear debates on the actual position of districts in the coordination of school-district instructional leadership practices.

The need to expand the concept of distributed leadership to the district level can easily be discerned from Spillane *et al*.'s (2004) statement that leadership activity is constituted in the interaction of multiple leaders using particular tools and artefacts around particular leadership tasks. In these schemes, the interdependencies among the constituting elements-leaders, followers, and situation-of leadership activity are critical. At the district and school level, for example, it is important to find out how teacher leaders and coaches interact in workshops and determine their impact on student learning. This study, by utilizing the distributed leadership framework, sought to find out whether activities between schools and districts are determined by rigid structures and policies that only conform to formal establishment. It aimed at establishing the ability of and extent to which districts operate as followers of school leaders in instructional design and implementation.

According to Pickeral *et al*. (2009), district policymakers and education leaders are better positioned to identify strategies that can be used to improve teaching and learning. A constant interaction with school leaders will provide a better position for district leaders to gain information from school leaders on their challenges. Collaborative instructional leadership activities should be aimed at helping district policymakers improve their interactions with schools in an effort to create a better school climate. They are charged with the responsibility of creating and sustaining a system of continuous engagement of leaders, interpersonal relationships having been found critical in producing learning practices. Although the study demonstrated a relationship between interaction patterns of

leaders at the district and school level, it failed to state the structures that produced such a result, hence the need for further studies in the area. Research indicates that a positive interaction between leaders is a critical dimension of improving teaching and learning, but *how* districts can create a continuous engagement of leaders of instruction is an area that has limited literature, hence the need for further studies.

In a study of the role of district leadership in meeting the challenge of improving instruction and achievement, Barnes, Camburn, Sanders and Sebastian (2010) found that there are possibilities of practice transformations when districts get involved in district professional development programmes (DPDs). As with this current study, they used the mixed methods approach in which quantitative data was collected from loggings of self-administered questionnaires and qualitative data from interviews with principals who had participated in the DPDs. A rich portrait of the learning and change process was found as the study indicated that a healthy interaction system of leaders produces a positive impact on students' performance. The study acknowledged the great potential for refinement of practice as leaders were found willing to try new ideas in their schools. The study exposed knowledge, structures, tools and routines that districts can use in district leadership. It was found out that school leaders are motivated to implement district-based instructional standards and this current study builds on such findings by examining how that motivation is generated through school-district networking.

Leadership is explained as an activity rather than a matter of personalities, and at district-school interaction levels, this should be appropriate. The issue of multiple leaders equates squarely with the idea of leadership as a matter of influence, and leadership activities at the district level may include subject panels, personnel recruitment meetings and resource allocation consultations. Burns (1978), cited by Ballantine (2013), found the concept of 'transactional opinion leadership' existing at all levels and acting as a relay and channel for opinion. He emphasizes interactions and transactions of various stakeholders to instructional practice. Leadership is considered to be a 'multifold' process between formal leaders, mediators, influential individuals and recipients of educational products.

Rorrer *et al*. (2008) argue that districts have four major roles in educational reform. In a study aimed at establishing the ability of district-leaders to contribute to systematic reform in education it was found out that providing instructional leadership is among the key roles of district leadership. The researchers examined functions of districts as portrayed by past studies and in a later study by Neumerski, (2013) of integrated approaches to instructional

leadership, negotiation was cited as an important aspect of district instructional leadership, hence building on that insight by examining cooperation between leaders in context. It stated emphatically that literature on the role of districts was discontinuous and limited in nature, and the findings suggested that district reform programmes lacked research-based guidance, hence the need for further studies in the operations of district-based leadership. Both studies recommended a coherent and integrated approach to examining districts as institutional players in educational reform, with one clear way of accomplishing that goal being to examine leaders as they interact in practice.

The present study is different from that of Rorrer *et al*. (2008) in that it does not depend on a collection of previous studies but shows some similar traits in that a district is the geographical location of it. Nor is it limited to the district level but brings in school leaders to find how district leaders relate with school leaders in efforts to improve teaching and learning.

According to Sherer (2008), districts take a variety of approaches to addressing instructional challenges, including enhancement of content knowledge of teachers, setting up structures to distribute instructional materials and ensuring interactions between instructional coaches and lead teachers. It is therefore evident that school leaders should be integrated into an overall district reform movement, so district and school-based leadership may complement each other in procuring and distributing materials and staff development (Firestone & Martinez, 2007). Although Sherer's study mentioned district involvement in instructional leadership it gave minimum attention to district involvement as it was more appropriate to the school situation. It proved that informal positions at school level are critical components of instructional leadership as a result of teacher agency. This study widens the role of teacher agency from the confines of the school to cover the district level, of which studies are limited and it is in this regard that this current study may make a contribution. Most studies that discuss the role of subject leaders in instructional leadership are confined to the school situation so this one breaks new ground, focussing as it does on the case of Zimbabwe by assessing leader agency in the learning and teaching of History.

Districts have been found to operate within three major frameworks in their dealing with schools. Richmon and Allison (2003) highlight three theories usually employed by districts which are the *autonomous*, *interactive* and the *provisional*. Autonomous theories view leadership as the duty of one appointed all-able individual, perhaps viewed as the traditional approach to district leadership. At the district level, in the case of Zimbabwe,

such an individual can be the district education officer and a principal at school level. The success or failure of the district is thus considered to be a result of visions and abilities of such an individual. This study does not consider such a perspective because leadership practices have been transformative in recent times. The study is concerned with all leadership in its interaction.

The interactive theory considers district leadership as a product of interactions between individuals (Camburn, Kimball & Lowernhaupt, 2008), who may be the district education officers, classroom practitioners or cluster subject specialists (Spillane, 2005). Provisional theorists consider leadership to be a product of the situation, a concept that gives in to informal structures as leadership sources because there are no fixed structures or systems to the discharge of leadership. This study follows in the observations of Camburn, Kimball and Lowernhaupt, (2008), of viewing instructional leadership as a product of instructional interactions; hence the need to examine how policies, structures and activities are constructed and executed between the two groups of leadership. Accepting that leadership is not confined to formal structures compelled the researcher to use a distributed leadership framework in which leaders were not confined to formally appointed positions.

In their discussion of authentic leadership, Wang and Bird (2011) call for the establishment of multi-level modelling between districts and schools. According to the Ontario Leadership Framework there is a need to promote collaborative learning communities between schools and districts, which will enable schools, school communities and districts to work together and learn from each other with a central focus on improved teaching quality, student achievement and wellbeing (Ontario, 2009).The position of Wang and Bird(2011) is important in the present study as it gives insights into the sampling procedures in which a variety of leaders at both the school and the district level were included in order to accommodate the multi-faceted nature of instructional leadership. There is need to examine how multi-level modelling of teaching may be achieved at the district level in order to show feasibility and impact of such team activities.

Rorrer *et al* (2008) identified four major roles of districts as institutional actors in education, with districts obliged to craft policies and regulations which do not contradict but support and complement efforts to improve student achievement (Mangin, 2007).The roles include the provision of instructional leadership, reorienting organizations, establishment of policy uniformity and the maintenance of equity focus. Of these roles, the provision of instructional leadership is the most important. The two major role practices of

instructional leadership by districts are 'will generation' and 'capacity building' (Rorrer *et al.*, 2008), which emphasizes the need for interactions between districts and schools. This study, by focusing on these assesses the implementation of the collaborative approach to the teaching and learning of History. The key activities of districts in a collaborative framework, according to the Ontario Leadership Framework (2010:3),are promoting professional community, shared norms, values, reflective dialogue, public practice, collaboration with collective responsibility for students, organizational learning, cooperation to gather information about teaching and content, discussions and critique of new ideas, and trust, integrity, honest and openness, concern and personal regard for others, competence, reliability, and consistency.

A number of previous studies on instructional leadership have produced large quantities of theoretical positions on how districts and schools may interact but the challenge has remained to determine what obtains on the ground and what works, that is, the practice. By examining leadership in context, this study makes a unique contribution to efforts to improve the quality of instruction in the schools.

Roller *et al*. (2008) found out that districts continue to function as the dominant local governance for schools, despite being neglected by researchers. Using a method of narrative synthesis, the study established that district instructional leadership builds capacity by coordinating and aligning work and means of communication, planning and even collaboration. It is in the area of collaboration that this study seeks to find deeper insights in order to find ways of improving such practices. A number of researchers have identified districts as instructional leaders and justified their involvement, but there is limited literature on the practical aspects of district involvement, hence this study moves in that important direction.

Developing a culture for the district is one of the major roles of district leadership (Waters & Marzano, 2006), including the norms, expectations and values. A culture of meeting and deliberations on instructional issues at the district level is likely to develop a feeling of compliance amongst leaders which can see the adoption of suggested teaching strategies. In order to bring about reforms in instruction, the district should first change the existing culture as the relationship between teacher and district is not a matter of the hierarchical structures and controls but a matter of norms, expectations and values that shape the operations of a district. There is need to establish policies and structures to enhance relationships between History leaders at the school level and those at the district level to

make them more inclusive in order for them to benefit all stakeholders. The extent to which informal interactions are contributing to an improvement in the teaching and learning of History should be assessed with a view to increase the involvement of such leaders. Studies that deal with leaders' interactions have been confined to the school situation and it is the aim of the current research to examine what impact there is for interactions between districts and schools if interaction is not confined to managerial activities but also includes issues of teaching and learning.

Maintaining equity is another critical role of district leadership (Roller *et al.*, 2008). (Ibid) demonstrated that districts can minimize inequities within the district by displacing institutionalized practices. In Zimbabwe, for example, inequalities in the teaching and learning of History manifest in areas of teacher leaders where some schools have unqualified staff and inadequate resources, such as textbooks and other teaching aids. In a district in which collaboration is taken seriously it would be expected that resource redistribution would be carried out in under-resourced centres. Roller *et al*. (2008) do not explain how districts may achieve this, hence the need for further research in the area. A promotion of collaborative behaviour among leadership for instruction is one way of minimizing inequalities and it was a purpose of this study to find out how such efforts and activities are coordinated in the district. By examining how districts related with schools, the extent to which equality of treatment is afforded to different schools was assessed.

Establishing policy coherence is one major role of district leadership. District leaders are responsible for linking policy to the needs of schools (Roller *et al*., 2008). In promoting policy coherence, negotiation is an important process but this can only be achieved through interactions. It occurs as districts build policies from within and from outside the district into one through workshops and district coaching. The manner in which they are held and the usefulness of such activities require further research in order to establish their efficacy. Most researchers accept that policy-making is a critical role of districts and such policies may include the teaching load for each teacher and the number of periods per week for each subject. Issues of teacher-student ratios, which have a great impact on teaching outcomes, are usually determined at district level and such decisions are better made when there are constant interactions between those at the district level and those at the school level. There is need, however, to find out the role of the district in school implementation procedures. This study, by assessing activities and policies that exist

between districts and schools in the teaching of History, provides useful insights into this area.

Waters and Marzano (2006) carried out a study to determine the influence of district leadership on student outcomes and identify the characteristics of effective schools and leaders. It informed the current study in that it acknowledged that leadership is not confined to formal positions although it was limited to the role of district superintendents. The study employed the quantitative method, thus limiting findings to numerical descriptions. The present study widens data collection procedures to include qualitative instruments because objectives of the study were not limited to quantitative data. The study established that there is a statistically significant relationship (a positive correlation of -24) between district leadership and student achievement. Such findings are important in that they reinforce the need for more serious studies to establish how such interactions may be understood and even improved. The study identified that those districts that were more oriented towards students' academic performance were the most effective because they remained focused on teaching and learning, but there is need for further study to establish how such an academic focus may be maintained.

The study by Waters and Marzano (2006) also restated the fundamental role of collaboration in district leadership, finding that effective superintendents consulted all stakeholders, including central office staff, board members and school leaders, in establishing aims for district instructional leadership. The manner in which such consultations are made was however not made clear and research is needed to discuss how such practices are carried out and with what success. The same position was later developed by Neumerski, (2013), who argued that the integrated approach was the best way of understanding and improving teaching and learning at both district and school levels. This study follows such intentions and actually examines practices that involve both the district and school leadership and assesses the impact of such relationships on the teaching and learning of History. The need for a more consolidated approach to instructional leadership practices has been long overdue (Hornig, 2012).By examining how History leaders at the school level relate to leaders at the district level, this study contributes to the production of integrated literature on instructional literature that scholars like Neumerski (2013) bemoan.

The development of a shared vision is a key aspect of district instructional leadership, especially in the area of History teaching with its pronounced approach and methods

contestations (Thomas, 2008).The study by Thomas (2008) did not however elaborate on how such a vision is actually achieved. Communication between district leadership and the schools was found to be important. Other practices that were discovered by researchers include modelling good teaching, adopting good instructional methodologies, using an instructional evaluation programme, monitoring student achievement, rewarding good teachers and directing personnel operations to ensure a stable and motivated staff who are eager to implement good instructional practices (Waters & Marzano, 2006). Noble as the identified practices may be, the studies did not elaborate how these were achieved through an implementation process and hence the need for further study to establish what obtains on the ground in as far as instructional practices are concerned. Ways that are used by districts to reward good instructional practices need to be examined in terms of how they impact on student outcomes. The concept of modelling good teaching is an important district activity and it is in the scope of this study to expose how district coaching has taken it as a critical staff development activity in the teaching and learning of History. Researchers have failed to explain disparities in the performance of students in the same subject within the same district and a study of this nature becomes critical in providing the explanations.

Studies have also called for the need to concentrate on interactions between districts and schools because that is the actual doing of instructional leadership, which in particular places and at certain times constitutes instructional practice (Spillane *et al*., 2004). If honesty, trust and competence become the results of district-school interactions, even challenges faced by subjects such as History may be impacted upon. Researchers generally agree that interactions between districts and schools are fundamental to any successful educational reform, especially when high school outcomes are expected (Harris *et al*., 2010), but researchers have continued to produce segmented literature for leadership activities, thus making it difficult to examine relationships between various groups of instructional leadership, and it is a major aim of this study to fill that gap by examining leadership in its interactive processes. Understanding the nature of relationships that exist between instructional leaders is an important objective of the study, hence the significance of a holistic approach to examining instructional practice.

One of the fundamental roles of districts is the bridging of organizational development through a consistent generation of will (Firestone & Martinez, 2007). Will is critical in ensuring the take-off and sustenance of educational reform. Chitate (2005) argues that the

failure of educational innovations such as Education with Production and Syllabus 2166 in Zimbabwe's History projects was due to the failure by districts to mount will generating workshops. Will provides the necessary attitudes, the motivation and beliefs to implement and carry through programmes aimed at improving student outcomes in schools (Rorrer *et al*., 2008). In a distributed leadership framework, will should be found at the district and school leadership levels, with the will to work together from both sets of personnel .That 'will' only manifests itself through a balanced interaction process(Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008), for districts to be successful in generating will they should actively be involved in instructional activities, be sensitive to events and developments at the school level as well as be consistent in their interactions with various schools. By examining how district and school-based instructional practices are structured and coordinated, this study provides opportunities to assess how will among teachers, teacher leaders, principals and district leaders are able to motivate themselves and each other in bringing about better teaching and learning among students. Where there is a will amongst leaders it is possible, and it is important to find out how the level of determination amongst instructional leaders impacts on students' performance.

Another important role of districts in instructional leadership is capacity building. Jita and Mokhele (2014:1) argue that "building capacity is thus critical, and that is what continuing professional development (CPD) aims to achieve. Since the goal of most education reforms is to improve teacher performance and student learning, the CPD of teachers will... continue to feature prominently..."According to Firestone (1989:57), capacity building is "the wherewithal to actually implement the decision. The capacity to use reform is the extent to which the school has the knowledge, skills, personnel, and other resources necessary to carry out decisions." From these viewpoints, capacity building implies making available resources, qualified personnel, opportunity and time to enable the carrying out of envisaged reform programmes. Districts may build the capacity of schools under their jurisdiction by mobilizing personnel such as subject specialist, organizing subject workshops, providing resources, developing and implementing quality control measures and ensuring district-school linkages. An examination of the interactions of History leaders at the school level and those that operate on a district scale provides an ample opportunity for assessing capacities of leaders in working together for purposes of improving the manner in which subjects are taught and learnt in schools. When districts boost the capacities of leaders, it follows that teaching and learning becomes of high

quality. The concept of capacity building as an instructional role of districts was also refined by Hornig (2003), who argues that district officials should have the knowledge and wisdom of instructional projects obtaining in schools. District instructional leaders can only be aware of what obtains in the schools if a healthy relationship exists between the two. This observation concurs with that of Spillane (2004), underlining the importance of interactive instructional practices between districts and schools. Hornig (2003) emphasizes the promotion of positive socio-political ties and not only academic and professional ties. Such an interactive process may best be accomplished through the distributed leadership framework. Fullan and Levin (2008) argue that transparency, accessibility and accountability are central ingredients of capacity building at district level. The increased demands for transparency and accountability in recent times in the field of educational reform have made it imperative that studies examining the relations between leaders be given more attention. Through a study of interaction practices, instructional leaders may realize the significance of being accountable to each other.

In a study by Floden *et al.* (1987), districts were found to have an impact on what school leaders do. The joint influence of district and school leadership on student achievement was found to be of great importance, especially when district and school practices shared common positions. The same research called for studies to focus on the impact of school policies on district activities and policies, and that concentrating only on the impact of district policies on schools was tantamount to promoting a strong hierarchical model of district control of school decisions and activities. The same position for the need to examine the impact of districts on the practice of school leaders and vice-versa is supported by Barnes *et al.* (2010). It is through the study of leadership in interaction that such an approach of reciprocal analysis of leadership practice may be achieved. The current study is a follow up to suggestions to also examine the impact of school-based instructional practices on district policies. Instead of concentrating on the top-down relationship of district-school relationships this study adds the bottom-up relationships to determine how school-based History leaders affect activities and policies at district level.

The pressure for educational accountability has increased the need for district-school leadership interactions (DSI) in recent years (Rodgers, 2009). Districts are expected to make clear their expectations from the schools and the schools to do likewise for the districts (Harris, 2008). Districts may influence who is qualified to be a teacher, teacher leader or coach at the school level and may even influence the success of principals by the

level of support they are prepared to give (Camburn *et al*., 2008). Research studies are needed to provide proved guidelines on how districts may influence school practices without stifling school autonomy and creativeness. Districts play an important role in improving the content knowledge of instructional leaders and setting structures to enhance interactions and staff development (Sherer, 2008). Despite making these claims, studies have been shy of elaborating on the practical conditions under which progress can be achieved. There is need for further studies to examine the possibilities and the challenges in district and school teamwork.

The district also determines school leadership by the way it communicates its own visions of it. Such communication may determine the head's behaviour towards teacher leadership (Mangin, 2007).The nature of teacher leadership initiatives at the district level impacts on the enactment of the same at the school level, hence the significance of school-based and district-based instructional leadership (ibid). Capacity building at the school level has also been found to be linked to the building of confidence and collective efficacy of the district. It is for these reasons and that models of district-school interactions should be examined. Communication between school and district based leadership can only be enhanced when the two categories of leadership meet frequently to share views on instructional leadership practices. A number of approaches have been used by previous researchers to expose the role of districts in improving the teaching and learning of specific subjects and other educational reforms. Districts have been viewed in the context of organizational theory, hence focusing on the structures and functions of districts (Floden *et al*.,1987; Firestone & Martinez,2007). Others have approached the issue focusing on district leaders (Hornig, 2012) and others on what districts do to influence teaching and learning. The present study is different from such previous studies in that it is more holistic and involves school and district leaders in their interactions. By doing so it is more comprehensive and produces an informative position on how cooperation of leaders may be exploited for the benefit of teaching and learning in schools.

2.5. INTERACTIONS IN INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

According to Louis *et al*. (1996) in Blasé & Blasé (2000:130), "... the restructuring of schools to empower teachers and to implement school-based shared decision making has resulted in a move away from bureaucratic control and toward professionalization of

teaching." Blasé and Blasé (2000) argue that in a number of schools, leaders are developing collaborative practices in teaching, among which are coaching, group investigations, study teams and explorations. All these are hinged on healthy relationships between leaders. Jita and Mokhele (2014) acknowledge that recent scholarship has paid more attention to networks and communities of practice which are all a product of constant interactions of leaders. Such studies provide important information on the rationale, operations, forms and sometimes challenges faced in the attempt by various instructional leaders to support each other in an endeavour to improve the quality of instruction. Studies dealing with multiple leaders have been abundant but have not tackled the district-school relationship, preferring to deal with interactions of leaders even at the high school level. Such studies, although limited in scope, help in informing what interactions or cooperation in instructional leadership may bring.

A study by the National Study of School Evaluation (NSSE, 2007) in the USA showed a consistent view of high performing districts and schools with high instructional leadership interactional levels. The study established that, without a close interactional practice, districts or schools are little more than a set of independent players lacking shared understanding. According to the NSSE (2007), leadership that is composed of systematic and collaborative decision-making appears to hold the most promise for improving student achievement and district effectiveness. Although individual efforts may be useful it is shared leadership and collaboration that can bring about real instructional change. Findings by the NSSE (2007) confirmed earlier findings by Waters and Marzano,(2006) that focused on the importance of interactions at school level and the findings are still relevant at the district-wide level. More frequent interaction activities were found to keep the district and schools focused on matters of instruction. Findings from the NSSE (2007) study are important in that they confirm the importance of mutual cooperation between district leaders and school leaders but are wanting in providing detail as to how such an interaction process might be initiated and sustained.

Leithwood *et al*. (2004) found that leaders are more effective when they provide mutual support. Although that study was confined to principal support to teachers, the findings showed that instructional support from another leader greatly improved the quality of teaching and learning as a result of the motivation that comes with team spirit. When leaders assist each other at a formal level better understanding is attained and it became expected that when leaders meet informally to discuss instructional leadership issues,

teaching practice improves. The same team spirit that the study discovered at the school level when leaders interact may be exploited at the district level with wider impacts on the teaching and learning of History. The same position by Leithwood *et al*. (2004) was consolidated by the NSSE (2007), which also argued that an essential role of districts in their interaction with schools was to provide support and staff. The district must also deploy the necessary human, technical and material resources in the schools and at central offices. The two studies did not discuss how that support could be provided or challenges that may be faced in the provision of that support, so there is need for further studies to examine the *how* part of the provision of that support.

In another study on the impact of interactions between leaders, Young and King (2002) found that the capacity of a school is enhanced when instructional leaders work with each other. In the study, the capacity of schools was seen to improve as a result of the efforts of teacher leaders and coaches whose shared vision would generate hard work and enthusiasm to perform better. In studies in a similar vein, Camburn *et al*. (2008) and Coburn and Russell (2008) found that the performance of teacher leaders and coaches at the school level cannot be treated in isolation to policies at the district level. They argued that the district may influence who is qualified to be a coach and who is not qualified. District policies also define the support to be given to teacher leaders, principals or coaches, hence the need to examine their work in a holistic manner and not to treat them individually. Although these studies acknowledged the inter-relatedness of instructional leaders they came short of examining the policies, activities and structures that enable instructional leaders to boost the capacity of each other in context (Neumerski, 2013).In those studies by Camburn *et al*. (2008),Coburn and Russell, (2008) and Youngs, (2012), pointed out that a gap in the integrated approach to the treatment of leadership literature exists, and it is in an effort to close such gaps that this study was carried out.

In another study to examine the role of interactions in improving teaching and learning, Mangin and Stoelinga (2008) found that the interaction of coaches and teacher leaders helped in improving methodological approaches, but the study did not provide information on how such a development comes about. There is therefore a need to follow up on how really teamwork between schools and the district may impact on the teaching methods of teachers. In their study on teachers' perceptions of the Zimbabwean O' level Syllabus 2167, Mapetere, Makaye and Muguti (2012) argued for more district-wide workshops for History teachers to share and develop each other in best teaching practices, but as with

other studies it did not explain how such workshops could improve the teaching and learning of History. In that study, the authors argue that the teaching and learning of History has become disjointed as the strategies have attracted criticism for being old and using out-of-date methods, despite arguments against traditional approaches. The research by Mapetere, Makaye and Muguti (2012) suggested a more vigorous system of workshops and this can be attained easily if districts and schools meet regularly in well-programmed interactional activities. It is thus imperative that such theoretical propositions are examined practically, hence the need for studies in the vein of the present one.

Although district leadership through district coaching practices has gained attention in most nations there has been limited research on how district coaching improves instruction, especially in subjects such as History (Hornig, 2012). Much money has been invested in developing district instructional leadership (Neuman & Wright,2010), but limited evaluative research has been carried out to establish what is taking place in terms of working together to achieve better teaching and learning between districts and schools. The current study is relevant in ensuring that resources that are channelled towards district-school interaction practices are accounted for by exposing those projects that may be useful and those that may not be helpful to the improvement of teaching and learning.

Many districts and schools have invested heavily in leadership for the improvement of instruction and it is proper that such investments in instructional leadership is well coordinated (Neuman & Wright 2010).One of the most cited projects that tried to promote interactions between educational leaders is the 'No Child Left Behind' (NCLB) which arose from the 2001 Act in the USA to promote interactions between schools and districts (Townsend *et al*., 2013). Enacted in 2002, the project aimed at promoting high student outcomes for all students in American schools by making principals and teachers more mutually accountable. It supported standards-based education reform aimed at setting high standard outcomes in education. Schools were held exclusively accountable to pupils' performance, with the programme emphasizing school-based instructional leadership although it acknowledged that schools and districts should interact if they are to genuinely assist students. The Act gave states and districts more flexibility on how they would utilize educational funds but failed to take into consideration the 'situation' of the teacher. Although the Act acknowledged the centrality of a shared vision in the improvement of teaching and learning, it was not concerned with examining a two-way process of interaction or to identify what could make partnership between schools and district more

useful and the need for studies in other countries to find out activities that could enhance student performance as a result of a shared vision and mission between leaders. Literature on the NCLB project was found relevant for this study in that it portrays what can be achieved if districts and schools work together for a common purpose. Literature on the project has demonstrated that despite large funding for educational reforms, nothing may materialize if no good interaction practices are established between instructional players.

Literature on the NCLB project demonstrates that a close interaction process between leaders makes them more mutually accountable. The model resulted in more attention being given to curriculum and instruction but it did not make districts more accountable to schools. In her review of the NCLB project, Ballantine (2013), argues that by holding students, teachers, schools and districts responsible for the results on standardized achievement tests, expectations for students would rise, teaching improve and learning increase.

In his study to establish leadership distribution by the NCLB programme, Rodgers (2009) states that the project charged districts with the role of monitoring all schools within their divisions. Such monitoring could only be achieved through efficient interactions between schools and districts. By charging districts with the duty of supervising school-based performance without making districts answerable to the schools, programme showed a lack of appreciation of the distributive nature of instructional leadership. Charging districts with the duty of ensuring that all students met the minimum standards exerted unnecessary pressure on school leadership without empowering them to make a contribution to the way things could be done. The programme thus promoted the top-down type of leadership, which in most cases faces rejection by the community of implementers (Rorrer *et al*., 2008). Literature on the NCLB project is important for this study in that it portrays challenges that may be faced when programmes to improve teaching and learning are distributed across various leaders. The project also demonstrated that where authoritarian channels of communication are used limited success may be achieved in the improvement of classroom instruction.

Elmore (2006:261) criticizes the No Child Left Behind policy for promoting the top-down type of relationships between district leadership and school-based leadership "… as improvement advances, leadership refracts; it ceases to follow the lines of positional authority and begins to follow the distribution of knowledge and skill." In a school situation it is not only the head, superintendents and vice principals who should be

considered as leaders but even those who are not formally appointed have equal leadership capacities. It is in the interest of this study to find out the extent to which leadership activities are distributed between formal positions such as the district education officers and informal sources of leadership like a well-informed History teacher at school level.

Although the NCLB initiative acknowledged the centrality of school leadership in student outcomes it fell short of emphasizing the relationships between districts and schools and has failed to articulate a mutual kind of relationship between the two (Ballantine,2013). The NCLB project was found wanting because it failed to acknowledge that school-based instructional leadership is a critical component of educational reform, hence failing to provide school-based instructional leadership with resources. According to Barnes, Camburn, Saunders and Sebastian (2010), while the NCLB was standard based, the programme failed to provide the tools for school leaders to achieve outcomes. The model also concentrated on a limited range of outcomes which could only be measured through tests. Interactional practice was not taken as a critical issue and hence the failure to accommodate inputs and suggestions from teachers. In a study by Ballantine on the NCLB framework it was established why some projects carried by districts and school were not successful. This study, by examining how History leaders at the district and school level interact provides a rare opportunity to account for successes and failures of educational projects the world over, thus preventing unnecessary resource wastage.

Another model of district-school interaction practice which has received unprecedented attention is the Ontario Leadership Framework (Cravens, Golding & Penaloza, 2012).The Ontario Leadership Framework (OLF) was a project to enhance student outcomes through an improved leadership practice (Ballantine, 2010), "designed to support student achievement and well-being by attracting and developing skilled and passionate school and system leaders." Its emphasis on student outcomes resulted in it being branded as the, "roadmap to successful leadership", (Institute of Education Leadership, 2008:3).The framework was applied province-wide, thereby making its adoption to district-school leadership practices compatible. The OLF was a plan of action aimed at supporting student achievement and wellbeing through ensuring good leadership. According to Ballantine (2010), the policy was intended to support and improve the leadership practices with the ultimate goal of improving student outcomes. The OLF, like the current study, linked instructional practices to student performance. Leadership cannot be leadership for its own sake but should be assessed in terms of student performance and staff motivation.

Levin and Fullan (2008) describe the OLF as an idea of capacity building which is focused on results and established that a distributed leadership framework is capable of empowering leaders to levels on which the attainment of better results is possible. Although the study, like that of Neumerski (2013), was mainly based on a review of literature, the findings on the OLF are relevant to present efforts to improve instructional practice as the study demonstrates that leadership cannot be confined to a single individual but to a group of individuals operating within a given context. The framework is important for the present study as it links leadership to student achievement. The OL Finitiative highlighted the centrality of collaborative behaviour in improving instructional leadership which is a key component of district-school leadership interaction:

According to the Ontario Leadership Framework (2010:1):

> … real and lasting improvement in Ontario Schools requires every school to have a culture of collaborative professionalism, in which educators work together to use evidence to improve their practice and students' learning. In addition, development of school and district leadership can improve the ability of leaders to act together within and across districts.

An analysis of the position above reveals that, in theory, the OLF fell into the distributed leadership framework as it emphasized the need for capacity building through collaboration. It therefore provided a rare chance to examine interactions within organizations and institutions (Leithwood, 2012), however it failed to completely articulate a completely distributed feature as it sided only with the formally designed leaders instead of considering leadership as occurring across individuals in both formal and informal positions(Spillane, Diamond & Jita, 2003). Although the OLF study was carried out in a developed country which may have different educational set ups to developing countries such as Zimbabwe, the study remained useful for the current study in that it gave prominence to the need to study how leaders related to each other in improving the quality of instruction. The framework showed that interactions between leaders are important for high quality instruction.

By acknowledging that school leadership is critical to the promotion of student outcomes, the OFL gave impetus to serious research on the role of school leadership but its concept of school leadership was limited in two major ways. Leadership was viewed as synonymous with a school principal but issues of district school interactions were not

given deserving attention (Rorrer *et al*., 2008).The noble intention of building capacity for schools as suggested by the NCLB project emphasises the significance of collaboration of leaders in issues of instructional leadership.

In another study on the role of interaction practices in Zimbabwe, Makaye (2011) examined the Better Schools Project (BSPZ) with an aim of assessing the extent to which the programme had achieved the goal of better teaching conditions. The Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe (BSPZ), a modification of the Effective Schools Research (ESR) Model was a project that made deliberate efforts to promote interactions between schools and districts in an endeavour to promote better student outcome. BSPZ was a project launched to address challenges in the Zimbabwean education sector where the Ministry of Education wanted to shift efforts from a quantitative approach to education to one that emphasizes quality (Ministry of Education, 2008). The first phase of the programme, which took place in 1993, witnessed the introduction of the Head Teacher Training and Support Programme (HTSP). This approach to leadership hinged on a traditional theory which assumed that the school was as good as its leader. This phase resulted in the establishment of clusters, rampant production of head teacher support materials and the setting up of resource centres but the programme could not be accelerated because the programme had simply produced leadership based on an individual, the head teacher (Mangin & Stoelinga 2008). According to Spillane *et al*. (2004), leaders are only leaders because of followers and the situation. In the first phase of the BSPZ, policymakers simply took into consideration the head teacher leadership and ignored teacher and district-based leadership. The phase was thus found wanting, hence the launch of the second phase.

The second phase of the BSPZ was launched in 1996, when emphasis was now placed on teacher leadership and agency. Programme implementers came to realize that teachers hold the other key instructional success (Firestone & Martinez, 2008).A reason for the paradigm shift was proffered: "This phase was born out of the realization that the trickledown effect had not occurred as expected. It was, therefore, necessary to target the teacher without neglecting education managers and other stakeholders." (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, 2008:1).In other words, it was realized that there was a need for a more distributed approach where interactions of leaders would play a more important role to the implementation of BSPZ if it was to realize its goals.

Chikoko (2007) and Makaye (2011) have argued that BSPZ was aimed at promoting interactions between district and school-based leadership practices. One of its major

objectives was the provision of information to subjects' leaders and stakeholders, and the provision of teaching and learning materials. The programme also aimed at organizing activities in which teachers and their communities might interact (Ministry of Education, Sport and Culture, 2008).A close examination of these objectives exhibit a lack of appreciation of the role of districts in programmes to improve student outcomes. Both authors found that lack of resources hampered interaction between leaders at the cluster, district and school levels, thus preventing the BSPZ project from attaining its aim.

By focusing on creating an enabling environment for productive relationships and improving student knowledge and teaching practices, the BSPZ may be considered as essentially a project on interactional instructional leadership. In his evaluation of the project, Makaye (2011) accepts that the major aim was to promote a system of collaboration within districts. The study by Makaye (2011) revealed that there were no proper structures, policies or practices to promote the implementation of BSPZ. The study was however limited in scope since it only covered two clusters and did not address interaction in districts as it related to a specific subject. In a related study of the Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe, Chikoko (2007) argued that the BSPZ had provided a structure that might be used by both school and district officials to promote better results for students and school administration. The study however did not provide detail of how such a structure may be utilized to promote interactions between schools and districts in order to enhance student outcomes in specific subjects such as History. The current study, although not confined to the activities of BSPZ, makes a follow up on some of the findings on the project, in that the BSPZ structure system is a key component of district coordination activities. Studies on the BSPZ are critical to this study in that they portray some of the methods that are useful in examining district-wide programmes.

Studies on the BSPZ have demonstrated that despite being a good model for the promotion of interactions between district and school-based instructional leadership, the project failed mainly because it did not adopt a distributed approach. District leaders could not support the idea of them becoming followers as well as leaders at the same time, the romance of leadership (Sherer, 2008).They remained aloof and wanted schools to interact between themselves and their communities. As in the No Child Left Behind project of the USA, districts failed to see the need to empower school-based leadership totally and remained as the supervisors who could not learn from the schools. The BSPZ failed to realize that leadership does not occur through the efforts of just one individual but rather it occurs

through a collective influence of leaders, followers and their situation (Spillane *et al*., 2004).The current study, unlike those of Makaye (2011) and Chikoko (2007), was confined to one district for purposes of detail but not to one educational reform project. Instructional leadership practices are viewed in this study in their totality as the context of interaction is crucial. Studies on instructional interventions in Zimbabwe and other countries are crucial for this study in that they reveal what researchers emphasized when it comes to issues of cooperation between leaders and what they did not concentrate on. In this case they failed to examine in detail how school leaders can also affect the practice at district level, hence the thrust of this study.

The literature reviewed thus far provides a conceptual foundation for the interaction between school-based and district leadership. It begins to inform us on the kinds of relationship that may ensue, for example, as authoritative and/or autonomous. Interactive instructional practices highlighted in the literature include curriculum articulation, cross-programme activities, and strategic staffing (Hallinger & Walker, 2012). Edwards (2013) found fostering group goals and performance monitoring as some of the important instructional practices. The reviewed literature has recurring themes that all point to the need for a well-sustained interactive and collaborative relationship. (Sebastian & Allensworth, 2012).The literature however fails to specifically suggest the kinds of structures and policies that may be useful to promote subject-based interactions between district- and school-based leadership.

According to Brazer and Baver (2013), the available literature points to a segmented instruction that is inadequate to develop full instructional leadership for specific subjects such as History. In addition, the recurring theme of placing student outcomes as the ultimate goal of instructional leadership has been emphasized (Terosky, 2013).The foregoing review helps to begin thinking about how instructional practice and leadership can be organized effectively in a marginalized subject such as History, especially with respect to the possible interactions between districts and schools.

2.6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This section describes the conceptual framework on which the study was grounded in order to examine and analyse collaboration between leadership in the teaching and learning of History at the school level and those operating at the district level. A conceptual framework is explained by Reichel and Ramey (1987) in Kombo and Tromp

(2009) as a set of broad ideas and principles taken from relevant studies and used to structure a presentation. It can thus be regarded as a map for the study.

A conceptual framework was important in that it helped the researcher to understand how leadership is organized and hence the communication of the study and findings. Leadership is a complex issue and it was not easy to pinpoint a single theory. The conceptual framework of the study, that leadership should be distributed between district and school based leadership, was used by the researcher to examine findings and provided focus.

That leadership is conceptualized as being distributed (Spillane & Harris, 2008) is an issue of rising importance in educational circles. A number of scholars have utilized the conceptual framework of distributed leadership in their studies (Gronn, 2003: Robinson, 2008; Spillane, 2006), and varied interpretations have been assigned to the idea, making it imperative to examine its application to different contexts (Sherer, 2008).According to Spillane and Harris (2008), a distributed perspective frames leadership practice in a particular way and leadership practice is viewed as a product of the interactions of school leaders, followers and their situation. A distributed leadership framework is largely understood as the presence of multiple leaders and in this study it implies that leaders are found at both the classroom level, the school administrative and the district level and in both formal and informal positions. This leader-plus framework considers multiple agents as contributing to the improvement of teaching and learning in the schools (Spillane, 2006), a definition implying leadership is not fixed to formal structures but any other teacher can be a leader provided he/she has the appropriate knowledge and the skills.

A distributed conception of leadership borrows from distributed cognition whereby learning is "stretched across people and elements of the situation (Sherer, 2008:3). This conception of leadership is premised on the foundation that most of the knowledge required for improvement of instructional practices must inevitably reside in the people who teach and work in the classroom rather than those who manage them (Supovitz, 2008). According to Youngs (2012), distributed leadership is a free-floating concept that has come to prominence in the education field, considered as the modern mode of leadership suitable for ushering in improvements in educational reform. The growing literature on the distributed concept of leadership gives the impression that it is a mature concept (Day, Gronn & Salus, 2004). Most of the literature examined in this study views leadership as the work of many people who are linked to each other in a continuous and

mutual way. Leadership is thus found in various forms and not only a matter of formally designated positions.

Sun and Allison (2005:6) expanded the conception of distributed leadership by Spillane as "… best understood as a process distributed across interactive webs of groups and work partners embedded within dynamic, varied and locally known social systems." It is not enough to have a distributed leadership structure but there is a need to examine how that distribution is accomplished (Spillane, 2005).

A distributed conception thus views leadership as a system of practice comprising a collection of interacting components, leaders, followers and situation, components to be understood together because the system is more than the sum of the practices (Spillane, 2005:150).There are two major ways in which distributed leadership may be viewed according to the above insight. The first view is normative, with a similar meaning to the democratic style of leadership, by which the principal or formal leader simply distributes or delegates duties to others but remains in control. The characteristics of the formal leader remain as the most defining attribute of the achievement of outcomes (Hallinger, 2005). The second view of distributed leadership is the analytic view, whereby leadership work is considered as spread among leaders, followers and the situation (Spillane, 2004).It is the second meaning that guides the conception of the writer. Shared instructional leadership is not hinged upon a position but depends on the totality of the participative resources. Followers and leaders are bound together in the transformational process to produce a leader-leader situation.

Interactions between district and schools, according to this framework, should be based on mutual cooperation without a tendency of one dictating to the other. Elmore (2006:261) states: "as improvement advances, leadership refracts; it ceases to follow the lines of positional authority and begins to follow the distribution of knowledge and skill."Such a development implies that leaders will become followers and such interaction practice may bring positive outcomes to instruction and student outcomes. If a teacher in a specific subject area has the knowledge and skills in a particular concept then good leadership should allow such a teacher to take responsibility for developing other members of staff at school and even at the district level. Sherer (2008:4) describes a situation in which leaders today become followers as, "…the romance of leadership-a follower-centric theory." Such a scenario emerges because leadership is not static but dynamic. It is the intention and ability to interact that is fundamental in a distributed approach to instructional practices

between districts and schools. Leadership cannot be tied down to the variable of leader persona and behaviours (ibid).Practice occurs in the interactions of leaders, followers and particular contexts and in specific tasks (Neumerski, 2013).

In discussing the role of teacher agency, Sherer (2008) argues that the distributed theory is useful in understanding instructional leadership at both the school and district levels. The ability of the distributive theory to consider multiple sources of guidance and direction as dictated by expertise distribution makes distributed leadership framework useful in understanding interactions between district and school-based leadership practices. The framework connects not only leaders to other leaders, context and followers, but also instructional leadership to instruction itself.

According to Flodden, Porter, Alford, Freeman, Irwin, Schmidt and Schwille (1987), when instructional leadership is extended to cover districts it moves beyond the autonomous-control dichotomy, following the distribution of knowledge and skill. Traditional practices of districts used to be those of dictating to schools with the ability and success of leadership measured in terms of their level of conformity to district directives, but such outlooks have outlived their usefulness. Distributed leadership now involves having teachers making curriculum decisions (Hallinger & Walker 2012), and when teachers have engaged in district curriculum changes and implementations such programmes succeeded, but when teachers are ignored, instructional innovation usually faces rejection. Fullan and Levin (2008) questions the extent to which teachers are prepared to make decisions or to be responsible for the consequences of such decisions.

Townsend, Hocevar, Ballenger and Place (2013:18) state that "People do not like to be told what to do, to be given little or no option about their own practice, especially when they consider themselves to be professionals." Distributed leadership is thus concerned with the empowerment of teachers in matters of instructional significance, not only within the four walls of the classroom. They should decide on whom to interact with, how and when. In support of this view, Hallinger and Walker (2012) argue that distributed leadership should be understood as the "presence of multiple leaders", and Spillane and Diamond (2007) as a "leader-plus perspective". Such multiple leaders are found at both the school level and the district level, but literature fails to explain how it may work together for the benefit of students in subject-specific domains such as history.

This concept of leadership emphasizes a collaborative approach to the teaching and learning process. Hallinger and Walker (2012) highlight the critical role of "spontaneous collaboration", which is a natural product of interactions in working practices. When there is natural collaboration, leaders are prepared to make an extra effort to bring improvements due to a shared vision. When leaders engage in spontaneous collaboration it implies voluntary interaction when there is no use of force. Voluntary collaborative interaction suggests a lack of formalized impositions whereby leaders may volunteer to be followers. Voluntary interactions between schools and districts occur most often, but have not been taped to the advantage of either the schools or the districts (Neuman & Wright, 2010).

Traditional views of leadership support the notion of an individual leader (Spillane *et al*., 2003), but in distributed leadership, instructional roles are extended beyond the characteristics of the individual (Sherer, 2008; Spillane *et al*., 2004). "According to Firestone and Martinez (2007:3), "distributed leadership moves from individual and role-based views of leadership". Leaders should be peers as they are as diverse as the roles they should play. In instructional leadership practices for subjects such as history, individual-based leadership may not produce the desired improvement for student outcomes as some of the leaders may not share the vision of the leader. It is imperative therefore that those leaders should have a shared vision.

A distributed conception of leadership is useful for this study because it emphasizes interactions between different instructional players, which is the essence of this study of interactions between district- and school-based instructional leadership. A distributed view of leadership also centres on practice, and not just what is prescribed. Principals, teachers, coaches and district subject specialists, as well as district officials, should collaborate because their work is intertwined and interconnected (Neumerski, 2013). A distributed perspective therefore foregrounds leadership practice in the interactions of leaders, followers and the context(Spillane *et al*.,2003). A diagrammatic representation of the concept of distributed leadership is given below.
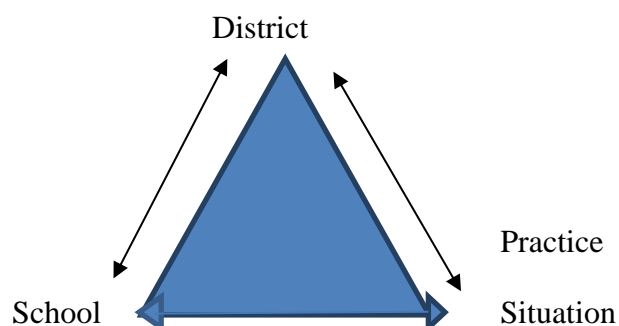
Figure 2.1: Relationship of distributed leadership. Adapted from Spillane et al.(2004).

A distributed leadership framework was used by a number of scholars in their studies of a similar phenomenon. Runnel (2008) used a distributed conceptual framework to examine leadership practices in China. The case study established that co-leadership improved performance in education. This current study builds on that study by viewing leadership between districts and schools as a combined activity, hence seeking to understand how their activities are coordinated.

Using a distributed leadership framework, Bolivar (2009) revealed that collective interactions among staff in order to build curricular foundations in IB schools in Venezuela brought great success, a position supported by Hallinger *et al*. (2012). It is against this international background that this perspective is adopted in this study, with both collective and concertive meanings. The concertive meanings of instructional leadership include spontaneous collaboration, which involves naturally occurring interactions among History leaders (Gronn, 2009). Shared approaches to leadership, involving close interdependency among leaders, are critical components, and instructional leadership is considered as a process whereby History teaching leaders individually or collectively influence colleagues in order to improve the teaching and learning practices. For such a process to take place, the relationships between leaders should be examined and understood. Blasé and Blasé (2000) consider the ability of teacher leaders to involve colleagues collaboratively in mutual learning and development as a critical component of instructional leadership hence the need for studies which seek to improve interactional practices of leaders in order to enhance teaching and learning.

2.7   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is guided by the symbolic interactions model propounded by Max Weber between 1864 and 1920 (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). The theory explains human behaviour as a direct product of interactions where participants in the context give own meanings to their relationships. Parker (2004), in Kombo and Tromp, (2009), argues that History content and methods are the official versions of reality and in examining these there is need to place them in the context of the practice. The theory postulates that when individuals like instructional leaders interact, improvements to occur as a result of the communication of shared meanings. The practice of leadership is thus closely linked with

how people relate to each other as opposed to isolationism. Leadership is only possible if there are relations between people, some of whom are leaders and others followers. The theory informs this study on the meaning of interactions between stakeholders in instructional leadership and is thus used as a reference point to account for the presence or lack of useful collaborative tendencies between district and school leaders in the teaching and learning of History. It is anticipated that collaboration can only take place when various viewpoints of stakeholders are given due respect, but when respect for individual perspectives is not taken into account, collaboration becomes a futile exercise.

The centrality of interactive behaviour in producing meaning in the Symbolic interactions theory and to the current study is significant. History is a subject that deals with individual meanings and symbols and instructional practice should manifest that History has 'multiple truths' rather than be treated as a finished product for uncritical and 'unquestioned consumption'(Parker, 2004:49). It is expected therefore that in efforts to improve the teaching and learning of the subject, opinions of leaders can be articulated when a programme of collaboration is defined clearly. According to this theory, "…human beings do not act individually but interact with each other, thus reacting to each other" (Kombo & Tromp, 2009:57).From these insights of the theory it becomes important for instructional leaders at both district and school level to tell their own story, hence the use of strategies such as interviews and observations to obtain the inside view of informants.

The central theme of the interactions model is the relationship between various participants of leadership. School-based leadership will need to communicate with district leadership as school or district leadership as a standalone entity would not achieve teaching and learning improvements, There is serious need for subject specialists, heads of department for the History subject, heads of school, district education officers, cluster subject heads and district subject panellists to interact in efforts to improve the teaching and learning of History (Evans, 2013).A rich interactive process is expected to produce opportunities for leaders to learn new practices from which students may benefit. The interactive approach was found to be useful in English in Zimbabwe by Ndamba (2013), who argues that improvement in teaching is a collective rather than an individual enterprise. When teachers and other leaders work in concert, real improvements take place in the teaching and learning of a subject.

An interactive perspective compels an interpretive approach to this study. In a study by Blasé and Blasé (2000), the symbolic interaction theory was used to examine teachers'

perspectives on instructional leadership, basing on its strength of providing meanings that human beings construct in their own settings. The framework helps to explain how instructional leaders support or fail to support one another from an endogenous emic perspective (Li, 2012).When leaders support each other in communities of practice or clusters (Jita & Mokhele, 2014) individual and group benefits of content knowledge and skills improvements accrue. The relationship between History instructional leaders was not only examined as conditional but was considered as interactional (Printy *et al*., 2009). History leaders were examined not only in terms of their support to each other but also in regard to their support to students' critical mind development. This position is advanced by Whitehouse and Zajda (2009), who argue that the aims, methods and subject matter of History should develop critical skills of questioning things and coming to reasoned judgment. When students are given opportunities to interact with each other and with History leaders on issues of academic rigour in the subject, a situation in which real historians are produced arises. This is mostly attained through the use of the interactive approach to History instructional activities. History teaching and learning has been castigated for being too traditional, with memorisation of facts being the main activity, but an interactions approach suggests that both leaders and students should be allowed to debate perspectives as individual positions are considered important.

The theoretical framework portrays some underlying traits on leadership and a concept of leadership as a shared process emerges (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008).This theory anticipates that an active collaboration of History leaders at the district and school level will allow different contexts to be taken into consideration. On context, Whitehouse and Zajda (2009:960) argue, "Context shapes the work of the historian. It shapes its purpose, method and product". The role of context, which is the prevailing local condition for leaders or students, is significant in determining the level of interaction that may be realised. According to Quinn (2002), teaching behaviours that may be deemed effective in some situations may actually produce negative effects in another. It is important to consider factors that may allow or hinder collaboration of leaders, such as attitude and accessibility, and improve on them if collaboration is to benefit all parties. Context is critical for the achievement of high quality student outcomes.

The discussed theoretical framework holds that interaction of school and district based leadership is fundamental in promoting system coherence, keeping programmes focused on teaching, aligning resources and building capacity. The capacity of leaders to handle

certain topics in the syllabus is improved when they meet frequently to help each other with approaches and even content materials. Harris (2004) confirms that interaction between instructional leadership at all levels is crucial for enabling clear communication of curriculum goals so that teachers do not continue in their old practices. In History, for example, the goals for teaching the subject have always been shifted and contested and an interactive approach will provide opportunities for interrogation of issues. There is strong evidence that with democratic interactions between school- and district-based leadership, learning and communicating collectively, subject-based improvements may be attained (ibid).From the framework, instructional leadership for History is conceived of as a shared process which does not depend on formal authoritarian channels.

The theory of interaction also conceptualizes leadership as being distributed (Spillane, & Harris, 2008). Examining how leadership is distributed has been an issue of rising importance in educational circles. A number of scholars have utilized the conceptual framework of distributed leadership in their studies (Gronn, 2002 and Spillane, 2006). The scenario of having multiple leaders has not been accepted by all partners in Zimbabwe, where the educational system has mainly been hierarchical, hence it is relevant to examine reactions of leaders to movements towards decentralization of decisions to leaders at different levels. This leader-plus framework considers multiple agents as contributing to the improvement of teaching and learning in the schools (Spillane, 2006). This definition implies that leadership is not fixed to formal structures but any other teacher can be a leader provided he/she has the knowledge and the skills. It is the intention of the study therefore to find out the significance assigned to non-appointed leaders in the teaching and learning of History in the district.

Brunerian History instructional practices grounded in both social and cognitivist paradigms encourage the engagement of both History leaders and students at every level for real and significant experience (Whitehouse & Zajda, 2009). Shared instructional leadership is not hinged upon a position but depends on the totality of the participative resources. Followers and leaders are bound together in the transformational process to produce a leader-leader situation. Interactions between district and schools, according to this theory, should be based on mutual cooperation without a tendency of one dictating to the other. Elmore (2006:261) states, "as improvement advances, leadership refracts; it ceases to follow the lines of positional authority and begins to follow the distribution of knowledge and skill". Such a development implies such interaction practice may bring

positive outcomes to instruction and student outcomes. If a History teacher has the knowledge and skills in a particular concept then good leadership should allow such a teacher to take responsibility of staff developing other members at school and even at the district level. Sherer (2008:4) describes a situation in which leaders today become followers as, "…the romance of leadership-a follower-centric theory." It is the ability to interact that is fundamental in History instructional practices between districts and schools. Practice occurs in the interactions of leaders, followers and particular contexts and in specific tasks (Neumerski, 2013). History teaching can provide a good theatre of authentic empowering and transformative instruction, and this research examines the extent to which district and school instructional practices are transformative.

The ability of interactive theory to consider multiple sources of guidance and direction as dictated by expertise distribution makes the framework useful in understanding interactions between district and school-based leadership practices. The framework not only connects leaders to other leaders, context and followers but should also connect instructional leadership to instruction itself and in this case it is the instruction of the History subject with all its internal dynamics.

According to Flodden, Porter, Alford, Freeman, Irwin, Schmidt and Schwille (1987), when instructional leadership is extended to cover districts it moves beyond the autonomous-control dichotomy. In other words, it follows the distribution of knowledge and skill. Traditional practices of districts used to be those of dictating to schools what they should do, and this is more evident in History teaching where ideological and cultural beliefs are at stake (Thomas, 2008). The ability and success of school leadership used to be measured in terms of their level of conformity to district directives but such outlooks have outlived their usefulness. Distributed leadership involves having teachers making curriculum decisions (Hallinger & Walker, 2012). Whenever teachers are engaged in district curriculum changes and implementations such programmes have succeeded, but when teachers are ignored, instructional innovation usually faces rejection. Fullan and Levin (2008) questions the extent to which teachers are prepared to make decisions or to be responsible to consequences of such decisions.

Townsend, Hocevar, Ballenger and Place (2013:18), state that, "People do not like to be told what to do, to be given little or no option about their own practice, especially when they consider themselves to be professionals…"Interactive leadership is thus concerned with the empowerment of teachers in matters of instructional significance not only within

the four walls of the classroom. They should decide on whom to interact with, how and when. In support of this view, Hallinger and Lee (2012) argue that distributed leadership should be understood as the "presence of multiple leaders", a "leader-plus perspective" (Spillane & Diamond, 2007).In extending the significance of the same to History teaching and learning, Stoddard (2010) argues that History teachers and students should be empowered to approach the subject from multiple perspectives in order to align with the epistemological beliefs of the subject in which independent decision-making is critical.

The Model of interaction of leadership emphasizes a collaborative approach to the History teaching and learning process. Hallinger and Walker (2012) highlight the critical role of "spontaneous collaboration" which is a natural product of interactions in working practices. When there is natural collaboration, leaders are prepared to make an extra effort bring improvements, due to a shared vision. When leaders engage in spontaneous collaboration it implies voluntary interaction with no use of force. Voluntary collaborative interaction suggests a lack of formalized impositions by which leaders may volunteer to be followers. Voluntary interactions between schools and districts occur most often but such interactions have not been taped to the advantage of both the schools and the districts (Neuman & Wright, 2010).

An interactive conception of History instructional leadership is useful for this study because it emphasizes interactions between different instructional players, which is the essence of this study in which interactions between district- and school-based instructional leaders will be examined. An interactive view of leadership also centres on practice. It is what really obtains on the ground that is important for the study and not just what is prescribed. Principals, teachers, coaches and district subject specialists as well as district officials should collaborate with each other because their work is intertwined and inter-connected (Neumerski, 2013). An interactive perspective therefore foregrounds instructional leadership practices for History in the relationships of leaders, followers and the context.

Using an interactive leadership framework, it was revealed that collective interactions among staff in order to build curricular foundations in IB schools in Venezuela brought great success. The position is supported by Hallinger *et al*. (2011), who posit that interactions with a shared vision will bring about improved outcomes for educational systems. It is against this background of a number of studies conducted in other countries using the distributed leadership that this perspective is adopted in this study. Both the

collective and the concerted meanings of distributed leadership are implied in the study, including spontaneous collaboration which involves naturally occurring interactions among History leaders (Gronn, 2002).Shared approaches to leadership, involving close interdependency among leaders, are critical components of this study. This interaction model begins to shed light on concerted forms of interactions in which collective activities between the district and the schools are examined.

In this study, instructional leadership is considered as a process whereby History teaching leaders individually or collectively influence colleagues in order to improve the teaching and learning practices (Ndamba, 2013). For such a process to take place the relationships between leaders should be examined and understood and an application of the interaction model will do just that. Blasé and Blasé (2000) consider the ability of teacher leaders to involve colleagues collaboratively in mutual learning and development as a critical component of instructional leadership hence the need for studies, such as the current one, which seek to improve interactional practices of leaders in order to enhance teaching and learning. The theory explains who is involved in district-school collaborative activities, why and how. The theory also suggests different kinds of relationships that may ensue as a result of given factors and thus provides a firm foundation to anchor discussions for data discussion in chapter four. Having discussed the informing theory to the study of interactional practices between district and school-based instructional leaders, I now move on to examine the concept of instructional leadership as a key pillar of this study's conceptual framework.

2.8.   SUMMARY

The chapter reviewed literature related to interactions between district- and school-based instructional practices. The literature review has demonstrated that although the focus of this study is linked to findings from other scholars it differs from what has already been conducted, and in the case of Zimbabwe it is breaking new ground. Studies examined raised significant issues important in the present study as they show the need for further studies in the area of interactions of instructional leaders, especially when district leaders are involved, as few studies have ventured into that area. Despite various forms of research studies examining how district- and school-based leadership work together to achieve

better teaching and learning, a void remains on the real nature of interactions that exist and the practicalities of such interactions. The reviewed literature demonstrated that despite varied positions on instructional leadership it is critical to examine how leaders in the classroom may share visions, policies and activities with those at the district level to accomplish better teaching and learning in the History subject area in secondary schools.

Most writers appear to assume that distributed leadership is beyond controversy and contributes to legitimized school improvement (Youngs, 2012), but the evolution of the concept calls for more studies of leaders in interaction to see how cooperation of leaders may improve teaching and learning in schools. The present study explores the fundamental nature of interactions and extent of teamwork between History leadership at the district and the school level. It bridges a gap identified in the literature reviewed where most studies concentrated on specific leadership levels without combining activities of various leaders as what actually obtains in practice. The current study thus brings realism to instructional leadership literature in that it accepts that leaders are interacting with others, be it positively or negatively, hence the need for studies to be more integrative.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1.   INTRODUCTION

In chapter 2, the review of literature on how districts and schools work together to improve the teaching and learning of History demonstrated that an examination of this phenomenon calls for both numerical and descriptive data. Such discoveries from the literature review, together with the nature of the research questions, guided the researcher to opt for the mixed methods approach to answer the research questions. This chapter discusses the research methodology that was used in examining interactions between district and school-based instructional leadership practices for the History subject in Zaka district of Zimbabwe. It explores the plan of action that was used to examine teamwork or lack thereof between school History leaders and those operating at the district level. The research approach, design, population, sampling procedures, instrumentation, data presentation and analysis techniques are discussed, with data collection methods detailed.

3.2.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question which guided data collection was: How do schools and districts interact in pursuit of instructional leadership for the History subject in Zimbabwe? This main problem was further sub-divided into five research questions:

- What is the nature of relationships that exist between districts and schools with respect to instructional leadership for the History subject?

- What policies and structures guide the interactions between districts and the schools for instructional leadership in History?

- What practices define the interactions between schools and districts for instructional leadership in History?

- How are the district and schools' instructional leadership practices coordinated?

- How can the existing interactions between district and schools for History teaching and learning be explained and improved?

3.3.   APPROACH

In studying interactions between district and school-based instructional leadership practices for the History subject, a mixed method approach was found most suitable. The approach of the study should be made clear from the start in order to avoid haphazard data collection, presentation and analysis. Creswell (2012) argues that the mixed method has become popular in research where mixing of the quantitative and qualitative approaches is now regarded as the newest development. The mixed methods approach is defined by Creswell and Plano Clark (2011) as a procedure of gathering and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study in order to understand a research problem. The mixed methods approach is also referred to as 'multi-methods' (Hesse-Biber, 2010) as it is not based on one method but a combination of two. De Vos *et al.* (2010) accept that the mixed method involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches, combined to produce a more complete picture of the research issue under investigation. In this study there was a combination of both quantitative and qualitative techniques, methods and even language. Despite conflicting perspectives by researchers, from which those of qualitative persuasions challenge the utility of quantitative approaches and vice-versa, the researcher found it prudent to forget about those debates in order to achieve a hybrid result. The mixed method approach acted as a triangulation strategy to data collection, enabling the researcher to minimise errors and biases common in single approach designs.

In using it, the researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Greene, 2007), and instead of keeping the two kinds of data separate there was an intentional combination of the two research paradigms (Maree, 2012). A better understanding of structures, policies and attitudes on interactional practices between district and school-based leadership could be better understood from a richer hybrid of both quantitative and qualitative methods than one that depended on either of the two. Creswell (2012:558) supports this observation: "The basic assumption is that the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods in combination provide a better understanding of the research problem and question than either method by itself." The study mixed both quantitative and qualitative data at the data collection stage and the analytic level (Creswell, 2007). Some of the data sought was purely numerical, such as the frequencies of instructional meetings carried out between district leadership and schools, while expressions by respondents on the meaning of these district- schools collaborative engagements were qualitative. This made the mixed method approach inevitable.

The mixed methods approach was found to be practical for this study as both quantitative and qualitative data was sought (Greene, 2007).The need to examine leadership, both school-based and district-based, in context made the mixed method approach useful as school-based leaders and district-based leadership was examined in the context of their daily operations (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). The examination of leaders in their context is supported by Neumerski (2013), who argues that whilst such researches are limited it is only through conducting it that cooperation amongst leaders can be assessed. In this study, it was possible to examine how leaders interact in instructional activities like workshops and seminars using qualitative methods as well as assessing relationships between frequencies of interactions through quantitative means. Use of thick descriptions and numbers provided complete data of instructional leadership interactions for the subject.

In this study, the qualitative phase followed the in the quantitative phase. Moments where discussions and analysis were concurrent were however common in this study.

The approach enabled flexibility on the part of the researcher to use what was possible without getting tied to the quantitative-qualitative dichotomy. In this study, the researcher was able to use the quantitative instrument of the questionnaire to get responses from 28 participants quickly before confining interviews to 5 of those respondents in order to get in-depth descriptions of leaders. Using only the quantitative approach would have limited the data collected while relying only on qualitative data would have resulted in baseless findings as the root origin of issues would be missing. Creswell (2012:558) argues, "You also conduct mixed methods when one type of research (quantitative or qualitative) is not enough to address the research problem or answer the research questions."As the strengths of both approaches were maximized, the weaknesses were minimized (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark & Smith, 2011).The quantitative phase of this study was found to be weak in detailing the context in which leaders interact, and this was catered for by the qualitative phase in which detailed narrations on how leaders interact for purposes of instructional leadership were gained from the interviews and observations. At the same time, the subjectivity and bias of the researcher during the qualitative phase were checked by the findings of quantitative phase where random sampling of leaders for the sample was used and statistical analysis was used.

A number of factors were taken into consideration in the choice of a mixed methods approach. The research question, the interactions between district- and school-based

instructional practices for the History subject, seeks and utilizes both qualitative and quantitative forms of data with objectives 1, 2 and 3 being mostly quantitative, and objectives 4 and 5 seeking mostly qualitative data. The researcher was also being practical in the sense that in everyday life people do not use one kind of data to solve problems (Greene, 2007), or confine themselves to numbers or and words just for their own sake. Rather, they combine the two to bring out a deeper understanding of the problem. The need for more data to extend, elaborate and explain issues made the choice of the mixed methods imperative in this study. The kind of data that was sought for by the first three objectives of the study, mainly the *what* of instructional leadership practices, required a follow up with a qualitative approach of the *how* of such practices. This enabled the acquisition of more specific information to clarify statistical parameters of the first phase.

The nature of the study, interactions between district- and school-based instructional leadership practices, required integrating or combining methods (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). In this study of similar nature, Neumerski (2013) used literature from both quantitative and qualitative studies to produce integrated literature on instructional leadership. Such an approach was found to be more holistic and produces more comprehensive information. In this particular research, the survey method in which the questionnaire was used was consolidated by in-depth interviews and observations executed during the qualitative phase.

The researcher viewed the problem from a multiple perspective standpoint in order to enhance and enrich the findings (Plano Clark, 2010). The problem was examined from the perspectives of teacher leaders and district leaders, and as a different but more useful approach than earlier studies which concentrated on individual levels of leadership. This approach ensured the provision of contextual illustrations, as a result of using interviews, to general findings from the survey, producing a more complete view of the interactions between district- and school-based instructional leadership practices for the History subject. Building on the database from a quantitative approach, by using a qualitative approach, enabled validation of results and a more informed selection of participants in the second phase of data collection (ibid).

3.3.1   Research design

Kombo and Tromp (2009) define a 'research design' as the glue that holds together the research study. It shows the framework of individuals *who* the researcher studied, *where* and *when* (McMillan & Schumacher, 2008), and is the plan used in collecting data, analysing and interpreting observations. Embarking on a research project without it is like building a house without a plan. A research design that would suit the approach of the mixed methods was important in order to create a structure with an arrangement of conditions for data collection and analysis. The design links the philosophical foundations and the methodological assumptions of the study, whilst to safeguard its validity and authenticity a sequential explanatory design was used (Creswell, 2007).

According to Creswell (2012:565): "... a mixed methods researcher might collect quantitative and qualitative information sequentially in two phases, with one form of data collection following and informing the other." The sequential explanatory design was used as a guide for the researcher as to *which* instructional leaders to approach*, how* and *when.* Researchers accept that the explanatory sequential design has become the most popular form of mixed methods approach, especially in educational research (ibid.). According to Ndabezinhle (2013), the choice of research design depends on the nature of the research question, which in this study was complex in that it required both quantitative and qualitative data. The design enabled the collection of primary data of numeric nature as well as people's own beliefs and convictions on how districts and schools shared responsibilities of instructional practice. An explanatory sequential mixed methods design, also known as the 'two phase model' (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), consists of quantitative data collected first and then qualitative data which is collected in the second stage. General trends portrayed by the quantitative phase are followed up in finer detail in the qualitative explanations and descriptions by the leaders themselves. Mixed methods researchers often provide a visualization of procedures for easy understanding by readers, as represented diagrammatically below.

| Quantitative data collection and analysis | → | Qualitative data collection and analysis | → | Quantitative qualitative data interpretation |
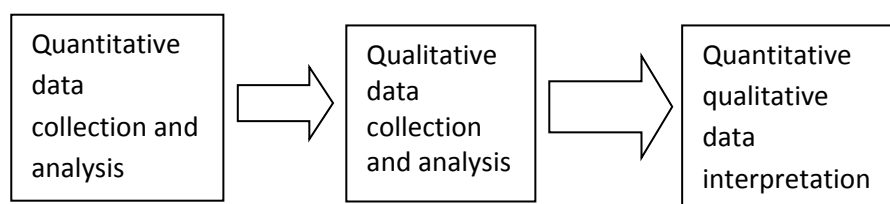
Figure 3.1: The Mixed Method Design. Adapted from Maree (ed.) (2012:272) and originally proposed by Morse (1991).

The design shows that quantitative data was analysed before the collection of qualitative data, enabling the identification of participants to the second phase as well as issues to seek further clarity. Instructional leaders who were sampled for the interviews were taken from those who had completed questionnaires. This was not easy as the researcher was impeded in this process of data analysis for the first phase, while the schedule for the second phase was rapidly approaching. A number of issues that were raised in the first phase of the study required the researcher to go back and verify before settling on the sample for the qualitative phase. The direction of the arrows shows the sequential nature of the design, with both the quantitative and qualitative phases given similar importance. Finer presentation of data was left for later as the researcher had to use a preliminary report to move to the second phase. As soon as the themes and trends became clear the researcher moved on to the second phase, in which qualitative data was collected and analysed. At this stage finer details were provided. Discussion of both quantitative and qualitative data was held simultaneously, with themes emerging from the two sets of data discussed. While the original design was the sequential approach, in practice one could also consider my approach to be concurrent in some ways.

In this study, the methods were predetermined rather than emergent (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011), which enabled good preparation and testing of instruments before use in the field. McMillan and Schumacher (2010:401) state that, "in a sequential explanatory design, quantitative and qualitative data collection is implemented in two phases, with the emphasis on quantitative methods". A quantitative technique was thus used first before employing a qualitative approach to build upon the findings, with a clear intent of mixing both sets of data. The two approaches were mixed and connected during the selection of participants' stage in which interviewees were grounded in the results of the survey of the first phase. The second mixing occurred at the results stage, when data was integrated for purposes of interpretation. The sequential explanatory design had its own challenges, for instance how to decide on which issues to follow up on in the second phase and the choice of participants. The researcher remained guided by the research objectives but took cognizance of the emerging issues from the first phase to determine the breath and width of the interviews, although the schedules were predetermined. The design for the second phase was evolving as it was grounded in the findings of the quantitative phase.

Data was collected in a sequence with quantitative data first, then qualitative data was collected in the second phase using in-depth interviews for selected cases. The sequential

collection of data was found to be not only logical but also systematic, as this enhanced the effective address of both quantitative and qualitative objectives of the study (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). Both sets of data were given priority and thus equally emphasized (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Qualitative data was used to explain in much more detail findings from quantitative data. This research design enabled the researcher to analyse quantitative data first, to get broad patterns related to the problem, while qualitative data, seeking more in-depth information to understand finer details of district-school based cooperation practices was then collected (Plano Clark,2010). Although the researcher faced some challenges of delay as a result of the need to verify some of the quantitative data, in some cases, the researcher used the qualitative phase to find out consistencies in data from respondents.

3.3.2 Research site

According to Kombo and Tromp (2009), the selection of the research site is important as it determines the significance of data collected. It describes the largest areas relevant to the study and in this study the research site was Zaka district, located in the Masvingo district of Zimbabwe. This is a rural district with a combination of boarding mission schools and day secondary schools with a total of 40 schools. Mission schools are usually well-resourced and students and teachers stay at such stations. These schools are in most cases better instructional centres than day secondary schools, which are usually those whose students stay at home and travel long distances every morning. Although some of such schools now possess good instructional infrastructure they are usually poorly resourced. Teachers favour mission schools where amenities such as electricity and water provisions are available.

It is possible in Zimbabwe to find highly qualified History instructional leaders in large numbers at one school, while only temporary teachers with lower qualifications teach in another. Schools in this district are different in terms of the qualifications of leaders, with some schools having highly qualified personnel while in other schools better qualified staff are seriously needed, thus making the need for collaborative work more important. Out of the 40 schools considered, only two were boarding schools and the rest secondary day schools. Schools and the district centre became the specific sites of the study as the researcher made sites visits to complete questionnaires, to carry out the interviews and to make observations. All the schools were accessible, thus making possible the use of random selection of participating leaders in the quantitative phase.

Figure 3.2: A map of Zimbabwe showing the location of Zaka district in Masvingo Province
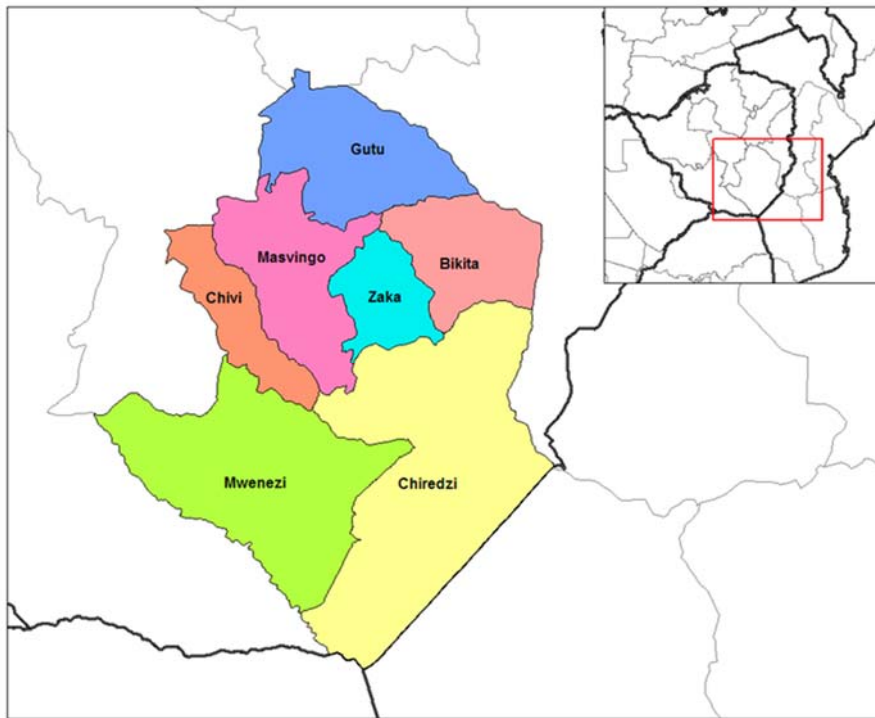
3.3.3. The quantitative phase

A number of procedures were followed in the quantitative phase, as detailed in this sub-section.

3.3.3.1 Population

A population is defined by Kombo and Tromp (2009:76), "... as a group of individuals, objects or items from which samples are taken for measurement". Creswell (2012) adds that a population is a group of people or items that have the same characteristics and can thus be regarded as the whole group or the universe but with a common feature. It is a specific group of people to which findings may refer. (ibid), considers the population as the target group from which the researcher gets information and in this current study the population included all district education officers for Zaka district. The common defining feature for the population was that they were supposed to be instructional leaders for the History subject and working in Zaka district. All History leaders were given an opportunity to participate in the first phase. The district education officers were six in total. District instructional leaders for the History subject who constituted the History District

Committee were also part of the target population, totalling four excluding the education officers. This brought the number of district instructional leaders to 10. School History leaders were made up of subject heads at the schools and out of the 40 schools a total possible of 40 leaders were expected. The target population of the study was therefore 50 History instructional leaders with a common feature of being linked to the teaching and learning of History. The population was composed of both males and females and its variability ensured that views of various categories of leaders were represented. By including a diversity of instructional leaders the researcher ensured rich and diverse viewpoints. The target population was found to be accessible as these could easily be reached at district and school levels. Kombo and Tromp (2009) argue that a good population is one that has the knowledge and only those who were involved in the teaching and learning of History could be part of the target population. Defining the population enabled the researcher to establish boundaries of involvement and exclusion of participants. Findings and conclusions are therefore limited to the defined population. The target population of district and school leaders was found effective in providing data pertaining to interactions between them. The researcher found it prudent to consider the parameters of the population before moving on to select the sample.

3.3.3.2. Sampling procedure

Kombo and Tromp (2009) define sampling as the procedure used by the researcher to gather people, places or anything to study. It is a process of selecting a given quantity of individuals or objects from the population which then becomes the representative portion of the entire population. The sampling design defines the section of the research that shows how cases for the questionnaire were selected. In this particular study it was the selection of History teachers, teacher leaders, cluster leaders, coaches, principals, district officials and subject panellists. A deliberate move to ensure representation of different leaders was made by treating each group category separately for the random selection and also by using purposive sampling to identify specific leaders, such as the Head In Charge (HIC) and the History District Chair (HDC). Strategic positions held by different leaders were considered in the selection of respondents. Simple random sampling was used for the quantitative sample, with every member of the population having an equal opportunity to be selected, and not affected by the inclusion of other members (Cohen *et al*., 2008).

Creswell (2012) accepts that simple random sampling has become the most popular as well as most rigorous form of probability sampling. In using simple random sampling, the researcher was able to select schools and individual leaders for History with an allocation of equal probability chances of all schools and leaders to be included. The use of this sampling strategy also ensured that the sample was as naturally representative of the population as possible. Any possibility of bias was distributed among the naturally selected History leaders. It was simple in that no complex categorizations were used and it provided all History leaders with an opportunity to participate. The use of the simple random sampling also enabled this researcher to apply statistical summaries to data presentation and analysis. Randomization ensured a fairly general application of the findings to the population of district instructional leadership. A larger number of participants, 28 was used for the quantitative sample to provide a more general picture of the frequencies, the structures and policies of interactions. Given that History is a compulsory subject, all schools in the district take History and thus all had instructional leaders for the subject.

A random selection of the schools minimized the impact of the researcher's bias towards particular schools. Names of all schools in the district were assigned an alphabetic letter and the letters put in a hat and thoroughly shuffled. Numbers were assigned to the 40 secondary schools in the district and a random numbers table was used to select the schools. A random picking out of the letters was made and the schools corresponding to the first 30 letters formed the sample for the first phase of data collection. A questionnaire survey for 30 leaders was carried out in the district. Each individual school had an equal opportunity to participate in the study. Using random sampling for the quantitative phase of the study reduced the bias effect on the researcher who might have selected certain schools in the district simply because they were more conveniently located (Cohen *et al*., 2008).

The use of random sampling procedures for the quantitative phase had its own challenges which the researcher made efforts to minimise. Chances of failing to get representation of the various categories of instructional leaders were high but this was catered for by treating district leaders and school leaders separately during the 'hat shuffling' process. This, way chances of over-representation of particular leadership sections were minimised.

Table 3.1: Categories of leaders in the sample

Status	Number	%
School leaders	20	66.7
District Leaders	7	23.3
Cluster leaders	3	10
Total	30	100

The table shows that school leaders dominated the sample for the questionnaire with 20 leaders sampled in the study. One History leader was sampled from each school. Seven district leaders were sampled and it is important to note that some of the district leaders were actually stationed in the schools while others were stationed at the district offices. Three cluster leaders who were stationed in the schools were also sampled.

3.3.3.3. Data gathering

Creswell (2012:163), argues, "The process of collecting quantitative data consists of more than simply collecting data. You decide on what participants you will study." In this study data was collected from multiple leaders and also at multiple levels. Data was collected from District Education Officers and District History Committee members and school History leaders. Research questions 1, 2 and 3 were mainly descriptive and sought to describe what was existing in terms of meetings, workshops, structures, routines and policies of cooperation in efforts to improve the teaching and learning of History, hence a questionnaire survey was used. This enabled the gathering of quantitative data which described the nature of interactions using trends without a control of participants.

3.3.3.3.1.. Questionnaire According to Cohen *et al*. (2008:317), "The questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information, providing structured, often numerical data", whilst for Mqulwana (2010:52) it is "…a list of questions that a researcher uses to glean information." From these two definitions, a questionnaire is seen as a set of questions that are guided by specific objectives. Unlike an interview, in which the informant responds to questions in the presence of the researcher, thus enabling the

researcher to leave the questionnaires and move on to other schools before returning to collect them.

The researcher distributed the questionnaires, thus ensuring that data was sought from the right people, namely History leaders. It was possible that if the questionnaires were posted, non-History leaders could complete one or two, but due to the presence of the researcher at the distribution stage the correct respondents were given questionnaires. The researcher asked questions to participants who answered such questions according to their own expertise, knowledge, skills and attitudes. Questions were answered in the respondents' own time but, where possible, the researcher waited for them to complete before collecting the questionnaires.

There is a general guideline in the use of questionnaires that when the sample is larger the more structured should be the questions, and the smaller the sample the less structured the sample (Cohen *et al*., 2008).In this study the sample was average at30 History leaders, and thus most of the questions were closed-ended to ensure easy analysis of data. The use of closed and structured questions enabled patterns to be followed and the nature of district-school interactions was easy to analyse. Closed questions prescribed the range of possible responses from which respondents selected from thus enabling the generation of frequencies of responses which were easy to organize using descriptive statistics (Cohen *et al*., 2008).

The use of questionnaires enabled the collection of data from many schools and district leaders in a short time (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). Data was collected from 28 district and school leaders over a short period of time. The questionnaire was self-administered to the schools and district for completion. After delivering the questionnaires, respondents were left to complete it then submitted to the researcher when they thought they were ready. The presence of the researcher ensured that any queries could be attended to quickly (Cohen *et al*., 2008). A high response rate was also encouraged by the presence of the researcher in the vicinity and respondents acted quickly when they knew that the researcher was nearby. If respondents needed more time the questionnaires were left behind then collected later, giving them time to think seriously about their response. The second option, however, was demanding in terms of travelling on the part of the researcher.

Questionnaires provided room to respondents to answer questions at their own time and pace, especially when these were delivered and collected later. Such an arrangement

promoted confidentiality as no names were required from the respondents, the purpose of such questions being simply to solicit information (Cohen *et al*., 2008).Closed questionnaires were used to collect data for ease of use and analysis of responses, whilst open-ended questionnaires provided respondents with room to be more flexible and exhaustive in their ideas and feelings. Closed-ended questions were easy to compute and analyse and made up the bulk of the questions, thus focussing responses.

Using open-ended questions was considered suitable because some of the responses were unknown to the researcher (Cohen *et al*., 2008).Open spaces ensured that respondents wrote as much as they wished, thus providing detail. The use of open-ended questions enabled participants to provide free accounts in their own words to qualify their positions without being constrained by the pre-set guidelines of the researcher. Pilot testing the questionnaire limited chances of providing vague questions to respondents. Simple language used in the questionnaire also ensured that most respondents answered all questions, thus providing a complete set of data. The use of research objectives to guide the formulation of the questionnaire assisted in ensuring that questions were relevant.

Questionnaires had their own limitations, which the researcher took cognizance of during the use of the instrument in the field and after data collection. Questionnaires were time-intensive during their preparation stage, which required a thorough revision of the question items as well as pilot testing the questionnaire so that refinement was made before the instrument was taken to the field (Maree, 2012).The need for more time with the questionnaire during its formative stages was compensated for during the analysis stage, when it became faster.

Open-ended questionnaires provided room for irrelevant and redundant information from respondents (Cohen *et al*., 2008), so in order to minimize this challenge, pilot testing of the instruments was conducted and all items portraying some vagueness refined.

Three data collection tools were used to collect data but the questionnaire survey which targeted 20 schools in the district and five History district leaders was the first to be used. 28 respondents returned their questionnaires. This tool is presented under Appendix A. All History teacher leaders who at each school were requested to complete the questionnaire and in all cases they accepted collection. In some schools the researcher would wait for two to four hours to take the completed questionnaire but in a number of instances it was necessary to leave the questionnaire for later collection in order to avoid disturbing work

activities of respondents. A high rate of return of the questionnaires was achieved, with a 90% return rate (n=28). A visit to the district offices to identify district leaders resulted in the researcher being referred to the schools in which some of the district leaders worked. School History leaders were identified as district leaders too. Two District Education Officers also completed questionnaires as district leaders. Data from questionnaires is presented first.

Demographics of respondents to questionnaire

Table 3.2: Distribution by gender and work experience

Experience in years	Gender			
	Males		Females	
	N	%	N	%
0-5	6	21.4	2	7.1
6-10	7	25	0	0
11-15	5	17.9	1	3.6
16-20	2	7.1	1	3.6
21+	2	7.1	2	7.1
Total	22	78.6	6	21.4

The table indicates that the sample for the questionnaire was made up of all experience ranges, with most respondents, 7, in the 6-10 experience range. The representation of all age ranges from 0-5 up to 21 years and above was important in that it shows when and how interactive behaviour may be affected by the experience of the individual. Experience is a critical factor in collaborative behaviour of a leader and the researcher thus found it pertinent to find to involve all categories in the questionnaire sample. The vast experience of respondents to the questionnaire shows that the sample was useful as most respondents had been involved in interactive activities over a lengthy time.

Table 3.2: Questionnaire Data Matrix Plan

Broad research questions	Data needed
Nature of relationships that exist between districts and schools.	Usefulness of relationships, permanence of relationships.
Policies and structures that guide interactions between districts between districts and schools.	Evidence of the existence of such policies and structures, the authenticity of such structures and consistencies of policy. Evidence of national, provincial and district involvement in History instructional leadership practices.
Practices that define interactions.	Examples of constantly carried out activities that one could regard as a practice. Meetings and workshops carried out between the district and the schools in order to promote instructional leadership improvements. The frequency of instructional activities.
Coordination of district-school instructional practices.	Roles of district and school leaders in collaborative instructional activities and the kind of instructional leadership, whether it is formal, informal or distributed.
Challenges and measures to improving interactions between schools and the district.	Sources of challenges, magnitude of such challenges and possible solutions to setbacks. Attitudes of leaders towards challenges.

Table 3.4 shows the main question categories that were used for the questionnaire. The questions were guided by the objectives of the study. It also shows issues that the researcher expected respondents to address in each question category. The questionnaire therefore started with guided questions in which respondents had to respond to specific issues, but opened up with them being asked to provide possible solutions to challenges that they would have raised. Questions 1-5 sought information on the biographic characteristics of respondents, as discussed under sampling procedures.

3.3.3.3.2. Pilot Study

A pilot study was carried out with the questionnaires in order to test the accuracy of questions. It was done as the final preparatory stage for data collection (Gray, 2009:359).

This process was important in screening questionnaire questions. Unreliable items were discarded as a result of the pilot study and this enhanced the validity of the study. Bias sequencing and clarity of issues was improved by the pilot study. Four History leaders from another district, Masvingo, were asked to complete the questionnaire and four items were corrected as a result of this exercise when it was discovered that the four questions consistently confused respondents, with one of the respondents actually putting a question mark on one of the items.

3.3.3.3.3 Data presentation and analysis

Use of raw data has no inherent meaning in research so once collected it was subjected to analysis, in a mechanism of simplification to make it more comprehensive (Maree, 2012). According to Kombo and Tromp(2009), data analysis involves examining what has been collected to produce deductions and inferences. It included analysis of views on structures, policies and activities, with data analysis conducted sequentially, using the quantitative approach. The survey was analysed first, which enabled the researcher to build analysis of the second, qualitative phase.

For the quantitative phase, data analysis was only possible after all questionnaires had been collected. Questionnaires were coded from questionnaire 1 to questionnaire 28. Coding of data ensured confidentiality as it now became difficult to identify specific names of participants and respondents. Data was also scored whereby responses were assigned numeric value for example, *agree*-3 and *strongly agree*-4. This was done to maintain anonymity as promised on the consent form and as a fulfilment of ethical considerations. Simple descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data, which according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:149) will "…transform a set of numbers or observations into indices that describe or characterize the data". Data was aggregated and presented using descriptive statistics of mode, mean and standard deviation to summarize, organize, and reduce large numbers of observations. Numerical values were assigned to leaders' responses to measure emerging themes and trends on instructional practices. Simple techniques of data analysis were used for easy communication of information. The predictive correlational approach was used to examine relationships between collaborative practice levels and the performance of students. Simple statistical techniques enabled the extraction of information from data (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). Descriptive statistics

enabled the reduction of large volumes of data into manageable units for purposes of interpretation. Use of means and standard deviations ensured a summative presentation of data. The use of measures of central tendency, such as mean and median, as well as the standard deviation, enabled trends in workshops, meetings and policies associated with History instructional interactions to be assessed. Agreements and disagreements in questionnaire responses were thus easy to observe from statistical results.

3.3.3.3.4 Validity and reliability

According to Cohen *et al*. (2008:146), "…reliability is a measure of consistency over time and over similar sample. A reliable instrument for a piece of research will yield similar responses over time." The researcher ensured that questions on the History leaders questionnaire were stable and consistent. Questions were refined so that they became clear and unambiguous to avoid confusing participants. The researcher ensured reliability in terms of the quantitative data by the use of pilot testing of the questionnaire in a few selected cases. Questionnaire items that portrayed some degree of ambiguity were screened and eliminated. Reliability is the extent to which measures are free from error, thus the fewer errors the more reliable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Validity, meanwhile, is the extent to which data collection and analysis address the research question. According to Cohen *et al*. (2008:133), "validity is an important key to effective research. If a piece of research is invalid then it is worthless". It refers to the degree to which data collection instruments measure what they purport to measure. Sound evidence of issues raised in the study was provided to demonstrate statistical parameters. Efforts were made by the researcher to ensure that the research study described, measured or explained the problem that the researcher was studying. It refers to the truthfulness of findings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).In this study a number of validity types were ensured in order to make the findings truthful, including face validity, content validity and external validity. The extent to which a construct appears to be measuring what it is supposed to measure is known as face validity and the use of a pilot study with some of the History leaders outside the study sample ensured that this aspect was achieved. Validity was also enhanced in this study by a thorough examination of the questionnaire (McMillan & Schumacher, 2008). With the assistance of the supervisor, items which were suspicious in their focus were eliminated from the questionnaire. The questionnaire was only printed

for completion after it was clear that it was going to measure what the research questions required.

In the quantitative phase of the study, careful sampling and the use of appropriate instruments enhanced content validity, which seeks to establish the level of generalizability of findings to the study population. The population was made explicit (Rodgers, 2009), and included all instructional leaders of History in the 40 schools of Zaka district of Zimbabwe, and district leaders of History in the same district. The use of triangulation, using more than one data collection tool, also ensured that what could be missed by one instrument was captured by the other (Tromp & Kombo, 2009), thus enhancing the study findings. Careful sampling also enhanced the validity of the study (Cohen *et al*., 2008). In making it possible for other researchers to try similar studies and using same instruments in their own environment, external validity was ensured. This was ensured by describing in detail the conditions under which this study was carried out and pilot testing the questionnaire to ensure that unclear items were excluded from the questionnaire. Procedures of questionnaire completion were consistently followed in research sites and to individual History leaders. The same standardized questionnaire was used for all questionnaire respondents.

3.3.4   The qualitative phase

Data to address research questions was also gathered using the qualitative approach, enabling the researcher to get in-depth ideas of History leaders at the school and district level. Although quantitative methods were used in the first phase, objectives four and five required qualitative data to provide more details on the how aspects of interactional instructional leadership practices. Understanding of how meetings and workshops were carried out between districts and schools was possible from the natural settings of such activities as the views and experiences of participants were captured in their natural environment. Since relatively small samples are considered adequate in qualitative research where in-depth interviews provide thick descriptions, purposive sampling was found useful in the selection of History instructional leaders for the interview phase.

3.3.4.1. Sampling procedure

Given that good research involves choosing participants who the researcher believes to be in possession of the right information, purposive sampling was found to be appropriate. A purposive sampling procedure was applied to locate instructional leaders for History at both the school and district level. According to Kombo and Tromp(2009), the researcher targets a group of people believed to be reliable on specific information: "…the power of purposive sampling is in selecting information rich cases for in-depth analysis..."(ibid.:82).This involves choosing participants who have the right information for the study, and selecting school and district leaders to participate ensured the availability of data rich sources as those involved in district and school leadership practices were deliberately selected. According to Cohen *et al.* (2008:115), "There is little benefit in seeking a random sample when most of the random sample may be largely ignorant of particular issues and unable to comment on matters of interest to the researcher."The researcher intentionally selected individual History leaders and observation sites to understand interactional practices for the History subject in the district. The researcher simply went for 'information rich' sites (Creswell, 2012), and found it a waste of time to involve every leader, preferring to use common sense to identify strategic leaders who provided specific information after questionnaire data had been collected. A critical case purposive sampling procedure was therefore used.

In pursuance of purposive sampling, the researcher became entangled in the snowball or chain purposive sampling procedure, as those leaders identified through purposive sampling referred me to better informed leaders. In the snowball procedure, the researcher started by identifying one History leader but was then referred to more knowledgeable leaders. The researcher was referred to the District History HIC, who then referred the researcher to subject specialists such as the District History Committee Chair. Only those involved in the teaching and learning for History were considered from selected schools, depending on the relevance of issues raised in the questionnaire survey. Participants were handpicked by the researcher for the level of their knowledge on issues of History instructional practices between the district and the schools (ibid.).There was no time wastage as the researcher only dealt with the data rich sources, that is, the knowledgeable people. Interviews were conducted with five purposively selected participants from the schools and district cases to gain a deeper insight into district-school interactions for the History subject. Interviewees were engaged with once for a period of 1 hour but a second

interview for purposes of verification of data was done after the initial one. The second interview was about 30 minutes at most as this was just a case of verification.

Purposive sampling had its own shortcomings which the researcher took care to guard against. One such was sampling error, whereby the selected cases could fail to be representative of the entire population. Sampling error may be a result of sampling bias where the researcher may select only cases that may produce desired result. In order to avoid this, various categories of leaders were selected for the interview with each category targeted once. An education officer, a History District Committee member, a district History coach, a school History leader and a national History marker involved in district instructional activities were selected for the purposive sample to avoid missing out on the views of any critical group. The sample selected therefore possessed knowledge about district-school leadership collaborative activities, was willing to share the information with the researcher, was made up of active members in the culture of History district instructional leadership activities and were willing to give their time for the interviews because they valued instructional development for the subject.

Like purposive sampling, the snowball sampling procedure in which the researcher latter became embroiled, had its own challenges. One such challenge was that in as much as the researcher wanted to determine those to be involved in the interviews, control was lost and the researcher only managed to determine the number of interviewees. The researcher however found the snowball sampling process very enriching. The need to report details and to provide in-depth details diminished the need for many informants for the interviews. Creswell (2012) argues that involving too many cases can become unwieldy and may result in superficial presentations. For such reasons, the researcher had to stick to the five intended members of the interview sample.

3.3.4.2 Data gathering

A number of data gathering methods were used.

3.3.4.2.1. Interviews

In the second phase of the study, face-to-face interviews were carried out with five purposively selected leaders who were conveniently sampled, to seek clarity on issues raised in the questionnaire. With the consent of the participants, data collection was audio-taped and later transcribed. The use of the interview was a mark of paradigm shift from

considering human beings as simply data sources that could be manipulated, to a level on which knowledge is regarded as a product of mutual interaction and conversations. The issue of cooperation between districts and schools is so controversial that interviews provided an opportunity for diverse and personal opinions. This method of data collection suited well the concept of distributed leadership. Cohen and Manion (2011:349) argue that "…the interview is not concerned with collecting data about life: It is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable." In the interviews, precedence was given to the ability of the interviewer and the interviewee to interact and to produce information relevant to the study.

Maree (2012) argues that an interview has an advantage of increasing comprehensiveness of data and making its collection more systematic. Interviews were also found to be adaptive and more flexible than questionnaires, and an alteration to the interview environments was possible (Yin, 2003). Questioning techniques were adjusted to suit varying situations. The interview process was flexible and there was room for a multi-sensory approach to data collection when the verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard channels were all used (Cohen *et al*., 2008).Interviews provided detailed qualitative data, with probing and close observation of non-verbal behaviour providing salient information on district-school interactions. The interviewer probed not only for complete answers but also to get information on complex and deep meanings of district and school interaction practices (Yin, 2003).The order of the interview was controlled but there was room for unexpected responses to avoid rigidity (Cohen *et al*., 2008). All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of participants. Audio-recording of the interview enabled the researcher to follow the process of the interview during transcribing and so capture items that might have been missed during the discussion.

The use of face-to-face interviews provided participants with the opportunity to give their own points of view in relation to interactional activities for the teaching and learning of History. It enabled the researcher to probe and seek elaboration, especially on the views of leaders on how instructional practices may be improved in the district. It was also possible to make an assessment of leaders' attitudes towards certain practices as this was clearly portrayed by their facial expressions and gestures (Cohen & Manion, 2011).

Disadvantages with the interview process included it being time-consuming (Cohen *et al*., 2008) and it was not possible for the researcher to hurry up respondents. A prolonged engagement in the field also demanded time in order to get detailed data (Yin,

2003).Interviews were sometimes found to inconvenience respondents, but the researcher prepared the interview time in consultation with them, and followed their suggestions on the times to hold discussion meetings. Anonymity was also difficult with interviews but the researcher clearly explained the purpose of the research such that respondents were forthcoming in providing information.

The need for a conducive environment gave some challenges to the success of interviews. On two occasions programmed interviews could not be carried out because the informants were found in the company of their spouses and the researcher had to cancel the interviews as this was found to be inconveniencing to the families.

The interview, in which the researcher attained thick and deeper meanings to observations and trends in questionnaire responses became the third instrument and the interview guide (see Appendix C). This data was collected from September to the end of October 2014. All identified cases for interviews were successful and five interview cases were held. In total, five interviews were held with three History teacher leaders and two district leaders. Most of the interviews were carried out in work offices of interviewees after 4pm, which is usually the time when work ends. In one case the interview was held in the house of the researcher and in another it was held in the house of the interviewee after an invitation had been extended. The first part of the interview sought general information and was meant to calm down interviewees before examining more specific interactional practices. Data from the interviews is presented third. Research objectives were used to guide the discussion with findings from the multiple methods used to build arguments.

3.3.4.2.2. Observations

The second data collection was the non- participant observation criteria. This was designed to be the third stage but activities crucial to the study were scheduled early and the researcher had to utilize the opportunities as they arose, so in most cases observations were done before interviews. The observation protocol sheet is presented under Appendix B. Using the observation protocol made observation easy as categories of activities and leaders were organised beforehand and it was just a matter of recording these. The observation guide provided guidance on critical issues for observation (Borg & Gall, 1996). The researcher made preliminary visits for other related meetings for purposes of

familiarization. Participants were informed of pending visits before they were made and permission was sought from function conveners.

All observations that were planned for were made. In effect the researcher could not manage to observe all activities as there were many. In some cases, the researcher had to examine the agenda of some activities to avoid unnecessary observation of similar activities, but where it was unavoidable the researcher would just observe. Observations stretched from early September to the end of October 2014 and five instructional activities ranging from meetings, seminars and workshops were observed. These were not sporadic events and the researcher was aware of the occurrence of the activities. The researcher was given a schedule of instructional leadership activities and well informed of pending activities and preparations for observation that were always made in time.

According to Creswell (2012:236), "Observation is the process of gathering open-ended, first-hand information by observing people and places at research site."The process offered the researcher an opportunity to gather live data from naturally occurring social situations (Cohen *et al*., 2008), and to hear and see events, discussions and processes at their natural sites (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).A true and real picture of instructional leadership practices was produced. It was possible to observe the relationship of leaders in collaborative practices. Observations were an essential method of data collection, especially when used with the other methods. A rich understanding of interactions between district- and school-based leadership was produced. Observations were made on the number of meetings held collectively between different school History leaders and those at the district level, as well as on events such as workshops between district- and school-based leadership. Behaviours of collaboration between school and district leadership were an important focus of the observation process to find out the level of leadership distribution.

The interactional setting, whether formal, informal, planned, unplanned, verbal or non-verbal, was also a critical aspect of the observation (Cohen *et al*., 2008). Subject panels and district meetings were observed to find out the nature of interactions. During observations, role distribution in meetings was analysed, with the frequency of such meetings and the extent to which instructional matters are discussed being assessed. The non-participant observation was used, thus minimizing interactions with the participants (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). A complete record of participants' behaviour was kept, but intrusion into the meetings or workshops of the instructional leaders was minimized

through the use of the non-participant observation (Cohen *et al*., 2008). Minute-by-minute accounts of proceedings were recorded during leadership activities at school and district level, interaction son leadership and their possible impacts on practice.

Observing instructional leaders in their interactions within specific contexts provided the researcher with a rare opportunity to record information as it occurred in its primary form. The researcher was able to capture the actual acts and behaviours and thus be in a position to compare such actual happenings with sentiments made by respondents in questionnaires and those expressed in the interviews. A number of issues which could not be verbalized in the interviews and the questionnaires were captured live.

It was possible to check on non-verbal communication, which included gestures and feelings. It was easy to assess who was in charge of leadership and how that leadership is distributed among leaders. Observations enabled the capture of data on issues that some of the leaders might not have been ready to share with the researcher.

Limitations of observations included failure by the researcher to control proceedings, non-participant observation leaving the researcher to sit through long sessions which did not include issues relevant to the study. It sometimes took a long time to get the relevant meeting or behaviour, though the researcher took advantage of analysing data from the first phase to find relevant phenomenon to observe. According to Cohen *et al*. (2008), observations are non-interventionist and researchers cannot manipulate the situation or participants. Observations were costly in terms of time and money and sometimes some behaviours were difficult to interpret.

The researcher was also limited to two sites where organisers felt the presence of the researcher was not welcome. The researcher had no choice but to wait for those activities to which an invitation had been made. In the initial days of observations, the researcher had difficulties in creating the conducive rapport with individual leaders who despite accepting that they understood the purpose of the study, portrayed other feelings through their behaviour. This however improved to levels at which the researcher almost became an active participant in collaborative engagements of district and school-based leadership. A number of participants who were not accustomed to having researchers in their workshops were not getting used to this, thus creating an improved research site.

During the observations, the researcher would sit in the back to watch and record. The role of a non-participant observer made most participants comfortable as they would proceed

without interference from the 'outsider' (Creswell, 2012). However by not participating I realised that I denied myself the actual experiences and at times changed roles, though rarely to being an active participant to the observations. The researcher was always quick to identify who or what to observe and the observation protocol was handy as it spelt out issues to take note of at every stage. Such issues as leaders of the activity, power distribution, level of participation and tools used in the activities were some of the central issues for observation. Observations started from broad views to more specific activities like pair work or group activities where the researcher wanted to find more about the nature of leadership interactions.

Field notes, texts or words recorded during observations were important. In a number of cases the shorthand with memos on the left-hand margins were used to summarise what was said by whom to who. Special reactions were also recorded in the right hand margins and these were important during the reporting stage.

Data from observations was presented second. Narrative reports supported by a table summarizing events and critical observations are used to present the data. The summary table shows when the observation was made, the convener, the aim of the instructional activity, participants and the main issues observed,

Table 3.3: **An analytical framework for observed data.**

Code	Activity 1	Activity 2	Activity 3	Activity 4	Activity 5
Date	**06/10/14**	**12/09/14**	**17/09/14**	**26/09/14**	**3-4/10/14**
Place	**BSPZ**	**BSPZ**	**BSPZ-Zaka**	**District- cluster Workshop**	**Zaka School**
Time	**0900**	**0900**	**0900-1200**	**1000-1400**	**0900**
Nature of Activity	Submission of set exam papers	Evaluation of Mid-year Exams	Subject Panel Workshop	Workshop	Seminar
Participants	Head in Charge and Examiners	District History leaders, School history leaders and Head in Charge	Head In Charge-History, H.O.Ds, Resource persons and subject teachers.	Heads for Dzoro Cluster, school subject teachers, District BSPZ officials	Students, Chair for District seminars, History teachers, zimsec markers.
Convener(s)	HIC	HIC	Better Schools Programme	Dzoro district cluster Heads in	Head in Charge(HIC)

			Zimbabwe and National Secondary School Heads.	conjunction with BSPZ-Zaka district.	
Purpose of Activity	Taking stock of set papers and standardization of papers.	Reviewing performance of pupils and marking procedures for History mid-years	Post-mortem of District mid-year examinations and preparation for seminar presentations	Preparation for seminars for 0 and A'levels, running of district and cluster examinations.	Preparation of students for History final examinations
Leadership distribution and tools used.	Head in charge was the overall leader with each examiner leading his/her paper. Set papers were the tools used	Head In Charge (HIC) and district History Chair led activities. Subject specialist would come in here and there.	Head in Charge controlled all activities linked instruction while formal protocols were done by NASH and the DEO. Participants used past exam papers, results analysis sheets and marking guides. Specialists for 0' and A' levels grouped differently.	Meeting was chaired by a district subject chair District subject chair, school leaders, NASH representative and HIC.	Meeting was chaired by the district chair for History panels. students presented papers and district leaders made inputs in the discussions. Teachers and students had leadership roles in the deliberations.
Major Issues done, discussed, planned and level of participation	Syllabus interpretation and coverage, terms used for each question and levels of difficulty	Very high level of involvement. Bands of essays discussed	Participants were encouraged to pay special attention to marking guides. History seminars were supposed to be done before examinations.	Conduct at seminars, dates and questions for presentation	Question interpretation, presentation and argument sustenance in examinations. Examiners'expectations were also discussed.
Interesting Issues noted during the course or soon after	Seriousness given to standards and quality control. A strong sense of collective ownership of discussed papers.	Different performance from different stations in the district. Some schools had not written the examinations despite taking them to schools	It was noted that no one took responsibility for the welfare of participants with some blasting NASH and others BSPZ officials for not feeding people and poor chairs that were not	Seriousness with which district-school interaction activities are taken. Level of commitment was very high.	Interaction between district and school leaders as well as students was cordial and informal.

			comfortable for participants.		
Frequency of Leadership Activity	Once a term	Once a term	As need arises and as conditions permit(no schedule existed)	Once a term	Once a term

3.3.4.2.3 Data analysis

After collecting data, the next important step was analysis, to give the whole research project it worthiness, order and meaning. For the qualitative phase, data analysis was done as soon as data collection began. Analysing data as soon as it was collected enabled the researcher to be guided on issues to seek further detail and clarity. It was also possible to quickly identify gaps during the process of data collection and questions to fill such gaps. Carrying out both data collection and analysis at the same time in the qualitative phase ensured that the study remained focused on instructional interactional practices. Continuous reflection of data as a result of adjustments produced finer details of instructional activities in the district. Data analysis included the capture, coding and analysis of collected evidence. Data analysis began with transcriptions made from the audio tapes, and study of notes taken during interviews in a search for similar themes through a process of segmentation. Critical data segments in district school instructional practices were identified according to the research objectives (Cohen *et al*., 2008).Coding was then conducted, following objective-based segmentation. The researcher studied the transcribed data and meanings were generated through the classification, categorization, which involved grouping same responses together, and ordering of units of meanings from the interview. Narratives were then structured in order to describe the interviews with emerging issues analysed thematically.

3.3.4.2.3.4. Credibility and trustworthiness

Validation of data was the last stage of the data collection process, seen by Golafshani (2003) in qualitative researches as linked to credibility as well as trustworthiness. Credibility was ensured by staying longer at sites to verify data collected, then enhanced

by the provision of in-depth description of data to enable readers to make their own interpretations. A detailed description of the researcher's interaction with participants in the field, including challenges encountered and how these were dealt with, also enhances the trustworthiness of the study.

Prolonged engagement in the field as well as member checking ensured trustworthiness in the case of interviews (Creswell, 2008). Validation of data is expected to involve participants and in this study they were asked to confirm critical responses, with all but one accepting that the data had been captured accurately, leading to necessary changes being effected. Member checking made it possible for participants to correct factual errors in the interviews and to provide further information to issues they had raised (Cohen *et al.*, 2008).An analytic approach was used to triangulate the interview data and observation data.

The researcher used audio tapes if participants agreed and these played an important role in enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of collected data. Playing the audio tapes several times enabled the capture of very fine details about feelings and views of participants. I constantly referred to verbatim utterances of participants, thus providing primary data which every reader could use to assess the accuracy of conclusions reached.

Trustworthiness and the credibility of the study depended on its truth value, consistency and transferability. The use of the mixed methods approach provided a deep level of triangulation and a pilot study that ensured that findings were credible.

3.3.4.2.5. Ethical considerations

Ethical issues are important in any kind of research to ensure good conduct and the respect of participants and respondents (Goddard, 2010). According to Mertens,(2009), substantial discussions about ethical issues in mixed methods research has arisen with arguments that such issues are more complex than in either quantitative or qualitative research carried out in a single manner. The mixed method research site is thus considered as a multiple, interpretive theatre where complex and multiple points of ethical considerations manifest themselves. The sampling process in this study became an ethical matter where the researcher faced the danger of grouping all History instructional leaders together in a general category. Creswell (2012) argues against this practice as it may result in the researcher stereotyping all participants. Another ethical danger of similar magnitude was

the possibility of marginalising a number of History instructional leaders from the sample. By making use of both random and purposive sampling both general grouping and marginalisation were minimised.

There was a need to protect the welfare and dignity of leaders involved in the study, so ethical guidelines were taken into consideration in planning and implementation stages of the study. The researcher sought permission to carry out this study from the University by applying for ethical clearance, which once granted left the researcher free to collect data. In the ethical clearance application, the researcher made an undertaking to respect the rights of respondents and participants and the document remained the guiding principle during the research process. The researcher informed participants of their rights to participate and informed them that they would remain anonymous (Creswell, 2007). Participants were made aware that they could withdraw from the process at any stage but it was encouraging to note that none of the participants or informants withdrew as they felt that the research was important to the improvement of their own practices. The consent form used contained information that made it possible for respondents to seek clarity of research purpose as well as question items. It contained the name and address of the supervisor as well as his email and telephone numbers. This made it possible for respondents to find out more information and even inform the supervisor on possible unethical practices by the researcher. The consent form also contained the email address, the physical address as well as the cell phone numbers of the researcher. It was possible therefore for respondents to seek clarity with the researcher and to track the researcher where there was need. Although the consent form and the questionnaire were attached to each other, they were separated as soon as they were completed in order to ensure anonymity of responses.

Questionnaires did not have a section for names or any information that could lead to the identification of leaders involved in the study. The coding system of the questionnaire, such asQ1 and Q24, also ensured anonymity.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) advise that informed consent be achieved by telling participants all relevant information about the research. Any potential risks associated with participation in the study were explained, albeit not physical. It was unrealistic to completely avoid some form of harm to participants, but I made efforts to respect their opinions and to maintain confidentiality, for instance, by conducting interviews privately in their offices or homes. The researcher was honest with respondents and participants by

telling them that the study was a personal doctoral study that could however unravel critical issues about their own practices. I was also honest in that the data gathering process was not going to disturb their daily work or family commitments and on three occasions the researcher had to reschedule interviews after informants were found to be committed with other activities. Care was taken to avoid psychological harm by not forcing participants to respond to issues that they had some reservations especially where leadership personalities could come in. Facing expressions of informants were monitored and every time distress was shown the subject would be stopped.

Consent forms were used to obtain the consent of participants and all were adults who signed the forms on their own behalf. Every questionnaire had a consent form attached and whilst some did not sign it I encouraged them to do so, even if they were willing to assist even without the forms. A number of respondents and participants simply asked for the permission letter from the ministry. When they saw the letter they felt it was enough evidence but encouragement resulted in all leaders signing. The researcher however noticed that most leaders considered the signing of consent letters as extra burden owing to it being a new development in research in Zimbabwe.

A fundamental aspect of ethical consideration is respect and the researcher respected authority and participants by seeking permission to have access to them and the data. Permission to carry out the study was also sought from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education in Zimbabwe, using the ethical clearance form from the University. After obtaining the permission from the ministry, authority was also sought from the regional offices of Masvingo and district offices of Zaka to carry out the research. At school level, permission was requested from the principal before administering the interview or questionnaire (Cohen *et al*., 2008).

Respondents signed consent forms just before the completion of the questionnaire and the execution of the interview. No minor children were used for this study as instructional leaders at both the school and the district levels were mature people who personally decided to participate or to refrain from giving information. Those who sought to discontinue after initially agreeing to participate were allowed to do so. Deceit of participants was not used in this study and permission for participants to participate in the second phase of the study was explained and sought before the first phase of quantitative data collection. Respondents were not coerced into completing the questionnaire but the researcher explained and encouraged them to do so on their own because the questionnaire

was found to be an intrusion into the activities of respondents and their time. Participation of was based on their informed consent and the potential of the study to improve their teaching and learning practices in the area of History (Cohen *et al*., 2008).

Deceptive practices were not used in this study. The study involved real issues in the teaching and learning of History and instructional leaders understood the value of such practices. Deception was thus not necessary, impossible and unacceptable. It was made clear to observations participants that the researcher was in such meetings for purposes of observing and although this had the limitation of sometimes creating artificial behaviour, cheating was found to be unethical.

The researcher respected the potential of power issues especially where Education Officers were discussed and avoided leading informants. Informants were allowed to explain issues in a manner and direction they wished instead of pinning them to specific cases. Instructional leadership cultures of the district were respected by sitting through long sessions of observations and avoiding negative comments on certain practices. All this was done in order to uphold the promise of being ethical as undertaken in the ethical clearance application.

Ethical issues were also given special attention during data presentation and analysis where the researcher sought statistical skills from a colleague in order to avoid applying statistical measures inappropriately in pursuit of favourable outcomes. It was therefore ensured that findings were presented objectively and without deception (Kombo& Tromp, 2009). The boundaries of the study were thus clearly delineated in order to allow other researchers to find out more about the problem.

3.5   SUMMARY

This chapter discussed the method, design and procedures used to gather data in the study of activities, procedures, policies and routines in schools and the district together in order to improve the teaching and learning of History. Presentation and analysis techniques and measures to ensure ethics, reliability, validity and credibility were examined. The discussion has shown that the mixed method approach was used in the study because the research question required both quantitative and qualitative information. Research instruments such as the questionnaire survey, interviews and observations were discussed in terms of their strengths and challenges in gathering data pertaining to interactional

practices between district and school based leadership in History teaching and learning. The chapter also justifies the use of the sequential explanatory design and the sampling procedures. Issues of validity and reliability in the case of the quantitative phase, trustworthiness and credibility of the qualitative phase as well as ethical considerations close the chapter.

The next chapter will present, interpret and analyse data gathered using the approach, design and instruments discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1.   INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents findings of the study into the interactions between district and school-based instructional leadership practices for the History subject in the Zaka district of Zimbabwe. The aim is to recommend instructional leadership practices that are more likely to help in achieving quality education for students and professional development for staff. This chapter presents findings from the questionnaire survey and from observations made on instructional leadership activities involving district and school-based leaders. Data from interviews carried out with purposively sampled district and school leaders is also presented. The mixed methods approach allowed for mixing of data at the analysis and discussion stages of this presentation, with details on the biographical information of the participants in each sample given before the presentation of findings.

4.2.   DATA FROM THE QUANTITATIVE PHASE

This section presents data from the quantitative phase of the research, and then examines the findings against existing literature, with gaps and explanations addressed concurrently.

4.2.1. Demographics of respondents who responded questionnaires

It was important that the work experience of the sample leaders be taken into consideration because the nature of responses is linked to their prior experiences (Stanley, 2011). Most of the leaders consulted had a wealth of experience in the instructional leadership of History, with most having spent a minimum of five years in formal positions of instructional leadership.

In the following table, 4.1, I present the number of male and female respondents in each of the leadership experience ranges identified by the questionnaire. In total, 28 respondents returned the questionnaire and the age experience ranges were 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16-20 years and the 21 and above categories of leadership experience. This information was important because the knowledge level of leaders about instructional leadership activities is more likely to be linked to each leader' leadership experiences. The table below shows

the gender composition and the experience ranges of the participants. There was a skewed distribution in favour of male leaders in the sample, almost in line with the demographics of the district itself.

Table 4.1: Distribution of respondents by gender and work experience (n=28)

Experience in years	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female			
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage		
0-5	6	21.4 %	2	7.1 %	8	28.5%
6-10	7	25 %	0	0%	7	25 %
11-15	5	17.9 %	1	3.6 %	6	21.5%
16-20	2	7.1 %	1	3.6 %	3	10.7 %
21+	2	7.1 %	2	7.1 %	4	14.3 %
Total	**22**	**78.6%**	**6**	**21.4 %**	**28**	**100 %**

From the data presented in table 4.1 above, 28.5 % (n=28) had leadership experience ranging from 0-5 years, (25%,n=28) were in the 6-10 years' experience range, 11-15 experience range constituted (21.5%,n=28), 16-20 years' experience range had 10.7%(n=28) and the 21 and above experience range had (14.3%,n=28). According to Marzano and Waters (2006), the experience of instructional leaders is critical in their ability to assist teachers in their instructional practice. It was thus interesting to note that most leaders had vast experience in the leadership of History teaching and learning. Although the qualifications of leaders are as important, there can be no substitute for experience in instructional leadership. It can also be argued that the experiences of instructional leaders may be an important factor in the success of instructional leadership practices.

The researcher also found it important to consider the status of leaders as their responses to my questions were more likely to be influenced by their positions. Table 4.2 summaries the status distribution of the participating leaders. According to Marzano and Waters (2006), the behaviour of instructional leaders is affected considerably by their location and roles. In this study it was expected that the views of leaders towards collaborative activities would be influenced by their status.

The questionnaire sought disaggregated data on the leadership status of respondent when it was realised that leaders were not of the same category. Three main categories of leadership roles were identified, viz. school leaders, district leaders and cluster leaders. The table 4.2 below summaries numbers for each category of leaders. Although the total number of respondents was 28, the total number became 30 because two leaders had more than one status.

Table 4.2: Distribution by leadership status (n=30)

Status	Number	Percentage
School leader	20	66.7%
District Leader	7	23.3%
Cluster leader	3	10%
Total	**30**	**100%**

N.B. *Two leaders took on the roles of both district and school leaders at the same time.*

From the demographic make-up of leaders who responded to questionnaires, most, (66.7%, n=30) were school leaders, although a good number of district leaders, (23.3%, n=30) also participated. School leaders were mostly Heads of Departments (HODs) and Subject Heads (SH) who directly interacted with classroom the teachers and even with pupils, whilst district leaders included Education Officers, Inspectors and District Subject Coaches who monitored teaching and learning in the whole district. A number of district leaders for the History subject were stationed at the school level and these were mainly subject specialist who acted as district coaches for the subject. Of those who returned the questionnaires, (66.7%, n=30) indicated that they were school-based leaders, while (23.3%, n=30) were district leaders, and (10%, n=30) were cluster leaders. Some History leaders took on a dual role as both school leaders and district leaders. District and cluster leaders were also located at the school level which meant that issues discussed at the district level could easily find their way to the schools. The possibility of having both district and school leaders at the school level enabled the development of better instructional leadership interactions as district leaders were not confined to district offices. West (2011) posits that the location of instructional leaders at the school level may go a long way in communicating a clear vision of instructional leadership expectations. Leaders

who responded to the questionnaire explained that due to their locational proximity to the schools, it was easier for them to link expectations at the district level to the school level standards.

The level of education was found to be important in that qualifications are usually used to determine a position of an individual, particularly in instructional leadership positions (Little, 2003). I therefore found it important to explore the qualifications of leaders as summarised in Table4.3 (below).

Table 4.3: Distribution by qualifications (n=28)

Qualification	Number	Percentage
Bachelor of Education(BEd)	18	64.3%
Master of Education(MEd)	3	10.7%
Dip in Education(Dip)	7	25%
Total	**28**	**100%**

The highest number of respondents, (64.3%, n=28) were holders of a bachelor's degree in History, while (25%,n=28) were holders of a diploma in Education and only (10.7%,n=28) were holders of a Master's degree in Education. The informants in this study were thus appropriately qualified to articulate informed views on the issues of interest to this research. The issue of leaders' qualifications was topical with most participants arguing that it was only proper to have those who are trained in secondary History education as instructional leaders for the subject. The assumption is that with qualifications comes knowledge on pedagogical and content issues of interest in the subject. In one of the earlier studies of instructional leadership, Roller *et al* (1987) accept the view that the capacity of district instructional leadership is enhanced when staff with the requisite qualifications are equitably distributed within the district.

4.2.2. The nature of relationships that exist between districts and schools

Items 6-9 on the questionnaire sought information on the nature of relationships between school and district leadership for the History subject. This data was important because the

kind of relationships obtaining on the ground would determine the quality of the interactional practices between schools and districts. Literature, reviewed in chapter two, discussed the different types of relationships between district and school based leadership, where the synthesis was that some of the relationships tended to be more prescriptive than others. This is the case when districts only issue instructions on what they expect school to do, and the school based leaders are expected to simply follow the dictates of the districts (Waters and Marzano, 2006).

The data is first presented as a composite table before each item is discussed separately. The composite table is meant to give the overall picture of responses with grand totals for the mean and standard deviation thus showing the level of uniformity in opinions of leaders on the instructional leadership experiences. Item 6 asked respondents to explain their views on the importance of constant interactions between district and school History leaders. It also sought to find out whether leaders were aware of the existence of collaborative activities between district and schools. The mean and standard deviations on items dealing with the nature of relationship between districts and schools are presented in Table 4.4(below). Responses were coded as follows: Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Agree=3 and Strongly Agree=4. (No=28).

Table 4.4: The mean and standard deviation on items dealing with the nature of relationship between district and schools.

Question	Response	Mean	S.D
6	How do you view the importance of constant interactions between district and the school History leaders?	3.4	0.7
7	Interactions between school and district based leadership in this district can be rated as good.	3.2	0.6
8	There is an underuse of district-school instructional leadership teamwork capacity in the teaching and learning of History.	3.2	0.7
11	There is a reported increase in district-school instructional leadership interactive programmes in the teaching and learning of History.	2.9	0.7
15	Only formally appointed leaders are used in school-district collaborative	2.6	0.5

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	activities.		
Grand Mean		**3.1**	**0.6**

Table 4.4 shows descriptive statistics, mean and standard deviation for all the variables used in the interaction between the district and the schools (items 6, 7, 8, 11, 15). The descriptive analysis results revealed the mean value for item 6(How do you view the importance of constant interactions between district and the school History leaders) is 3.4, (S.D = 0.7), on 4 Likert scale which means that the respondents on average felt that the importance of constant interaction between district and school is crucial. Interactions between school and district based leadership in this district can be rated as good, because they had a mean value of 3.2, (S.D = 0.6), on 4 Likert scale meaning that slightly above (majority) average respondents felt that interactions between school and district based leadership in this district can be rated as good . Also, for the item on the "underuse of district-school instructional leadership teamwork capacity in the teaching and learning of History", the mean value is 3.2, (S.D = 0.7), on a 4 Likert scale which means that a slightly above average number of respondents felt that there was an underuse of district-school instructional leadership teamwork capacity in the teaching and learning of History. For the item on " a reported increase in district-school instructional leadership, the mean value is 2.9,(S.D=0.7), on 4 Liket scale meaning a positive response. On the item, "Only formally leaders are used in district-school instructional leadership interactions, the mean value is 2.6,(S.D=0.5), on 4 Likert scale which means leaders varied significantly in their opinions. Analysis of each response in the table4.4 is now done below.

4.2.3. Item 7: Interactions between school- and district-based leadership in this district can be rated as good

Item 7 of the questionnaire solicited information on respondents' rating of interactions in the district. It conditioned the interactions as good and sought reactions to the rating. Responses were coded as follows: Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Agree=3 and Strongly Agree=4. The calculated mean and standard deviation is shown in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Response rate of leaders on instructional leadership interaction (n=28)

Question	Response	Mean	S.D
7	Interactions between school and district based leadership in this district can be rated as good.	3.2	0.6

Table 4.5 (above) shows the response distribution on leaders' rating of interactions between district- and school-based leadership. As shown by the mean of 3.2 and a standard deviation of 0.6, most respondents agreed that interactions were good. Elaboration was sought in the interviews and those for this category felt that the frequency of the interactions meant they could meet monthly and at least twice a term for instructional activities, warranted a rating in the category of good. A further significant number strongly agreed that relations existing in the district were good, using the overall district pass rate in which three of the schools came up in the national top ten performing schools in Zimbabwe. This was a clear testimony that collaborative activities were producing the right impact and hence were very good and implies that the majority of respondents confirmed that district-school interactions in the teaching and learning of History in the district were good. It was clear that leaders considered the usefulness of district-and school- based instructional leadership interactions in terms of their impact on student outcomes. This behaviour by respondents resonated with the observations of Hornig (2003) who advances that instructional leadership should be linked to students' outcomes in order to make leaders accountable. He argues that the success of instructional leadership practices should be measured in terms of what it brings to the ultimate performance by students.

The mode for the frequency of responses was 3, which represented a positive response. They were not spread, with a standard deviation of 0, 6, the high frequency of a positive response was possibly a result of the development of a collaborative culture in the district and one of the major reasons respondents had a positive feeling of district-school activities. Although most considered district-school relations as good, a small number, (8.3%) (n=28), felt relations between district and school leadership could be improved. Responses on the item showed that when respondents felt relations were good they were basing their opinions on the number of such interactions, but those who considered relations poor were mostly referring to the kind of interactions in which education officers pretended to know everything about the teaching and learning of History. Respondents

cited 'witch hunt visits' to schools as examples that made the collaboration between schools and districts poor.

Another category who considered relations between the district and the schools as poor argued that communication between the two had remained entrenched in the formal channel and creativity on the part of school leaders was being stifled by directives from central the district offices. Leaders were of the opinion that if district offices were to be involved it should be in the manner of facilitation rather than direct control of instructional activities for the History subject, which they felt should be left in the hands of subject specialists.

Item 8: There is an underuse of district-school teamwork capacity in the teaching and learning of History

The questionnaire sought for data to establish the extent to which teamwork in instructional leadership was utilised to full capacity in the district. Responses were coded as follows: Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Agree=3 and Strongly Agree=4. Table 4.6 below presents the calculated mean and standard deviation for the responses.

Table 4.6: Response rate of leaders on instructional leadership interaction (n=28)

Question	Response	Mean	S.D
8	There is an underuse of district-school instructional leadership teamwork capacity in the teaching and learning of History.	3.2	0.7

Item8 required respondents to give an opinion on the proposition that teamwork capacity of the district was underused, suggesting that district-school collaboration was not utilized to full capacity and proposing that more could be done in the area of collaboration. According to Sipple and Killen (2004), capacity building is a critical aspect of school-district instructional leadership collaboration and most leaders accepted this proposition but pointed out that the capacity of the district in instructional leadership development was not being utilised to its full potential. As represented in Table4.6 (above), most respondents, with a mean of 3.2, agreed that interactions were not fully utilized and discussions with informants during the interviews proved that leaders felt more staff development activities that would capacitate leaders in instructional delivery and

management should be included in interactional activities. The standard deviation on this item was limited to 0.6, showing no major variations in responses. Respondents also felt that regional subject inspectors who were specialists should be involved in instructional leadership activities at district level, to avoid a situation in which provincial subject specialists would demand different standards from those discussed and accepted at district-schools level. It emerged during observations and interviews that expectations at the provincial education directorate level were in most cases contrasting or unknown to the district-school instructional leadership. A significant number of respondents strongly agreed that there was still more that could be done.

A very low percentage of respondents were of the opinion that district-school interactional practices were operating at their full potential. The dominant opinion was therefore that district-school interactions could still do more in the area of activity diversification and bring in more useful partners to enhance instructional leadership activities. The dominant opinion from respondents was that more could still be done to improve the quantity and quality of the collaboration of district and schools in the area of the teaching and learning of the History subject. It is possible that interactive practices had diminished in recent years, or leaders were making comparisons of their own practices with those for other districts or for the History subject with those for other subjects in the same district. In as much as observations by researchers such Wang and Bird(2011), that districts have the capacity to empower instructional leaders to play their roles of improving teaching and learning, it emerged in this study such capacity was not being fully utilised mainly due to the qualifications of district officers who were considered to be lacking. Resource availability could also explain the reason for instructional leadership practices not operating at the expected level.

4.2.6. Practices that define interactions between schools and the district

Item 11: There is a reported increase in district-school instructional leadership interactive programmes in the teaching and learning of History?

The researcher sought to get opinions of respondents on whether instructional leadership interactions were on the increase in the district. Responses were coded as follows: Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Agree=3 and Strongly Agree=4.The calculated mean and standard deviation of the responses is given in table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7: Response rate of leaders on instructional leadership interaction (n=28)

Question	Response	Mean	S.D
11	There is a reported increase in district-school instructional leadership interactive programmes in the teaching and learning of History.	2.9	0.7

Question 11 of the questionnaire required respondents to accept or refute the proposition that district- school collaborative activities had increased in the district. The question sought to find out whether collaborative activities between the district and schools were on the increase or declining. Most respondents affirmed the proposition and accepted that these activities were actually increasing. A positive response mean of 2.9 with a standard deviation of responses of 0.7 was recorded, suggesting the popularity of collaborative programmes linked to an increase in the district's overall rating in national examinations. Most respondents agreed that the increase was a result of knowledge and pedagogical skills gained due to instructional leadership collaboration between the district and the schools, however, a significant number, 6, disagreed with the proposition, consistent with a previous assertion by a few that the district had no policy to guide district instructional leadership interactions.

The difference in opinions was significant in that it pointed to the existence of anomalies in the interactions. It suggests that there were improved interactions for some schools but others were not aware or involved in the developments thus suggesting that developments in instructional leadership activities in the district were not equitably distributed in the district. Promotion of equity (Printy and Marks, 2002) is a key instructional leadership role of districts but findings from this study showed that the district was failing in this regard. The finding confirms that there was divided opinion on the role of district-school interactive instructional leadership activities in the district, as there was with an earlier proposition by one questionnaire respondent who argued that there were good and improved instructional leadership interactions for the teaching and learning of History. Most of the History leaders in the district consider collaboration in instructional leadership for the teaching and learning of History to be improving, but a significant number think there is no serious improvements to talk about. It was found out that although collaboration is increasing in some of the activities, as in the area of classroom supervision, it was still

limited where it matters most, in the area of pedagogical and content organisation in History classrooms (Neumerski, 2013). This limitation may be due to the importance attached to high quality passes by both private and public institution stakeholders. Leaders seem to be more concerned with passing examinations than with instructional practices, as long as they achieve the ultimate goal of having students passing by whatever means. Literature like that by Mangin and Stoelinga (2008) emphasise the need to concentrate on matters of pedagogy in issues of instructional leadership.

Item 15: Only formally appointed leaders are used in school-district teaching and learning programmes.

It was found necessary to seek information on the type of appointment of leaders. Formally and informally appointed leaders were the main categories where formally appointed leaders are those who are in those positions as a result of ministerial appointment. Informally appointed leaders are those leaders who are in leadership positions due to their knowledge and skills.

Responses were coded as follows: Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Agree=3 and Strongly Agree=4. The calculated mean and the standard deviation are given in table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8: Response rate of leaders on instructional leadership interaction (n=28)

Question	Response	Mean	S.D
15	Only formally appointed leaders are used in school-district collaborative activities.	2.6	0.5

Question 15 of the questionnaire sought information on the nature of appointments for History instructional leadership activities in the district, to find out the extent to which they followed formal channels. Formally appointed leaders are those with ministerial appointments, while informal leaders are those with no government appointment but in leadership position because of their skills and knowledge. On whether appointment was limited to formal appointments in the district, respondents disagreed, with an average mean of 2.6 and a standard deviation of 0.5, suggesting that leaders varied significantly in their opinions on the nature of leaders most suitable for the promotion of instructional leadership for the subject. A large number accepted that leadership in collaborative

activities was linked to formal appointments, with respondents believing that appointments to History leadership activities in the district were influenced by formal appointments. Formally appointed leaders included DEOs and heads of school. From discussions with interviewees it emerged that informal leaders were the most popular with History leaders because formal leaders were stigmatized when identified with authoritarian systems. This view by leaders resonates with the observation of Quinn (2002), who argues that in order to bring about a close link between instructional leadership and instruction, there is need to involve informal leaders who have closer ties with teachers. It can be stated that the association of district leadership for History with formal appointments is stifling interactional instructional leadership activities for the subject. The use of informal leaders in promoting instructional leadership was considered the best way to encourage the improvements in the teaching and learning of History for the use of formal leaders was considered to be stigmatized.

4.2.4. Policies and structures that guide interactions between district- and school-based instructional leadership practices

Items 9 and 10 of the questionnaire sought for data that pointed to policies and structures that guide interactions between districts and schools in relation to instructional practices for the History subject. Stanley (2011) argues that it is only when the right structures and policies exists that useful instructional leadership can be provided in any specific subject. This information was important in that it would shed light on the permanence of instructional practices as well as consistencies, orderliness and accountability.

Item 9: You have a policy that guides instructional leadership interactions between the district and schools in the teaching and learning of History

The questionnaire requested respondents to give their views on whether they thought there was a policy in the district that guided instructional leadership interactions. The existence of such a policy (May, 2013) would be indicative of the availability of well established instructional leadership practices. Responses were put in two categories as (yes) and (no).Table 4.9 below shows the responses**.**

Table 4.9: Existence of a guiding policy in the district (n=28).

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	24	85.7%
No	4	14.3%
Total	**28**	**100**%

On whether the district had a policy that guided district-school interaction activities, the majority, (85.7%, n=28), pointed out that they had a policy for the district, 10 of which singled out a policy on seminar activities for all schools to participate in once a term. 8 respondents pointed out the setting of district examinations in which each school was expected to participate. On this item, respondents were required to explain their opinions and those opinions in an open ended section of the questionnaire and the explanations are given below:

> *District comes in with district examinations. It does not regulate the teaching of the subject. This is just an arrangement where we meet and set examinations and to consider that as a policy, well I don't know. It's just an arrangement that we may call a policy but it is not hard and fast like most policies* (Q27).

One of those who agreed that there was a policy stated that:

> *In the district, frequently school leaders and teachers are called upon to meet and share in seminars and workshops especially for lesson supervision for A' level.O' level is never given the same treatment as A' level. There is a policy in the district that all schools should participate in district instructional leadership activities like seminars, meetings and workshops only that this policy is not written down and there are no penalties for not respecting them. Absence of a stamped written down document should not be mistaken for the non-existence of a policy. It's there* (Q15).

From explanations given by those who responded positively it is evident that a policy does exist, the only challenge being that it is not endorsed by the Ministry or circulated through ministerial authority. This could explain the lack of consistency, as pointed out by one of the respondents who argued that activities were only pertaining to A'level examination preparations, whilst ignoring O' levels. The failure by the district leadership to enforce participation by schools was also sending wrong signals to leaders, that it was not as important because they could choose what to participate in, without sanctions. The other

critical respondent also pointed out that there was no regulation of instructional leadership for the teaching of the subject, only examination issues. A lack of understanding on what instructional leadership activities between the district and the schools could also be affecting the focus of activities. This assertion of districts' lack of clear policies on what instructional leadership activities is supported by Blase and Blase (2000) and also by Rorrer *et al (*1987), who articulate that the greatest challenge in the development of instructional leadership is the vagueness of district intentions. It emerged that leaders were becoming more concerned with examination performance of schools instead of concentrating on conditions to improve the teaching and learning of the subject. An analysis of above quotations show that leaders were concentrating on how to assist teachers prepare pupils for examinations which was just one of instructional leadership activities.

Respondent Q16 said:

> *There are Ministry circulars setting minimum requirements for written work for teachers in the class but no such policy exists for instructional leadership standards at the district level. The ministry should introduce similar policies at the district level if these activities are to be taken seriously. If the Ministry can dictate how many times instructional leaders should have class visits for example, how many times there should be book inspections. You see, that was going to guide instructional leadership activities. We only have classroom expectations and standards then it should go on and set standards for district and school instructional leadership activities. Why leaving everything to chance?*

Such a response points to the need for district-school instructional leadership interactions to be guided by ministerial directives. Lima (2008), points out that instructional leadership should be guided by clear policies to minimise conflicting signals to expectations and standards of instructional guidance in the schools. The respondent felt strongly that the role of collaborative activities should be spelt out categorically in ministerial circulars in order to confirm the centrality of district-wide instructional leadership issues in the teaching and learning of History. It came out during workshops on supervision that a number of leaders were not aware of what they were supposed to comment on during class visits. The terms to use in describing instructional behaviour were found to be confused. It emerged that instructional leaders still concentrated on minor issues such as writing the

date on the chalkboard, the handwriting of the teacher instead of concentrating on real instructional matters of pedagogy and content selection.

Four of the 28 respondents stated that there was no policy to guide district-school instructional leadership interactions in the district under study. Most of those in this category ignored the explanation section of this question, suggesting that they could be very emotional about this and were thus hiding their unpleasant feelings. Only 1 of the 4 explained his position that there was no policy in the district:

> *There is no policy and calendar of activities. This explains why some schools will never participate in these important activities. These activities have been shunned by schools in this district who think they have nothing to benefit as they have most of the resources. I think everything rests with the choice of each individual school whether to participate or not. If a policy existed these collaborative practices would have been given serious attention but because they are considered as an additional arrangement by each district, they have not been given the attention that they actually deserve.* (Q18).

Such an observation is interesting in that the researcher was given a clear programme of action which all schools were supposed to have. It therefore follows that, even with the existence of a programme of action, schools would participate as they wished, thus reducing the significance of district-school instructional leadership interactional activities. The response was however important in that it revealed much about the nature of interactions in the district. It became clear that communication in the district was not to the standard that might ensure clear policy communication. The respondent felt strongly that the non-participation of some of the schools, especially those which had better facilities, was hindering full benefits of collaborative work in the subject, because the sharing of knowledge, skills and resources was now limited. It can be possible that the absence of a clear guiding policy on instructional leadership in the district was sending wrong signals on the work of instructional leaders where they could choose between participating or not.

4.2.5. Structures that exist to promote district-school interactions in History teaching and learning

Question 10 sought information relating to structures in the district meant for district-school collaborative activities. The questionnaire gave a number of structures relevant to

district-school interactions, such as District History Subject Panel (DHSP), District History Committee for Students (DHCS), District Examinations Committee (DEC) and District History Subject Coordinator (DHSC). Their existence was considered a strong indicator of the existence of strong collaborative tendencies between the district and schools. Such committees were considered to have the knowledge and skill as well as the authority to guide instructional leadership. Most respondents, 25, identified the DHSP as the most vivid structure in the district. Respondents suggested that for most History leaders, attending to district subject activities through seminar engagements was the most common instructional activity.

A total of 16 respondents pointed out that the DHSC's post was the most effective structure in the interaction of schools and the district in History instructional leadership. Respondents suggested that the DHSC's position was considered critical in producing the schedule of activities and leading during instructional leadership activities. A total of 14 respondents identified the DEC as the most vivid structure in the district. The DEC was explained as useful in setting district examinations, standardizing the papers and training examination markers, who in this case are actually History teachers from the schools. Observations made by the researcher confirmed that the DHSP was the most vivid instructional leadership programme in the district. In one of the observations made, it was noticed that Heads of Departments (H.O.Ds) were equipped with instructional leadership skills of negotiation, networking and supervision with special emphasis on feedback provision. This was found to resonate with the findings of Sherer (2008) who argues that leaders should have agency for them to be able to influence others to improve instructional practices.

An analysis of structures named by respondents shows that such structures are suitable for the promotion of district-school instructional leadership in that most of these were composed of subject specialists like that of DHSP. This structure although composed of the right personnel, was considered by leaders to lack the authority to implement instructional leadership. Leaders were of the opinion that instead of real authority of instructional leadership residing in NASH, it should be transferred to bodies that are made up of instructional leaders for the subject and not administrators. Camburn, Kimball and Stoelinga (2008) support the idea of creating structures for instructional leadership which are composed of specialists in the area in order to offer specialist instructional guidance. Most leaders, in agreement with the observations by Marzano and Waters (2006), that

instructional leadership should be led by knowledgeable individuals, proposed the removal of NASH from matters to do with instructional leadership.

Item 12: Which of the following district-school activities/practices have shaped the teaching and learning of History?

It was found necessary to find out the major district-school practices. Such practices define the kind of relationships that exist between the two. Table4.10 summarises responses from the questionnaire**.**

Table 4.10: Most commonly cited district and school practices (n=28)

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
District tests	20	30.8%
Seminar presentations	21	32.3%
Staff workshops	18	27.7%
School visits	1	1.5%
Circular dissemination	4	6.2%
No response	1	1.5%
Total	**65**	**100**

NB. *A respondent could select more than one response.*

Question 12 required respondents to identify major activities that have shaped district-school interactions from a list that included district tests, seminar presentations, staff workshops, school visits and circular dissemination. It was closely linked to a previous one that sought information on structures existing in the district for purposes of History instructional leadership. A total of 21respondents indicated seminar presentations as the most frequent practice, by which teachers and History leaders would come together to present and discuss questions in preparation for examinations. Stanley (2011), advances that workshops and seminars have remained the most critical strategies of instructional leadership practices as these promote collaboration when leaders come together to share views. A total of 18 respondents identified staff workshops as the most important activity shaping the interactions in instructional leadership in the district. Leaders however felt that participating members in such workshops should be increased from the traditional one

member per school to more members to ensure that the impact of such workshops could realise greater results for instructional leadership changes in the schools. Literature (West, 2011) has it that when fewer members of staff from each school participates in such instructional leadership activities, the support such leaders may get is little when they go back to the schools to implement strategies learnt in workshops and seminars.

The dissemination of circulars was identified by only 4 respondents, suggesting a decline in less interactional instructional leadership practices of simply directing schools. School visits received the least number of respondents, only 1, suggesting that the interaction is mainly one way, with school leaders expected to come to district centres for interaction. Evidence points to a lack of school visits as a practice of collaborative development of the learning and teaching of History. Only 1 respondent did not mark a response to the question. Findings from this item agreed with a previously discussed position that district and school instructional leadership practices have reinforced the traditional approach to the teaching and learning of History, as pupils are simply regarded as consumers of teachers' choice of content and teaching strategies without any contribution on the same from the students. It is thus clear that, despite claims to be moving towards the New History approach, where students are considered as masters of their own learning, instructional practices have remained generally traditional because the progressive methods are not emphasised during school-district interactional activities.

Item 13: How frequently do you hold meetings that involve the whole district?

Question 13 of the questionnaire sought information on the frequency of district-school interactive meetings, important in that it could reflect the value attached to these collaborative activities. Most of the respondents, 21, indicated that such meetings were held once a term, whilst 6 reported the number as twice per term, suggesting that these should have been district leaders who meet more frequently than other leaders. Only 1 respondent indicated that they met once per year.

The frequency of meetings was so spread out that instructional leadership programmes may be forgotten before a build-up takes place. Meeting twice or once in a period of four months may not produce the desired impact on students' performance, as some of the learnt instructional leadership practices may need constant checking. It also emerged that during such instructional leadership activities, different History leaders from the same school might participate, thus making continuity difficult. Any instructional leadership

activities that are worthwhile should have a high frequency in order to keep learnt materials fresh for leaders (Jacobson and Johanson, 2011). Although the majority seemed to agree that they met once a term, those who suggested otherwise were important in exposing the nature of collaborations in the district. This suggests a lack of a clear policy on when these activities should take place. Meeting once per term, after three months, which is the duration of the Zimbabwean school term, does not point to a healthy interactive process. It can therefore be stated that the times that History leaders were meeting, which is not as many, was negatively affecting the impact that could be realized from district-school interactions in the teaching and learning of History. Discussions held by the researcher with informants suggested that most leaders would want to meet at least once a month to discuss instructional leadership practices. The challenge to leaders to meet frequently could be due to a lack of resources, especially the money needed to run workshops and seminars.

4.2.7. Coordination of district-school instructional practices

Item 14: Roles played by district and school leadership in promoting collaboration

The questionnaire also sought data on how collaborative activities for instructional leadership were coordinated, important because the manner of coordination might show whether leadership was distributed across leaders and the district at large. On this question of different roles played by either district or school leaders in collaborative activities, interesting issues emerged. The most frequent activity raised by district leaders was that they were responsible for organizing subject panels and coordinating district examinations. This was indicated by 10 respondents and was in agreement with some previous observations that the most vivid collaborative practice was in the area of examination preparation of students, especially those at A' level. The district was said to be responsible for resource mobilization. One of the respondents stated:

> *District's role is the mobilization of personnel through holding seminars. In fact it is the district leadership that is in total control. More often, school leaders are just invited to participate. We are just told to bring students for these activities and sometimes we are told at very short notices* (Q11).

The above response shows that the respondent felt that the coordination of instructional leadership practices for the History subject were totally controlled by district leaders who

invited school leaders to participate without giving them time to contribute organizational decisions to the running of such instructional activities. The control of such instructional activities can thus be defined as top-down and the interactive practice as vertical rather than horizontal. Ndamba (2013) argues that the use of top-down strategies of policy implementation usually leads to instructional leadership programmes facing rejection from implementing partners. In agreement with Ndamba(2013) and views from leaders, Stanley(2011), accepts that leaders are best able to pursue instructional leadership goals when the coordination is fluid with leaders taking various roles such as facilitator, presenter, note taker as well as questioner. This way, each member will act as leader and follower at the same time (Spillane, *et al.*, 2004).

District education officers were found to be critical participants for instructional leadership activities in the teaching and learning of History as they have the capacity to mobilize both material and human resources. These do not operate directly with school leaders as they are not subject specialists for secondary curriculum, but rather they assign History district leaders to do that on their behalf. In some cases, however, respondents suggested that despite not being subject specialists, district education officers coordinate instructional leadership activities, although they may not be well informed with specialist knowledge and skills.

Another critical group in the coordination of district-school activities was the National Association of Secondary School Heads (NASH), to which all secondary school heads belong, with a Southern African Chapter already launched. One respondent pointed out:

> *The activities of district level are controlled by NASH. This is an association of school heads and commands a lot of respect and authority. This body is the right organ to control these activities. NASH controls everything in this district ranging from sporting activities to teaching and learning activities. It has so much authority and respect such that arrangement where it controls activities on the teaching and learning of History is the best arrangement for the subject. The challenge is that although NASH is in control, most of the heads in that association are not in touch with demands for the subject. They are usually biased towards Science and mathematics.* (Q20).

On the same issue, another respondent observed:

History activities at the district level are funded and controlled by NASH who actually appoints the H.I.C (Head in Charge). History workshops and meetings in the district are directed by the Head in Charge and that head decides when to meet, which participants to involve and where to meet (Q3).

As NASH is made up of heads of schools, it is expected to carry authority for ensuring compliance with district activities. School History leaders were said to be responsible for producing the programmes and acting as resource personnel during seminar presentations, Data on this item suggests that a number of leaders were involved in the coordination of district-school activities, but the History Management Committee is mostly involved in running activities and answering to NASH and DEOs. History school leaders, some of whom are in the district leadership, are critical parties in the coordination process. It can be argued, therefore, that data from questionnaires confirms that the coordination of History instructional activities still follow formal channels of communication when no such activities can take place without the sanction of district education officers. Although a number of stakeholders were suggested by respondents as being in control of district-school instructional leadership activities, it was clear that NASH was in overall charge, thus perpetuating the top-down approach in instructional leadership for the History subject (Ndamba, 2014).

4.2.8. Challenges faced in collaborative activities and measures to improve interactions between schools and the district

Question 16 sought information on challenges faced by district and school leaders in efforts to improve collaboration in History instructional activities. Respondents could select more than one challenge so the number of responses became 37.Table 4.11, below provides a summary of the challenges faced by respondents in instructional leadership interactions between district and school based leadership.

Table 4.11: Challenges faced in collaborative activities in the district (n=37)

Response	Number	Percentage
Poor communication	12	32.4%

Negative attitudes	3	8.1%
Lack of funding	22	59.5%
Total	**37**	**100**%

Most of the respondents, 22, indicated lack of funding as stumbling block to good district school instructional leadership interactions, with data revealing that it was needed for the production of teaching and learning materials, transporting both teachers and teacher leaders to interactive activities and payment of personnel and resource persons. Observations showed that funding was needed to procure venues for instructional activities as well as erecting facilities. The issue of poor funding emerged in each of the five interviews and was singled out as the most likely block to successful collaborative instructional activities. It emerged that instructional activities between the district and the schools were sponsored by contributions from the Better Schools Fund, with each student contributing about $2, 00every term. This made it difficult to realize the complete impact of these instructional activities on students. One of the respondents said:

> *Funding is our greatest challenge as most of the funding comes from students' subscriptions. The amounts that these students pay can hardly sustain instructional activities for a massive subject like History* (Q9).

A total of 12 respondents suggested that poor communication was the major hindrance to the development of collaboration between district- and school-based leadership. Earlier responses from other questionnaires suggested that some leaders were not aware of what was happening in the area of History district programmes, suggesting that indeed poor communication strategies could be affecting the district's instructional activities for the subject. An efficient system of communication is an integral part of instructional collaboration, but it emerged that most communication was through word of mouth as heads who would have attended workshops were requested to send leaders to workshops and seminars for History teaching. Informants pointed out that in some cases heads of schools forgot to pass on the information, or ignored the requests, resulting in a number of school leaders failing to participate.

Question 17 of the questionnaire requested respondents to suggest steps that might be taken to improve instructional leadership interactions between school- and district-based

leadership in the teaching and learning of History. A number of themes emerged from the suggestions given, summarized as follows.

Theme 1: Provision of better sponsorship

This aspect was suggested by 25 of the 28 participants, with a belief that district-school interaction activities were seriously hampered by lack of funds as most schools could not sponsor the movement of school leaders to participate at the district level. In those cases in which the need of sponsorship was raised the statement '*sponsorship is needed*' appeared more than ten times, suggesting the extent to which lack of funds had affected instructional leadership practices for History in the district. Sponsorship for the functions themselves was suggested by 5 of the respondents, who felt that they mostly failed to produce good activities because:

> *Working on empty stomachs the whole day diminishes the significance of activities. When people go for sporting activities they are given good subsistence amounts but when they go for instructional activities at the district level no such support is provided. This clearly shows that the value that is given to these activities is low* (Q25)

Respondents felt that with better sponsorship the district could achieve far more in collaborative instructional leadership. They even suggested ways in which district-school instructional leadership interactions might be sponsored. A total of 5 recommended that a levy be put in place for students to pay towards History district instructional leadership practices. For instance, Q17 suggested:

> *Students should pay a levy towards teaching and learning activities. They should pay money for seminars at the beginning of year and peg fees including meeting funding. This way all pupils can participate in such activities instead of leaving them to cater for themselves.*

Lack of funding was considered a serious setback to the extent that respondents wanted students and parents to pay for the cost of such important activities. The weight of collaborative instructional leadership activities would increase with parents and students recognizing the significance when a cost implication is realised. In writing about factors that can promote instructional leadership practices, Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth (2000), observe that the success of instructional leadership activities is seriously hampered

by a lack of a proper incentive system. The role of instructional leadership practices could improve skills and knowledge if better funding were provided to invite specialists in the teaching and learning of History to attend such activities.

Theme 2: Decentralisation of programmes to schools

A number of respondents felt that there was over-centralisation of instructional leadership activities and authority at district level. In the interaction process, it emerged that *all* activities were controlled from the district offices and, indeed, *most* of the activities took place at the district level. This scenario has created or confirmed relationship established by educational bureaucracy in which leaders, district inspectors in particular, in particular, no longer consider school leaders as colleagues but rather as inferiors who should be schooled on the supervision of the teaching and learning of the subject. The attitude of some of the district leaders was castigated as an impediment to useful instructional leadership interaction between districts and schools, as some harass school leaders in efforts to show their power. One respondent stated:

> *The district inspectors must tone down on threatening teachers particularly during inspection. It should be inspection to inform rather than to find faults. They always say, 'Patakasvika pachikoro pavo vakamanyirana'* (When we arrived at their school they ran over each other) *instead of saying the inspection was friendly and fruitful. As long as such master-servant relationships continue to exist collaboration between district and school leaders may not improve in real terms.*

The quotation reveals that one of the major steps to improving district-school instructional leadership relations in the teaching and learning of History is for the district leaders to modify their role each time they interact with school leaders. The above quotation depicts a problem of attitudes on the part of district leaders who fail to establish a mutual relationship based on respect and instead consider visits to schools in terms of fault finding. Respondents felt that this was creating unnecessary friction between the two leadership categories and that had produced strained relationships. A more informal relationship would create more sharing opportunities by which leaders would become equal, to the benefit of interactional practices. One respondent added:

> *District officers need to be more friendly and should not be feared. Supervision should be identifying strengths and challenges and then suggesting the way forward*

together. These instructional activities have been destroyed by a spirit of condemning shown by some leaders even where they are not subject specialists (Q13)

Another respondent almost repeated the words:

Visits by the district to schools should not be fault finding missions. These inspection visits should involve all district leaders and not only education officers. School leaders from other district schools should be part of such visits, where say a team can observe a History lesson after which discussions will be held. This way instructional practice will be improved instead of just having meaningless reports which usually are just condemnation of teachers' strategies (Q22).

It is clear from these sentiments that power relations between district- and school-based instructional leadership are undoing the creation of productive relations between the two parties. Distributed leadership, by which district leaders can sometimes change their roles from leaders to followers, depending on the situation, is a possible solution. The use of formally appointed leaders could explain the existence of strained relations in which History leaders who are not in formal designations and are not always comfortable in working with their formally appointed superiors.

The need for more decentralization was also identified in the area of district leaders visiting individual schools to discuss and practice leadership activities. One respondent pointed out that:

…there is need for some of these activities to be located in the schools especially those which seem isolated from others. This will enable members from such schools to understand the significance of collaborative leadership. Continuously carrying out instructional leadership activities in the better schools of the district like at (x) does not help the poorly resourced schools and there is need to reach out for them (Q6).

Another respondent suggested more school-based instructional leadership activities in which district leadership could share in the improvement of teaching and learning. Respondent (Q21) argued:

There is need for moreinter-school seminars on the supervision of teaching and learning of History without too much interference from NASH as the case is in the district. What is important here is not just removing activities from district level

centres but it is also to bring down district leaders to the level of school leaders such that they may became colleagues whose interaction is equal.

From the above sentiments it is evident that leaders perceived the relationship between district and school leaders in the teaching and learning of History as not being based on equal partnership. Leaders suggested that formally appointed leaders, such as the district education officers and inspectors should modify their roles during instructional leadership activities to allow some of the informal leaders, who in this case may had the skills and knowledge, also to take leadership positions. This position is supported by Stanley (2011) who argues that instructional leaders should always respect each other in order to generate collective wisdom for instructional leadership reform. School leaders felt that the failure by district leaders to consider them as partners was preventing the complete realisation of instructional leadership interactions.

Theme 3: Establishment of better district facilities and structures for instructional leadership activities.

A theme that emerged from a number of respondents (11), was that better instructional leadership structures should be established. Leaders felt that in as much as instructional leadership positions were defined at the school level, no clear structures existed at the district level. One of those 11 respondents who felt that better structures should be established had this to say:

> *We need instructional leadership structures at the district level which are not only dominated by education officers and the inspectors. Most of those inspectors do not know how the subject is taught at secondary level so how do you expect them to lead us who are specialists. We are the specialists who should be in the structures to say guide new teachers in the subject on how to teach. The structure of the district inspectorate should be disbanded when it comes to district instructional leadership (Q19)*

An analysis of the above statement shows that the leader felt that district education officers should not be part of the instructional leadership structure for the subject as they are not trained in the History subject teaching strategies. The respondent seemed to suggest that instructional leadership between the district and the schools could be improved if specialists who had the knowledge and the skills were put into leadership positions. A

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major reason given by the respondent was that most of the district inspectors were primary trained making them ill-prepared for district instructional leadership at that level.

Respondents felt that collaboration between district- and school-based leadership for History instruction could be improved through the establishment of modern communication means such as E-learning facilities in the district. One respondent said:

There was a need to set up E-learning programmes at district level. This will help in the provision of stronger network channels. Structures where we can meet and discuss issues and problems and most of the times we assemble in dusty and very poor rooms (Q7).

The need for better facilities to utilize during collaborative instructional leadership activities also emerged during observations, it was established that when leaders met, other than in schools, a number castigated the venues for lack of equipment, so the establishment of an interaction centre would result in better dissemination of learning and teaching materials in the district.

Theme 4. Widening of collaborative activities

Another major suggestion put forward by questionnaire respondents was the widening of district-school interactive activities. A total of 6 respondents felt that there was over-emphasis on issues to do with A' level examinations, as if the teaching and learning of History was solely for examinations. One respondent said:

In the district, frequently teacher leaders and teachers are called upon to meet and share in seminars and workshops especially for A' level. All instruction activities should not be hinged on examination. Some of the examination activities have become monotonous except for new teachers who might benefit on how to set a question, mark and so on. For some of us we may need something new (Q14).

Statements such as this portray a strong bias of district-school instructional leadership practices towards one major activity, thus failing to develop instructional leadership needs in other spheres of leadership in History teaching and learning. A total of 2 respondents suggested more effort be given to syllabus interpretation, believing that schools and the district should help newly appointed teachers and some who are untrained to develop skills of syllabus interpretation. This suggestion was significant in that it was noted in all

observed school-district activities that only seasoned and experienced leaders participated, thus raising questions about the utility of such programmes to personnel capacity building, which is a crucial aspect of district-school collaborative practices.

Theme 5: Changing the composition of History district leadership

In as much as school leaders were happy with the work that the district leadership was doing to improve the learning and teaching of History, a significant number, 10, felt that personnel making up the district leadership could be improved for the benefit of the schools and the district. One respondent suggested:

> *District inspectors should be subject specialists and not general practitioners in order to make supervision of instruction more useful. In our case, there are no subject specialists at the district level and those subject specialists are based at the provincial level. Each time the provincial team visits the schools, we have new issues raised, different from what we discuss at our interactions. It may be better to bring subject specialist at the district level each time we have our instructional workshops and seminars* (Q27).

This observation is important in that most of the district inspectors in Zimbabwe are primary trained but are compelled by circumstances to lead in secondary school instructional activities in the district. One of the district leaders, an inspector, stated:

> *The ministry should have a district based inspector to enhance supervision. All inspectors on the ground are for primary and to wait for a single subject specialist at the provincial level is not useful. We need subject specialist at the district level and the ministry should seriously consider that option* (Q3).

This suggestion arises from Zimbabwe's only having subject inspectors for secondary schools at the provincial level, making it difficult for any serious interaction to take place between these subject leaders and subject specialists at school level. Suggestions by respondents were that the appointment of History district inspectors could result in more meaningful interactions. This perhaps, was emanating from challenges which leaders encounter with non-specialists at district level, on which leaders who are formally appointed may take charge of instructional activities for subjects such as History, but with no specific knowledge or skills in the teaching and learning of the subject.

Another suggestion on the composition of district leadership was the need to incorporate teachers of extraordinary abilities. A total of 5 respondents believed there were certain individuals whose performance warranted leadership positions in the district. One such group suggested was that of national examination markers. One respondent suggested:

The district office should encourage markers who are in the district to coordinate district meetings. National markers in the district can provide better guidance to how teachers can improve their teaching because that is the ultimate goal of instructional leadership- to have good passes so lets have to markers directing how teaching should be approached. They however should consider competent teachers who are not markers but looking at previous results of the school the teacher is working. It must be competence (merit) rather than being a marker, which should be looked at (Q7).

In support of the above opinion, another respondent stated:

There is need to use A' level and O' level History markers and those teachers recording high pass rates despite being non-markers. These leaders have demonstrated great ability and therefore should be used to impact knowledge and skills on colleagues. The pass rates they have demonstrated enable them to command high respect among members (Q26).

Observations such as this bring to light insights that school and district History leaders nurse about the improvements that may be made to History teaching and learning in the district. They suggest that competent teachers be considered, and this borrows from the concept of distributed leadership in which those with skills and abilities should be given leadership roles. The district appeared to be giving roles to formally appointed leaders, thus disregarding other leaders who might be having the requisite skills and knowledge for the improvement of instruction for History. Observations made in the district confirmed that examination markers played a crucial role in the interactions between the district and the school in the area of examination setting, marking guides development and the actual marking and seminar presentations. However, respondents were of the opinion that those who had demonstrated instructional exceptional abilities should also be given leadership positions so that they shared their wisdom with colleagues in the district.

Theme 6: Improving communication between district leadership and school leadership

The issue of poor communication received one of the highest responses in the questionnaire, 16. Respondents felt that the use of the traditional channels of communication, such as sending circulars and instructions to heads of school, should be improved upon. One of the respondents stated:

> *We have moved a long way technology-wise and it is high time better communications are used. Heads forget most circulars in their bags and offices and most often than not you hear of an important function just before or long after the event. Some of the heads of schools deliberately delay communicating about activities that require the presence of school leaders may be to save money or maybe they don't consider such activities as important, I don't know* (Q11).

In support of this, another respondent to the questionnaire pointed out that:

> *…district instructional leadership to teaching and learning programmes should be communicated to all leaders. The use of traditional forms of communication is no longer suitable in this modern world as communication is the first form of interaction, without which we cannot move forward* (Q18).

Sentiments from respondents suggest that some school leaders were not participating in district programmes not because they were unwilling but simply because they were not communicated to on time. This resulted in them being unaware of district-school leadership collaborative activities. The continued use of school heads as the chief communication channel was castigated as leaders felt that such school heads were not giving instructional programmes the attention that they deserved. Heads were accused of being more concerned with administrative issues and leaders felt communication should be through district leadership structures that could be supported by formal structures instead of entirely depending on formal systems. In observations it was noted that a number of schools would not participate in instructional activities mainly due to lack of communication.

Theme 7: Staff development programmes

A good number of respondents, 7, suggested the development of interactive staff development programmes. One respondent suggested that:

Resource persons be invited to staff develop leaders on issues like syllabus interpretation and marking guide application. Leaders should be well versed with issues of the syllabus and teaching strategies if they are to provide informed leadership for the teachers in the schools. University as well as teachers training colleges' lecturers should be invited to school-district interactive activities to upgrade skills and content knowledge of leaders. That way our leaders may be staff developed before they go to the schools where they may earn more respect as result of such interactions (Q24).

Another respondent proposed that there be,

In-service courses for staff in History instructional leadership positions. These can be done as short courses at the district level with training institutions coming to train teachers at the district level. This can go a long way in adding value to interactional practices for our subject (Q1).

These suggestions developed previous ones on the need to widen instructional activities for the benefit of students and staff. A powerful suggestion was for:

The district to lobby for the involvement of instructional leaders in curriculum planning. Instructional activities at the district level should provide a rare opportunity for us leaders to participate in curriculum development where we should discuss national curriculum matters before they are finalized for implementation in the schools. All suggestions for topic or teaching methods should be discussed here (Q8).

The respondent may have felt that without a direct involvement of History instructional leaders in curriculum development the teaching would remain limited. It therefore follows that district-school interactive activities could provide a good opportunity for curriculum planners to engage with both school and district leadership for the benefit of the teaching and learning of the History subject.

4.2.9. Summary of data from the quantitative phase

A number of issues emerged from the quantitative phase of data collection. Data indicated that History leaders valued interactional activities between district- and school-based instructional leadership, although a number of challenges were faced in efforts to promote

such collaborative work. It also emerged that leadership for History instructional activities was not as distributed as leaders would want, as it has remained top-down instead of bottom-up. History leaders in the district showed a clear idea of what they wanted to do to improve the teaching and learning of History but required strong support.

The finer details of these emerging issues are presented in the second phase of data collection, in which data from observations and interviews is presented.

4.3.   DATA FROM OBSERVATIONS

Five major instructional leadership interactional activities that involved district and school leaders were observed and a framework for the activities is given in Table 3.2(Chapter 3). These activities followed a calendar of activities given to the researcher by the district leadership. The activities built upon each other and it became imperative that the researcher adhered to the given programme of activities. The observation period was spread from June to the end of November 2014. The period of June to October was found to be useful for my observations, with a number of instructional leadership interactions as shown by the district schedule of activities. Public examinations in Zimbabwe usually begin in October and that usually marks the end of the district's hectic programme. An observation guide was used, thus making it easy to attend to crucial themes in the findings. The activities observed ranged from district coordination activities, staff development programmes, seminars and workshop on class visits and book inspection.

4.3.1. Activity 1

The first observation was on 6 September 2014, of a seminar for A' level History instructional leaders at a high school in the district. The activity and my observation lasted from 08:00.up to 16:00.Participants included the Head in Charge (HIC) of History district activities, A level History teachers and HODs for A level History. (50%, n=40) of the History offering schools were represented, showing the value that leaders placed on these activities. Most of the schools that were not present sent apologies, which confirmed an earlier position from questionnaire data, that History leaders in the district valued the collaborative activities. The seminar was convened by the National Association of Secondary Heads (NASH) in conjunction with the History District Committee (HDC). The involvement of NASH also showed the value that leadership in the district ascribes to

collaborations in the teaching and learning of the subject. NASH is held in high esteem and its involvement demonstrates that such activities are an integral part of the teaching and learning process in the schools. When they are involved, the activities are more likely to be taken seriously.

The purpose of the activity was sharing instructional leadership insights for History supervision by leaders in the district. It was emphasised that instructional leaders for A' level History learning should promote flexibility on the part of staff members. It was also discussed that instructional leadership activities like class supervisions and book inspections should be planned and communicated to members well in advance to avoid making such visits 'which hunts.' This observation by participants of the event reinforces the argument by Darling Hammond *et al*. (2009) that communication is a key aspect of instructional leadership because it helps to build trust between partners. Leaders also discussed at length the role of the district inspectorate in instructional leadership. It came out in the discussions that some of the district leaders were not really conversant with instructional leadership practices for the subject at that level and thus could not provide the necessary guidance for History learning and teaching.

The NASH was in overall command of activities that took place on the day, represented by the HIC, who was a greatly respected History subject specialist who directed activities at the occasion. For example, it was the HIC who introduced resource persons to the event. In one of his statements, the HIC actually said, "*I do not tolerate school leaders who operate without plans of actions in their leadership roles*" He was referred to as 'the NASH'. The use of the term "I", suggests the availability of real authority in the league as well as the existence of a superior- inferior relationship between the two categories of instructional leadership. The History District Committee Chairperson took charge of most instructional leadership activities and decisions, but on further investigation it was clear that the Chair was also a subject specialist who was a seasoned History leader. He was chairing most of the sessions and allowed leaders to make contributions, presentations and suggestions. Discussions were mainly concerned with correct procedures during classroom visits and book inspection activities. Occasionally questions would be referred to school teachers and the Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council (ZIMSEC) markers, however, a culture of consensus existed in which leaders were quick to concur on debate-generating issues. This culture to concur for its own sake was found by Stanley (2011) to destroy the necessary rigour in instructional leadership activities. Leaders demonstrated confidence in what they

were doing although some leaders looked unclear in what they were supposed to do in their instructional leadership roles in the schools.

Participants to the seminar however bemoaned the lack of adequate time to exhaust deliberations, so suggestions were made that a request for two to three days seminars be put to NASH. The participant stated,

> *Ladies and gentlemen, why are we always rushing with things? What can we say we have leant by this short gathering? We need more time for presentations, discussions and the actual doing where we make mock supervisions here and see if people can actually describe what they expect accurately during instructional leadership.*

It was also observed that seminars were held mostly once a term in the district, except when serious developments would have taken place, and most leaders considered this as inadequate.

4.3.2. Activity 2

The second activity to be observed was an evaluation of visits by the district inspectorate to the schools. Participants in this event included district inspectors, the HIC of History, the History District Chairperson (HDC) and school History leaders. Most critical parties were represented.

The convener of this activity was the HIC, who answers to the DEO and NASH and was a History subject specialist who participated actively and showed signs of great knowledge and skill. His other major role included making critical announcements. The purpose of the activity was to review district education officers' visits to schools for purposes of History subject supervision. The willingness of History leaders to share their experiences from their own centres was an interesting observation as they were able to learn from each other's contextual and locational advantages and challenges.

The HIC was the overseer of all activities and delegated to the HDSC, who chaired activities. The HDS Chair directed discussions in which subject specialists engaged in debates on certain questions. During discussions statements which were recorded include,

1. *We do not want intimidation during visits,*

2. *Inform us when district and provincial leaders are coming to our schools and*

3. Why witch-hunts in teaching and learning supervision?

An analysis of the given extracts from observations notes portray a strained relationship between district and school based leadership in that the underlying sentiments suggests that school leaders think that district leaders, by not informing them of pending visits to schools, create mistrust and embarrass them in front of other staff members and even students when they visit them without notice. It was in this sense that district leadership to schools was considered by some leaders as witch- hunts. A few members of the teaching leaders appeared reserved and on further enquiry it emerged that these were school leaders from the smaller schools whose pass rates have been a persistent challenge. Members pointed out in interviews that sometimes they lacked confidence to make contributions because people would frequently make comments about their poor results. It was observed that the best school representatives in the district were absent from the event. I was told by one of the district leaders that they sometimes ignored instructional leadership activities because they believed 'they have little to gain from interacting with those schools which are not well equipped'. It therefore can be stated that differences in school resources were creating different attitudes towards district-school instructional leadership collaborative activities.

In an interview to be presented later, the HIC hinted that compliance in district- school instructional leadership activities was a big challenge for there were those who felt that the History District Committee had no power to enforce compliance with resolutions. Some of the leaders who did a post observation interview with the researcher pointed out that there was need to concentrate more on pedagogical and content organisation for the subject in order to bring improvement to instructional practices in the classroom. The need for district leaders to communicate their visits to schools in time was emphasised. It was discussed at length whether district inspectors should visit schools without giving prior information as was normally the case. Most school leaders felt that it was proper for district leaders to only visit schools after giving notices as such instructional leadership practices should be for staff development and not for fault finding. District leaders however argued that in most cases it was difficult for them to give such notices because they were also taken by surprise by provincial inspectors who would come and demand that they make such 'uninformed' visits. The discussions of the day reiterated the importance of clear communication strategies in district and school instructional leadership practices.

4.3.3. Activity 3

The third collaborative activity between district- and school-based instructional leadership to be observed was a subject panel workshop held on 17 September 2014 at the Better Schools Programme Zimbabwe (BSPZ) centre at Jerera. The panel meeting started at 9 a.m. and ended at noon. Participants included the HIC, heads of department, History teachers and resource persons. The inclusion of resource persons brought different instructional knowledge and experiences, and they commanded much respect among the participants, who would listen attentively to their suggestions during the proceedings. The conveners of the instructional leadership programme in this specific instance were the BSPZ and NASH, and in charge of subject panels was the overall leader. The meeting was convened in order to prepare for a seminar presentation. The director of ceremonies was one of the district heads and managed the programme throughout, with the DEO giving the keynote address and emphasizing that district-school teamwork was the key to the successful teaching and learning of the subject in the district. A public service representative was also present to discuss the importance of good conduct during and after district and school instructional activities.

Heads of department also held a separate meeting with the district inspectorate to seek guidance on supervision of instruction, showing a new facet of district-school instructional leadership interactional practices. It came out in the discussions that in some of the schools, heads of departments were not subject specialists and this was found to be problematic as the expectations of such leaders were considered to be sometimes inconsistent with the requirements of the subject. It was emphasised in most conditions possible that heads of departments for the subject should be specialists for them to provide informed guidance. One of the participating leaders pointed out the issue:

> *I want to know how someone who is not History teaching trained can lead staff who are actually subject trained? Is that possible? It's not because the teacher may challenge such a leader who may realise at the end of the day that he/she knows nothing about the subject. It is important for those teachers who have relevant qualifications to be appointed leaders and not to use personal relations only for appointment*

An analysis of the above sentiments proves the need to use qualified staff in the provision of instructional leadership for the History subject. It challenges a common practice in

schools of bunching different subjects which may completely be unrelated to each other under one HOD for convenience purposes. It is against such practices where expertise in the provision of instructional leadership is not given serious consideration, which most leaders spoke.

Some smaller schools however felt this was difficult for there was a practice of putting many subjects together under one leader who might not be specialist for the subject. Inclusion of supervision standards is a critical aspect of instructional practices controlled by the district and would enable both school leaders and district leaders to have similar expectations. The use of resource personnel to impart skills and knowledge was seen to have greatly improved skills and knowledge of participating leaders.

4.3.4. Activity 4

The fourth activity to be observed was a workshop that took place atone high school on 26 September 2014, from 10 a.m.to 2 p.m. Participants included cluster leadership committees and school representatives, but the limit of one participant from each school was considered inadequate by participants, who felt it should be doubled to encourage sharing of views when they returned to their schools. Jita and Mokhele (2012) found that teacher capacity in professional development can be enhanced when more than one member from the same school are allowed to participate. The main task of the meeting was to prepare for cluster seminars and the setting up of cluster committees for 2015. Discussions clearly indicated the value that district leadership puts in instructional leadership activities, with all leaders expected at the meeting to prepare for the year's instructional leadership work.

Discussing the financial status for the programmes was also an issue on the agenda, and pointed to organisation of instructional leadership activities in the district. It was observed that most leaders were unhappy with the manner in which instructional leadership activities for the History subject were handled. A number of sentiments were aired, notably that some subjects, such as Mathematics and Science, were still given preferential treatment by the leadership, resulting in very little funds being channelled towards instructional development of History. There was a high level of sharing expertise, the ability to differ and then genuinely resolve the differences, confirming findings of Haack (2003) that such instructional collaborative activities in which leaders come together for

sustained, reflective inquiry are rare but possible. The researcher was able to see and hear real reflective instructional discussions that are only possible when leaders come together as a team.

One of the cluster chairpersons chaired the meeting with the other cluster heads participating actively and, with eagerness to participate and be active during deliberations, the degree of interaction was strong. It was agreed that more funding strategies be sought if district instructional leadership practices were to succeed in the district. It emerged from the discussions that the financial position was poor but participants agreed to increase the frequency of meetings. There was also discussion on the need for increased supervision of teaching and learning in the schools, with participants lamenting the absence of a system in which they could meet in the schools to see real classroom practices. A similar finding was made by Stanely (2011), that only when teachers began to observe one another informally and engage in discussions about teaching and learning could significant change take place in the classrooms. It was observed during the activity that leaders wanted to advance the achievements of the schools and the district as a whole in the area of History learning and teaching. A presentation was made on good supervision strategies and the presenter concentrated on the need for leaders to be respectful of each other without compromising objectivity in class supervisions.

4.3.5. Activity 5

The fifth activity observed, from 3 to 4 October 2014, was a seminar held at one of the high schools in the district. The programme started at 9 a.m. and involved History teachers, the district chairperson for History instructional activities, ZIMSEC markers and the Head In Charge of History instructional activities in the district. The composition of participants could be described as inclusive and representative, a combination involved in the administration of instructional leadership activities and a group of subject specialists who knew finer expectations of History teaching and learning. Of significance was the enthusiasm for collaborative opportunities demonstrated at the function, with a great deal of cooperative effort during the activity and participants focusing activities on instructional leadership activities. The programme was chaired by the DC for History panels.A genuine intent on using interactive instructional leadership and teaching methodologies was witnessed.

4.3.6. Summary of data from observations

Data from observations confirmed a number of findings from the questionnaire notably that History leaders in the district took collaborative work seriously, as demonstrated by their attendance at such activities. Leaders lacked the spirit of academic disagreement and norms of polite interaction and the desire to agree were found to be dominant forces which hindered genuine interactive discussions between leaders. It emerged from observed activities that seminars and workshops in the district had created forums for knowledge and skill collaboration. Although there was evidence of constructive management of instructional leadership interactional activities, there was a need for control to be more fluid so that leaders could be followers, participants and facilitators at the same time, in order to conform to the expectations of distributed leadership discussed in Chapter Two. Activities observed were worthwhile and well structured, with attendance at instructional leadership programmes good, albeit with potential for improvement. There was strong involvement of Education officers from the district office, heads of school, the History District Leadership Committee and school History leaders in district-school collaborative activities. There was an evident need to widen practices that defined the interaction of district- and school-based instructional leadership.

4.4. DATA FROM INTERVIEWS

Five purposively selected leaders were interviewed in the qualitative phase whose profiles follow:

P1 is a district leader who had been a head for more than ten years. He was a History specialist appointed to district leadership due to his area of specialization and being a head of school. He has a passion for the teaching and learning of History and as the head in charge is leading the History district and school collaborative activities.

P2 is a school leader with more than five years' experience of teaching History. She is a national examination marker who participates in district-school collaborative activities.

P3, a DEO with extensive district leadership experience and concern for district-school leadership interactions. Not a History subject specialist, she has been appointed for primary supervision and had supported History interactive activities.

P4, a senior History school leader with more than 16 years of History teaching, demonstrated a critical view of district-school interactive programmes. He has produced some of the best results in the district and was not a national marker for History.

P5, a senior school leader who has participated in History district activities, is stationed at one of the schools in the district.

Data gathered from interviews is presented here using a thematic approach.

4.4.1. Theme1: Appointment and roles of leaders

The introductory part of the interview involved the researcher probing how the identified leader had been appointed to the leadership role. This section of the interview also sought information pertaining to the roles or functions of the leaders. P1 stated:

> *I was appointed on the basis that I am a head first and second because I specialized in History in my studies. NASH felt that I should be the Head in Charge on that basis. Those in the schools, except heads, were not consulted on whether or not to appoint me. My appointment was formally by the DEO after recommendations from NASH.*

The leader demonstrated a strong passion for the teaching and learning of the subject as shown even by the interest in the interview. He telephoned the researcher to attend the interview on a Sunday. The major role of the leader involved overseeing instructional activities in the district, reporting to NASH and the DEO:

> *My duty is to see to it that district instructional activities for the History subject are carried out as planned in the district schedule. I supervise the operations of the History District Committee. I make reports to the District Inspectorate and to NASH.*

The appointment of A1 was made formally, but strong consideration was given to the qualifications and abilities of the head in charge. The interview with this leader demonstrated that he was well-versed in the needs of the subject's instructional leadership requirements, appearing a suitable candidate to guide the operations of district instructional programmes. Earlier presentations on observations made when the leader controlled discussions during workshops provided evidence that he was well- versed with

issues of instructional leadership for the subject. One of the interviewees actually pointed out that the appointment of the HIC was a prerogative of NASH. He states:

> *The appointment of the Head in Charge is not done in consultation with other leaders. I think he should be an elected official because we know each other well when it comes to issues of the teaching and learning of History. NASH just appoints without consultation and that amounts to imposition. This time we are lucky that the one appointed as an experienced History leader but it may happen that we may get others who are not knowledgeable if this practice is allowed to continue.*

P2 is a school leader and ZIMSEC marker with more than five years' experience in national examination marking, as well as involvement in district-school interactive activities. She was not formally appointed to the position but was a member of the district interactive activities by virtue of being a History teacher. On her roles in the district-school interactional activities, she pointed out that:

> *My role is to link school activities and expectations with the district. I take our experiences and expectations to the district. I also take deliberations and suggested strategies from district leadership to the schools for implementation. I also play an important role of guiding both students and teachers when it comes to examinations as you know I am a ZIMSEC marker. I sometimes carry out workshops for History teachers in order to update them on national markers' expectations.* (P2)

P2 raised important features of district-school instructional leadership interactions, that of networking. The leader raises an issue of linking staff and staff development through workshops. Workshops,(Stanley,2011), play a crucial role of staff developing instructional leaders but the way the leader discussed the issue suggested that such efforts are skewed towards leadership for examination purposes.

P3 is a formal designation and the leader is involved in district instructional leadership for the subject because she was a DEO whose mandate involved monitoring subject panels for the improvement of teaching and learning for History. She stated:

> *My involvement is mandatory given that I am an education officer at the district level. We are de facto members because we are the district leaders. Even if we are not specialists of the subject, we are supposed to monitor activities and ensure that these activities are done and done properly. When identifying leaders for these*

subject panels, we take into consideration qualifications, position held by the individual as well as the experience. We expect a leader to be of great potential to colleagues and we therefore cannot just pick on anyone. (P3)

P4 was appointed as a result of his track record as a History teacher in the district. He was one of the best teachers of the subject, with a major role in chairing History district instructional activities:

I was approached by the Head in Charge of History district activities to assist them in organizing meetings, seminars and workshops to improve the teaching and learning of the subject. It came to me that my name was suggested by History teachers in the district and I humbly accepted the role. (P4)

Like the case of P4, P5 became involved in district instructional leadership activities because she was a History teacher in the district. Her experience as a History leader made her an important member of the district instructional programmes and seminar presentations.

Analysis of the five responses above portrays a variety of selection criteria to the appointment of district-school interactive leaders for History in the district. It is evident that no singular criterion was used and the appointment of leaders was both formal and informal, with some History leaders in the district being formally appointed by NASH and the DEOs. In their discussion of teacher collaborative practices, Jita and Mokhele (2014) made similar findings, some of the leaders having been appointed to leadership roles as a result of demonstrating knowledge and good skills in the teaching and learning of the subject. The appointment of the head in charge had interesting ramifications, and as a result being a head of school he could command respect, which ironically the HIC proved to lack, especially in the area of ensuring compliance to district-school activities. The use of a leader who had specialized in History was important in that he would be conversant with issues in the teaching and learning of History. From the interview with the district leader it was evident that he had the knowledge and requisite skills and used specialist terms in the teaching and learning of History.

The verbatim response of P2 also indicated some criteria for leaders' appointments, in this case on the basis of being a ZIMSEC marker. This was important because, although the interviewee was a school teacher his experience was found to be of benefit to the whole district, in which most school History leaders were not markers. It therefore meant that the

whole district would benefit from interacting with leaders who had the national examination standard expectations. The interviewee, however, pointed out that his interaction with History leaders was limited as there were few staff development workshops. It was during seminar presentations that the leader said he had played an important role of informing students on examiners' expectations.

4.4.2. Theme 2: Views of interviewees on the need for interactions between district- and school-based leaders

Regarding the importance of constant interactions between district- and school-based leadership, all interviewees spoke highly of the need for these interactions.

P1 accepted the importance of such interactional practices in the teaching and learning of History:

> *Such interactions are important. The only challenge is that most of our people do not consider them as such. These interactions are important for better management of the schools. They result in better pass rates in our schools and overall, the district rating at the provincial level is respectable. They are very very important I will say. They improve the capacity of History teachers to deliver.* (P1)

The participant considered the significance of district-school activities in terms of capacitating schools to perform better in examinations. A sense of oneness in instructional improvement for the district schools was significant as it was considered unimportant for a single school to perform well. The respondent portrayed a feeling that it was important for all schools to perform well in the subject as all the schools would produce a district ranking. It was through the activities of district and school interactional practices that uniformity of high performance could be attained.

P2 said:

> *Oh yes, they are as important as the teaching itself. They ensure that schools and the district work in unison. History district and school interactions have created a sense of belonging that encourages us to help each other. We are now very good at sharing resources because when we meet we always identify each other's needs and try to assist each other. Interactions between district- and school-based leadership give birth to trust which provides the conducive learning and teaching environment.* (P2)

The observation above explains the importance of interactional activities as that of creating communities of practice in which such collaboration encourages the sharing of resources between the 'haves' and 'have nots' in the district. When leaders of History meet constantly, a sense of trust is created and such a sense was found to be useful in encouraging leaders to accept and give advice to each other, which will consequently give rise to better teaching and learning of the subject.

P4 pointed out that:

> *Constant interactions provide guidance and directions of implementing new approaches and strategies. They should be of great value but if they are not implemented properly, they may create animosity instead of development in the district.*

An examination of the responses given shows that most leaders agreed that district-school interactive programmes were important, but most participants were quick to point out that most leaders were not giving serious attention to the role of such instructional leadership interactions. The significance of such interactions lay in the improvement in pupils' examination results, and district leaders were emotional on the theme of how schools and district instructional leadership should combine to improve the overall district examination rating at the provincial and national level. One of the district leaders said of interactions between district- and school-based leadership:

> *They are very serious because we want them to work as a team to improve district rating in examinations. They make the struggling schools and the better schools perform at the same level and we are proud when that happens.*

The position of the quoted district leader is that collaborative work between the district and school leadership improves the overall district rating in examination by ensuring collaboration between leaders and even students. Although this is limited in focus it is an interesting observation as networking is the hallmark of instructional leadership.

4.4.3. Theme 3: Description of existing relationships between schools and the district

Item 3 of the interview protocol sought information on the nature of existing relationships between district and school leadership. Most of the interviewees, 3, were of the view that

relationships were good, but they were defined by formal procedures. One of those who felt relations were good said:

> *You mean relations between us and the district leadership? It's good, oh yes it's good, but more still can be done to reduce the boss-inferior relationships where the EOs are the bosses and we are the servants. A lot of fear is created when district and school leaders meet for any programme.* (P5)

On further probing from the interviewee on what was meant by saying relationships were good, she explained that there was a strong belief in the district that collaborative work could improve the teaching and learning of History as demonstrated by many activities aimed at creating teamwork. She cited activities such as workshops, meetings and seminars as a clear signal of good interactive practices for the district. On what was meant by "created fear and the boss-inferior relationships", she pointed out, with a serious face that, a number of district leaders believed in the long-term concept of creating fear in school leaders. In most cases school leaders ended up pretending that they knew certain teaching approaches and course content even where they would appear ignorant in order to avoid negative criticism from district leaders. It was the opinion of this interviewee that district and school instructional leaders should consider each other as colleagues if the relationships between the two were to be perfect for the benefit of instructional leadership.

Another interviewee, who happened to be a district leader, described the interactions in the district using superlative terms. She described them as follows:

> *We have excellent relationships. These interactions have produced very good results for the district and you can go to the province to check for yourself. Our meetings and seminars are so organized that leaders from other districts have always come to learn from us. Of course we cannot say we have achieved all we need to do.* (P3)

Views of this interviewee were similar to those of the first, but although the participant was happy with the kind of relationship existing between district and school leadership, she also felt more could be done. When probed on those things that still could be done to improve the relationship for instruction for History, the district leader pointed out that their activities could be widened to bring in institutions of higher learning, such as universities and teachers' training institutions. The leader argued that this might inform participants on new instructional trends in the teaching and learning of the subject.

Those interviewees who felt relationships between district- and school-based instructional leaders were poor cited mostly the behaviour of district leaders of treating school leaders as inferiors who should be schooled on the teaching and learning of History. One of the interviewees responded as follows:

> *Interactions between district and school leadership provide a rare opportunity for a strong network in the district but the challenge is sometimes the failure of the two to understand one another. District leaders who are education officers enjoy instructing school leaders on what to do and it is that attitude which is the greatest hindrance to district- school collaborative activities. It's just a matter of district leaders instructing school leaders to do this and that or demanding that we do what they want in most instances through circulars. We do it simply because it will be a demand from our superiors and not because we like it. In most cases when instructional practices for the subject are imposed on us, we accept artificially but when you come for classroom results, you will realize that no real change is implemented through force.* (P4)

The response from the interviewee underlined an issue that was articulated by a number of respondents who were not happy with the attitude of some district leaders who could not modify their positional authority in interactional activities. Formal relationships were found to be widespread but were considered by respondents and interviewees as an impediment to healthy interactional activities between district- and school-based History leaders. Attitudes of district leaders, who were accused of treating other leaders like school pupils who should be taught on best practices, was echoed by a number of informants who felt that if instructional practices were to improve there was a need for leaders to be equal to each other, with a view to sharing tasks and responsibilities. Informants, including educational officers, accepted that the formal structures of interaction should be changed if genuine interactions were to develop in which a school leader could confidently use staff development with other leaders on good teaching practices in the teaching and learning of History.

Another interviewee described the existing district-school collaborative activities as important for purposes of 'networking many people to improve performance and for capacity building'. On probing the informant stated that networking activities in syllabus interpretation and examinations expectations had taken the district to high levels in the

teaching and learning of History. The interviewee however felt that more interactions for teaching strategies and content organisation were needed.

4.4.4. Theme 4: Structures for district and school collaborative programmes

Interviewees were asked about policies and structures that existed in the district to promote collaborative instructional leadership practices between district and the schools. Two of the leaders made reference to the existence of a History District Coordination Committee headed by the head in charge. One district leader pointed out that the Committee was doing a sterling job in improving the teaching and learning of History by coordinating programmes such as seminars and staff development workshops. For instance, Leader P3 pointed out that:

> *The History district team is the most vibrant instructional association I have come to know. Its ability to bring education officers, teachers and pupils together has gone a long way in improving teaching and learning for subjects like History. Imagine what was happening in the past when no such activities were done. Now you go there and you discover new approaches resulting in all of us doing things the right way. The Committee has managed to identify areas where staff development is needed and members have benefited from workshops carried out.* (P3)

Comments like this demonstrate that district subject panels command respect among both district- and school-based leadership, largely because such panels are composed mostly of subject specialists. It was established from the interviews that the chairperson of the committee was also a subject specialist, and educational inspectors, who are not History specialists, would simply be involved as overseers. The composition of the History District Committee was highly spoken of by interviewees, especially as national markers of the subject were integral members. National markers, it was argued by one interviewee:

> *…would guide teachers and students on the critical expectations in the final examinations. We no longer need to be trained markers for us to know national expectations because by simply participating in these seminars we are as good as ZIMSEC markers.* (P2)

Interviewees felt that bringing in critical stakeholders gave district-school interactive programmes the significance that would result in most leaders wishing to participate in

them. The idea that Zaka district instructional activities were skewed towards examinations emerged in the interviews as informants felt they were benefiting in the area of pass rate improvements.

It was, however, disturbing to note that none of the interviewees pointed out any other structure besides the History District Committee. Indeed, one of the school leaders, who seemed to have little respect of the HDC, pointed out that the district and the schools could be more creative in proffering more collaborative policies and structures:

> *It's only the History District Committee that we know of and nothing more. Each time you are invited to the district then you know it's them. The same people and their songs about examination drilling. Both teachers and students are taught on how to memorise prepared answers so that they reproduce in examinations. What instructional strategies to use- oh no they don't discuss teaching and learning approaches. They want just results and results.* (P4)

Probed further, the school leaders felt that activities of instructional leadership in the district were becoming monotonous in that they were centred on one issue, namely A' level examinations. He suggested another structure in the form of student associations, in which students could be empowered to experiment with instructional modalities. The leader also suggested school visits as an important instructional leadership activity with which local circumstances could be utilized in efforts to improve the teaching and learning of History. The same suggestion was also identified by a number of questionnaire respondents who felt that collaborative instructional activities should involve district leaders visiting individual schools and not persisting with the traditional format of school leaders going to the district for activities. Informants felt that if collaborative activities could be transferred from the district centres to the schools they could be more practical and accommodative of contextual conditions.

4.4.5. Theme 5: The coordination of district-school based interactional activities

Informants were asked how collaborative activities in the learning and teaching of History were coordinated. P1 explained:

> *The HIC controls everything and instructs the DHC to organize programmes. The HIC acts on the instructions of the Head in Charge of all subject panels who in turn answers to the DEO. There are real structures with authority for the coordination of*

these activities for they are as important as everyday teaching and learning in the classrooms. (P1)

P4 added:

Coordination is by the History District Coordination Committee headed by the chair. The committee has done a great piece of work although communication is still a big challenge in the district. Sometimes you just hear something was done before you get the communication. The coordination is sometimes done through heads of schools who sometimes fail to take these things seriously. (P4)

P5, however, felt that the coordination of district- and school-based instructional activities was not up to standard:

There are no permanent structures for the coordination of such fundamental functions. All officers for these important coordination roles are on part-time bases. They have their classes and administrative duties to take care of and how do you expect them to link with stakeholders when they do it at their own spare time? There is need for full-time officers for them to do proper coordination. (P5)

An analysis of these responses depicts great efforts and seriousness given to the interactions between district- and school-based leadership for the learning and teaching of History. This becomes evident in even the DEO being involved in these matters of instruction, as demonstrated by constant supervision of instructional leadership activities. The inclusion of the HIC is also a clear indication of the significance of the activities, for in addition to being a subject specialist he also commands respect as a member of NASH. It is evident from the data, however, that no full-time personnel have been assigned to the coordination of instructional practice. The only people actually charged with development and supervision of instruction are the district educational officers and provincial officers. This arrangement side-lines subject leaders in the schools, whilst appointment of full-time leaders to concentrate on the development and supervision of instructional practice, according to the informants, would enable a constant check on History teaching practices in the district schools. The HIC and the Chair for History instructional activities were found to be badly positioned to conduct real coordination, given the number of other duties as they are full-time teachers and administrators in their schools, and making them full-time instructional leaders was considered by informants to be a plausible move.

4.4.6. Theme 6: The impact of district-school interactional practices on the performance of pupils in the History subject

Asked about the impact of district-school collaborative activities on the performance of pupils, three informants pointed out that those of the district and the schools had resulted in an improved performance of A' level students in the entire district. One pointed out that:

> *Most A level schools are scoring over 80% pass rates because of these meetings and seminars where many novice teachers get direction and guidance on how to tackle questions. The problem is however nothing of the same can be said for O'level. Interactional activities seem to be directed only towards A levels and nothing else.* (P3)

Another of those who was positive about the impact of district- and school-based interactional leadership practices pointed out:

> *Oh yes a lot of positives have been achieved, not to talk about pass rates but an improved attitude of History pupils towards the subject. Participating in seminars has developed a positive attitude of pupils towards the subject as the activities have acted like an incentive to most pupils.***Ini zvakandi improver chaizvo paconfidence yangu** *(As for myself, they have improved me in the area of my confidence).The problem is however that beneficiaries are few and now they are ignoring the grassroots- there is no proper library system to benefit those in very remote stations.*(P4)

The third respondent was of the opinion that it was not only in the area of overall pass rates that an improvement had been realized:

> *The impact of district as well as school interactions should not only be a case of pass rates. An examination of pupils' exercise books in the schools show an improvement of performance on part C of the essay question which is a result of the interaction of teachers with national markers during workshops and seminars. Instructional practice in the district has enabled students to be able to network among themselves. Instead of students waiting for teachers to link and seek resources for them, students have established own linkages and can share experiences, knowledge and skills without entirely waiting for the teacher.* (P2)

An analysis of responses given above indicates that improved performance at A' level is the greatest impact of district- and school-based instructional leadership for the History

subject. Students' preparation for the national examinations through district mid-year examinations was considered to have produced tangible results. Standardized tests and revision programmes were considered to have impacted positively but mostly at A' level, with little improvement found at O'level.

Two informants argued that no tangible improvements have been realized in the district. One of those who felt that there was no improvement argued:

> *There is no improvement on the performance of pupils as a result of these interactions. Most of those schools that are performing well are not active members of the interaction activities. You can get a register of those most active school leaders and see if their performance has improved. The answer is 'no'. Schools whose pupils are doing well are not members of those interactive programmes.* (P4)

An extreme response was that by respondent P5 who argued:

> *Funds are misused by leaders. The big Chefs are exploiting opportunities for personal benefit. They only concentrate on meetings,* **zvokwadi kuti tione zvatakabenefita hapana- hatizvioni isu** *(truly there is nothing we have benefited- we have nothing tangible. These activities mostly benefit heads who go to hotels.* (P5)

Responses from informants indicate that there is no consensus among leaders as regards the impact of district-school leadership interactive programmes.

The other informant from those who felt district-school collaborative activities were not producing the desired improvements in the performance of pupils argued that very few teachers and pupils were participating and it was not possible to assess the impact collaborative activities were producing:

> *Very few leaders and teachers frequently participate in the district activities. Most schools are still facing poor pass rates as low as fifteen percent at O'level and this is clear evidence that these instructional leadership programmes have not yet produced the desired results. We expect more if all school leaders could participate. More activities should be channelled towards staff development instead of concentrating on examinations only.* (P4)

An analysis of responses of the two informants gives important insights on the collaboration between district- and school-based instructional leadership for the subject. The issue of the involvement of a limited number of teachers and pupils was raised as a

factor that makes an assessment of the impact of interactive programmes difficult. The two felt that performance of students in national examinations was not linked to district-school collaborative programmes in that they were too limited to have an impact. The feeling that interactive activities were not producing the desired effects as a result of leaders not utilizing them fully was evident from the interviews. Participants were clear that with a more serious use of collaborative practices, the teaching and learning of History could achieve more, particularly as it was an interactive subject.

4.4.7. Theme 7: Dominating programmes in district-school based instructional leadership interactions

Interviewees were asked about the major teaching and learning activities during interactions between school- and district-based instructional leadership. The five informants were unanimous in pointing out examination preparation as the major activity. Informant P1 pointed out that:

> *It's mostly examination preparation through seminars and workshops. Students and teachers find them interesting in that they get a new learning environment through excursions. The activities are limited in that they concentrate on examinations but it's a good start. More maybe done, especially in syllabus understanding and organization. Leaders may be feel this is the most important thing to do. Oh yes, when students pass examinations, everything else is covered. Parents see examinations as the most important thing and that's why these activities are always on examinations.* (P1)

P2 added:

> *We only know of one major learning activity- seminars and seminars. They are also not many and I can't remember any other activity we have been involved in. Each time you hear there is a workshop or meeting it should be a seminar. I think it is the best way to encourage interactive teaching as they give opportunities to students and teachers to demonstrate knowledge and skills. I however feel that there is need for more diversified activities if these activities are to benefit us all.* (P2)

P4 explained:

It's the routine system of mid-year examinations, revisions in form of seminars but of course we have had moments of discussing the syllabus. We have not done much in the area of content organization or teaching methods. Remember however that not everyone participates in these activities. There are always those that feel they have nothing to benefit from these activities and will never be available. (P4)

Data from the interviewees clearly indicate that the district-schools interactive activities were limited in that they were mainly focused on the examination as an end product. That informants pointed out that not all schools asked students to write the district set examinations made the situation worrisome. Although it became clear that examination activities constituted the majority of the district's activities, informants accepted that this was bringing the most direct benefit to students and this in the improved performance by candidates in final examinations, especially at A' level.

Two informants pointed out that workshops on syllabus interpretation were sometimes held but not frequently. An examination of the district instructional activities programme indicated two slots for syllabus interpretation activities, with participants to the interview feeling that this could be the most crucial activity, but it was not given the attention deserving. Informants felt that a serious engagement on issues to do with the syllabus in which content and teaching strategies would be discussed could see the teaching and learning of the subject improve. All the interviewees were of the opinion that it was in the area of teaching strategies that most school leaders were finding challenges, and district-school interactive activities should be centred on that. A feeling of monotony could be sensed from the discussions with interviewees, with one describing seminars as 'routine'.

4.4.8. Theme 8: Measures that can be put in place to improve district-school interaction practices

Informants were also asked about measures that could be put in place to improve district and school instructional leadership practices. A suggestion that was put forward by all the interviewees was the need for these activities to seek better funding.P2 suggested:

The greatest challenge is sponsorship whereby willing students and teachers sometimes fail to participate in such activities because they do not have the funds. If sponsorship is provided, more leaders will be involved and the benefits spread to more schools. As long as individual schools and students sponsor themselves in these important activities, the ultimate goal of better teaching and improved performance by pupils will remain just but a dream. (P2)

On the same issue, P4 suggested that having better funding could result in the district and school History leaders being able to invite specialists in the teaching and learning of History who might offer staff development for teachers and district leaders to a level of benefit to both students and teachers. She lamented a situation in which most of the district and school activities were led by people whose credentials were considered as being similar to those they led. The suggestion was that provincial subject leaders and university lecturers be involved in district-school instructional leadership activities in order to give them more value.

It is evident from the responses that informants as well as respondents to the questionnaire felt that successful collaboration between district- and school-based leadership depended on sound sponsorship. This can be considered as accurate, in that in Zimbabwe many educational blueprints have not succeeded because they lack sponsorship, and expecting students' levies to be adequate may not be useful. A good financial base for instructional leadership practices for the History subject may encourage even unwilling members to come forward and benefit from interaction activities. A situation in which only one leader from a school participates in these activities may not bring the desired results. A situation in which many teacher leaders are sponsored to participate may bring more coordinated changes to the teaching and learning of the subject (Jita & Mokhele, 2014).

Another suggestion was the appointment of full-time district and school leadership committee members to take care of instructional activities in the district.P5 suggested:

We need full-time committee members who can prepare and execute serious school and district activities. The district instructional leadership is made up of leaders who are full time teachers with full loads at their stations and do you think that they can do much when they have serious commitments at the schools. They actually consider their leadership role for the subject's instructional development as part-time and in most cases with no incentives to motivate them to work hard. Do you think they take

that work very seriously? Whatever work is done outside your normal working hours may never be taken seriously. (P5)

The informant in the above suggestion was raising an important issue in that there was a need to reduce teaching loads for those involved in the subject's instructional development, or even make them district subject advisors whose only task would be to monitor and experiment with teaching strategies for the subject. In a study of teachers' collaboration practices in Mpumalanga, South Africa, Jita and Mokhele (2014) established that subject advisors played an important role each time teacher leaders met to discuss issues to do with the curriculum.

Another informant suggested the bringing in of ZIMSEC national and regional markers to coordinate district and school instructional activities, arguing that because ZIMSEC markers had great knowledge and skills it was imperative that they were present to avoid irrelevant discussions at such gatherings.P4 suggested:

> *We sometimes waste a lot of time getting presentations from leaders who are out of touch with fundamental developments in the teaching of the subject. It's boring to spend two hours listening to nothing. We want national curriculum directors to be part and parcel of our activities, we want national examination leaders from the national to the regional levels to be invited to such functions and I tell you brother, when that happens we will all benefit and be good teachers. Oh yes.* (P4)

An analysis of the above quotation shows a deep affection on the part of the leader on collaborative activities between district and school leadership. The leader showed great confidence in what could be achieved if such interactions involved knowledgeable people, such as curriculum directors and examination chiefs. The informant was also clear that even though their time was being wasted by uninformed facilitators, they were not happy to be engaged in 'useless' programmes that were simply meant to present a picture that there were some activities happening in the district. Informants wanted programmes that would see them grow from one level of teaching to the next.

4.4.9. Theme 9: Factors that promote the quality of district and school interaction practices

When interviewees were asked about factors that are promoting interaction between district- and school-based leadership, four of the informants pointed out that the attitude of leaders was the greatest factor promoting interaction.P5 explained that:

The attitude of leaders both at the district and the school level is great. Right from the DEO to the head in charge and the District Chair of History activities there is great interest in the activities. The great attitude amongst leaders drives activities despite poor funding. The attitude is being fired by the improvements realized in the district's rankings and the request by district management for poor performing schools to account for their poor results. The issue of subject rankings in this district has become so serious that no one wants to be left behind. There is good attitude towards collaboration in this district. (P5)

P1 added that:

The spirit in the district is the greatest factor promoting interaction. People have great respect for the district leadership and efforts are done to participate. You should however remember that the spirit along won't take us there because resources are needed to meet practical challenges. (P1)

Informants felt that attitudes were the main factor in efforts to improve instructional practice. It emerged that a positive attitude was dominant in the district and it was this which enabled coordinators and leaders to continue despite financial hardships. The researcher got to know that there were some teacher leaders in the district who used their personal funds to attend to these activities because of the benefits expected to accrue.

Another factor raised by informants was the availability of ZIMSEC markers who would attract leaders to programmes in order for them to learn skills expected in national examinations. Informant P2 stated:

The presence of ZIMSEC markers at these activities is an attraction in that they possess special skills and knowledge which we all need for personal staff development. We always come out of seminars as better teachers and I would say the greatest factor promoting interactions is the presence of these skilled people who always make such interactions worthwhile. (P2)

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4.4.10. Theme10: Barriers to useful interactions between district- and school-based leadership

Asked about barriers hindering successful district-school instructional leadership collaboration in the teaching and learning of History, four of the informants pointed out that the financial support of these activities was the greatest problem.P2 explained:

> *It's very clear that the greatest challenge to district- school interactions in the area of History teaching is sponsorship. History is not in the same category with subjects like Mathematics and Science which sometimes get sponsorship. History programmes are entirely sponsored by the schools and individual pupils. Most pupils and schools have no capacity to sponsor these activities and sometimes they just let go. We need good sponsorship for these programmes, I tell you we would be far.* (P2)

P1 added:

> *Money issues my brother. Nothing more. With more funds the Heaven is possible. If instructional activities in this district were to get serious funding, we could achieve much more. I actually feel that our leadership should approach even private players for us to get requisite sponsorship for such facilities as seminar rooms and libraries for the improvement of teaching practices.* (P1)

All responses were linked to the issue of funding, and this again agreed with observed data as well as data from questionnaires in which the issue of funding was raised on many instances. |Asked how such a challenge could be overcome, P4 suggested:

> *The fees structure should include a levy for district instructional activities. The issue of teaching and learning are more crucial than such activities as sporting, we already have levies. Why not put a levy for these important activities. We are told students are contributing towards instructional activities but we do not see it. We still have to dig deep into private pockets when we go for such activities but that is not what members of NASH do when they go for their own activities. They get good amounts and I do not know why that is not applying to issues of instructional leadership. The attitude of NASH should be taken as the greatest undoing. They give lip service but their actions say otherwise.* (P4)

P1 suggested the engagement of the corporate world for sponsorship or the government to put aside a levy for instructional leadership activities in each district, believing that

activities related to the teaching and learning of History were not given the support that they deserved. Informants were of the opinion that, despite a positive attitude towards History instructional activities, a lack of proper funding would destroy progress in the area.

4.5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Having presented data from questionnaires, observations and interviews I now discuss the major findings from the three instruments, concurrently, as well as from the interface of related theoretical positions of other researchers. Emerging themes as well as the objectives of the study are used to guide the discussion.

The purpose of this study was to gain an understanding of the policies, structures, activities and programmes that exist between district- and school-based instructional leadership in order to improve the teaching and learning of History. As stated in Chapter 1, the guiding objectives of the study were to:

(a) find out the nature of relationships that exist between districts and schools with respect to instructional leadership for the History subject;

(b) assess policies and structures that guide the interactions between districts and schools for History instructional leadership;

(c) explore practices that define interactions between schools and districts for instructional leadership in History;

(d) examine how district and schools' instructional leadership practices are coordinated;

(e) suggest possible ways in which instructional leadership for the History subject may be understood and improved.

4.4.1. The nature of relationships that guide interactions between district and schools for History instructional leadership

Literature identifies various kinds of relationships in instructional leadership, but the prescriptive model of instructional leadership was found to be the most common type in the district. The theoretical framework for this study, interactionism considers relationships as fundamental to the development of common meanings. The prescriptive model which

was found to be common in the district involves direct assistance to teacher leaders, group development, staff development and curriculum development (Blasé & Blasé, 2000).Of the various viewpoints articulated by the participants on the nature of relationships that should guide interactions between the district and schools for History instructional leadership, the most dominant was that relationships should be emergent.

The questionnaire responses, together with the interview data and observations portrayed a notion that instructional leadership interactions should be continuous and simple (West, 2011). Contrary to this view, however, it emerged in this study that relations were rather complex and seasonal. Those who were negative about the existing relationships felt that they were a preserve of formally appointed leaders and were thus exclusive to those who were 'at the chalk face' of the teaching and learning of History. Hierarchical formalities and procedures were found to command an almost sacred level of reverence, thus contradicting the concept of distributed leaderships in which leaders should be followers in some contexts (Spillane *et al.*, 2004). This emerging view was in accord with that of Woods and Roberts (2013), who argue that unless interactions in instructional leadership are a property of all individuals, the impact on student outcomes is insignificant. It emerged that most leaders feel that the kind of interactions existing in the district were limited in scope, time and space. The finding resonates with the argument by May (2013), that participative and distributive interaction should be given precedence over formal relations. Formal leadership channels have been stigmatized to the extent that most respondents felt that formally appointed leaders, such as DEOs and heads of school should be left out of collaborative district school instructional leadership. Respondents pointed out that the latter group of leaders should remain in their administrative roles and leave instructional leadership to subject specialist. Again, May (2013) accepts that there is some tension between local school leadership and central district 'managerialism' that has seriously affected instructional aptitudes. Directive and hierarchical approaches remain a common practice in district-school interactions but there is need to move to democratic procedures that breed opportunities for distributive leadership, as this will enable leaders to contribute to whole district improvements in the teaching and learning of History. According to the National College for School leadership (2004:3), "Formal leaders, no matter how talented, cannot make the equity agenda thrive without leadership coming from others in the school."There is a need for formally appointed leaders to delegate

instructional responsibilities to informal instructional leaders whose status does not generate indifferent attitudes among other instructional leaders and followers.

Participants felt that there has been an over-emphasis on instructional leadership for examination preparation, tantamount to examination drilling. In most observed instructional leadership activities, the issue of examinations and their revision appeared to be the core business. Whilst this finding would not surprise History leaders, it is in contrast with most literature on the teaching and learning of History, in which the role of examinations in History teaching has been down-played. Researchers on History instructional practices consider an over-emphasis on examination as equivalent to the promotion of rote learning of the subject (Jofre & Schiralli, 2002; Louis, 2012). Although examination preparation is important to students, the accomplishment could be enhanced by widening collaborative activities. Respondents felt that district-school collaboration could include other activities of staff development, such as content selection and method selection. Suggestions by respondents and informants were in accord with the findings of Mokhele (2011), that teacher networks increase instructional capacities of teachers in specific subjects such as Mathematics and Science.

District-School interaction activities were found to be congested in the second and third term of the school calendar, thus confirming a frequent view that district instructional leadership practices are limited to examination preparation and thus side-line other critical aspects of instructional activities. Contrary to the findings of this study, however, Stanley (2011) argues that because most leaders spend much of their time alone at the front of their classrooms, rarely becoming involved in sustained reflective discussions, collaborative work should be spread across the whole calendar year. Such a programme, not limited to a season, would enable the development of a change culture and codification of instructional leaders' collective knowledge on instructional standards for the History subject. Collective expertise in the subject might then be tapped as leaders constantly work together. Interaction should not be limited to a period if changes to the teaching and learning of the subject are to be permanent. In the district under study, leaders might not have benefited as much from collaborative instructional leadership for the History subject as a result of such activities being congested in just one term of the academic year.

There was also evidence of the exploratory model wherein History leaders' conferences were held in an effort to monitor and improve student progress (Blasé & Blasé, 2000).It emerged, however, especially from the questionnaires and interviews, that leaders view

instructional leadership activities for the History subject positively, although, they had reservations on the execution of such collaborative engagements. In agreement with the observations by Zajda and Whitehouse (2000:953), that "…teaching and learning history, as a curriculum discipline, has been characterized by political, economic, cultural and ideological imperatives…" which require constant leaders' interactions, participants felt that the idea of meeting as History leaders had provided a staff development programme without going to college. The only drawback of the initiative was the over-concentrating on examinations as the end product.

It emerged that there was a serious need to exploit the positive attitude towards instructional leadership activities in order to deepen them to holistic collaborative activities which were more integrative (Capper &Young, 2013). Findings confirmed the argument of Little (2003), that there is generative power of professional community development when teacher leaders of a specific subject such as History frequently interact for purposes of improving learning and teaching. In accordance with arguments by West (2011), leaders accepted that History subject knowledge should be derived from instructional practice in as much as practice should be influenced by knowledge. Jita and Ndlalane (2009), agree that collaborative clustering in subject-related interactions break down barriers of teacher isolation, thus improving classroom practices. Ensuring a continuous interaction of leaders may enable real classroom instructional changes for the History subject.

It was also established that the most unresolved issue about the nature of district and school interactional instructional activities is on the control of such interactions. It seems formally appointed leaders do not intend to let go of their control mechanisms, while most leaders felt the hierarchical system of the education system was having a negative impact on the productivity of such interactional practices. From interviews, through questionnaires and observations, strong sentiments on issues related to control emerged with indications that controversy existed. This finding touched on the control-autonomy dichotomy which has pervaded school-district relations. Stanley (2011), in agreement with the feelings of most leaders in this study, posits that a democratic, symmetrical power structure for district- school leaders' interaction will equalize control for History instructional activities. This will enable the taking of various roles, as observed during some of the seminars in the district, in which leaders could be facilitators, presenters, note-takers, questioners, cheerleaders and even novices. It confirmed literature (ibid.) that History leaders benefit most from collaborative activities when the control of such

activities is fluid. A sense of group ownership is created and such an arrangement of distributed leadership as discussed in the conceptual framework is productive to the teaching and learning of the subject.

4.4.2. Policies and structures that guide interactions between the district and schools for History instructional leadership

Findings of the study suggest that there is no policy in the district to guide instructional leadership for History. Although plans of actions and schedules existed, these are not regarded as policy as they do not exist in Ministry statutes. This finding resonated with the observations of Rorrer *et al.* (1987) that districts have vague ideas of how they should relate with schools in matters of instructional leadership. It is such a lack of clarity that has resulted in contradictory expectations from school leaders and district leaders, as there is lack of sanctions in place to ensure all leaders and schools participate in these activities. It was established that the better resourced schools participate when they choose and from most observations it was evident that they felt they had little to gain so would not participate. A policy would ensure that such anomalies do not exist, especially if initiated by the government. District leadership should also have the capacity to enforce compliance to give such activities the weight they deserve. Although work plans for each term were made available, these could not be considered as policies, as demonstrated by the behaviour of some schools and leaders who could chose to participate or not. A policy can also assist the DHMC to distribute its activities well. Leaders suggested that there was too much concentration on A' level instructional activities and many of the respondents pointed out that this was the case because members of the DHMC were A level teachers who were mainly concerned about pass rates. A clear policy would guide them to include more frequently other instructional leadership practices, such as experimenting with teaching methods of New History. A policy is important in guiding resource mobilization as organizations would not want to give money to programmes without clear policies.

It emerged from the study that most participants favour a view that committees for instructional leadership should be made up of specialists in the subject. Membership of the committees was as ordinary as any other committee, and it was not encouraging to note that all of the sitting members were not History leaders. Because most members of the DMC were not renowned History teachers, it emerged that they were sometimes taken for

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granted by those leaders who had the knowledge and skills for History teaching and learning. There is a need for all History instructional structures to be made up of specialists in the subject if they are to bring motivation to other leaders, thus agreeing with the finding of Quinn (2002), that instructional leaders must be able to influence others to carry out appropriate instructional practices with their best knowledge of the subject. An arrangement whereby those with skills and knowledge are given leadership positions was found to motivate other leaders to participate in collaborative activities.

There was an emerging and consistent suggestion by respondents and participants, however, that the absence of a district structure specifically for students was hampering instructional leadership activities, as collaboration was supposed to involve students who are critical stakeholders in the teaching and learning of History. Findings suggest that there is much dictation to students by leaders without receiving any input from students, who should be allowed to operate like proto-historians if the teaching and learning of the subject is to be activity-based, as suggested by the New History concept. Stanley (2011) suggests that although many instructional leaders feel that involving students in structures of district-school meetings is irrelevant, there is need for an alignment if district-school interaction activities are to be more rewarding. Instructional strategies are considered to be more effective if they involve students at classroom level, therefore more of such involvement is needed at the district level.

4.4.3. Practices that define interactions between schools and districts for instructional leadership in History

Blasé and Blasé(2000) suggests that, " In many schools, teachers are developing a collaborative practice of teaching which includes coaching, reflection, group investigation of data, study teams which create a "community of learners"(p.130). This practice was reported to produce effective instructional leadership. In the current study it was established that the most outstanding practices that define interactions between schools and the district were seminars, which were highly rated by all respondents to the questionnaire and the most frequent instructional leadership activity in the district. Interviews and observations confirmed the same view, with leaders regarding seminars in which students and teachers meet and discuss examination questions as an important instructional activity, as they have a direct impact on students' outcomes, as indicated by the A level national

performance for the subject in which the district was in the top ten, with three of the district schools performing excellently in History. Leaders attributed such high performance to the frequency of seminars, in which staff members kept up with current practices in History teaching. However, leaders felt that although seminars were producing the desired outcomes, there was too much concentration on A' levels and a need to consider more such instructional activities for O'level and even junior levels.

Other instructional practices in the collaboration of schools and the district were workshops, in which teachers and leaders could meet and discuss teaching approaches. Leaders suggested that such instructional activities were the most important, but the district was not giving them the attention they deserved, with activities skewed towards examination preparation. According to Mervis (2009), the workshop-style delivery remains prominent in collaborative instructional practices because it is an easy way out, and people want to 'do things the workshop way'. Unlike the findings of Mervis (2009), this study showed that real workshops for instructional expertise development were limited, and leaders felt the manner in which they were held could be improved. Respondents, participants and informants all pointed to the need to invite college and university lecturers to facilitate instructional activities, believing that bringing this would provide a great opportunity for staff development. Literature on how instructional workshops should be held suggests that the workshop culture should be driven from the ground up. Leaders were found overwhelmingly to value professional development that provides connection between their classroom practice and activities at the district level.

Leaders, however, bemoaned the absence of classroom-based instructional interactions between the district and the schools. Leaders suggested that it would benefit the teaching and learning of History if collaboration would include classroom visits on which leaders would observe and discuss History lesson. This way, it was envisaged, leaders would appreciate different contexts of the district and thus be better able to assist each other. During observation of instructional activities it emerged that leaders who were not used to sharing or learning from each other found the district centres uncertain and unfamiliar. In most cases, leaders could not move from polite formal discussions as most participants looked hesitant to disagree. Taking instructional interaction activities to the classrooms may bring out the reality of instructional practices in which leaders may openly speak about their conditions, as well as staging role-plays and enabling productive dialogue (Stanley, 2011). It emerged from the study that most History leaders retreat into comfort

zones of 'what works for me in my classroom' each time they return to their centres. Visiting leaders in their own school environments might transform a pseudo-community of leaders into a far more interactive group that engaged in more robust practices.

Findings from the study also portrayed a perennial challenge to the focus of History interactional practices for the district. An emerging trend was that it was unclear from the leaders' views and their observed activities whether interaction should be to improve content knowledge, to develop changes in instructional pedagogy, or both. A study by Grossman, Wineburg, and Woolworth (2000) established that professional instructional interactions should be twofold, fostering subject area learning and pedagogical development. As in the above case (ibid.), in this study conflicts between those leaders seeking direct classroom matters and those seeking distant intellectual renewal were vivid. A balance between the two purposes of instructional interactions should be established to make collaborative work more productive.

4.4.4. The coordination of district and schools' instructional leadership practices

Establishing how instructional collaboration between the district and the schools are coordinated was important because the coordination of instructional practices determines the extent of the existence of a shared vision in the district. According to Curry (2008), instructional interaction activities become more useful when they derive their impetus and energy from participants, as this offers a valuable sense of initiative and control. Printy and Marks (2002) argue that shared instructional leadership involves active collaboration of leaders on curriculum, instruction and assessment. It was established that most instructional activities in the district are coordinated by NASH. The Association of Secondary Heads directed all instructional activities by its appointment of the HIC in charge of district instructional activities, an arrangement found to be both strength and a limitation. It was found to be strength in that NASH has the capacity to direct and control instructional activities, capacity being a crucial aspect of district instructional activities (Jita & Mokhele,). The association was found to carry the authority even to sanction specific behaviour within the interactions, which ironically it was not doing when certain schools would not participate, but without attracting sanctions from NASH. The limitation of having NASH coordinating instructional activities was that it attracted negative attitudes from most teacher leaders, who felt the bureaucratic systems of school heads continue to

haunt them at the district level. NASH, by its nature of being an association of heads of schools was found to be a formal organisation with formal interactive practices. Gruenhagen (2008:183) argues that instructional leadership interactive structures should be "teacher-centred, growing organically from local context with teachers leading and taking responsibility for learning opportunities". This was found to be the dominant feeling of leaders who felt that imposed versions of interactive practice were incommensurate. According to Blasé and Blasé (2000), the restructuring of schools to empower teachers to implement shared decision-making should see movement away from bureaucratic control. A good number of leaders challenged the centralization on instructional activities in the hands of school heads, arguing that some of them were not being promoted, on the basis of instructional abilities, and putting them in charge was stifling instructional development in the district.

It was NASH which appointed the HIC who acted as an overseer of all district instructional activities for the subject. The HIC was found to be a History specialist who demonstrated great vision and instructional knowledge of the teaching and learning of History. The leader knew each History leader in the district, demonstrating that instructional activities of the district were well networked. The HIC, however, accepted that some schools in the district were too large to be controlled by the DMC. The leader showed that they did nothing to enforce compliance from schools, demonstrating a negative attitude towards district activities. The DMC runs activities of instructional interaction and is made up of subject specialists. Findings on this theme testified to the need for History leaders to be in control, flexible and own instructional practices. The need for inclusivity in decision-making, facilitation and participation was clear. Leaders should be given opportunities to participate in multiple ways of instructional leadership. It is suggested that some of the negative attitudes of leaders towards collaboration in instructional practices may be due to the manner in which these activities are coordinated. Involvement of less knowledgeable individuals on specific matters of the teaching and learning of the subject may be dampening spirits of those who specialize in the subject.

4.4.5. Views of leaders on impact of district-school instructional leadership practices on student performance

Instructional leadership literature is clear on the benefits of collaborative practices especially on students' performance. Weingarten in Stanley (2011:1) summed the benefits of instructional collaborative practices thus:

> Imagine a system in which teachers have time to come together to resolve student issues, share lesson plans, analyze student work, discuss successes and failures, and learn through high-quality professional development. Imagine a system in which students can't fall through the cracks- because they're backed by a team of teachers, not just the one at the front of the room.

Literature on instructional leadership suggests that the relationships among instructional leadership, teaching, and even student achievement is not clear (Leithwood *et al.*, 1990) in Blasé and Blasé (2000).Most interviewees saw the overall district rating as a clear testimony of the success of the impact of instructional activities on the performance of students. The district had three of its schools in the top ten performing schools at national level, a mark no other district in the country had achieved. This evidence contradicted literature which still is vague on how district instructional activities can impact on student performance.

As in a similar study by Blasé and Blasé (2000), it emerged from this study that interactions of History leaders promoted professional growth among leaders that cascaded to improved teaching and learning. This is achieved through a process of inquiry, reflection and exploration among leaders (ibid.). Leaders' reflective behaviour was found to result in more varied teaching methods, a finding in agreement with that of Quinn (2002), who argues that instructional leaders must influence others to use appropriate instructional practices in specific subject matter in order to improve students' performance.

The impact of district-school instructional leadership interaction was found to be seriously affected by the context of different schools. Leaders reported on the continued existence of disparity between schools as some of the district schools performed excellently in the subject but still others were among the worst performing schools, despite being active members of district-school interaction programmes. Leaders suggested that some of the instructional strategies suggested at such activities did not take into cognizance prevailing circumstances of some schools. This observation by leaders was found to be in tandem

with that of Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin in Quinn (2002:449), when they argue that, "…teaching behaviours deemed effective in some situations are ineffective or even counterproductive when used too much or in the wrong circumstances. Effective teaching behaviours vary depending on student characteristics, subject matter demands…"Leaders raised the issue of student calibre and resource availability as factors making it difficult to have a clear picture of the impact of collaboration on student performance. It was suggested that in order to counter challenges associated with different context, collaboration in instructional practices should include visits to schools to interact in the classrooms, in which various contextual forces are at play.

4.4.6. Challenges faced by leaders in History collaborative work

A number of challenges were highlighted by respondents to the questionnaire as well as by interviewees. During observations a number of challenges were also noticed. Some of the challenges resonated with from previous studies. Little (2003) argues that collaborative instructional practices are not fool proof. A community of leaders can work together to reinforce old instructional practices. It was stated by a number of respondents that despite meeting frequently to discuss instructional development, old and traditional practices of teacher-centred approaches and the exam orientation of the teaching of History has continued. Informants and respondents suggested that a follow up to the schools would ensure that instructional strategies suggested during collaborative workshops and meetings are implemented in the schools. Collaborative values were seen to be positive and shown by the level of knowledge sharing and the creation of common instructional beliefs, but what remains amiss is a system of follow up in order to get feedback of classroom implementation of strategies.

Another challenge that was observed was the culture of conformity in interactional discussions. Stanley (2011) argues that in subject-based collaborative instructional activities, communities of leaders may promote polite interactions and instil a desire for consensus as groups quickly concur rather than be honest with each other in frank instructional debates. Conflicts regarding History methodologies and desired outcomes for students were missing in most observed sessions of instructional development and this was unnatural. This was found to be true especially during seminar presentations, when only students tried vehemently to seek clarity to academic positions, with most of the leaders

very quick to concur. Fundamental issues of History teaching and learning are by nature conflict-generating and it becomes expected that robust discussions should be allowed to ensue. This can only be possible if leadership of instructional activities is given according to knowledge and skills instead of formal appointments.

Scheid (2006) brings up a challenge of logistical and locational differences and difficulties when it comes to collaborative activities. In Chapter Two, I discussed how issues of context should be taken into consideration in district instructional leadership activities. Some propositions that may apply to one instructional site may not be possible in another centre. Informants and respondents in this study advanced a number of locational and logistical challenges to collaborative engagements in the teaching and learning of History. Isolation of History leaders, as in a case discovered by Conway (2003) of music teachers, was also found to be a challenge. As a result of isolation, constant interactions between leaders and quick communication were found to be difficult, thus impacting negatively on the outcomes of interactive practices. Extremely high teacher-student ratios, poor and outdated sources and negative attitudes of students towards the subject are some of the contextual challenges that leaders should always consider when suggesting improvements in instructional practices.

A major challenge that emerged in the study was the frequency of collaborative activities which was established that because of distance and resource problems, instructional leaders could not meet frequently. Responses from questionnaires and interviews as well as observed data recommended that critical interaction activities beheld once or at most twice a term. The National Staff Development Council (NSDC, 2001) argues that in order to bring real change in instructional practices, collaborative groups should meet in teams on a regular basis. Collaborative communities of practice should operate with commitment to the norms of continuous improvement to engage members in improving their daily instructional work in line with district and schools goals (ibid.). Failure to meet frequently was found to promote isolation which in most cases would result in leaders loosing track of developments of suggested improvements in teaching practice. Despite a hunger for collaborative work between the district and the schools, the scheduled meeting times were found inadequate to evoke reflective instructional practices as it was found that, in most cases, each leader would be operating alone in a secluded place before providing a report at a distant instructional function. In 2009, researchers found clear research support for significant shortcomings in the "inherent, one-shot workshops that many school systems

tend to provide, which generations of teachers have derided"(Darling-Hammond *et al.*,2009:9). Frequent activities would support leaders in identifying and sharing their collective professional wisdom of good practice.

4.4.7. Suggestions on improvement of district-school instructional leadership practices

A number of suggestions were given by respondents and informants on measures that might be put in place to improve collaboration between district and school leaders. The most outstanding suggestion was that these interactional practices should not follow formal channels of district-school management systems. Leaders suggested that the formal channel had been stigmatized and to bring instructional activities into the management fold was tantamount to stifling relations. Respondents argued that administrative functions of the district should be separated from instructional leadership activities.

Another suggestion made by most respondents was the need to bring more variety to instructional leadership activities. It was pointed out that there was too much concentration on examinations and even though this was important, other instructional aspects such as scheming, content selection and teaching methods could be included to make interactional activities more holistic. It was suggested that in as much as History leaders should be well acquainted with examination expectations, and knowledgeable about other curriculum matters that built up to the examination process. Leaders found instructional leadership activities to be seriously skewed towards A' level examinations, evident in the 2014 examinations results when the district schools performed well in national ratings.

Another suggestion that received support from all categories of data was the need to involve pupils more in instructional leadership decisions. The absence of students from most instructional leadership activities was criticised by most respondents who felt that pupil-centred methods and strategies could not be fully implemented as long as pupils remained spectators in district-school instructional activities. Students are leaders of their own learning, hence the need to involve them more. Respondents felt that the involvement of students could give them an opportunity to suggest to other leaders their own expectations and challenges in the teaching and learning of History. The formation of a District History Association for students was considered to be an empowering move that would see them becoming involved in instructional decisions. Respondents felt involving

students only as presenters of papers during seminars was not enough, and it was envisaged that for them to have a real benefit from district-school collaboration they should also be allowed to collaborate at their own level.

Suggestions for improving collaborative activities between the district and the schools included a call for engagement with teacher training institutions and universities involved in teacher development. Respondents pointed out that engagement with such institutions with current instructional knowledge could bring great staff development opportunities to instructional players which will cascade down to instructional strategies in the classrooms. Respondents felt that the district and the schools could take advantage of a development in university learning where a multi-campus system was allowing universities to set up centres in rural settings. This could be a good opportunity to link district-school collaboration to research-based developments in universities.

Establishing better facilities, such as lecture rooms, demonstration rooms and libraries was indicated as a strong move to improve instructional activities. During observations, it emerged that in most district-school instructional activities, leaders would be having only pen and paper and the venues would not allow for any serious instructional demonstration. In one such observation, leaders were very annoyed by the choice of the venue which they considered as unfit for instructional leadership deliberations.

4.6.   SUMMARY

This chapter has presented, analysed and discussed data that was collected using questionnaires, observations and interviews. In some cases data from the three instruments corroborated each other, but in other cases it suggested stark differences in what was being said and/or done. A mixed methods design was chosen precisely for its ability to draw on different data sets to illuminate the issues under investigation. The next chapter presents a brief recap of the findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1.   INTRODUCTION

Interactions between district-and school-based instructional leaders have received much attention in the current atmosphere of educational accountability (Rorrer *et al*, 2008). Effective educational leadership, educational performance and leadership preparation have been found to be only possible when instructional leaders interact amongst themselves. The purpose of this study was therefore to gain an understanding of the policies, structures, activities and programmes that exist between district and schools for collaborative instructional leadership, in order to improve the teaching and learning of History. I found it prudent to examine how the district and school instructional leadership work together, because resource channelling and (school) staff improvement depends on that relationship. The need to address the uncoordinated activities in which leaders are not accountable to each other was considered important in carrying out this study. The continued unsatisfactory teaching practices for History, which are partly a result of the lack of coordinated instructional leadership between schools and districts, also prompted the present study. The major research question that I sought to explore was: How do schools and districts interact in pursuit of instructional leadership for the History subject in Zimbabwe? A number of sub questions guided the conduct of the study: viz.

- What is the nature of the relationships that exist between districts and schools with respect to instructional leadership for the History subject?

- What policies and structures guide the interactions between districts and the schools for instructional leadership in History?

- What practices define the interactions between schools and districts for instructional leadership in History?

- How are the district and schools' instructional leadership practices coordinated?

- How can the existing interactions between district and schools for History teaching and learning be explained and improved?

5.2.   OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The study sought to investigate the interactions between district- and school-based instructional leadership practices for the History subject. Using the Zaka district of Zimbabwe as a case study, the purpose of the study was to gain an understanding of the

policies, structures, activities and programmes of leadership for History at the point of intersection between schools and districts. The context in which I began my study was one where there was a clear divide and separation in the literature on the operations of districts on the one hand and that on the school leaders' efforts on the other hand, with very little research that seeks to link the two groups or bodies of scholarship. My study sought to correct this anomaly by examining the points of interaction between districts and school instructional leadership processes. Furthermore, it was also worrying that only a limited number of cases mostly confined to instructional leadership for Science and Mathematics subjects, had been given prominence in academic and professional circles especially in developing countries. Developments in the provision of instructional leadership for the teaching and learning of History, especially in Zimbabwe, have largely remained a closed book and the need is great to examine especially how collaboration between district and school instructional leadership works to promote changes in the subject curriculum and classroom instructional strategies. As part of the background to my study, there was a sense in which the apparently uncoordinated instructional leadership programmes, activities and strategies between the districts and schools for the teaching and learning of History may have given rise to different performance levels by schools located in the same area. The present study thus sought to establish the existing situation with respect to relationships between district and school instructional leadership practices and to test the assumptions around the poor or lack of coordination and impacts. The study is reported in five chapters and the chapter summaries are given below:

Chapter 1 introduced the contextual environment of the study, spelt out the aims of the study and defined the significance and delimitations of the study, covering the timeline of the fieldwork- which was from January 2014 to November 2014.The geographical boundaries of the study, i.e.in the Zaka district of Zimbabwe, were outlined. The sample of schools, involving 28 secondary schools in the district and the scope delimitations which are limited to instructional leadership for the subject History were defined. Due, in part, to the existence of limited scholarship on the intersection points between district-school instructional leadership or what I have referred to as the interactional practices for the History subject, the disjointed efforts between these two entities, and the seemingly uncoordinated and differential instructional leadership practices leading to different performance in the teaching of the subject and pupils' performance, there was a justified cause to embark on the present study to contribute new knowledge on how districts and

schools can collaboratively improve the practice of instructional leadership. Chapter 1 further argued the existence of a gap in knowledge on the intersectional leadership practices, or more specifically on establishing how districts and school leaders can work together to improve the teaching and learning of History. The chapter closed off with some definition of key terms used in the study, such as instructional leadership, school leadership, district leadership, distributed leadership and instructional leadership interaction practices.

Chapter Two discussed the literature related to the development of the construct of instructional leadership, district and school instructional leadership collaboration, with an aim of borrowing insights from other scholars and grounding this study in both the theory and experiences of these other scholars. Concepts on the development of instructional leadership, school instructional leadership, district instructional leadership and instructional leadership interactions were discussed in order to explore how best interactions between the district and school leadership can be orchestrated, the benefits thereof and the precautions that need to be considered. The conceptual framework examined the interconnectedness of the key concepts in ensuring a healthy instructional leadership interaction process between the district- and school-based leaders for the benefit of practicing staff. The theory of interactions, which was discussed, argued that the interactions of instructional leaders in the subject should preferably be from the ground up and not imposed from the top without considering the contextual setup. The theory of interactions further emphasises constant meetings and discussion between leaders of the interacting partners to derive more meanings from such practices. The conceptual and theoretical frameworks of distributed instructional leadership and the theory of interactions respectively, indicated that interactions between school- and district-based instructional leadership should be fluid and not confined to formal structures, and should preferably follow knowledge, skill and be guided by the context. The reviewed literature, although dealing mostly with the context of developed environments such as the United States of America, Europe and South Africa, was found useful in providing the theoretical explanations to responses and opinions of respondents and participants, as well as giving guidance to data collection methods in this research.

The concept of distributed leadership (Spillane *et al*, 2004) was given serious attention in the literature, primarily because of its position that it is only when instructional leadership follows knowledge, skill and context that useful interactions of leaders may take place.

Case studies of instructional leadership interactional practices from the developed and developing contexts were examined in order to get signposts of good and bad leadership interactional practices. The key argument that I developed through the literature review is that activities and efforts to develop good teaching and learning conditions challenge leaders to collaborate and not only direct one group of leaders to implement whatthe other category of leaders may think as the right procedures. The major conclusion from the literature review was that instructional leadership for History was more likely to be successful if it was approached as a collaborative process between districts and schools, thus re-enforcing the importance of researching this school-district leadership interface.

Chapter Three examined the methodology of the study. A mixed methods approach with the sequential explanatory design was adopted. Research questions 1 to 3 required mostly quantitative data on the nature of the relationships that exist and frequencies of instructional leadership activities, while questions4 and 5required mainly qualitative data that gives descriptions of instructional leadership activities and suggestions on how it may be improved. This mix of data required to answer the research questions compelled the researcher to use the mixed methods approach. The first phase was quantitative, with the questionnaire as the main data collecting instrument, and the second phase was qualitative with observations and interviews as data collection tools. The researcher found this approach fulfilling during the research process as trends that emerged in the quantitative phase, such as relationships, could be explained and clarified during the second phase, in which interviews and observations provided thick descriptions of the phenomenon. Data from the three instruments was presented separately before a concurrent analysis and discussion was done. A multifaceted view to data was made possible by the use of both quantitative and qualitative strategies of data gathering and presentation. A rare opportunity of natural triangulation provided the researcher with moments of multiple perspectives to instructional leadership interactional practices. The experience of this researcher is that the mixed methods approach can add rigour and insights to instructional leadership research. The strengths and limitations of questionnaires, observations and interviews as experienced by the researcher in the study were explained in this chapter. The presentation of data was a mixed experience in which statistical presentation allowed the researcher to work with statisticians in the finer interpretations of the quantitative data, combined with qualitative narrations and descriptions. The methodology of the study,

though with limitations, was found adequate in the articulation of answers to the research questions.

In **Chapter Four** of the study, data was presented using tables, means and standard deviations for the quantitative data and verbatim quotations, detailed descriptions and narrative reports for qualitative data. Analysis of both the data and the literature enabled me to establish points of agreements and disagreement in the scholarship on district-school leadership interactions. It emerged in the discussion of data and literature that there are some gaps between the claims in the literature and the obtaining practice on the ground in terms of the instructional leadership practices for the History subject in the districts. In most cases, leaders' ideas and practices supported some of the key claims in the literature on what is missing in the efforts to improve instructional leadership practices for the improvement of teaching and learning of the subject. Data presentation for the quantitative phase was guided by the objectives of the study. The objectives produced data on the nature of instructional leadership interactions that exist between district-and school-based leadership, the policies and structures that guide interactions between district-and school-based instructional leadership, practices that define instructional leadership interactions, the coordination of district-school instructional leadership and measures that may be used to improve such instructional leadership activities. Ten emerging themes were used to guide the presentation of data from the interviews. The themes included issues relating to appointment and roles of leaders, opinions of leaders on the utility of interactions, structures and policies for instructional leadership interactions, the coordination of instructional leadership activities, dominant programmes for instructional leadership interactions, factors promoting collaborative instructional leadership practices and the impact of the interactions on the teaching and learning of the subject and student performance in the History subject. A focus on the key activities was used as a way of presenting data from the observations and a summary of the five major instructional leadership activities was provided. The first activity to be observed was a seminar for A' level instructional leaders, the second was a workshop for Heads of Departments (HODs) and subject specialists (SS) to evaluate mid-year examinations, the third activity was a subject panel on lesson observations and script writing, the fourth was a workshop to prepare for district examinations and the fifth activity was a seminar for History leaders concentrating on book supervision and A' level examinations preparation.

The present chapter, which is the last of this study, provides the summary, conclusions and recommendations. It starts with the introduction in which a summary of the background to the study is provided. It then gives an overview of the study in which literature presentation as well as the empirical process on instructional leadership for the History subject is discussed. A summary of each chapter is then given before the presentation of the main findings of the study. This chapter also provides an overview of the whole study in relation to the research questions. It summarises the whole research process from the research problem, methodologies used, the results and the contribution of this study to instructional leadership for the subject of History. The chapter provides answers to the research inquiry and also revisits the limitations of the study and makes recommendations drawn from the conclusions of the study. Recommendations for instructional leadership practice in the subject and for further study form a critical component of this chapter as well as an acknowledgement of the existence of more gaps in instructional leadership literature despite the successful completion of this study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the contribution of this study and ends with my own final reflections on the experiences of doing this study and the entire process of research.

5.3. MAIN FINDINGS

The study sought to examine the interactions between district and school-based instructional leadership for the History subject in the Zaka district of Zimbabwe. It sought to find out the nature of the relations between the leaders in respect to instructional leadership for the History subject, to establish what policies and structures guide the interactions between districts and the schools, assess practices that define instructional leadership interactions between schools and district for History and to suggest measures that may be implemented to improve collaboration between districts and schools in order to improve teaching and learning in the History subject. Findings on each objective that was set forth are now summarized thematically.

5.3.1. The nature of district-school instructional leadership interaction relationships

The emerging themes from the data, which appear to support the findings by Blasé and Blasé (2000), showed that the prescriptive model of instructional leadership interaction

was the more dominant interactional practice for History leaders in the Zaka district. The model that was observed, which was also described by participants and informants mainly involves direct assistance to teacher leaders, mostly through staff development and curriculum development workshops and seminars. There is a sense in which a better model of interactional practices would have been one where the instructional leadership interactions would be informal and emergent, as the prescriptive model is notorious for its bureaucratic tendencies which may delay implementation of instructional changes. In unison with the arguments of Spillane *et al.* (2004), the leaders felt that hierarchical formalities and procedures were commanding a sacred level of reverence in the district, which hindered the useful interactions of leaders. Using formal channels of leadership was found to result in rather tense instructional leadership arrangements which created rigid relations for those involved in assisting teachers to improve the teaching and learning of History.

The findings of this research on the nature of instructional leadership interactional relationships between the district and the schools were interpreted as suggesting that despite leaders having positive attitudes towards collaborative work for purposes of enhancing the teaching and learning of History, rigidity, which is a result of the continued top-down approaches to leadership, has prevented the uptake of many of the instructional leadership activities for the History subject in the district. Most leaders sampled, in both the quantitative and the qualitative phases of the study, concurred with the distributive leadership literature that impositions from the top district leadership tended to stifle interactive practices resulting in most school leaders erecting buffers to interactions. Leaders who participated in both phases of the study hinted that the continued existence of directive tendencies in the interactions of district and school instructional leadership was undermining genuine interactive practices, as such practices gave rise to the 'egg carton' structure in which district and school leaders isolate each other from substantive interaction with peers for purposes of improving teaching and learning (Stanley, 2011). The emerging view of most leaders was in accord with that of Woods and Roberts (2013), who argue that unless instructional leadership interactions are a property of all individuals, the impact on student outcomes is insignificant. Leaders pointed out that the nature of district- and school-based instructional leadership interactive practices should not be mandatory as this destroys trust and collegiality on the part of interacting leaders.

Contrary to insights from such authors as Blasé and Blasé (2000) which suggest that instructional leadership practices should be continuous, in order to develop some permanence, instructional leaders from both the quantitative and qualitative stages of the study pointed out that the collaborative instructional leadership activities in their district were seasonal and confined to one major instructional activity of examination preparations of A' level pupils. Most leaders felt that this was inadequate; arguing that it was unlikely to produce dramatic results on teaching and learning behaviours or student outcomes as there was little scaffolding for both staff and students of History on how to achieve the results. Respondents to the questionnaire and interviews concurred that other instructional leadership skills were severely underrepresented in the programme of activities, thus failing to produce a well-rounded History instructional leader for the effective guidance of teaching and learning in the subject. Responses from interviewees also suggested that leaders were uncertain about how they should interact, although they seemed clear on be benefits of such interactions. A more comprehensive programme of activities was suggested by most leaders so as to enable them to collaborate in all areas of instructional leadership for the subject. Although they considered the interaction of district- and school-based instructional leaders as useful, they were quick to point out that such interactions would not be a panacea for all the challenges of change in the subject of History, as a tendency to interact for purposes of maintaining the status quo was a common feature of the interactional practices in the district.

The literature review and findings from the study suggests that the culture of instructional leadership rigour still needs to be developed in most institutions. From the observations, it emerged that there was a tendency among leaders to agree, without seriously interrogating issues of instructional leadership for the subject. The collaborative nature of district-and school-based instructional leadership practices is not as effective as leaders expect it to be. Resonating with previous studies, such as Scheid (2006), the findings of the present study confirmed that most district- and school-based instructional leadership interactional practices fall into the traditional workshop and examination preparation model as most leaders found these to be safe zones for collaboration. Leaders felt that bringing external facilitators to some of the district and school instructional leadership activities might provide a more uncompromising stance to the instructional leadership discussions. It became clear from the findings that although traditional channels and practices of instructional leadership such as the role of District Education Officers and inspectors

remain important in the provision of instructional leadership guidance, there is serious need to transform them if they are to remain acceptable to school instructional leaders.

5.3.2. Structures and policies that guide district-school instructional leadership interactions

A major finding of this study, in agreement with Rorrer *et al.* (2008) was that District Education Officers (DEOs) are ill-prepared to promote practices for subjects such as History because most are not trained in any specific subject to secondary levels. Findings from the quantitative phase were consonant with conceptions of district leadership which argue that no serious instructional leadership direction can be given by the district if no proper structures to guide such changes exist at the district level (Marzano and Waters, 2006). Leaders felt that it was pertinent that useful structures be put in place before a programme of instructional leadership interaction was generated, to avoid a situation in which leaders interacted for its own sake. It was therefore not surprising that most History leaders bemoaned the absence of specialist education officers to guide district and school instructional leadership interactions. This finding raises a major question for research and policy on the structures of education, that is, on whether the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education of Zimbabwe needs to review the present structure of provincial or district leadership, or both, for improved instructional leadership.

The findings suggest the need for redeployment of subject specialists who are currently located at provincial level to the district level to provide more effective instructional leadership in the History subject. Most leaders pointed out that there were policy and structural contradictions between the provincial and district structures for instructional leadership. Most district officers for example, were found to be trained up to the primary level, and hence are ill-prepared to guide instructional leadership activities for most secondary school specialization areas. The leaders felt that there could be more benefits for collaborative instructional leadership activities if subject specialists who are presently stationed at the provincial levels were reassigned to district instructional leadership roles.

Collaborative structures were found to be rather reluctant to tap on both local and external expertise to produce collective instructional leadership wisdom for the teaching and learning of History. Structures and policies were considered by participants and informants to be inadequate to the task of producing reflective and shared inquiry of instructional

leadership strategies for the History subject. The sustenance of useful structures for district-school based instructional leadership practices was seen to be hinged on the inauguration of a strong incentive- and resource-based support system (Curry, 2008). Leaders thus called for a serious paradigm shift on how structures for History instructional leadership interactive practices were incentivized. Structural constraints were considered a limiting factor in district and school instructional leadership interactive activities for improved teaching and learning.

Communication structures were also considered unsuitable to bring about change in History instructional leadership practices, as these were found to be more traditional and authoritarian, to the detriment of collegiality. Most leaders who completed the questionnaire suggested that better and informal channels of communication could help to develop links with the struggling school leadership for the History subject and thus develop a community for instructional leadership interaction in the same manner as the instructional communities of practice (Little, 2002). My observations of the five key instructional leadership activities in the district clearly showed that, without a clearly developed communication channel, collaborative activities between the district and school leaders would be futile. The issue of some leaders having failed to get the communication came up several times in workshops and seminar deliberations. Most policies on district-school instructional leadership interactions were considered by respondents to be incommensurate with democratic developments which provide the socio-political contexts for the History instructional leadership. Findings from the study suggests that there is need to establish structures which are well constituted to provide instructional leadership guidance to both district and school based practices.

5.3.3. Practices that define the interactions between schools and district for instructional leadership in History

It was established from the findings, as discussed in chapter four, that instructional leadership interactional practices between the district and the school leaders was narrow and tended to be seasonal. Results from both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study suggest that frequently used strategies for instructional leadership interactions were not providing the most desirable effects to instructional improvement for the subject. Practices that were common in the interactions of schools and the district were considered

by most leaders as inadequate in producing refined guidance to the teaching and learning of the History subject. Furthermore, the findings indicated that the traditional model of workshops and examination preparations still dominated instructional leadership practices in the district. In agreement with the views from the literature, for instance Mervis (2009), I found that most district-and school-based instructional leadership interactional activities were in the workshop style, in part because it is considered an easy way out and most leaders seemed to enjoy doing things in ways they were accustomed to. The workshop style was however considered to be mainly theoretical and thus limited in providing hands-on-experience to instructional leadership for the subject.

Most of the activities were found to be congested to the second term of the school calendar, a time that is usually set aside for examination preparation. As with the findings of Jofre and Schiralli (2002), examination-linked activities were found to be dominating district- and school-based instructional leadership collaboration. Leaders felt that concentrating mostly on A' level instructional leadership guidance to teachers for examination preparation was seriously limiting their scope and potential of instructional leadership in the schools. As in the case study by Little (2003), a number of leaders felt that a more generative power for instructional leadership change in the schools could be created if interactional instructional leadership activities were widened to include such issues as content selection, planning and scheming of actual lesson, lesson delivery and classroom management, in addition to examination issues. This was considered important because leaders felt that in their instructional guidance to staff, a number of them were found wanting. Leaders felt that it was only proper for them to be well acquainted with the expectations of leadership. The concentration of practices on limited activities was considered monotonous by most leaders, who felt that there was need to bring in more activities linked to syllabi interpretation, content organisation as well as selection of instructional strategies. A number of instructional activities and opportunities suggested in the literature and the theoretical framework were found to be missing in the district' programme of action. In concordance with some of the literature(West,2011), some of the leaders accepted that History instructional leadership knowledge should be derived from instructional practices in as much as practice should be influenced by knowledge, and that concentrating on matters of examination guidance and preparation was limiting knowledge generation and practical experiences.

The study also established that most practices were district-centred as school leaders were expected to come to district centres for guidance on instructional leadership activities. This arrangement was found to perpetuate top-down interactions, confirming the finding by Printy & Marks (2003), on the frequency of such interactions and the feeling that they were not suitable for genuine instructional leadership practices for the improvement of teaching and learning. Instructional leadership practices between the district and the school leaders were considered by most informants and participants to be reinforcing old History leadership approaches as opportunities for leaders to observe one another were limited in part because of the location of most of the instructional leadership activities at district centres. Locating instructional leadership activities in the schools was considered more realistic in efforts to improve the teaching and learning of the subject as local conditions for leaders would be considered a factor. It can be stated that there is need, as suggested by findings, to relocate instructional leadership collaboration activities between districts and schools from district centres where they are usually held to schools where contextual factors are at play.

5.3.4. The coordination of district and schools' instructional leadership practices for the History subject

One of the most contested issues of the interaction of district and school-based instructional leadership found in both the literature review and the empirical study was in the coordination of these activities. In agreement with the views of May (2013), leaders argued that there was some tension in the district as to who should control and coordinate instructional leadership activities in the district. The tension between the central district leadership and school-based leaders was found to be seriously affecting instructional leadership aptitudes. Literature, including Gruenhagen (2008), and findings from this study confirm that instructional leadership between districts and schools should be school-leader-centred and grow organically from a local context, with school leaders taking coordination responsibilities for supervision and leadership opportunities. Most leaders were of the opinion that the involvement of NASH and the District Inspectorate was hampering genuine instructional leadership interactions in the district as formal connotations of such leaders brought about a 'boss-subordinate' relationship which hindered the development of a distributed leadership framework. Although a number of specialist leaders were found to be involved in the coordination of instructional leadership

activities, school leaders felt that more decision making powers should be granted to subject specialists who in this case are school leaders with knowledge and skills in the teaching and learning of the subject.

Consistent with Curry (2008), the leaders felt that when they participate willingly in collaborative work, they may unconsciously accept new knowledge and skills for instructional leadership change. Instructional leadership collaborations for History were considered more useful when they derive their impetus and energy from participants, as this offers a valuable sense of initiative and control. The distinction between interactions as determined from within by the interacting leaders or as an imposition from without was found to be significant. It was established in this study that most leaders value instructional strategies and skills that show some coherent connection between a school's local contexts and their classroom experiences. Leaders demonstrated that they had very little patience with activities and programmes imposed on them by the district. It emerged from both literature (Mervis, 2009) and the present study, that there were exciting learning opportunities for instructional leaders when collaboration between the district and the schools was left in the hands of school leaders.

The involvement of heads of school and District Education Officers in the coordination of instructional leadership activities was considered to be counterproductive for improvements in the teaching and learning of History. Leaders felt that formally appointed leaders were more preoccupied with administrative issues of management than instructional matters of the subject. Most school leaders pointed out that on a number of occasions they would spend time on matters of professional conduct of leaders in the schools instead of dealing with matters to do with teaching and learning of the subject. Data from the observations also confirmed these sentiments with officials from the Public Service Commission (a ministry that deals with the employment and working conditions of civil service), given a lot of time during meetings, which most leaders felt could have been assigned to deliberations of History instructional leadership matters. Leaders felt that school heads were not the best candidates for the coordination of instructional leadership activities as most were not specialists in the subject. Participating leaders, however, accepted the involvement of the head in charge of the district History instructional leadership activities as they felt that he was a subject specialist who was well versed in instructional leadership expectations of the subject. Resonating with positions of scholars such as May (2013), most leaders argued that formal leaders, no matter their levels of

talent, could not make the equity agenda thrive without concomitant coordination from school leaders. Participants argued that there was a need for the formally appointed leaders to delegate instructional leadership responsibilities to informal instructional leaders whose status was unlikely to generate indifferent attitudes among other instructional leaders.

5.3.5. Impact of district-and school-based instructional leadership interactions

Findings from the study resonated with researched positions that well-orchestrated interactions of district-and school-based instructional leadership would produce greater confidence for participating leaders (Haack, 2003). Leaders who were interviewed and those who completed questionnaires concurred that their confidence in content organisation and lesson delivery instructional leadership guidance to teachers had improved as a result of their interaction with seasoned instructional leaders, especially those involved in examination guidance strategies. It emerged that leaders could now take more risks in experimenting with new instructional leadership strategies. Those leaders who participated in instructional leadership interactions were seen to have developed strong beliefs in what they were doing and demonstrated, during observations, an enthusiasm for more collaboration and a desire to bring changes to the way leaders guided colleagues on instructional practices in the teaching and learning of History. Leaders agreed that in those activities with which they had engaged, their knowledge and practice had been enhanced. Most leaders admitted that collaborative instructional leadership practices had resulted in them accepting new approaches of instructional guidance to the teaching of the subject in which teachers and students are allowed to go beyond the four walls of the classroom as they also interact with those from other centres through seminars and workshops. History instructional leadership and even teaching in the district were observed to be taking on board collaborative strategies which are central to the New History instructional leadership approach.

Leaders at both the district and school leadership levels attributed the performance of the overall national ratings in national examinations, with the district having three of its schools in the top ten, to the positive impact that district-school instructional leadership activities was having on student outcomes. Leaders' views from the questionnaire, interview and observations all suggested that students in the district were showing evidence of benefiting from leaders' interactions, as shown by the improved attitudes of

teachers towards instructional leadership which also had resulted in good attitudes of pupils towards the History subject, especially when they were supposed to go out with their school leaders for seminars and workshops for the subject. Leaders argued that even though uniformity in instructional leadership practices at different schools was not one of their goals, it was interesting to them that most schools had registered an improved pass rate for the subject in the district, a result they attributed to the collaboration of leaders on instructional leadership matters.

The majority of the participants suggested that the widening of instructional leadership activities for the subject was more likely to promote staff development in good instructional leadership practices for the subject. The participants pointed out that, more instructional leaders, such as heads of department, should be involved in activities such as staff supervision procedures and networking in order to bring out more benefits from leaders' interactions.

5.3.6. Understanding existing interactions and suggested ways of improving district- and school-based instructional leadership practices

Existing interactions between district-and school-based instructional leadership are mostly viewed by leaders as mandatory activities which are not leader initiated. This obtaining scenario is contrary to insights from literature which proposes leader-initiated programmes of action (Stanley, 2011).Some of the leaders agreed that they mostly engaged in them in order to fulfil a duty and lacked a sense of real benefit because they were mostly invited to participate without consulting them first on what they really need improvements on. A number of suggestions for the improvement of these interactions were proffered by participants and informants. Among the suggestions was a call for the involvement of university and teachers' colleges lecturers to bring an external and scholarly flavour to such instructional leadership activities. A wider spectrum of activities, including syllabi interpretation, content selection and experimenting with instructional strategies, were also suggested as ways of improving collaborative engagements for instructional leadership for the History subject.

A suggestion made by a number of participants, especially in the interviews, was the need to take instructional leadership practices between the district and the schools to the school context. Unique local conditions were found to be impeding successful instructional

leadership strategies because such suggestions were not considerate of local contexts. The leaders felt that interacting at school sites would result in more realistic developments in instructional leadership practices for the subject. Both the literature (Firestone and Martinez, 2007) and the empirical study confirm that the best way to understand and improve instructional leadership for the History subject was to solicit and incorporate the school based leaders' views on the best ways of organizing learning and teaching as opposed to imposing too many ideas from outside the school context. A situation in which instructional leaders can visit one school and spend a day discussing and experimenting with instructional leadership strategies was considered by leaders to be ideal as opposed to just inviting school leaders to the district and then directing them to use strategies which might not otherwise apply in their schools.

5.4.   SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The following are the main findings of the study:

1. The nature of relationships between district-and school- based instructional leadership is rather vague and arbitrary, to the extent that instructional leaders are receiving conflicting signals pertaining to their roles and obligations in improving teaching and learning strategies for the subject of History.

2. Policies and structures for History instructional leadership, at both the district and school levels, are not well established and the attempt to use formal leadership seems to create indifferent attitudes and aptitudes to efforts to improve the teaching and learning of History as a subject. The existence of both the district and provincial instructional leadership structures appears to bean unnecessary duplication of roles and either of the two structures could be strengthened to do the task better alone.

3. Instructional leadership practices should be wide enough to cater for all aspects of instructional guidance to teaching and learning and not be confined to issues of examination only. This is important in order to equip leaders with knowledge and skills to transform the way teachers teach the subject in the schools generally.

4. Instructional leadership activities should not only be carried out at district centres but also need to be taken to the schools where in the local and contextual factors will be able to inform the efforts to improve the way the subject is taught. A number of instructional

leadership strategies suggested for teachers without viewing contextual factors have been found to be unworkable in some school set-ups.

5. Instructional leadership collaborations between district-and school-based leaders for History appear to have boosted the confidence of leaders in their efforts to assist teachers to improve the teaching and learning of History, even though there is still a need to make them more conforming to school leader and local conditions.

5.5.   CONCLUSIONS

Instructional leadership collaboration between district- and school-based leaders is critical for the provision of better guidance to efforts for the improvement of the teaching and learning of History. However, it is mainly through the creation of trust and patience by leaders at different levels that the fruits of the instructional leadership interactions are more likely to be realised. The creation of positive relationships between leaders themselves is fundamental before similar relations can be created between leaders and teachers of History. The study established that History instructional leaders at both the district and school levels consider interactions for purposes of improving teaching and learning as important for the creation of trust and respect among leaders. The study therefore concludes that the potential of instructional leadership interactional practices between district and school based leadership for the History subject can be rich and useful if coordination of such interactions is bottom-up rather than top-down. The knowledge of the instructional leaders of History pertaining to the context and practice of the subject should not be underrated for it has far reaching implications to the success or failure of collaborative instructional leadership practices for subject. It is not far-fetched therefore to conclude that until subject instructional leadership practices are coordinated and carried out at the school level wherein the locational conditions can be taken into consideration, it may be difficult to realize their full-potential. Leaders need more opportunities for routine and informal interactions around instructional leadership to keep them abreast with trends of modern instructional leadership practices, but these should not be imposed from the top.

The findings of the study showed that leaders get bored by monotonous instructional leadership activities that are narrow and detached from their own contextual conditions. One conclusion from this finding is that there is a need for varied and contextualised district- and school-based instructional leadership practices. The activity bandwidth of

instructional leadership activities should be widened to accommodate various instructional leadership aptitudes and not only be skewed towards examinations. The continued promotion of top-down instructional leadership approaches in matters of the teaching and learning of the subject of History are contradictory to the notion of the "New History" approach by which teachers and students should be masters of their own learning and teaching strategies.

The role of the district in History instructional leadership is questionable to say the least, given that there are no subject specialists at the district level to guide instructional leadership. It emerged in this study that most district instructional leaders were not specialists in their subject, especially those who made up the district inspectorate. These leaders had to wait for provincial leaders to "come down" and provide guidance on the subject linked instructional leadership practices. There is a need, therefore, for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education of Zimbabwe to reduce policy and structural duplication and contradictions by perhaps choosing between having the province or district as the centre of instructional leadership for the schools. It was established in this study that most Education Officers at the district level were trained up to the primary level, hence they seemed ill-prepared to lead instructional leadership activities for secondary school subjects such as History. District instructional leaders should be subject specialists if they are to maintain the focus on instructional issues as opposed to straying over to administrative issues which subject specialists might not find relevant.

Findings from the study suggest that participants consider the involvement of heads of departments and subject heads to be as important for effective instructional leadership in schools. It then follows that until instructional leadership interactions involve all stakeholders, they may not produce the desired effects as they miss what matters most. Most school leaders seem to take the view that anything that was done without them was not theirs to implement. Discussing instructional matters that affect staff members without them may be difficult to achieve, especially in the face of New History approaches which advocate that staff members should be empowered to try new approaches that suit their own conditions without being stuck to prescriptions.

It may also be concluded that instructional leadership activities between district-and school-based leaders need regular external input to prevent inbreeding of instructional leadership strategies which may be geared towards maintaining the status quoin teaching and learning of the subject. This conclusion is predicated on the notion that some of the

local facilitators were found to lack knowledge and skills to convince the participants on the need for change in the subject of History.

5.6.   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In this section, I take note of some limitations of the present study in order to enable improvements for future studies of a similar nature.

It may not be possible to generalize the findings of this study to all districts of Zimbabwe considering that the study was confined to one district of the ten provinces of Zimbabwe. A study in more or even in a different district may lead to similar or different findings. The fact that Zaka is a predominantly rural district may suggest the need for further studies of the interactions between district and school leadership in urban districts that may not suffer from some of the limitations of a rural set up.

The study was also confined to only one subject area, History, among a number of subjects that are offered in the Zimbabwean secondary school system. Findings of this study may need to be tested with other subject areas. The number of participants in the study, 28 for the questionnaire, 5 for the interviews and 5 observed instructional activities might also have restricted collection of a wider offset of data on interactional instructional leadership practices.

The period of study, of one year, might also have confined the researcher to data from seasonal events which a longer period of study may be able to offset. In addition, data was collected from district and school leaders only, which may prevent more authoritative claims about provincial leaders in the findings. In the recommendations and suggestions from the informants, reference is made to the need to include more stakeholders and thus a more comprehensive study may be needed.

5.7.   CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

Notwithstanding the challenges faced and limitations of the study and being aware that no single study can provide all answers to questions about instructional leadership at the

point(s) of intersection between schools and districts, I am strongly convinced that this study begins to make a strong contribution to the scholarship on instructional leadership practices that involve schools and districts, especially for the subject of History. The literature on instructional leadership practices, especially for History in Zimbabwe, is limited to non-existent, owing to the many curriculum changes that have taken place and the role of the subject in ideological contestations of the curriculum. This study will go a long way in encouraging a collaborative and collective approach to instructional leadership for the teaching and learning of History as the findings suggested that district-school collaborative instructional leadership practices really work if they are enacted in proper ways. Research on instructional leadership for the teaching and learning of History has mostly been informed by studies from Europe and North America and it is hoped that the findings of this study will make a humble contribution in informing researchers on the experiences of district- and school-based leaders on the role of interactive approaches to instructional leadership for History teaching and learning in a developing country context.

The study has also added literature on subject specific instructional leadership practices. Much of the instructional leadership literature is not directly linked to subject domains and this study makes a special contribution in that regard for the subject of History. Through this study, scholars are invited to dialogue that encourages further studies on how the control-autonomy controversy manifests itself in district-and school-based instructional leadership practices.

The study also informs district inspectors of education on the opinions of school leaders as regards their expectations, demands and comments on instructional leadership. In this study most leaders were unanimous that interactions between district and school History leaders should be based on mutual respect and should not be seen as 'witch-hunts'. The major factor to the success of instructional leadership practices were found to be mostly hinged on attitude of the two categories of district and school based leaders.

The study also hopes to generate debate on appropriate policies and structures at the district, provincial and school levels for promoting the instructional leadership in the History subject. Some of the leaders at both the district and school levels began to question the need for the existence of districts as a structure for instructional leadership, primarily because there are no subject specialists at that level. The present study has established that structural arrangements are critical to the work of instructional leadership as they may promote or stifle collaborative work between district- and school-based instructional

leaders and by pointing out the shortfalls of district structures for instructional leadership, this study provides valuable insights on how to reorganise and orchestrate such leadership arrangements within school systems.

The study further provides empirical support for the distributed leadership framework that proposes that instructional leadership practices for the History subject, and for all other subjects, be informal, fluid and following skill, knowledge and also be cognisant of contextual dictations. Findings from both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study showed that leaders consider relations which are based on informal arrangements of knowledge, skill and mutual respect as those which more likely to ensure instructional sharing, development and change. Leaders were clear that they are impatient with dictated instructional leadership programmes. This study therefore provides further impetus to other scholars to examine how district-and school-based instructional leadership may collaborate in a distributed and symmetrical manner in order to improve the teaching and learning of specific subjects.

Finally, this study has contributed a great deal to me personally as a novice researcher of instructional leadership. I have been able to explore a number of scholarly perspectives on instructional leadership, especially those that are informed by the distributed concept. I have grown as a researcher and as person, as a result of my interactions with my supervisor, institutional authorities, informants and participants. The study has opened up a new area of research on instructional leadership collaborations and especially understanding the dynamics of subject based leadership practice at the points of interaction. This is one area of research that is yet to be fully explored in both developing and developed country contexts.

5.7.1. Recommendations for instructional leadership practice

The following recommendations are made regarding the practice of instructional leadership:

1. There is need to train district- and school-based instructional leaders for History in order to develop instructional leadership capacities for the enhancement of their skills and knowledge. It was established in this study that a number of district- and school-based leaders, even while they hold the interactions between schools and districts in high esteem, were not clear on what each of the different categories of leadership was expected to do.

This is especially important in Zimbabwe where there is no instructional leadership qualification required for one to be appointed as an instructional leader at the school or district levels.

2. An external partner to the district-and school-based instructional leadership interactions, such as institutions of higher learning may assist in the promotion of requisite skills and knowledge to enhance instructional leadership interactions. This can be done by bringing in universities and teacher training colleges into the fold of the interactional instructional leadership activities at the district level. A scenario in which university professors can present papers on best instructional leadership interactive practices before the interactive activities are planned and executed can breathe more life into district and school instructional leadership activities.

3. Instructional leadership practices should brought closer to the schools in which locational and contextual conditions can be taken into consideration in efforts to improve the teaching and learning of History. Carrying out most of the activities in the schools on a rotational basis whereby leaders may meet at one school for a day will enable the evaluation of instructional leadership practices in a more realistic manner. Probing various themes that emerged from both qualitative and quantitative findings showed that leaders changed their instructional practices considerably when colleagues suggest that and make a follow up on their practices in the schools. Interview accounts repeated the need to take interactional instructional leadership activities to the schools, in which they could face their real instructional leadership test. The literature in chapter two also reiterated the significance of leaders coming together in school environments, resolving students' and staff problems together, sharing lesson plans, analysing student work together and examining challenges and successes.

4. Instructional leadership policies and structures that are binding and useful to the improvement of History teaching and learning should be established at the district level. Subject specialists could be relocated from the provincial level to the district level to enhance instructional leadership interactional practice. This recommendation is predicated on the finding that most district leaders are ill-prepared to guide instructional leadership discussions because they do not have relevant subject specialisation areas for secondary schools. Findings from this study showed that in as much as structures exist at the district level, no similar structures for purposes of promoting instructional leadership interactions exist at the school level. There is need for school instructional leadership to create

structures that may promote interaction at the school level as well as network with district instructional leadership. It emerged that, in most cases, only one member of the school leadership would participate in district-school interaction activities. Propositions from literature are that such a scenario creates a challenge of institutional support available to participating leaders with which leaders may gain new ideas and skills but be unable to implement them in the school set-up. By providing site specific support, districts may be seen to be improving instructional leadership guidance in the teaching and learning of the subject. School-based instructional leadership interactional practices may provide encouragement as well quick feedback to instructional leaders, which may reinforce good History teaching and learning practices. School leaders may be found to support district wide suggestions to instructional leadership changes if they become involved through the formation of school structures that may link directly with district instructional leadership structures.

5. Instruments to enforce collaborative instructional leadership tendencies between schools and the district should be developed by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to give value and respect to team work in instructional leadership. It emerged from findings that a number of school leaders were choosing between participating in instructional leadership activities or not simply because they sometimes felt no obligation to do so. This was found to be minimizing the benefits thereto other interacting leaders. The centrality of instructional leadership interactions between district-and school-based leadership for the subject of History was found to need statutes to guide and enforce accountability on all school leaders to ensure that no school or district leaders took these activities for granted

6. The coordination of instructional leadership practices should be bottom-up and not top-down so as to empower school leaders in programme initiation and ownership which is critical in fluid and distributed collaborative work. This may be achieved by allowing leaders to run their own activities by removing NASH dictations in issues of instructional leadership and bring in subject specialist to manage all activities linked to efforts of improving the teaching and learning of school subjects.

7. There is an urgent need for leaders at both the district and school levels to widen instructional leadership collaborative activities and actively participate in them if instructional leadership in the teaching and learning of History is to improve. Every teacher of the subject should be persuaded to participate in instructional leadership

programmes for them to be appreciative of measures that may be taken by their leaders in efforts to improve the teaching and learning of History.

5.7.2. Recommendations for further study

The following recommendations for further research on the topic are proposed.

1. This study was confined to instructional leadership practices within just one district of Zimbabwe and further studies are needed to find out what is obtaining in other districts and even other countries in order to get a national and international view which may inform policies of instructional leadership more comprehensively. Such a study may also consider other subjects as case studies which may extend implications to the whole curriculum.

2. The study recommended the devolvement of the office of subject specialists at the provincial level for establishment at the district level in order to enhance informed instructional leadership collaboration. There is therefore need to further investigate the role of province- and school-based instructional leadership interactional practices if such a suggestion is to be taken on board. There is need to establish whether the system needs the province and/or the district in the promotion of instructional leadership practices for the two levels were found to be uncoordinated in matters of instructional leadership strategies, knowledge and skills.

3. It was also established in the study that the coordination of instructional leadership interactional practices is a significant issue in the success of such activities but there is need for further investigation to establish how the autonomy-control dichotomy plays itself in instructional leadership for other specific subjects in the school curriculum. The role of the control-autonomy debate between district- and school-based leadership should be investigated further for it has direct implications to the success or failure of instructional leadership practices for the History subject.

4. In this study, it emerged that a number of leaders were of the opinion that students should be involved as partners in instructional leadership activities but this area has

not been researched on seriously. Research is needed on the role of students and other stakeholders in the promotion of good instructional leadership practices for the History subject.

5.8. FINAL REFLECTIONS ON THE STUDY

Having answered my research questions, I now give my final thoughts on this study of the interactions between district-and school-based instructional leadership practices for the History subject.

Collaboration between and among instructional leaders is demonstrably critical for the development of useful instructional leadership practices, in part because it creates opportunities for sharing and networking among leaders. Uncoordinated instructional leadership practices are costly in terms of differential development for the subject and often lead to resistance from the practicing staff. There is need to reconsider the significance of existing educational structures in terms of their roles in providing instructional leadership for the improvement of teaching and learning. The balance between province-and school- based instructional leadership interactional practices in the district-and school-based instructional leadership practices remains unresolved in my study and therefore needs further study.

I was humbled by the eagerness of respondents and participants to share their views and experiences. They demonstrated some concern and the need to see improvements in the way instructional leadership is provided for the improvement of teaching and learning in History, through strong collaborative instructional leadership practices between the district and the schools. I was humbled by the willingness to participate and go an extra mile to see the success of this study. This study has therefore enriched me academically and challenged my own sense of social responsibility for the development of research and practice on instructional leadership in schools and districts. This study has helped to improve my own conceptions and practices as an instructional leader at a university level, where I have come to appreciate that a person is not just a leader because of formal appointment, but that leadership is a product of mutual interactions with other leaders. I have now come to appreciate more the romance of a leadership approach wherein leaders can be both followers and leaders at the same time. Future scholarship is yet to explore the

interchange between followership and leadership in the context of developing countries. That is perhaps, the next phase of this journey into the scholarship of intersections!

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Appendices

1. **Questionnaire for district and school based instructional leaders**

2. **Interview guide for History instructional leaders**

3. **Observation protocol for instructional leadership activities**

4. **Letter of authorisation from the Permanent Secretary of Primary and Secondary Education**

5. **Ethical clearance letter from the University of the Free State**

Appendix 1: Questionnaire for school and district leaders.

I am carrying out a study on the interactions between district and school based instructional leadership practices for the History subject in Zaka district of Zimbabwe. I am kindly requesting that you complete following questions using a tick and/or an explanation where appropriate. Your help is greatly appreciated and your responses will be kept confidential.

Section A: Biographic Information

Please put a tick in the box that represents your response.

1. Gender: Male   ☐

Female   ☐

2. Leadership experience   0-5 years   ☐

6-10 years   ☐

11-15 years ☐

16-20 years ☐

21+ years   ☐

3. Qualifications   CE/Dip Ed ☐

Degreed Specify…………………………..

Other (Specify)…………………………………………

4. Status   Teacher leader   ☐

Cluster leader   ☐

District subject leader   ☐

District Education officer   ☐

Subject Co-coordinator   ☐

5.Station   School   ☐

Cluster Resource Centre   ☐

District Education Offices   ☐

Section B: Nature of relationships that exist between districts and schools.

6a. How do you view the importance of constant interactions between district and school History leaders?

    (a) Not very useful   ☐

    (b) Useful   ☐

    (c) Very useful   ☐

    (d) Sometimes useful   ☐

6b. Explain your answer in 1a above.

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7a. Interactions between school and district based leadership in this districtcan be rated as good.

      Agree   ☐

      Strongly agree   ☐

      Disagree

      Strongly disagree   ☐

7b. Give any evidence or instances that support your response in 7a above.

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8.What is your perspective on claims that there is an underuse of district-school teamwork capacity in the teaching and learning of History?

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Section C: Policies and structures that guide interactions between district and schools.

9.What policies exist in this district to encourage collaboration of those involved in the teaching and learning of History?

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10a. What structures exist in the district to promote interactions between schools and the district in the teaching and learning of History?

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10b. How useful are such structures mentioned in (10a), above to the improvement of the teaching and learning of History at your school/ in the district?

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Section D: Practices that define interactions between schools and the district.

11.There is a reported increase in district-school interactive programmes in teaching and learning. How is your school/ district responding to this development in the area of History teaching and learning?

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12a.Outline major district- school activities/practices that have shaped the teaching and learning of History in this district?(These may include standardized district tests, seminar presentations for staff and for students, meetings etc.)

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12b. Rank the activities from (12a) above in terms of frequency.

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Section E: Coordination of district-school instructional practices.

13. What role(s) does your district/ school leaders play in the execution of teaching and learning programmes/ activities in the district?

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14a. Only formally appointed leaders are used in school-district teaching and learning programmes.(Formally appointed leaders are those in officially announced positions while informal leaders are those who carry out certain tasks because of their abilities, skill and knowledge even though they are not officially appointed).

Yes ☐   No ☐

14b .Explain your answer in (14a) above.

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Section E: Challenges and measures to improving interactions between schools and the district.

15. What are the key challenges to increasing collaborative activities between the school and the district?

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16. What possible steps can be put in place to improve on the current relationship between the district and schools in the teaching and learning of History?

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17. Which teaching and learning outcomes for History are likely to emerge from a strong collaboration between the district and the school or lack of it?

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18. Make any other comments that related to what district and school based leadership can do to improve the teaching and learning of History.

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Thank You.

Appendix 2: Interview protocol for school and district history leaders

1. Introductory discussion. (Researcher introduces himself, asks background information about the experience of the leader and present designation. Probe the role of the leader and how the leader became appointed in the current position.)

2. What are your views on the need for interactions between school and district based instructional leadership?(observe expressions and attitudes, probe on the reasons for opinions).

3. How can you describe the existing relationships between schools and the district in the teaching and learning of History?(Pay attention to description terms used and probe on such descriptions).

4. What structures meant to promote district and school based instructional interactions exist in schools and at the district level? (Probe on the formulation, suitability and operations of such structures from the school or district perspective).

5. How have district-school interactional practices impacted on the performance of pupils for the history subject? (Probe on evidence of impact and how such impact could have come about).

6. What measures can be put in place to improve district-school interaction practices? (Probe on who should initiate such measures and the sustainability of measures, probe on reasons for suggestions).

7. What factors do you think promote the quality of district and school interaction practices? (probe on how such factors may help and how they may be implemented).

8. What could be some of the barriers to useful interactional practices between the district and school based instructional practices. (Probe on the occurrence of such hindrances, who may be responsible and on how such barriers may be overcame).

Appendix 3: Observation guide for district- school interaction activities

1. Date.......................... Place......................................
Time...

2. Nature of activity (Workshop, meeting, seminar etc).

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3.Participants (Students, school leaders, district leaders or any other resource officials).

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4.Convener(s)

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5.Purpose of activity

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6.Leadership distribution (who was leading,why and how. Report on tools used as well as facilities used for the activity.)

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7.Major issues done, discussed, planned and level of
participation...
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8.Interesting issues noted during the course or soon after the meeting,seminar or
workshop.
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9.Frequency of leadership activity

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Appendix 4: Letter of authorisation from the Permanent Secretary of Primary and Secondary Education

DGOS please assist- A/Red ffevgra

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT,
ARTS & CULTURE (MSV. PROV.)
MAS !GO PROV. EDU. DIRECTOR
2014 -02- 05
P.O. BOX 82, MASVINGO
ZIMBABWE

all communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Primary and Secondary
Education
Telephone: 732006
Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"
Fax:794505

REFERENCE: C/426/3

Ministry of Primary and
Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
HARARE

23 January 2014

Kudakwashe Mapetere
Great Zimbabwe University
Box 1235
MASVINGO

Re: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AT SELECTED
     SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN ZAKA DISTRICT: MASVINGO
     PROVINCE

Reference is made to your application to carry out research at selected Secondary schools in Zaka District, Masvingo on the title:

THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN DISTRICT AND SCHOOL BASED
INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES FOR THE HISTORY
SUBJECT IN ZAKA DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director Masvingo who is responsible for the schools which you want to involve in your research.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for Education, Sport, Arts and Culture.

Z.M. Chitiga
Acting Director: Policy, Planning, Research and Development
For: SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

Appendix 5:   Ethical clearance letter

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Ethics Office   WinkieDireko Building

Faculty of Education

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BarclayA@ufs.ac.za

10 April 2014

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION:

THE INTERACTIONS BETWEEN DISTRICT AND SCHOOL-BASED INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES FOR THE HISTORY SUBJECT IN THE ZAKA DISTRICT OF ZIMBABWE

Dear Mr Mapetere

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Education, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence, is:

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension in writing.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project besubmitted in writing to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Barclay

Faculty Ethics Officer