EXPLORING DISTRIBUTED INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN HIGH PERFORMING ZIMBABWEAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

By

TENHA JOHN

M.Ed. Education Management (MSU); MBA (ZOU).
B.Ed. Educational Administration Planning and Policy Studies (ZOU).
Cert. in Ed. (UZ)

Submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in Education
(PhD Education Management and Leadership)

In the

School of Education Studies, Faculty of Education

at the

University of the Free State

BLOEMFONTEIN

August 2022

Supervisor: Professor Loyiso C. Jita

Co-supervisor: Dr. Thuthukile Jita

DECLARATION

I, John Tenha, declare that the Doctoral Degree research thesis that I hereby submit for the Doctoral qualification PhD in Education Degree at the University of the Free State is my independent work, and that I have not previously submitted it for a qualification at another institution of higher education.

I, John Tenha, hereby declare that I am aware that the copy right is invested in the University of the Free State.

I, John Tenha, hereby declare that all royalties as regards intellectual property that was developed during the course of/and in connection with the study at the University of the Free State, will accrue to the University.

.....

J. Tenha

August 2022

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family for their love, encouragement, understanding and support throughout the academic journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am so grateful to my supervisors, Professor Loyiso C. Jita and Dr. Thuthukile Jita, for their patience, support and guidance during my academic journey. Without their patience and support this study could not have been possible. My sincere gratitude also goes to the Office of the SANRAL Chair, School of Mathematics Natural Sciences and Technology Education for the financial support they accorded to me for this study. I would also like to thank the RIMS team, and all the other members of staff at the University of Free State who contributed to making my academic journey smooth.

I would also like to acknowledge the unwavering support and constant encouragement I got from Dr Banabas Muyengwa and Professor Tungu Mufunani Khosa. They always spared their time to assist me in this academic journey.

I would also like to thank all the participating schools, teachers, and the school principals and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe, for granting me permission to conduct my study in primary schools in Mashonaland East Province.

Recognition also goes to the language editor, Dr Betty Kutukwa Mutambanengwe for her professional work in editing this document. I cannot leave out all my workmates who contributed in various capacities to make this study a success.

Finally, I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to my wife Virginia Tenha and my children, Evans, Elvis and Elton for their support and understanding during the study.

ABSTRACT

Instructional leadership has been one of the most discussed leadership constructs in educational research over the times. The focus of instructional leadership is on principals as the people with all the knowledge to develop schools to greater heights. The increasing workload for principals and the advent of distributed leadership made it prudent for school principals to distribute leadership to other staff members. This practice made use of by effective school principals helped schools to improve their instructional performance. This study was, therefore, motivated by the thought of distributing instructional leadership to all members in a school.

Distributed leadership calls for more players in instructional leadership. This results in the tapping of knowledge and expertise in school members. The aim of this study was to have a deeper understanding of how distributed instructional leadership practices were enacted in high performing primary schools for improved performance. The study focused on examining the main activities that characterised instructional leadership practice in the selected schools. It also focused on how the major activities of instructional leadership align with and or exhibited features of distributed leadership. In specific, the study focused on how distributed instructional leadership is enacted in high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe.

The qualitative research approach and a multiple case study research design were adopted for this study. A sample of three school principals and nine teachers were purposively selected. Structured interviews, observations and document analysis were used to gather data. The study concluded that the school principals were involved in instructional leadership. The principals carried out instructional leadership activities through distributing leadership practices to other members in their schools. Distributed instructional leadership practices were enacted through varied leadership activities undertaken by various school members.

It was established that visioning the school was a key activity of instructional leadership in these successful schools. The schools had specific visions which were developed through collaboration among the principals, teachers and the school community, an example of a distributed instructional leadership practice in the schools. Another finding was that in all the three successful primary schools, managing instruction was prioritised by the principals who all took a distributed approach in executing this activity with their teachers. It was also found that the

schools relied on two major strategies to manage instruction and promote instructional improvement, viz, observation of teaching and feedback together with modelling of exemplary practice by the leadership team. The final finding was that the schools had conducive environments for teaching and learning that they created through professional development and collaborative leadership practice.

The study recommends that principals nurture teachers through distributing leadership to all members to enable them to grow professionally. This has benefits for both teachers and learners. It is also recommended that teachers are made aware of the importance of distributing instructional leadership. Further research on a wider scale on how distributed instructional leadership is enacted in schools is recommended.

Key words: School leadership, instructional leadership, distributed leadership, leadership practices, high performing primary schools, distributed instructional leadership

ACRONYMS

DSI	District Schools Inspector
ECD	Early Childhood Development
PED	Provincial Education Director
PLAP	Performance Lag Address Programme
MoPSE	Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
SDC	School Development Committee
TIC	Teacher in Charge
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
ZIMSEC	Zimbabwe School Examinations Council

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION i
DEDICATION ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS iii
ABSTRACT iiv
ACRONYMS vi
LIST OF TABLES xii
LIST OF FIGURES xiii
LIST OF APPENDICES xiv

CHAPTER 1 1
BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY……..1
1.1 INTRODUCTION 1
1.2 BACKGROUND 2
1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT 6
1.4 THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION 8
1.4.1 Sub-questions 8
1.5 AIM OF THE RESEARCH 9
1.5.1 Objectives of the study 9
1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY 9
1.7 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 10
1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 11
1.9 DELIMITATIONS 13
1.10 LIMITATIONS 13
1.11 DEFINITION OF TERMS 14
1.12 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS……16
1.13 SUMMARY 17

CHAPTER 2 18
LITERATURE REVIEW 18
2.1 INTRODUCTION 18
2.2 LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS 18

2.2.1 Understanding school leadership 19
2.2.2 Understanding principals' leadership roles 19
2.3 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES 22
2.4 MODELS OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP 27
2.4.1 Hallinger and Murphy's model of instructional leadership 27
2.4.2 Leadership practice by Murphy 28
2.4.3 Leadership practice by Weber 29
2.4.4 Leadrship process by Bryk *et al.* 30
2.5 PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL ROLES THAT IMPROVE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 33
2.5.1 Formulating vision and mission statements 34
2.5.2 Managing instructional programmes 37
2.5.3 Creating a conducive school environment 45
2.6 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ZIMBABWE 54
2.7 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP 56
2.7.1 An overview of distributed leadership 57
2.7.2 Aspects of distributed leadership 59
2.7.3 The significance of distributed leadership 64
2.7.4 Distributed leadership in schools 66
2.7.5 Distributed instructional leadership practices 74
2.7.6 Teacher leadership in schools 75
2.7.7 Challenges schools face in enacting distributed leadership 78
2.8 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 81
2.9 SUMMARY 83

CHAPTER 3 85
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 85
3.1 INTRODUCTION 85
3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM 85
3.3 THE QUALITATIVE APPROACH 87
3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN 90
3.4.1 A case study 90
3.5 RESEARCH SITES 93

3.6 MY POSITIONALITY 94
3.7 PARTICIPANTS 95
3.7.1 Selecting participants 95
3.8 ETHICAL ISSUES 96
3.8.1 Permission to conduct research 97
3.8.2 Participant informed consent 97
3.9 COLLECTING DATA 97
3.9.1 Pilot study 98
3.9.2 Interviews 99
3.9.3 Observations 101
3.9.4 Document analysis 102
3.10 DATA ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT 103
3.10.1 Data analysis 103
3.10.2 Coding of data 105
3.10.3 Data synthesis 106
3.10.4 Data organisation and management 106
3.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY OF STUDY 106
3.12 SUMMARY 108

CHAPTER 4 109
DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS 109
4.1 INTRODUCTION 109
4.2 REPORTS FROM MATANGA PRIMARY SCHOOL 109
4.2.1 Background information of the participants 110
4.2.2 Visioning Matanga Primary School 111
4.2.3 Supervision of teachers at Matanga Primary School 117
4.2.4 Wishing for a conducive working environment 126
4.2.5 Staff development at Matanga Primary School 131
4.2.6 Opportunities for leadership 136
4.2.7 Class allocation at Matanga Primary School 140
4.2.8 Closing the participants' stories 144
4.3 REPORTS FROM BEPURA PRIMARY SCHOOL 145
4.3.1 Background information of Bepura Primary School participants 146

4.3.2 Visioning Bepura Primary School 147
4.3.3 Supervision of teachers at Bepura Primary School 151
4.3.4 Wishing for a conducive working environment 159
4.3.5 Staff development at Bepura Primary School 166
4.3.6 Opportunities for leadership 171
4.3.7 Class allocation at Bepura Primary School 176
4.3.8 Closing Bepura Primary School participants' stories 180
4.4 REPORTS FROM CHRIM PRIMARY SCHOOL 181
4.4.1 Background information for Mr Kanyo and the teachers 182
4.4.2 Visioning a private school 183
4.4.3 Supervision of teachers at Chrim Primary School 188
4.4.4 Creating a conducive work environment 194
4.4.5 Staff development at Chrim Primary School 198
4.4.6 Leadership opportunities at Chrim Primary School 203
4.4.7 Class allocation at Chrim Primary School 207
4.4.8 Closing the principal and teachers' stories 211
4.5 SUMMARY 212

CHAPTER 5 213
CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS 213
5.1 INTRODUCTION 213
5.2 PARTICIPANTS' BACKGROUND INFORMATION 213
5.2.1 Principals' background 215
5.2.2 Teacher background information 215
5.3 ACTIVITIES CHARACTERISING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICE 216
5.3.1 Visioning schools 216
5.3.2 Managing instructional activities 221
5.3.3 Creating a positive school environment 225
5.3.3.1 Staff development of teachers 225
5.3.3.2 Allocating classes in schools 230
5.4 ALIGNING INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES TO DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP PRACTICE 234
5.4.1 Collaborative vision formulation 234

5.4.2 Supervisory practices in the schools 237
5.4.3 Enhanced school environments 239
5.4.3.1 Capacity developing teachers 239
5.4.3.2 Leadership opportunities for teachers 242
5.5 UNDERSTANDING THE ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN HIGH PERFORMING PRIMARY SCHOOLS 244
5.6 SUMMARY 247

CHAPTER 6 249
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 249
6.1 INTRODUCTION 249
6.2 MAIN FINDINGS 249
6.2.1 Visioning schools 249
6.2.2 Supervision of instruction 250
6.2.3 Feedback sessions 251
6.2.4 Teaching and learning environment 252
6.3 CONCLUSIONS 254
6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY 256
6.5 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY 256
6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS 257
6.6.1 Recommendations for practice 257
6.6.2 Recommendations for policy 258
6.6.3 Recommendations for further study 259
REFERENCES 260
APPENDICES 279

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Sub-questions, themes, subthemes and categories…….105
Table 5.1: Profile of participants....……..……...…214

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Elements of leadership practice..……..……..61
Figure 4.1: Part of Mrs Chiri's narrative report..……....……120
Figure 4.2: Supervisory instrument used in lesson observations (A page from a participant's narrative report)..……....……153
Figure 4.3: A page from Ministry document emphasising staff development..……...……...171
Figure 4.4: Chrim Primary School vision and missioin statement..……...…….184
Figure 4.5: Record books assessment report.……..……189
Figure 4.6 Income generating projects at Chrim Primary School.……..195
Figure 4.7: Minutes of a fundraising committee.……..……..204

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical clearance letter..……..……..279
Appendix 2: Editorial certificate..…….....……280
Appendix 3: Turnitin report..…….....……...281
Appendix 4: Approval letter from Ministry..…….....……...282
Appendix 5: Approval letter from Provincial Office..……..…….283
Appendix 6: Approval letter from District Office...……..…….284
Appendix 7: First interview protocol for principals...……..……..285
Appendix 8: First interview protocol for teachers...……..…….287
Appendix 9: Second interview protocol for principals...……..…….289
Appendix 10: Second interview protocol for teachers...……...…….290
Appendix 11: Document analysis protocol...…….…..……291
Appendix 12: Observation protocol……..……292
Appendix 13: School specific vision and mission staements for Matanga Primary School.....……293
Appendix 14: Ministry vision and mission statements for Matanga Primary School.……....……..…….……..293
Appendix 15: Ministry and school specific vision and mission statements for Bepura Primary School.…….……..294
Appendix 16: Chrim Primary School policy document 1……. ....……..295
Appendix 17: Section C of a narrative form..…….....….....……..296
Appendix 18: Chrim Primary School policy document 2……....……..297
Appendix 19: Some Ministry documents used in schools…….298

CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Societies expect instructional leaders to be major players on matters that are associated with the learning of their children. This is because instructional leaders influence the direction that instructional activities take in schools (Hallinger and Murphy, 2012) through their coordination and control skills. In fact, instructional leadership has often been found to have a great impact on students' learning (Si-Rajab *et al*., 2019). School principals, as school leaders, are regarded as focal people with "all the brains" to lead their schools to high performance (Bhengu and Mkhize, 2013). Effective schools are regarded as products of principals who exhibit strong instructional leadership through availing positive climates that enhance instructional activities (Şişman, 2016). However, the idea of the principal being the sole individual who can transform the school cannot be sustained, considering the complexity of schools today and the demands of parents from schools. A challenge appears when school principals take instructional leadership as their sole responsibility since they cannot have all the expertise needed in different departments in a school, moreover, they cannot be everywhere in the school at any given moment. To centre leadership on one individual, when there exist different members with different skills and expertise in the school organisation, may not improve school performance to greater heights. Other specialists in the school include the deputy principal, senior teachers, teacher in charge (TIC) and learning area committee leaders. These have expertise in specific learning areas and their existence and composition depends on each individual school. Principals might not have the expertise necessary for the different learning areas. A question, therefore, arises on whether principals, as sole individuals, would be able to carry the burden of leading schools where such varied skills are needed. Instructional leadership on its own appears not to be adequate and needs to be complemented by another leadership model that distributes leadership roles (Mendels, 2012; Badenhorst and Radile, 2018).

The distributed leadership model advocates that leadership is stretched to other members at school (Mestry and Pillay, 2013). This perspective does not subscribe to the notion of a single leader being the hero of all school developments, but to leadership existing among multiple actors (Spillane, 2005; Bolden, 2011). Göksoy (2015) advocates that the complexity of

educational institutions cannot afford to have a sole individual managing all school activities. It, therefore, means that teachers' contributions are critical if effective leadership is to be obtained. Distributed leadership is an important contemporary leadership theory in education whose potential is to bring about improvement in schools (Hairon and Goh, 2015). Distributed leadership brings improvement to schools in that varied people with varied expertise are involved in leadership activities. Leaders exist at all levels in an organisation in both formal and informal positions.

Though a popular model, people often interpret the meaning of distributed leadership differently (Harris and Spillane, 2008). It is sometimes equated to concepts such as shared, emergent, collaborative, and collective leadership (Bolden, 2011). Spillane and Diamond (2007) believe that it can be effectively used in leading schools, and as a lens to examine leadership activities in schools. Its principles acknowledge the contribution of all members of the organisation towards school leadership, irrespective of being a formal or an informal leader (Spillane *et al.,* 2001). This suggests that leadership resides in both the principal and other members at the school. Spillane (2005) argues that of importance in leadership practice is how it is distributed in schools; this has not been fully explored. Therefore, there is a need for a leadership model which includes characteristics of instructional and distributed leadership. Consequently, this inspired me to examine the main activities of instructional leadership and how they exhibit features of distributed leadership practice in the context of Zimbabwean schools. In this chapter a focus is made on the background and orientation to the study. It outlines the problem statement, research questions, the theoretical framework and the research methodology. Delimitations and limitations are also discussed and key terms are defined. A summary rounds up the chapter.

1.2 BACKGROUND

Primary schools in Zimbabwe have two departments, the Infant and Junior departments. The Infant department is made up of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) A and B groups, grade one and two. The ECD A and B groups are preparatory grades for children who would enter grade one. From ECD B children would go to grade one. A Teacher in Charge (TIC) leads the Infant department. Appointment to this post is done by the school principal. The Junior department runs from grade three to seven. Depending on the school principal, some appoint a senior teacher to lead the Junior department, while others do not. In their final year, grade seven learners write national examinations that are set by the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council

(ZIMSEC), which is a national examination board. School principals (heads) are the overall leaders in schools and are deputised by vice principals. As leaders, principals are accountable to performance standards of their schools. The government of Zimbabwe introduced a new curriculum in 2017 (Curriculum Framework, 2015 - 2022), which provides principles that guide instructional activities. The curriculum framework emphasises the engagement of learners in addressing real life problems. The Curriculum Framework (2015 - 2022) states that school leaders are among the key actors in schools that must provide learning environments that are safe, pleasant, and learner friendly.

Instructional activities are a core activity for schools which can be carried out successfully through well thought out strategies (Yunas and Iqbal, 2013). School principals are expected to define their positions on instructional priorities instead of serving just as school managers. Taole (2013) is of the opinion that instructional leaders must set clear goals and allocate resources to accomplish the schools' instructional goals. Several researchers have explored school leadership in Zimbabwe. Majoni (2015) carried out a research on leadership types in Zimbabwean primary schools and concluded that school principals employed both the democratic and autocratic leadership styles. A gap exists as that study did not focus on instructional leadership activities by school principals. In another study, Shava (2015) showed Zimbabwean school principals as key persons in all school development activities as they were regarded as heroes and credited with all the ideas. However, the research did not explore instructional leadership distribution in the schools. In a similar research, Samkange (2013) studied management and administration in primary schools in Zimbabwe and discovered that school principals had little time for instructional tasks as they concentrated more on administrative activities. The study showed that school principals concentrated more on administrative activities than instructional activities. The findings of these studies seem to suggest a need for an examination of instructional leadership practices in Zimbabwean primary schools, especially those with high performance. It would appear little, if any, has been suggested on how instructional leadership is distributed among primary school principals. In addition, Peterson, Baugh and HMIE (in Townsend and MacBeath, 2011: 453) view Zimbabwean school principals as the know-it-all from being the leaders of the curriculum, the education visionaries, experts in assessment to being budget analysts among others. Accordingly, Martin (2018) correctly observes that these leadership requirements are far too much for one individual to be effective. Therefore, there is need for instructional leadership to be stretched to other school members. This research, therefore, focuses on finding out the

main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice in high performing Zimbabwean primary schools and how these activities exhibit features of distributed leadership, if at all.

A study on school leadership by Tshabangu (in Waite and Bogotch, 2017: 278) asserts that leadership was initially meant for school principals with teachers being left out from realising their potential skills in leadership. They discovered that when promoted to leadership positions, teachers isolate themselves from their subordinates, stop participating in school projects and rarely listen as they would have the thinking that they might diminish their leadership positions if they associate with subordinates. The need for distributed leadership is called for in the schools so that members' expertise and skills are made use of. It is believed that skills and expertise reside in school members (Goksoy, 2015). Samkange's (2013) study discovered that school principals concentrated more on administrative activities than instructional tasks, thus there is a need to balance administrative and instructional leadership tasks. Chidakwa's (2016) study discovered the existence of teamwork between teachers and the school leader resulting in higher learner performance. Nonetheless, all these studies do not specifically attend to the question of how instructional leadership is distributed to produce high performance in teachers and learners. Studies by Samkange (2013); Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013) and Majoni (2015) are evidence to this, there is no specific focus on instructional leadership. Samkange's (2013) research was on the administration of primary schools in Zimbabwe, while the research by Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013) focused on instructional supervision and Majoni (2015) focused on how the following leadership styles; democratic, autocratic, and laissez-fair affect school administration. This study sought to contribute knowledge on instructional leadership specifically. Furthermore, the study seeks to unpack how schools employ a distributed leadership frame through exploring leadership practices in primary schools with high academic performance.

Studies done in Botswana by Moswela and Kgosidialwa (2019) on leadership concluded that school leaders in Botswana practiced leadership that is democratic. Similarly, a study carried out by Naicker and Mestry (2013) in South African schools concluded that leadership was entrenched in traditional leadership activities. A shift was needed from autocratic to distributive leadership practices. Ibrahim and Al-Taneiji (2013) studied Dubai schools and discovered that school principals were inclined more to transformational leadership than instructional leadership. From their study of England primary schools, Day *et al.* (2016) point out the importance of school leaders to appropriately respond and act according to their school contexts to raise the academic performance of learners. Most studies conducted thus, do not explicitly focus on how

instructional leadership is distributed. This study closes the gap through exploring how schools with high pass rates enact distributed instructional leadership practice that leads to high learner academic performance.

Focusing more on administrative activities at the expense of instructional activities by school leaders often compromises student's performance. Principals often concentrate more on management activities, thereby affecting their instructional leadership potentials (Hejres *et al*., 2017). The aspect of concentrating leadership more on one individual also defeats the purpose of distributed leadership where other members are involved. School principals set the pace of development of their schools and assist members in understanding the focus of their schools. In redesigning school organisations, the principals' effort would be on developing their schools to be effective organisations. Although school principals have other management tasks to be conducted, their major task is instruction that increases learner achievement (Arlestig and Tornsen, 2014). Administrative activities that school principals do include attending to queries, meeting visitors and attending outside the school meetings (Phillips, 2009). These often consume much of the instructional leader's time. The priorities set by principals are normally meant for all members and how they uphold school activities is a signal to other staff members on how important instructional activities are to schools.

Instructional leadership is a major criterion for improving performance in schools (Meyers and Hitt, 2018). Amakyi and Ampah-Mensah (2013) are of the view that today's principals are no-longer much of managers but instructional leaders, communicators, and facilitators. By being instructional leaders, principals must keep abreast with new developments in instructional activities. For successful improvement of school activities, principals create positive school climates that increase learning (Leithwood and Louis, 2012; Bhengu *et al*., 2014). Positive school climates enable members to partake in school activities, lead others and share their knowledge with others. Leadership works best when stretched to all members with the school principal sharing the school vision with other members (Hallinger and Lee, 2013; Mitgang, 2012; Tian and Risku, 2019).

Distributed leadership also resides in teachers who serve as mentors to other teachers (Velarde, 2017). Such teachers are experienced personnel with expertise and skills and who get assigned to the task of leading other members at their grade levels. These teachers assigned leadership

activities are instructional leaders in their own context, who engage with other teachers to promote shared ideas and practices for quality instruction (Bush, 2018). Content knowledge and leadership practices make teachers with expertise contribute a great deal to their area of speciality, which results in improved performance at school (Seobi and Wood, 2016). Teachers with expertise and content mastery usually are leaders and can be key resource persons for other teachers when addressing problems and issues of instruction (Ghavifekr and Ibrahim, 2014). Instructional leadership by other teachers creates a platform for teaching and learning which indirectly develops teachers' professional competency, their motivation and teaching practices as members help each other as workmates. The aspect of having teachers leading some functions in the school signifies distributed leadership, with teachers either working on the same or different tasks and having constant communication and interaction (Jita and Mokhele, 2013). It is believed that making use of distributed instructional leadership at school presents "… an ideal opportunity to explore turnaround strategies to enhance performance at institutional level and create greater synergy between the different levels of staff" (Badenhorst and Radile, 2018: 4). Distributed instructional leadership is regarded as the appropriate means to improve school performance to greater heights. This research, therefore, examined activities that show features of distributed leadership in selected schools with high performance.

Most research on instructional activities has been on either instructional leadership (Yunas and Iqbal, 2013; Si-Rajab *et al.*, 2019) or distributed leadership (Spillane, 2005; Goksoy, 2015) with very little on a combination of the two. There is likely to be an increase in school performance when instructional leadership is distributed. Having been a teacher in varied primary schools and with an aim of contributing to educational scholarship on distributed instructional leadership, I became interested in undertaking this research to find out how instructional leadership is distributed in primary schools that have high academic pass rates.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Effective leadership of instructional activities is crucial in education (Sekhu in Ghavifekr *et al*., 2015: 48). Principals are regarded as the focal and key persons for the improvement of instructional performance at school with teachers taking instructions from the principal. School principals provide materials and assistance to educators and learners to improve learner performance (Ghavifekr *et al*., 2015). Instructional leadership encompasses varied practices and

processes that make schools develop (Bush, 2013; Mestry and Pillay, 2013) but it would appear, on its own, instructional leadership is not adequate.

Focusing on the principal as the single person with all the expertise to lead a school to prominence cannot be sustained due to growing demands on principals (Spillane, 2005; Goksoy, 2015). Grenda and Hackmann (2014) posit that school principals are overwhelmed by competing duties, which include management tasks, monitoring instructional activities, financial supervision, learner issues and accountability to raise student academic achievement. Literature shows that distributed leadership can improve instructional activities at school (Spillane and Healey, 2010; Halverson and Clifford, 2013). This results from stretching instructional leadership to various members in a school. Few studies, however, have investigated instructional leadership practices in primary schools in Zimbabwe, let alone distributed instructional leadership. Klar (2012) advocates that distributed leadership recognises the collaboration that exists among leaders in a school. Leadership practices bent on improving instructional activities also affect work relationships among members of staff and indirectly the academic performance of learners. This is crucial in that the type of relations in a school can affect instructional goals.

The aim of instructional leadership and distributed leadership is high performance by learners. Research on improved instructional activities in schools has primarily focused on either instructional leadership (Yunas and Iqbal, 2013; Si-Rajab *et al.*, 2019) or distributed leadership (Goksoy, 2015) without combining these two into a single leadership model. I argue, therefore, that school performance is likely to increase when instructional leadership is distributed among primary school leaders, and this motivated me to undertake this study. My study, therefore, sought to contribute knowledge on distributed instructional leadership practice through experiencing it in schools where it is practised, thereby making the schools different from other primary schools in Zimbabwe. There is ample literature that advocates for distributed leadership to let out the potentials in instructional leadership for improved school performance (Naicker and Mestry, 2013). However, very little evidence shows the relationship between the two phenomena. How the relationship between instructional leadership and distributed leadership is understood in schools is the focus of this study.

Literature has shown that principals indirectly influence the success of schools and performance of learners (Desravines and Fenton, 2015; Day *et al.*, 2016; Alam and Ahmad, 2017). Although a

lot of literature on the leadership of schools has been produced, there is no agreement on effective leadership practice. Many perspectives on school leadership are evident but how these reflect on distributed instructional leadership practice is minimal. Much literature does not accurately reflect leadership practices in schools. Angelle (2010) acknowledges the little attention given to distributed instructional leadership in primary schools. This justifies the need to conduct this study on instructional leadership activities in high performing primary schools. The difference in the distribution of instructional leadership activities in some schools which make them different from other primary schools in the same vicinity makes for an interesting research study.

The choice of primary schools was based on the idea that principal instructional leadership is substantial at primary school level (Dong and Seong, 2014). The choice was also based on the willingness by the school principals to participate in the study. The schools selected were high performing schools based on their good examination results and on the recommendations that had been given by the District Office. This suggested that the schools were good schools. "Scratch the surface of an excellent school, and you are likely to find an excellent principal. Peer into a failing school, and you will find weak leadership" (Leithwood and Riehl, 2003: 1). This, therefore, suggests that the schools selected were likely to be good schools with effective principals.

1.4 THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION

How is distributed instructional leadership practice enacted in some high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe for instructional improvement?

1.4.1 Sub-questions

The sub-questions below support the main research question:

1. What are the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice of selected high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe?
2. How do the major activities of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe align with and/or exhibit features of a distributed leadership practice, if at all?
3. How can the activities and practices of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools be understood and/or explained?

1.5 AIM OF THE RESEARCH

The aim of the study is to have a deeper understanding of how distributed instructional leadership practice is enacted in some Zimbabwean primary schools for instructional improvement.

1.5.1 Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice in selected high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe.
2. Explore how major activities of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools of Zimbabwe align with and/or exhibit features of distributed leadership practice, if at all.
3. Provide an empirically informed account of how activities and practices of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools can be understood and explained.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study offers an alternative effective school leadership model that combines two empirically based and tested leadership models. The fact that the components of this leadership model may account for the desired results in high performing primary schools will be a compelling aspect to enact distributed instructional leadership practices to other primary schools in the country. The knowledge that leadership works best when stretched to all members and with shared school vision is important to policy makers, school principals and educators, as it shows them that instructional leadership may need to be distributed for improved performance in schools. Alam and Ahmad (2017) posit that the academic results of learners are a worry to policy makers. It is hoped that the findings of this research will influence policy makers' future policy formulation on distributed instructional leadership in schools.

Manaseh (2016) advocates that principals must ensure that there is improvement in instructional programmes for improved learner academic performance. There is likely to be an improvement in learner academic performance when leadership is distributed across members. This knowledge is crucial for school principals and teachers as it alerts them on the importance of shared leadership at school. Having members work specifically on tasks they have wide knowledge of is likely to result in improved performance. The study will provide school principals with insights on how distributed instructional leadership might help to improve school performance through

removing from them the burden of sole leadership (Grenda and Hackmann, 2014). Another aspect of significance is that in distributed instructional leadership, all those in formal and non-formal leadership positions can lead, and their contributions acknowledged. This informs school principals on the value that members holding formal and informal positions have to them as school leaders and to schools.

Since research on distributed instructional leadership is ongoing in Africa and Zimbabwe specifically, a study like this one is likely to provide more information on distributed instructional leadership practices in schools. I hope those who read this study will get some ideas that will prompt them to conduct more research on the phenomenon distributed instructional leadership. Furthermore, besides enhancing my appreciation of primary school leadership, the study will broaden scholarship on distributed instructional leadership in primary schools.

1.7 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Several new and old theories on leadership have been used in previous leadership studies (Goksoy, 2015; Bush and Ng, 2019). This study utilises one of the recent theories which is informed by Spillane's distributed leadership framework (Jita and Mokhele, 2013; Grenda and Hackmann, 2014). This theory is concerned with leadership "… practice rather than leaders, their roles, functions, routines, or structures" (Spillane, 2005: 144). The key tenet of the framework is that leadership stretches across several participants (Spillane, 2005). Timperley (2005) points out that the traditional leadership models of a single heroic leader that practises a top-down leadership function are unrealistic and unsustainable in today's set up of primary schools.

Expertise exists in a variety of individuals within an organisation. It, therefore, means principals are not the only individuals with expertise to transform schools. Expertise also resides in teachers who pool up their efforts to achieve school instructional goals. This, therefore, portrays distributed leadership as being a joint action that includes the activities of various individuals (Spillane *et al*., 2001). Principals consciously support and facilitate leadership from other members of staff in the school. For this to succeed, skills must be made use of at the appropriate time and level. Successful leaders take note of the contributions from other members in the school who include, teachers and administrative staff (Leithwood *et al.,* 2004). Contributions from teachers help improve instruction. Distributed leadership can be shared across the school by administrators, teachers, and members of the community. However, this could be problematic if

communication is not conducted properly (Grenda and Hackmann, 2014). Principals need to create positive environments that allow interaction among members to take place smoothly.

Spillane and Healey (2010) and Bolden (2011) advocate that, theoretically, distributed leadership emphasises "leadership plus" and "leadership practice" aspects. Leadership under these aspects is stretched across staff members in the school suggesting that leadership activities can be done by either formal or informal leaders. Informal leaders emerge at school and are usually not on the Ministry's payroll. They lead important activities in schools. The "leadership plus" aspect makes use of expertise of different individuals that occupy various structural positions in schools.

Spillane (2005: 144) advocates that, "… leadership practice (should be) viewed as a product of interactions of school leaders, followers, and their situation." Principals and teachers interact in their situations with an aim of seeing what activities people do, how they do the activities and why they do them (Spillane, 2005). Followers in this instance represent individuals who do not have formal positions but take part in working over activities and making sure they are completed (Spillane, 2006). In this view, the individuals in leadership positions can move in and out of the leadership activity any time depending on the situation. Leadership plus and leadership practice aspects offer a critical framework for studying principals' daily working activities instead of concentrating on the structures of leaders, their functions, or their roles (Bolden, 2011).

A situation is the critical component of the distributed leadership framework. Spillane (2006) advocates that it is not the actions of principals and formal leaders that matters much, but how leadership is distributed. It is, therefore, critical that in studying distributed leadership, the practice aspect is understood as involving leader-follower interactions in the context of their situation.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this study, I used the qualitative research approach and the multiple case study design in examining the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice in high performing primary schools. This was done through interviews, observations, and document analysis. I engaged with principals and teachers in schools and saw how they interacted with their work situations. Through the case study design, a careful consideration of the main

activities that characterise instructional leadership was made possible. The importance of case studies lies in their ability to establish the cause and effects of actions in varied contexts (Cohen *et al*., 2007). I used the multiple case study design because it involves collecting data from various sites, which are the selected high performing primary schools (Yin, 2014) and I believe that it is in high performing schools that we find principals and educators who are involved in instructional leadership. The multiple case study design was used to achieve credible results (Merriam, 2009). I worked closely with school principals and listened to their responses during interviews (Clark and Ivankova, 2016) to unpack their understanding of distributed instructional leadership (Minichiello and Kottler, 2010). As qualitative research concentrates on direct experiences, I gained an understanding of the participants perceptions on instructional leadership in the context of their schools.

The qualitative research approach is embedded in the interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism looks for human views and their unique perspectives. This study focused on finding participants' views on distributed instructional leadership. Having a prolonged engagement in schools enabled me to observe principals, subject leaders, and teachers at their work. Interpretivists believe that people's actions have meaning that must be understood (O'Hara *et al*., 2011). People construe their daily activities in line with the meaning they give to their roles. The study explored distributed instructional leadership practices in schools. Through this paradigm, the researcher was able to make interpretations of the observations made on various activities in schools.

Three primary schools were selected based on recommendations from the district supervisor. The principals of the three schools form part of the participants including nine teachers who were purposively sampled from the three schools (Creswell, 2009). Three teachers were selected from each school to be part of the participants. To get three high performing primary schools, the researcher approached the District Education Office and requested for information on high performing schools as per their records of pass rates and supervision reports done in the past three years. From the information given by the District Office, I purposively sampled three primary schools that were well known for their instructional leadership.

I considered ethical issues of confidentiality to safeguard the research sites and the participants (Leedy and Ormod, 2013). I sought permission from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) to carry out a study in three selected primary schools. I also sought

permission from the Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State to carry out research since it has a code of ethics that guide research at the institution. To allay fears, I informed participants that the information they gave was for study purposes only and that it would be kept private and confidential. The respondents were informed of the reasons for conducting research and how they would have got involved. I gave respondents consent forms and advised them of their voluntary participation. Ethical issues are a critical component in research. Creswell (2012: 22) says, "… all educational researchers need to be aware of and anticipate ethical issues in their research". This can improve on responses. Walliman (in O'Hara *et al.*, 2011: 108) says ethics are rules that govern researchers' behaviour when carrying out research. These rules are critical as they safeguard the safety of participants.

1.9 DELIMITATIONS

Twelve participants, in total, were involved in this study. They included three primary school heads (principals), nine teachers with three of them coming from each of the three high performing primary schools. Participant teachers were qualified experienced teachers who have spent at least three or more years in service and at the sampled schools. This ensured that the participants are experienced and have sound knowledge of education activities in the school. The study of different cases enabled an understanding of the behaviours of teachers and principals while in their natural settings, the schools. The focus was on instructional leadership activities at each of the schools. The results of my study will offer some useful insights into distributed instructional leadership practice.

1.10 LIMITATIONS

The limitations of the present study include the fact that the findings may not be generalisable to all primary schools since the study focused on three high performing primary schools as the research sites. For this reason, I saw it crucial to give a comprehensive description of the participants, research methods and the presentation of the data collected. The findings may, however, apply to other similar schools as they show glimpses on how distributed instructional leadership practices were enacted in the selected primary schools.

I employed the qualitative research approach as it is more concerned about discovering more about a particular phenomenon of interest than to generalise. Creswell (2013) advocates that the personal standing of a researcher has a solid bearing on how problems are identified, examined,

analysed, and construed resulting in qualitative research being integrally subjective. The biases and subjectiveness of the researcher might have influenced the credibility and trustworthiness of the information collected. This was, however, mitigated by a prolonged engagement with participants, data triangulation and a pilot study.

The COVID-19 pandemic made schools open in phases with grade sevens starting then middle grades and lastly the infant grades. This meant that on my first visits there were only grade sixes and sevens. After about a month the middle grades opened and after a few weeks the infant grades opened. I had planned to conduct field work within three months, however, I had to prolong my stay in the schools to four and a half months. This enabled me to observe interactions in the whole school and to gather enough data from participants who ranged from grade one to seven.

1.11 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Several terms have been defined below so that there is a clear understanding of their meanings in this study.

School leadership:

School leaders influence school outcomes through their interventions and capacity building (Gurr, 2015). Effective teachers improve learner performance. It is, therefore, critical that high performing teachers are retained in schools. For this to happen, it needs a school principal at the helm who attracts and supports such teachers (Desravines and Fenton, 2015). The creation of conducive climates for teacher retention and improved learner academic performance are important aspects in the leadership of schools. School leadership is a vital element in learner academic work and is placed on second position after classroom instruction in its effect on learners (Leithwood *et al*., 2004). School leadership is taken to mean the activities done by school principals to transform schools to high academic performance.

Instructional leadership:

The teaching activity is a top priority for instructional leaders. Principals should be well versed in what would be happening in classrooms to appreciate the challenges teachers face as they work. Yunas and Iqbal (2013) advocate that school principals influence the implementation of the national curriculum at school. Dong and Seong (2014: 5) advocate that "… instructional

leadership focuses on all functions that contribute to student learning, such as managerial behaviours and organisational culture." Niqab *et al.,* (2014) advocate that school principals perform various activities at school among which are managing the curriculum and the supervision of staff and students. This model views the principal as a sole individual with the expertise to handle all activities at the school. Instructional leadership would be used here to mean leadership activities done by principals to assist teachers and learners to increase their work performance.

Distributed leadership:

This is "… a form of collective agency incorporating the activities of many individuals in a school, who work at mobilising and guiding other teachers in the process of instructional change" (Harris, 2005: 14). Leadership exists among varied people within the school organisation and with different skills. Individuals might perform similar or different tasks in the school organisation. Goksoy (2015) contends that leadership is stretched among different individuals with different roles in the school organisation. This model does not recognise the traditional approach of leadership that sees the school principal as the focal person as they believe that school leadership is complex that it cannot be performed by a single person. Distributed leadership, therefore, means leadership stretched according to expertise among school members.

Distributed instructional leadership:

Schools with this type of leadership are believed to have an increased working aura in schools because of the combined features of instructional and distributed leadership that make up the concept. Such type of leadership is stretched across different teachers. A combination of the two concepts is expected to produce a model that will be effective in improving instructional activities. Badenhorst and Radile (2018) contend that the distributed instructional leadership model involves other members of staff in making instructional decisions and forward planning. Distributed instructional leadership will be taken as an ideal lens for improving learner performance in schools.

Leadership practices:

These are actions and tasks that principals undertake in promoting instructional activities. Four core leadership practices put forward by Gurr (2015: 139) are, "… setting direction, developing

people, leading change, and improving teaching and learning ...” These are clearly seen as leadership practices of school principals to transform schools. Leadership practices will be taken to mean broad categories of activities done by school leaders to improve instructional activities.

High performing primary schools:

These are effective schools that produce high academic pass rates. High performing schools are characterised by effective classroom supervision, high performance by members of staff and learners, and having a positive working environment. Instructional leadership is believed to be distributed in such schools. These schools are in constant improvement, have not reached perfection and are willing to learn from others (Shannon and Bylsma, 2007). This study will take high performing schools to mean schools with dynamic school heads (principals), high pass rates and where instructional leadership is distributed.

1.12 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS

There are six chapters that make up this research.

Chapter one:

It outlines the background to the problem on how instructional leadership practice is enacted in Zimbabwean schools with outstanding pass rates. The problem statement, research questions, aims, objectives, significance, delimitations, and limitations are explained. An outline of the research methodology and theoretical framework are given. Key terms were defined.

Chapter two:

Chapter two explores and reviews literature that is associated with instructional and distributed leadership. Literature on empirical studies is cited and their findings, methodologies and frameworks were discussed with the intention of showing how they related to my study. Relevant literature on the framework that guided this research was explored.

Chapter three:

The research approach, research design and the research sites employed in this study are explained in this chapter. The selection procedures of participants, the instruments used to collect data and the data analysis procedures are discussed in the chapter.

Chapter four:

Three sites were used and from each site four participants took part in the study. The data from each participant and that gathered from observations and document analysis are presented, interpreted, and reported in narrative form in this chapter. The themes that emerge from the studied cases are also discussed.

Chapter five:

In this chapter, a cross-case analysis of the findings and discussions of these is done.

Chapter six:

The chapter gives a summary of the main findings of the study, it also draws conclusions and offers recommendations on enacting distributed instructional leadership practices in schools for instructional improvement.

1.13 SUMMARY

The background to the study on instructional and distributed leadership was highlighted. In addition, the problem statement and the research questions that guided this study were also stated. The aim and objectives have been stated in the chapter. Furthermore, an outline of the theoretical framework that guides this study was given followed by the research methodology and ethical issues. The delimitations and the limitations were discussed. A definition of key terms was done. Finally, the structure of the research was outlined. The following chapter reviews related literature on instructional and distributed leadership.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines literature on instructional and distributed leadership. It begins by reviewing empirical studies on instructional leadership. Different activities performed by school principals and other instructional leaders as well as discussions on the methodologies, frameworks and the findings of the empirical studies are presented. Gaps in the scholarship that my study would try to fill will be discussed. I begin with a discussion of the main activities that characterise instructional leadership, its importance and the challenges experienced in implementing it in schools. Literature on distributed leadership practice is also reviewed. The literature review is intended to explore the information on the practices of instructional and distributed leadership. The literature is centred on the key research question on: How distributed instructional leadership practice is enacted in some high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe for instructional improvement. The main question is answered through the sub-questions listed below:

1. What are the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice of selected high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe?
2. How do the major activities of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe align with and/or exhibit features of a distributed leadership practice, if at all?
3. How can the activities and practices of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools be understood and/or explained?

The theoretical framework for this research is given and the reasons for its choice are explained in the chapter. The concept of distributed leadership followed by the link between instructional and distributed leadership is explored.

2.2 LEADERSHIP IN SCHOOLS

Communities look at schools for high learner academic outcomes, and school principals have a major responsibility in achieving this. It is essential, therefore, to understand that school and principal leadership are important elements in improving the academic performance of learners (Sebastian and Allensworth, 2012).

2.2.1 Understanding school leadership

Leadership practices in schools play a major role in shaping instructional activities. Schools have different structures that are created and shaped by the school leadership. In today's world of outcome-based accountability, schools are often held responsible for increased learner performance and because of this, principals set priorities that become the priorities of the entire school. The amount of attention paid by the principal to instructional activities communicates to staff members how crucial teaching is to the school. As instructional leaders, school principals have a duty to lead staff in the effective implementation of the curriculum.

Leadership in schools often involves different key members who make use of the existing structures to improve school performance (Spillane, 2006). In their study of United States of America schools, Camburn *et al*. (2003) observed that leadership tasks were often spread over three to seven people, mostly specialists. This underscores the fact that despite the quantity of leaders involved, the "leadership practice" aspect involves the interactions that take place between leaders and followers, that is, the principals and teachers in the schools. Spillane (2005) points to this characteristic feature of leadership practice as "interaction".

From this view, the capabilities of school leaders are thus best understood from the group perspective instead of an individual perspective. This implies the ability of the school leader to nurture members' capacity to work as a team. Principals put in place systems that positively influence learner's academic performances. School leadership is an essential component in improving learner performance. Leadership effects on learner performance are believed to amount to a quarter of the entire school effects (Hairon, 2017). The effect appears small but is educationally significant. Considering this, it, therefore, requires that principals show strong skills and proficiency in instructional leadership to improve their schools (Heck and Hallinger, 2010; Leithwood, 2008). This they do through performing varied leadership roles.

2.2.2 Understanding principals' leadership role

Leadership is critical in schools as it determines their success and significance. It is a high priority issue that has become the subject of enormous literature both as a concept and a practice. Leadership has been described by Spillane *et al.* (2001: 24) as involving "... the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning." The aspect of

resources, their mobilisation and use, occupies an important place in this definition with an encouragement on staff members to take up tasks that enhance teaching and learning. Found in this definition is also the issue of influence. By being the main resource providers, principals influence teachers to effectively use resources. The aspect of influence is also found in the definition by Northouse (2013: 5) which regards leadership as "... a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal." The major reason for the existence of schools is learner academic achievement; therefore, school principals need to urge staff members to work towards achieving school goals. IrmanSyarif (2017: 2) describes leadership as, "… a process by which leaders described, will give orders/direction, guidance, or influence the work of others in choosing and achieving the goals set." Effective school principals have visions, and to achieve these they influence teachers towards these visions and goals. It is an important activity by school principals to influence teachers towards a common vision. Of importance in the definitions are the "... issues of who exerts the influence, how it is exerted and to what ends" (Jita and Mokhele, 2013: S124). Principals use the common goals to inspire followers to work towards high performance. They intentionally exert influence on staff members to direct their activities and relationships towards improving the school academic activities. The influence exerted by principals is related to teaching and learning which are central functions of a school. Leithwood and Louis (2012) advocate that leadership involves setting directions and supporting people to move in a set direction. The definitions above show the various activities carried out by principals as they influence teachers towards school improvement. Literature states that for such activities to be successfully done in schools it needs principals who enact instructional leadership practices. Instructional activities are the mainstay of schools; therefore, principals need to enact instructional leadership practices. Instructional leadership, as a process of influence, has the principal identifying the school direction with an intention to improve instructional activities (Hallinger and Murphy, 2012). Si-Rajab *et al.* (2019) contend that instructional leadership leads to priority being given to quality instruction and the achievement of lessons taught. The emphasis is on accountability and tangible academic standards. In a broader context, instructional leadership contributes to improved learner performance.

A study by Dong and Seong (2014) in Singapore showed that both primary and secondary school principals emphasised quality education. The question they sought to answer was "How are Singapore principals perceived in terms of their instructional leadership practices?" Their study

investigated instructional leadership practices focusing on the alignment of instruction to school vision; leadership of instructional activities; the development of positive teaching and learning environments; and the encouragement of professional development. The researchers used the Rasch model to examine the instructional leadership practices enacted by the Singaporean principals. Findings showed that principals were active in the four instructional leadership practices and were all regarded as strong instructional leaders. When compared between the two, primary schools were rated higher in the examined four dimensions of instructional leadership. The study showed the key activities carried out by principals as they enact instructional leadership practices in Singaporean schools. The Rasch model which compared items to people was used. This study was carried out in an Asian country where literature believes instructional leadership in schools is still in its infancy (Hallinger *et al.,* 2017). The results indicate a change in scenario that principals in some schools implement instructional leadership practices and that the four dimensions examined were given attention. It now remains to be seen in the present study whether and to what extent principals in primary schools in Zimbabwe carry out the activities that characterise instructional leadership as shown in Dong and Seong's (2014) study. The questionnaires used produced quantitative information which showed that principals attended to the leadership dimensions, but the aspect of how the principals enacted the activities in the schools remains unanswered. This gap is yet to be addressed and my study seeks to cover this lapse in our knowledge base.

There are some studies that were carried out to show the enactment of instructional leadership in schools. In a study conducted by Gurley *et al.* (2016) in a district in the South-Eastern part of the United States to find out how frequently principals enacted specific behaviours characterising instructional leadership, they found out that principals displayed instructional leadership behaviours as outlined by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). The study was in response to Hallinger *et al.* (2013) report that principals' self-reports on their implementation of instructional leadership was higher when compared to reports by teachers. Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership framework was employed by the research team as the conceptual anchor that guided their research. Leithwood *et al.* (2006) regard it as a widely acknowledged construct that has been used over the years in empirical studies. The researchers made use of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS), which is a 50-item instrument developed to measure principals' instructional leadership behaviours in schools. The PIMRS questionnaire was emailed to principals and teachers and a response rate of 80.9% by

principals and 61.5% by teachers was obtained. A close match was noted across function and dimension showing that principals enacted instructional leadership activities in their schools. This dispelled previous reports of a difference in perception between principals and teachers. The quantitative method, however, fell short in that it did not give detailed views of the participants as to which of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) leadership functions were executed, at what frequency and how. This highlighted an important methodological aspect to be addressed in future studies. The proper selection of a methodology enhances the credibility of the data collected and the research results. In the present study, the use of the qualitative methodology was ideal since it gave room to explore the how aspect of instructional leadership practices in schools. What the PIMRS revealed was that the frequency in enactment of the leadership practices by the principals was high. This only tells us that the principals applied instructional leadership but the issue of how they were enacted still needs to be understood.

2.3 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES

Principals carry out varied tasks in schools with an objective of raising learner academic outcomes. Perspectives on instructional leadership regard principals as supporting noble instructional practices and subject mastery that assist teachers. School leaders have a duty to provide quality education to schools, hence the emphasis on teacher increased instructional practice that raises the outcomes of learners. In a study on instructional leadership in Turkey schools, Turkoglu and Cansoy (2018) used qualitative research methods to collect data on the opinions of 15 school principals from different provinces of Turkey on instructional leadership behaviours. Eight principals were from state primary schools and seven from secondary schools in Turkey. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the interview form having been developed based on Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model. Findings suggested that principals worked within the frame of the Ministry of Education and conveyed Ministry goals to teachers as received. This stance by principals, defeats organisational integrity as principles are introduced to teachers without any interpretation or development (Leithwood *et al.,* 2008). This, therefore, meant principals lacked in the leadership practice of curriculum development since they left teachers to make decisions on their own. This was a result of over-centralisation by the government. However, despite the over-centralisation of the government structure by the government being an obstacle to principal application of instructional leadership practices as propounded by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), the principals monitored student learning and gave feedback to teachers. These are important instructional leadership practices. The principals also

made significant efforts in creating enabling environments at the schools. This practice fulfilled the third leadership dimension by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) of creating positive teaching and learning environments.

The findings were obtained from interviews only, with little triangulation from other sources to strengthen research results. Other forms of data collection could help increase the validity of the information. This informs my study on the importance of having a variety of methods in collecting data. The use of two groups of participants, primary and secondary school principals may also blur the results and give a blanket report that all the principals did not focus much on curriculum development. A more specific approach that separates primary from secondary school principals is to understand who did not support curriculum development and probably in what areas. The present study was designed to cover this gap by focusing specifically on high performing primary schools. A similarity exists in the centralisation of the education system in Turkey and Zimbabwe. Through my study of the primary schools, I wanted to find out whether principals support curriculum development or not for improved school performance. This would also reveal whether and how centralisation affects the ways in which principals enact instructional leadership practices. Even though instructional leadership is important in schools, its enactment in schools, particularly the developing world, is still low and less understood when compared to the Western societies (Hallinger *et al.,* 2017).

In a study carried out by Martin (2018) in Christian schools in the United States of America, principals indicated high engagement in instructional leadership, yet teachers showed that there was low principal instructional leadership. Teachers indicated that the strength of principals' engagement in instructional leadership differed from school to school. The study was a response to the 2011 Cardus Education Report which pointed out that Protestant Christian schools were developing their learners' faith and not their academic standing when compared to their counterparts in public schools. The study focused on finding out the qualities of principals in the Christian schools that had high academic performances. They used Hallinger and Heck's (1996) results of a meta-analysis research study as the theoretical framework that guided their study. Its view is that principals who engaged in instructional leadership defined their school missions, managed the curricular programmes, and created positive learning environments.

Looked at closely, the results of Hallinger and Heck's (1996) meta-analysis study are an improvement to the leadership dimensions by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). Eighteen principals from high-performing Christian schools across the United States of America participated in Martin's (2018) research. Nine elementary, nine middle/high school principals and 280 teachers participated in the study. The schools were long time serving schools that had been in operation for at least sixteen years. The Principal Instructional Management Scale was used in the study to gather information about the instructional leadership qualities of the principals. According to this study, the PIMRS questionnaire produced the information the researchers wanted, that is, the principals' involvement in instructional leadership. The responses by principals showed high prevalence of instructional leadership engagement by principals in the Christian schools. However, a difference is noted in the responses by the teachers. The teachers reported a difference in the degree of application of instructional leadership activities by principals. The difference could be a result of principals rating themselves highly in activities they carry out at their schools and or how they perceived instructional leadership. On the other hand, the teachers could have a different view of instructional leadership as compared to that of the principals, thus there rating would differ to that of the principals. This is now where the qualitative research method would be handy. Interviews would enable researchers to ask respondents and probe further to find out if the principals and the teachers had the same view about instructional leadership. Interviews conducted with principals in this instance did not focus on instructional leadership, but their personal details and missionary standing thus could not establish the respondents' views besides knowing that they practiced instructional leadership. The knowledge on how the principals implemented instructional leadership is not quite evident in the research, it thus highlights areas that my research sought to address on how principals enact instructional leadership practices in their schools as they interact with their staff members in the contexts of their schools.

Findings indicated that all the principals engaged in instructional leadership as stated by the instructional leadership model put forward by Hallinger's (1990) which is comprised of the development of a school mission, developing conducive school environments, and managing the instructional programme. The teachers' perspective was that the degree of principals' involvement in instructional leadership differed between schools. Definitions given to instructional leadership by the upper and lower schools were different. The focus of high school principals was on leading and managing the schools, whereas principals from the lower schools

focused more on instructional activities (Martin, 2018). Principals from the lower school also professionally developed themselves and supported the professional development of their teachers as well, more than was done by upper school principals. The difference in perception of instructional leadership by upper and lower schools corresponds to literature (Printy, 2008; Louis *et al.,* 2010) which states that there is more engagement of instructional leadership practices in primary schools than in secondary schools. In one of her studies, Printy (2008) looked at the impact principals and departmental heads had on teachers' use of teaching methods which were regarded as standard based, problem-oriented, and learner-centred. She found that principals did not have any impact on teachers' instructional decisions. Instead, the teachers' decisions on how to teach were influenced by their interactions with their professional peers. Findings from this study of Christian schools in USA showed a difference in the depth of applying instructional leadership by the principals. This could mean that Christian school principals focused more on developing learner faith when compared to principals from public schools.

In a different study, where mixed methods were used to collect data, the activities listed by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) are included in addition to other functions that principals are expected to perform. Glanz *et al*. (2017) carried out a study where they explored instructional leadership perceptions and behaviours among Israeli and USA Jewish schools. A mixed-method research approach was used to collect data in their research. Incorporated in the research design was the sequential explanatory strategy which enabled the analysis of qualitative data built up from the results of quantitative data. A questionnaire based on the Avney Rosha (2008) Capstones Institute study was constructed and used. It focused on principal management areas that included vision formulation, promoting professional development leading staff and bringing change to schools. Data were collected from ninety principals through questionnaires and from twenty principals through interviews. The data from questionnaires were analysed statistically and the data that were qualitatively gathered were condensed, coded, categorised, and theorised. Findings showed a higher prevalence of instructional leadership practices by USA principals than their Israeli counterparts, specifically in the practice of leading teaching and learning activities. Low levels of interest and involvement were shown by veteran Israeli principals in instructional leadership. Evidence in the results suggest the value of using the mixed methods approaches to study the leadership behaviours, the strength of the principals from the different countries was obtained. The method used by Glanz *et al.* (2017) is a two-phase method. It collected data first through questionnaires then a few selected principals were interviewed basing

on the results from the questionnaires. The questionnaire used, as the study indicates, contained the crucial elements of instructional leadership, vision development, staff development, leading staff and bringing change to schools. These elements are critical to effective schools and need effective principals to implement them. USA principals focused on improving instructional activities in their schools., thereby showing the application of instructional leadership. The improvement of instructional activities by school leaders showed enactment of instructional leadership practices by the principals. Instructional activities are key aspects in the existence of schools, thus by executing them results in improved school performance. Such activities illustrate instructional leadership practices.

The differences in the knowledge base on instructional leadership practices in America and the developing countries of Africa and Asia is evident (Hallinger *et al.*, 2017). Israeli principals showed non-adherence to instructional leadership, thus depicting the focus of the education system in that country and the level of its knowledge on instructional leadership, which as the results show still needs to develop. School leaders need to get involved in instructional leadership to meet the demands of the global educational environment which needs 21st century skills that can only be provided by leaders who get involved in curriculum and instruction matters (Naidoo and Pettersen, 2016). Principals must promote best practices in instructional activities for improved learner academic performance. This shows that the practices of leading teaching and learning activities are critical elements of instructional leadership. Since there were no activities signifying the implementation of instructional leadership by Jewish principals, it remained to be seen whether these could be compared to the instructional leadership practices by Zimbabwean primary school principals as the perceptions of the principals and teachers were to be found in my study. These were not depicted from this study and in addition, this study had principals only as respondents. My research includes both teachers and principals and it focuses on high performing primary schools.

A related study in South Africa shows how school principals concerntrated on administrative activities at the expense of instructional leadership activities. Naidoo and Petersen (2016) carried out a study to find out principals' views about their roles as instructional leaders. This was after reports of poor learner outcomes in South African schools that the researchers set to find out whether principals were skilled enough to lead and manage the implementation of the school curriculum. The researchers believed that there was a need to professionally develop principals

in instructional leadership for them to effectively lead their schools. Five principals participated in the study and data were gathered through interviews. They analysed their data using open coding and their findings revealed that few principals understood their roles as instructional leaders. Principals regarded their functions as purely managerial, that is, being leaders and administrators of schools. Three of the principals were found to engage in instructional leadership activities which included leading and managing teachers and some reference was made to teaching and promoting learning. There was no explicit mention of curriculum leadership by the principals. This suggested that the principals did not develop their teachers' instructional strategies. The principals were not much involved in finding out whether teachers' strategies contributed to higher learner outcomes or not. The emphasis of the other principals was more on administration than working on curriculum implementation. The two studies show how principals focus more on administrative activities at the expense of instructional leadership.

2.4 MODELS OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Instructional leadership models help us understand instructional leadership. These models exist in different versions but all focus on instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2015). Such models are by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), Murphy (1990), Weber (1996) and Byrk *et al.* (2010).

2.4.1 Hallinger and Murphy's model of instructional leadership

An influential study carried out by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) where they examined the instructional management behaviour of 10 elementary school principals in a single school district gave rise to three widely used leadership dimensions which are, formulating vision and mission statements, managing instructional programmes, and developing positive environments (Lee *et al*., 2012; Bellibas and Liu, 2016; Aziz *et al*., 2017; Cansoy *et al*., 2020). The leadership dimensions fall into eleven job functions that principals participate in to signify instructional leadership (Yasser *et al.,* 2015). The first dimension is made up of two functions. Principal activities carried out under these dimensions include developing and communicating the vision and mission statements. Vision formulation should not be the sole responsibility of principals alone. It must be a function of the principal and teachers so that the vision has the buy in of the teachers. The principal task is to ensure that schools have their vision. The setting up of a vision and mission of a school is an important leadership practice that lays out the focus and direction of a school. If principals fail to perform this function, a sense of common purpose is lost.

Three leadership functions make up the second dimension. These include the supervising and evaluating of teaching and learning; curriculum coordination and the monitoring of progress by learners (Aziz *et al.*, 2017). The role of the principal is to ensure that teachers work towards attaining school goals when in the classroom. They do this through working closely with teachers in curriculum and instruction related areas. They closely monitor the progress of learners through evaluating their performance in tests and examinations. The findings are examined with an aim of establishing whether there is progress or not in learner academic performance so that assistance can be given. Through these results, principals provide support to both learners and teachers on specific areas that need improvement (UNESCO, 2005). This is "... a key leadership responsibility of the principal" (Yasser *et al*., 2015: 1506). Learner academic performance levels serve as indicators of how successful teaching activities are at a school. To know whether teachers do their work, principals carry out lesson observations (Horng and Loeb, 2010). Such visits enable principals to establish how much learners benefit from the instruction and the challenges teachers face as they implement the curriculum. Principals provide support to staff members through feedback related to instructional behaviours. The involvement of principals in managing school instructional activities keeps them abreast with curricular matters. The aspect of coordinating and controlling school programmes continues to be the main duty of the principal.

The third dimension focuses on creating a positive school environment and is composed of several functions which include, protecting teaching and learning time; encouraging teacher professional learning; being visible at school; provision of incentives for teachers and for learning (Aziz *et al*., 2017; Hallinger, 2011). The performance of these functions by principals leads to an increase in school performance (Yasser *et al.,* 2015).

2.4.2 Leadership practice by Murphy (1990)

Other instructional leadership models were championed by other researchers. Basing on Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) work, Murphy (1990), came up with a model that was premised on an understanding that principals that were effective in their schools were involved in instructional leadership. From this understanding, Murphy highlighted four sets of activities related to instruction. The first activity focused on developing a mission and goals for an organisation. Setting clear goals and communicating them to all teachers is a critical activity for the principal. If the goals are persuasive and achievable, members of staff get motivated to

achieve them and are willing to be identified with their organisations (Leithwood *et al*., 2004). The direction the school needs to take must be explicitly stated to staff members so that they all work towards a common purpose. Being aware of the goals of the school most likely make teachers work towards achieving them. Teachers plan their lessons and teach. These teacher activities need to be co-ordinated and monitored. Principals co-ordinate school activities to ensure that all teachers work towards achieving the set goals. Principals evaluate curriculum implementation and assess learner and teacher progress (Mestry, 2017). This can be done through formative assessment where observations of grade books and student work are made. By cooperatively working with teachers on curriculum matters, principals show their interest and involvement in instructional activities. The type of working environment contributes immensely to the achievement of school goals. Principals must ensure that there is a positive climate existing at the school (Mestry, 2017). The importance of positive working climates was also stressed by Hallinger and Murphy in their 1985 model when they developed three leadership practices. A positive school environment leads teachers to practise desired behaviours that benefit learners (Ghavifekr and Ibrahim, 2014). A supportive environment affords teachers an opportunity to upgrade themselves professionally (Mestry, 2017). Teachers also need the opportunity to put into practice their newly acquired skills. This support motivates teachers to higher performance which can result in increased learner academic performance. Murphy (1990) proclaims that the four sets of leadership activities in his framework are found in schools where principals show strong instructional leadership. Since principals play important roles in teaching and learning, they must keep their schools focused on curriculum issues and encouraging best teaching practices to meet learner needs.

2.4.3 Leadership practice by Weber (1996)

A study by Weber (1996) came up with five instructional leadership aspects. The domains are like those highlighted by Murphy (1990). These are building up a mission for the school; the supervision of the curriculum and of instructional activities; the promotion of positive school climates; observation and improvement of teaching activities and lastly, the assessment and evaluation of instructional programmes. Weber believed that for the successful implementation of the domains, two significant factors, flexibility and clarity had to be considered (Yasser *et al.,* 2015). Flexibility was shown by the principals' willingness to share leadership tasks. Principals fear for their posts, thus may be reluctant to let other members lead in some school activities preferring to be in control of all activities, thereby defeating the call for distributed leadership.

The mere fact is that distributive leadership contributes to flat hierarchies and teacher empowerment does not mean principals are less important. They remain important because of their symbolic and positional authority. The aspect of clarity denotes school principals' capability to match leadership tasks with capable members who can carry out the tasks to completion. Weber (1996) declared that teachers' commitment is increased when leaders practise effective leadership behaviour and set high expectations for their teachers. The three models show outstanding similarities, says lig-Mielcarek (in Mestry, 2017: 263). Common across the models is the principals' ability to identify and communicate school goals, supervise the work of teachers, and give timely advice on teachers' performance. Feedback enables teachers to reflect on their instruction and its effects on learners.

2.4.4 Leadership processes by Bryk *et al*. (2010)

Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) advocate that strong leadership practices affect the processes of schools. In their framework of essential support, Bryk *et al.* (2010) believe that school leadership influences learners through several school processes which include the professional competences of teachers, the conduciveness to learning of the school, the degree of family and community involvement in the learning of students and how impressive the instruction is. School leaders develop teacher capacities to improve learner outcomes. Bryk *et al*. (2010) advocate that the amount of attention the school principals pay to the processes they listed give rise to differences in the performance of schools. To begin with, Bryk *et al*. (2010), focused on the professional capacity of staff as an aspect that affects teaching in schools. They pointed out that the skills, attitudes, disposition, and work arrangements in a school affect its performance. Principals, need to understand that teachers with content mastery and a positive attitude towards their work and school, perform highly than those without a high regard for their schools. Teachers who identify with their schools perform to their best to make their schools the best. Principals need to acknowledge such teachers so that they sustain their interest in their schools and their work. The aspect of the professional community is a key feature of this dimension. It refers to the extent of frequency of teacher interaction and shared norms focusing on instructional activities. Principal leadership practices influence this professional community, either through promoting the staff development of teachers or hindering it. Factors such as teacher interactions in schools, their contribution to decision-making, how they cooperate in school activities and the amount of trust in schools can promote or hinder their professional development. This shows the effect organisational factors have on the professional community.

By encouraging teachers to professionally develop themselves, principals help increase teacher enlightenment and their school performance. The changing education environment has made people aim for higher qualifications to remain relevant in the education system and to safeguard their working positions. The professional development of teachers is important since it improves their professional knowledge, attitudes, and skills. It enables teachers to easily respond to changing needs in schools. Instructional skills are enhanced when individuals acquire new knowledge and learn new skills. By capacity developing themselves, teachers enhance their value to their schools. Professional development programmes can be run at school with teachers conducting demonstration lessons. From such programmes, other teachers benefit by seeing how lessons are effectively conducted and any grey areas can be cleared. Demonstration lessons can be conducted at department level such as in the Infant department or in the junior grades to ensure maximum benefit by all involved. These work arrangements, when properly handled, benefit both teachers and learners. The capacity development programmes encourage teamwork, critical thinking and provide opportunities for feedback and reflection. Principals should, thus create positive environments that ensure that development programmes are sustainable and coherent with other school programmes.

The second dimension that Bryk *et al*. (2010) focused on was the school climate. Values, beliefs, and the communication that take place among school members daily (Bryk *et al.,* 2010) are crucial for the development of a learning atmosphere. Teachers and learners working in a school that values hard work instil those values, resulting in learners working hard at their tasks. The aspect of communication in schools enables members to learn from each other. Communication among members allows the free flow of information in the school. Other aspects that determine the climate of the school include the order and safety that exist in schools. Order is critical if learners are to benefit from schools and principals must instil a sense of order in both teachers and learners. Order reduces confusion among learners and teachers, and it increases the safety of the learning environment. Order and safety in schools and classrooms can be maintained through sticking to rules and policies. If a school policy states that school starts at eight o'clock in the morning, this should be followed to curb the confusion that arises when learners and teachers fail to observe rules. The aspect of safety also helps in ensuring that children are free from harm and that teachers are safe from disturbances by rowdy parents. A conducive environment enables both teachers and learners to function freely. It is likely that teachers in schools with positive

climates press for depth and rigor in learners' schoolwork. It is an important practice by principals to ensure the safety of teachers and learners at school.

Involving parents in the learning of their children is important in learners' social and academic development (El Nokali *et al*., 2010). It has an effect in modelling their behaviour both at home and at school. Important leadership practices exist within schools' capacity when discussing community involvement in learner education. The practice of schools reaching out to communities and involving parents in school activities is of great importance in improving school and community relations, which in turn improve and contribute to positive learner performance. Parents offer their services to school developmental activities, such as constructing classrooms, donating materials such as computers for school use. This improves relations between the community and the school. Teachers must understand the type of communities they work in and the type of children they teach to be able to offer appropriate instruction. They must know the social standing of learners, their families' economic status, health, and social background. An understanding of these help teachers, as educators, to know why learners behave in the way they do. Establishing partnerships with the community is an important practice that school principals can undertake. It assists schools when dealing with the safety of learners and in addressing absenteeism issues (Bryk *et al*., 2010). To correct deviant behaviour in learners or an issue of absenteeism, the principals can discuss these behaviours with parents and jointly solve the problem, thus leading to uninterrupted teaching and learning.

The type of instruction that learners get in their classrooms determines their learning. Through working with teachers in classrooms, principals directly influence how learners receive their instruction. Indirectly, principals influence students' learning when they involve parents in school activities. Bryk *et al.* (2010) concur with Hallinger and Murphy (1985) on the importance of creating conducive working environments in schools. Various practices by principals lead to successful instructional activities (Sebastian and Allensworth, 2012). It is, thus, essential that school principals' efforts are directed towards instructional activities. This study focuses on finding out the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice.

To understand school leadership practice needs one to understand macro activities and micro tasks (daily activities) (Spillane *et al.*, 2001). Macro functions that are vital for instructional leadership include building of vision on teaching and learning, having increased trust of each

other in the school, a sense of working together, supervising instruction in the school and the support for teacher development. These leadership functions agree with the three leadership practices by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and are still popular in instructional leadership activities. Another common practice is the managing of instructional programmes which include monitoring instruction and innovation. This practice was identified by Spillane *et al*. (2001) and Hallinger and Murphy (1985) as crucial to school performance. Teacher support and development also leads to improved teaching activities. Macro functions can limit access to leadership practice, therefore, macro tasks must be identified and analysed to access leadership practice. An understanding of micro tasks will enable us to analyse the 'how' of school leadership. Examples of micro tasks include the availability of opportunities for staff members to work together, in-service opportunities for teachers and classroom observations. The micro tasks enable us to understand school leaders' daily activities. To understand more on leadership practice, it needs going beyond analysing micro tasks to exploring their enactment. This has, therefore, led to this study. "Analysing leadership practice involves understanding how school leaders define, present, and carry out these micro tasks, exploring how they interact with others in the process" (Spillane *et al*., 2001: 24). It enables us to understand what leaders do and how they do it as they carry out their daily tasks. Of these models, the Hallinger and Murphy model is regarded as the most fully tested instructional leadership model.

2.5 PRINCIPAL INSTRUCTIONAL ROLES THAT IMPROVE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

Due to accountability issues on school principals for high learner academic outcomes, principals attend to school improvement roles. McBrayer *et al.* (2020) argue that the identification of such roles as instructional leadership practices enables school leaders to align their roles to those that improve schools. Since the primary responsibility of principals is the improvement of schools they need to identify and understand instructional leadership practices that focus on improving schools. School principals influence the implementation of national curriculum at school through performing various activities among which are managing the curriculum and the supervision of staff and students. The actions and tasks that principals undertake in promoting instructional activities are critical in improving school performance. In this study, instructional leadership practices are taken to mean the leadership roles and responsibilities performed by principals with the aim of assisting teachers and learners to improve school performance. Instructional leadership practices occupy an important space in the effectiveness of schools. In this study, the

three dimensions by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) take the centre stage. These include formulating vision and mission statements, managing instructional programmes and developing enabling environments (Lee *et al*., 2012; Aziz *et al*., 2017; Cansoy *et al*., 2020). Under these three dimensions fall eleven job functions that principals need to enact to signify instructional leadership (Yasser *et al.,* 2015). The first to be looked at is the dimension on formulating vision and mission statements followed by the management of instructional programmes and lastly the development of enabling environments.

2.5.1 Formulating vision and mission statements

The central activity for schools is successful curriculum implementation coupled with dependable arrangements to assess learners' academic achievements and effective teachers' instructional practice (Naidoo and Petersen, 2016). Thus, leadership that support instructional activities is a necessity. Mendels (2012) from the Wallace Foundation posed a question on what effective principals do that improve learning in schools. The Wallace Foundation has supported projects that promoted education leadership since the year 2000. Mendels, who is part of The Wallace Foundation posited that five practices are central to effective school leadership. The Foundation believed that with these elements in place, principals have a high chance of improving learner academic performance. The first practice focused on the crafting of a vision for the success of learners. The crafting of a vision is a key practice that exemplifies effective leadership. Visions spell out the commitments needed for high school standards and learner success. Allen *et al.* (2018) advocate that school visions provide important information about the reasons of existence that schools set for themselves. They further point out that schools vary in the way they abide by their statements which serve as silent contracts between the schools and their various stakeholders as they strengthen their agreed upon purposes. Allen *et al.* (2017) regard these statements as important factors that create effective schools that contribute to improved learning outcomes. This explains the need for clear explanations by principals on school visions to all members in schools to have a common focus. School principals guide the staff as they conduct their daily instructional activities. The development of the school vision, mission and school goals are primary tasks that principals perform. Hallinger (2011), however points out that it is not the principal's responsibility to define the vision alone. Their role is to make sure that the school develops and communicates a clear vision to stakeholders. When principals play the communicator role, they encourage staff members to get committed to the goals of the organisation. This is possible through setting clear standards of performance and

aligning goals to the vision of the school. Lynch (2012: 26) emphasises that, "… goals are the instrumental agents to focus attention of staff and students in a whole range of relevant activities." The development of a school vision and mission are an important practice that lays out the focus and direction of a school. Through this avenue, principals shape teachers' expectations and learners' opportunity to learn. Visions need to be defined in a manner that develops a sense of common purpose in staff members and learners.

In a related study, Kaparou and Bush (2016) examined whether principals in high-performing secondary schools in Greece enacted instructional leadership and whether this had an impact on learner performance. Greece's education system is highly centralised. The study was exploratory in nature, and it used the qualitative multiple case design to collect data from two high performing secondary schools in Athens. To gather data, the researchers used semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis. Principals, vice principals, teacher leaders and teachers were interviewed. The research methods employed in the study enabled the researchers directly gather data from participants during interviews and while the participants were in their natural environment. This increased the chances of the information being valid. Observations of leadership practices and meetings and the analysis of relevant school documents increased the amount of data gathered. This informed my study on the importance of employing these methods in research. A gap exists in that my research focuses on high performing primary schools whereas this research focused on high performing secondary schools.

Findings showed that principals focused on targets as per the Greek government's policy. They had no formal visions for their schools since the Greek government required them to formulate targets for their schools (Kaparou and Bush, 2016). As the principals had no formal visions for their schools it meant no shared visions with teachers. Vision formulation is an important activity in instructional leadership. The lack of a common vision limits teacher initiative in introducing learning interventions outside classrooms. Concerning curriculum management, they found out that principals simply played the role of curriculum processing with strict adherence to government specifications. This, limited principals from aligning the curriculum to their school's specific needs. This meant that the teachers also had very little or no influence on the curriculum except to implement it as per government directives. This is opposed to Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) leadership model which regards the management of the curriculum as the principal's role to improve learner performance. Another finding was that there was limited discussion between

principals and teachers on learner progress. This left principals with very little or no knowledge of learner progress. It is an important activity of instructional leadership for the principal to monitor learner progress. Teacher monitoring was regarded as surveillance and principals were regarded as lacking skills and subject knowledge to monitor the teachers. This contrasts with Leithwood *et al.* (2008) belief that the improvement of staff performance is the principal's responsibility. It also contrasts with Robinson (2008) who advocates that the principal's classroom observations coupled with feedback contribute to improved teacher and high school performance. Continued professional development is an important activity in instructional leadership. With the global world fast changing in way of life and technology, education systems need to move along with time. With the training activities offered by the Greek conventional government sometimes regarded as outdated and ineffective, it meant that principals were not free to implement instructional leadership practices. There were very minimal school-based staff development activities (Kaparou and Bush, 2016), thus signalling little value placed on instructional leadership. The findings show that the government policy of top-down implementation of skills prevented principals from devoting time to improve teaching and learning which is a core activity in schools.

In another study, Hallinger *et al.* (2017) conducted a study to find out what primary school principals in Vietnam regarded as their roles in instructional leadership and to highlight those instructional leadership practices that the principals regarded as important. They also focused on developing an instructional leadership model that suited the education setting in Vietnam. Their study is anchored in the international educational leadership theoretical framework. This broader global effort enabled the building of a comprehensive knowledge base of instructional leadership in Vietnam. Vietnam is believed to have a limited recognised knowledge base of principal instructional leadership (Hallinger *et al.*, 2017). A qualitative research approach was employed. Open-ended interviews were used to collect data from 27 successful principals from the central and southern part of Vietnam. From their findings, they came up with a preliminary instructional model in Vietnam that had building solidarity and the management of external relationships as additional constructs to the already existing model by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). The researchers found out that there was a standard practice of setting targets for the improvement of the school. School annual improvement plans were derived from the set targets. These were set by the principals in consultation with teachers and were disseminated to top officials, parents and the outside community. The Vietnamese targets could be taken to mean visions in the

Zimbabwean context. How schools in my study formulate their vision and mission statements is answered by results from the field study. Though there is centralisation of the education system in Vietnam, the fact that principals set school targets in concert with teachers showed a sense of collaborative effort. From the interviews the researchers conducted with principals they noted a consistent and active involvement of the principals and teachers in improving teaching and learning (Hallinger *et al.,* 2017). Since the foundation for all learning is found in the primary school, it is important that principals in the studied schools collaborated with teachers in setting school targets, this helps improve the quality of education in the primary schools (Naidoo and Pettersen, 2016). An important aspect in the Vietnamese study is that the principals set targets and they communicate them to top officials and other stakeholders.

The need for specific goals helps in channelling the energy of members towards their specific tasks. Communicating the school goals to staff members and stakeholders is an important instructional activity a principal undertakes. Whether principals communicate and how they communicate is the subject of this study. The idea is to ensure that the goals are clear, measurable and with a focus on the academic growth of learners (Geleta, 2015). Since the ultimate purpose of schools is learner academic achievement, school visions and missions must target the improvement of learner academic performance. Since schools are under pressure to produce good results, principals aim for quality education for learners. To do this, principals and teachers set high goals for learners whom they try to assist to achieve the high goals.

2.5.2 Managing instructional programmes

Three leadership practices are found under this dimension. These include the supervision and evaluation of instruction; curriculum coordination and monitoring the progress of learners (Aziz *et al.,* 2017). These activities can be shared with teachers who work with learners in the classroom, but the ultimate responsibility of leadership rests with the principal in ensuring that teachers work towards attaining school goals when in the classroom.

i. Supervision and evaluation of instruction

Brandon *et al.* (2018) explain that policies that place teacher supervision within the conception of instructional leadership are quite important. They further point out that supervision is informed by information from classroom observations, scholastic dialogues and artefacts that inform instruction and be the basis for instructional leadership practice. Their main argument is

that supervision should target instructional support that improves teaching, learning and shared instructional leadership. This signifies that, principals have a responsibility to coordinate the curriculum, supervise and evaluate teaching and monitor the progress of learners, the focus being the improvement of instruction. Yunas and Iqbal (2013) advocate that this leadership practice is meant to influence the behaviour of teachers to select and use good instructional methods and materials while in classrooms. Horng and Loeb (2010) advocate that through working closely with teachers, principals improve the teaching strategies by teachers. Classroom observations enable principals to assess teachers' use of effective instructional strategies. Such visits are believed to inform principals on how much learners benefit from the instruction. Through observations and an understanding of classroom teaching and learning by principals provide support to staff members through specific feedback related to instructional behaviours. Principals, thus impact on teachers through supervision and evaluation of instruction. Through instructional leadership practices, teacher competencies are enhanced.

In a study conducted by Ismail *et al.* (2018) to find out whether there existed a relationship between the instructional leadership by principals and the functional competency of teachers, it was found out that a high relationship existed. The study was carried out in highly respected schools in the northern part of Malaysia. The descriptive survey method was employed to collect data from 225 teachers sampled from twelve secondary and primary schools. The PIMRS questionnaire in conjunction with the Integrated Assessment Module for Education Services Officers (2014) were used when gathering data. The use of the PIMRS in quantitative studies has been wide and the results obtained signify the principal application of instructional leadership (Ismail *et al.,* 2018; Gurley *et al.,* 2016). Findings exhibited a strong relationship between principals' instructional leadership and the functional competency of teachers. The results revealed the principals' instructional leadership practices particularly those related to professional development. This suggests the principals' support of the teachers' professional development, thus portraying the principals' application of instructional leadership practices. The study used a quantitative research method to gather data from a mixed group of participants, primary and secondary school principals and teachers. What is not evident from the findings is what group said what and whether the relationship between the principals' instructional leadership and the teachers existed among the primary school group or the secondary school group and to what degree of intensity. This is critical as instructional leadership practices are regarded as more prevalent in primary schools than in secondary schools (Dong and Seong,

2014). These gaps inform my study on the importance of a proper choice of a sample. My study focuses on high performing primary schools only. The fact that a high relationship existed between the principals' instructional leadership practices and the teachers' functional competency is proof of the impact principals have on teachers. It can also be suggested that this effect spills over to learners, thus resulting in these schools being high performing schools. The view that effective schools are led by effective school heads can, therefore, be upheld. Lynch (2012) contends that principals, whose schools perform highly, spent some time discussing with their teachers on instructional activities. This participation by principals enables them to be involved in activities that improve classroom teaching.

Another related study was carried out by Donkor and Asante (2016). They focused on finding out the specific instructional leadership practices undertaken by heads of basic schools in the Kwaebibirem District of Ghana. They explored several areas which included lesson planning, principal support for teachers, and the supervision and evaluation of teachers and learners' performance. A descriptive research design was used. Three hundred and five (305) respondents made up of 60 head-teachers, 240 teachers, and five circuit supervisors took part in the study. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents. The data were presented in percentages and frequencies. Findings showed that the supervision and evaluation of teachers and learners were the most practised activities in the basic schools when compared to planning, organisation, and the delivery of the curriculum. It is important that principals supervise and evaluate teachers' instructional activities if learners are to benefit from the instruction. The descriptive survey research method was used because it states the nature of a given phenomenon and answers research questions regarding the prevailing position of a subject being studied. Through descriptive surveys data are gathered at specific times with the intension of describing the nature of the prevailing circumstances, thus it was suitable for Donkor and Asante's (2016) study since their aim was to find out the instructional leadership behaviour of heads. For my research where I must find out how principals enact instructional leadership practices in schools, the qualitative research design is more ideal as it allows asking questions and observing people in their natural environments.

The improvement of instruction is a practice that principals in effective schools attend to. Mendels (2012) advocates that, effective principals make use of strategies that are based on research to improve instructional activities. Discussions are encouraged among teachers on

instructional approaches to improve teaching and learning. Principals conduct classroom supervision and discuss their findings with teachers. This is done to assist teachers improve instructional activities. Anderson (2010) postulates that through giving instructional support in the form of constructive feedback after supervising the teachers improves performance in schools. Teachers need to be encouraged to offer their optimum for learners to benefit. Principals in effective schools manage people, data, and processes to stimulate instructional activities at school. Effective leaders support their teachers in their work, and they have strategies to retain those who perform highly. For teachers to stay long at a school depends on the support the teachers receive from the principals. There is, therefore, a need for principals to encourage teachers in their endeavours to professionally develop themselves. Mendels (2012: 58) concludes by saying that the job of the principal today is "… to work collaboratively and unleash potential." This indicates the need for principals to work closely with other school members and tap the expertise in them. This signals a movement away from concentrating on administrative tasks by school principals to instructional leadership.

The level of school academic standing is measured by its output which is the average academic achievement of learners at the end of instruction such as a term or a year. High pass rates are a sign of high school performance. Yangaiya and Ali (2013) believe that the determining factor of school effectiveness is leadership. Thus, for high performance, schools need effective instructional leaders who provide feedback, guidance and determine learning outcomes. To improve performance at school, principals need to focus on outstanding classroom performance and constantly monitor learner progress and correct problems timeously (Noman *et al.,* 2018). In such schools, teachers are equipped to implement the curriculum and principals monitor classroom activities. There is high collaboration between teachers and principals in these schools. Principals, therefore, play a major role in developing environments that enable teacher collaboration (Zuze and Juan, 2018).

School principals supervise teachers while teaching in the classroom, this enables them to see if quality education is implemented in the classrooms and then offer help if need be or give praise. The supervision of instructional activity enhances teacher professional growth, prevents burnout in experienced teachers and supports new teachers so that they quickly master the instructional system. The interactions that take place between the principals and teachers as they discuss observed classroom activities are an important practice which enables principals to give

assistance to teachers on time. Yousaf *et al.* (2018) believe that teacher supervision by the school principals result in teacher professional growth and high school performance. It, therefore, suggests that low levels of teacher supervision result in low teacher professionalism. Primary schools form the foundation for learners' further studies; therefore, it needs to be made firm so that learners get the best at this stage. Thus, one way of moving towards this is through the supervision of teachers and giving assistance. Without getting into classrooms the school principal might not be aware of challenges teachers face in the classroom such as lack of resources like textbooks. Inadequate textbooks in the school make teachers' work difficult as this results in many learners sharing one textbook. This does not result in productive work in the classroom. Experiencing this through visiting classrooms, enables the school principal to mobilise resources to equip schools. The focus of schools is educating learners, so giving supervision the credit it deserves, leads to improved education attainments. Through supervision, principals give guidance to teachers on effective classroom teaching, thus leading to the achievement of school objectives through effective teacher performance. Through feedback from classroom supervision, teacher competencies can be enhanced leading to improved teaching of learners (Heaton in Yousaf *et al.*, 2018: 286). Those principals that are effective in supervision assist their teachers in preparing learning activities before lessons start (Yousaf *et al.*, 2018). Such assistance by principals, help increase school performance. Using varied supervision practices such as class visits, workshops and seminars on teaching and learning result in improved teacher performance in schools (Obi in Yousaf *et al.*, 2018: 286).

ii. Curriculum coordination

School leadership and the quality of teaching are significant aspects that have an impact on the learning of students (Heck and Hallinger, 2010). The increased emphasis on schools to improve instructional activities has resulted in an increase in interest on instructional leadership by principals in various countries. In performing this practice, principals need to coordinate effectively both curricular and extra-curricular activities in a feasible manner since both contribute to the general education of learners. It is crucial that principals translate the school academic goals to curricular objectives that can be covered by teachers within the set time frame. The involvement of principals in managing school instructional activities keeps them abreast with curricular matters. Since principals are at the top of the school's organisational structures, the task of coordinating and controlling school programmes continue to be their main duties. The way supervisory practices are enacted can show the focus of the principal. Linking instructional

leadership practices to the school vision and clearly articulating them for teachers' understanding makes them effective. Teachers positively respond to supervision by their supervisors if the supervisors' intentions are meant for the good of the learners and for teachers' professional growth (Lee *et al.,* 2012). Through creating positive school environments, principals provide an incessant improvement in teaching and learning.

iii. Monitoring of learner progress

Principals in high performing schools communicate to varied stakeholders about the levels of performance of their learners. Together with teachers, they monitor learner progress very closely. They make use of information from tests and examination results to determine learner progress to make informed decisions on possible action which, among others, could be, for example, conducting extra lessons in the afternoon to assist learners. Basing on such results, principals assist teachers to improve instruction (UNESCO, 2005). Principals need to discuss test and examination results with individual teachers and with all staff members to have a common understanding of learner performance at the school (Geleta, 2015). This instructional leadership activity indicates the principal's involvement in managing the core activity of schools, instructional leadership. This is "... a key leadership responsibility of the principal" (Yasser *et al.,* 2015: 1506). Learner academic performance levels save as indicators of how successful teaching activities are taking place at a school. Principals ensure that school goals are transmitted to learners through evaluating instructional activities. The view that principals' leadership impact on learners is upheld by the following study by Khan *et al.* (2020).

Khan *et al.* (2020) conducted a study in Pakistan primary schools to examine the connection between instructional leadership by principals and the academic performance of learners through the mediating effects of teachers. The research used a quantitative research approach with a descriptive correlational research design. Data were gathered from 440 primary school teachers in Pakistan. The researchers used instructional leadership as their research model with the reason being that instructional leadership by principals had effects on teachers' commitment to their work. The findings showed that principals' instructional leadership practices influenced the academic performance of learners through the commitment of teachers to their schools. An increase in instructional leadership practices and teacher commitment led to an increase in the academic performance by learners (Khan *et al.,* 2020). However, what is not evident is how the school principals enact instructional leadership practices that lead to the teacher commitment and

higher learner performance. This is the focus of my study to find out how. The principals in Khan *et al.* (2020) study applied instructional leadership practices. Their study which involved teacher commitment was an extension to the instructional leadership model by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). The findings from this study confirm literature which states that principals have direct influence on teachers and an indirect impact on learners (Horng and Loeb, 2010). Teacher commitment to their work is crucial if learner performance is to improve. This is because it is the teacher who spends most of the time with learners in the classroom, thus their impact on learners is greater than any other persons. School principal's leadership enhances teacher commitment to their work. Teaching staff are a complex system of interdependent specialists who regularly interact with each other. Principals must, therefore, offer opportunities for teachers to work as a team where they can dialogue and come up with the best teaching practices in schools (Shaked and Schechter, 2016). How teachers do this is the subject of my research.

Teacher commitment is related to their willingness to work for the school. It entails that, teachers identify with the values and objectives of the school. The commitment by teachers to their work is crucial in the school system as it enhances learner support by teachers. Through school leadership, the commitment of teachers towards their work is enhanced. This was unpacked by Cansoy *et al.* (2020) who carried out a study in Istanbul province of Turkey to find out whether instructional leadership behaviours by principals impacted on the commitment of teachers. The study adopted the survey method. Their conceptual framework was on instructional leadership and collective teacher efficacy. Literature holds that the collaboration between teachers and principals help improve instruction and positive school climates (Hallinger, 2015). Principal leadership behaviours influence teacher performance and learner achievement (Klar, 2012). In the same manner that principal leadership behaviours affect teachers, teachers' behaviours also affect teaching and learning at the school. Thus, collective efficacy, which enhances teamwork among teachers, makes learners realise their sense of responsibility and an awareness to solving problems at the school. The researchers discovered that principal instructional leadership behaviours contributed to an increase in teacher collaboration and to their commitment to schools. This study shows the impact the principal's leadership practices have on teachers.

Principals need to be aware of activities taking place in classrooms. They must monitor and evaluate instructional programmes to see if there are any changes in learner content mastery. In this practice, principals use test or examination results to measure the level of performance and

achievement of school targets. When primary schools in Zimbabwe receive their grade seven results, they analyse them to find out how students would have performed in the written public examination in comparison to past sittings and to the pass rates of other schools. High pass rates are a sign that the school's performance was high. As a public examination, all people concerned need to know how learners would have performed (Maposa and Chisango, 2016). "Desirable national learner performance standards are set, and school leaders are expected to explain why the learners' achievement is below or above the standards" (Marishane, 2015: 192). The MoPSE through ZIMSEC, set the point system which schools use. In Zimbabwe, the passing levels per learning area are ranked from one (1) unit being the highest score for a mark of seventy-five percent (75%) and above and nine (9) units being the lowest score for a mark of twenty percent (20%) and below. The passing mark per each learning area is six (6) points for a candidate with a pass mark of fifty (50) present. Out of the five learning areas examined at grade seven, a candidate with a total of thirty (30) points which is the cut-off point is regarded as having passed. From thirty-one (31) points to forty-five points a candidate would have failed. Thus, when making analyses, schools use these scores. Principals use these results to make decisions and interpretations (Nkoma, *et al.,* 2017) on how to allocate classes to teachers, particularly grade six and seven classes. If the school's pass rate increases, the grade six and seven teachers can be retained in those classes but when there is a big difference in pass rate compared to the previous years, the school principal would replace the grade six and seven teachers with other teachers with the hope that the pass rates would improve. Depending on the school principal, class allocation can be done individually or in consultation with the vice principal (deputy head) and senior teacher. Public examination results show the levels of achievement of learners in a school and are a signal of whether schools are serving the purpose for which they were established. Secondary schools in Zimbabwe use grade seven results to select possible candidates to enrol into form one (Moyo and Maseko, 2016). Thus, school principals make every effort to ensure high pass rates at their schools. This can be done through allocating hard-working teachers to grade six and seven classes and providing them with teaching and learning materials. The practice of strategically placing teachers in classes such as allocating hard working teachers to grade six gives teachers ample time to study their learners and devise best ways of assisting them starting from grade six up to grade seven.

2.5.3 Creating a conducive school environment

It is the principal's task to create safe school environments that support effective teaching and learning and that promote professional interactions among teachers. This involves the formulation of flexible teams that deliver varied teaching practices, the designing of flexible timetables, the physical layout of classrooms and of the school in general (Dong and Seong, 2014). Mendels (2012) focused on the creation of a conducive environment that enhances improved instructional activities. Hospitable environments in schools enhance teacher and learner safety, orderliness, and support teacher development. Such environments as non-bureaucratic environments enable teachers to be part of the school community. Principals need to encourage collaborative work by teachers to improve teaching. Principals play an important "… role in developing a conducive environment for teacher collaboration" (Zuze and Juan, 2018: 4). Six leadership practices are found in creating a positive school environment. These are protecting teaching and learning time, the promotion of professional development, maintenance of high visibility, provision of incentives for teachers and for learners and the enforcement of academic standards. The performance of these instructional leadership practices by principals leads to improved school performance (Yasser *et al.*, 2015).

A study by Okey (2020) showed that the provision of conducive environments alone did not produce results. What produce results are the leadership activities that principals carry out in their schools. Okey (2020) studied instructional leadership practices by principals from public secondary schools in Nigeria. They adopted an ex-post facto research design basing on the fact that no variable of the study could easily be manipulated since both the principal's instructional leadership and the learner's academic performance had already occurred. The stratified random sampling technique was used to come up with a sample of thirty-six public secondary schools from three local government areas. From each of the sampled schools, seven teachers were selected ending up with a total of 252 respondents. Data were gathered through questionnaires and were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Findings showed a significant relationship between the instructional leadership practices by principals and the quality of academic performance by public secondary school learners. Principals were found to avail positive learning environments but did not conduct class supervision visits neither did they discuss learner progress with teachers. They also did not provide teaching and learning materials. School leadership is crucial and key to improving the quality of school performance (Nyangarika and Ngasa, 2020), thus principals must not neglect their roles (Okey, 2020). Though my study is

focused on primary schools, this study shed light on important instructional leadership activities. It points out roles that school principals must play for improved school performance.

A conducive working environment enable both teachers and learners to work with great enthusiasm. School principals should create and sustain an encouraging working atmosphere. They must encourage the sharing of innovative ideas that relate to instructional activities. A highly important practice in instructional leadership is when principals create a positive working atmosphere by reducing bureaucracy and distributing leadership activities. Teachers should be engaged in important instructional issues. For this to happen, principals must create positive working environments that enable teachers to engage "… in experimentation, reflection, and risk-taking" (Hallinger and Hosseingholizadeh, 2019: 12). School principals are expected to be friendly and approachable since their behaviours determine the climate at their schools. Staff members should be motivated to work towards achieving the school goals. A positive working environment is a crucial element to successful instructional leadership and principals have the responsibility of developing school climates that enable the existence of the best teaching and learning practices. Various job functions fall under this dimension, and these are discussed below:

i. Protecting instructional time

Instructional time is of great importance in schools and should be effectively utilised. Principals need to curb disruptions to learning time through developing and enforcing school wide policies. They support teaching activities through ensuring that teachers are not interrupted as they teach. Effective schools control disruptions that might crop up in the school. Maximum use of time by both learners and teachers is encouraged by principals. To lessen disruption in schools, visiting times and drop off time for learners can be stated and all stakeholders advised of the times. These can be displayed on entrances for all to see. To be effective, these times need to be adhered to for the benefit of the learners. Teachers can also be discouraged from disturbing fellow members through frequent visits to their classrooms during teaching time.

ii. Promoting professional development

Effective principals support the professional development of their staff members. Shava (2015) points out that effective school leaders improve working conditions, motivate, and capacitate their teachers to achieve school goals. Moyo and Maseko (2016) advocate that the MoPSE

should work together with schools in implementing programmes that enable skills development by teachers. This helps improve the teaching skills in teachers which in turn benefit learners. Principals need to inform teachers of the expected teacher and learner performances at the school and then support them as they work towards the achievement of the expected performances. In fact, school principals must encourage best practices for curriculum delivery. Effective principals employ a practice of intellectual stimulation (Glanz *et al.,* 2017) where they expose teachers to new and current ideas on improving teaching and learning activities. Such principals stay well-informed about contemporary education information, and they encourage teachers to be abreast with current education information (Naidoo and Petersen, 2016). Teachers are encouraged to read current books and articles on effective school instructional practices and to engage in discussions on new developments in teaching.

Principal support of the staff development of their members can be through the provision of appropriate resources and putting in place mechanisms that promote teacher professional development in line with school goals. This enriches the instructional experience of teachers and motivates them for higher performance. It is also crucial that principals give teachers an opportunity to apply newly learnt knowledge at the school. Principals need to help staff members to further their professional standing through opportunities that members can use to further their education. It is generally believed today that instructional leadership effects on learners are through the practices of teachers (Boyce and Bowers, 2018; Salo *et al.,* 2015). Thus, teacher learning must be supported in schools since it leads to improved instructional performance and a reform in education (Day *et al.,* 2016). Since education is dynamic, it needs to consistently respond to the prevailing political, technological, and socio-economic conditions. This led Zimbabwe into transforming its curriculum to remain relevant and to "… adequately meet the evolving national development aspirations" (Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022: 1). For this to succeed, it also needs teachers to improve their teaching skills and practices. Chitamba (2015) advocates that such staff training workshops prepare and equip teachers with skills to effectively implement the new curriculum. Staff development programmes benefit teachers and their schools. Thus, principals need to encourage teachers to attend such career upliftment workshops and even go for degree level programmes. This will enhance the teaching skills learnt while at teachers' college. Staff development programmes can also be done through school exchange visits with other schools or within the school through coaching and mentoring activities. These are important and school principals should support

them through facilitating for the possibility of such visits. Chitamba (2015) argues that the training teachers receive while at college does not sufficiently prepare them for what they really encounter in their teaching career. Thus, staff development training is needed, and principals must support these to maintain high standards of teaching in schools. After training, teachers must be afforded opportunities to put the acquired new knowledge into practice at school. It is crucial that principals acknowledge the achievements made by teachers in self-developing themselves. The opportunities afforded to teachers go a long way in improving teacher performance.

iii. Maintaining high visibility

Being visible at school and in classrooms is an important instructional activity that increases interactions between school leaders, teachers, and learners. Effective leaders focus more on curricula matters than administrative activities (Geleta, 2015). By spending time talking to teachers and learners, principals increase their understanding of teacher and learner outlook towards their leadership and the school.

iv. Managing instructional programmes and teaching process

Teaching and learning are core activities which need successful implementation in schools. Teachers need to be aware of school instructional programmes if successful implementation of the programmes is to be realised. Principals, thus, must create opportunities for the successful implementation of instructional programmes in the school. Şişman (2016: 1762) says, "In successful schools, school principals have a pivotal role in planning, implementing and coordinating of programmes." If principals do not take instructional leadership as their responsibility, school instructional performance might be affected. In a study conducted to establish the level of understanding of instructional leadership by South African principals, Mestry (2017) found out that principals did not fully understand instructional leadership and thus did not regard it as their main roles. The study was carried out in South African primary and secondary schools. The qualitative research methodology was used to define the principals' views of themselves being instructional leaders. The sample was made up of eight principals from affluent, middle, and poor schools, four from primary and four from secondary schools. More attention was focused on administrative activities than instructional leadership. Interesting to note is that, whereas the principals focused more on administrative activities, they unconscientiously performed some instructional leadership activities. They monitored and

controlled academic standards at their schools. It is crucial that principals understand instructional leadership. Though principals are involved in managerial duties, it is their active involvement in instructional leadership that improves school performance (Mestry, 2017). Even though the study was conducted in affluent schools, the principals denied the claims that their main job was the management of teaching and learning. The qualitative research methodology employed is critical in research in that it is more inclined to understanding rather than explaining and it allows a subjective investigation of reality from an insider's viewpoint. It remained to be proved after conducting my research whether principals in my study understood their instructional roles.

Effective instructional leaders engage teachers when discussing instructional activities. When it comes to classroom teaching, for instance, the principals can demonstrate how to conduct lessons, as a staff development activity. This signals the principal's involvement in instructional activities in the school. School principals, thus take such opportunities to demonstrate classroom teaching. The principals' presence is recognised in the school, and they take an opportunity to dialogue with teachers and build on their professional standing. This is supported by Salo *et al*. (2015) when they say principals in successful schools create time to talk to teachers and they also support their professional development. School principals observe teachers conducting lessons. The monitoring practice is important because through monitoring, principals stay informed on activities in classrooms and thus offer help where needed.

Effective principals use classroom observation to create an expressive dialogue with teachers where the principal provides valuable feedback to teachers. Leiva *et al.* (2017) advocate that, principals must be strategic when implementing practices to motivate teachers, sustain school improvement and increase teacher capacities. Practices employed to improve instructional programme must be well coordinated for them to be understood by all in the school. For instance, the frequency of classroom supervision by principals should be clearly understood by teachers as meant to improve school performance, otherwise it fails to serve the purpose it is meant for when teachers do not take the supervision along the same lines with their supervisors. The frequency of classroom supervision depends on the principal and the school. Some principals conduct classroom supervision once a month per class teacher, whereas others once per term. Teachers need to understand the idea behind this practice lest they take it as an intrusion to their professional autonomy by their supervisors. The feedback given to teachers

should be timely and developmental so that it has effect on the instructional development of the teachers. If delayed, it may fail to serve its purpose. Giving immediate feedback is a good practice since it is done when both the teacher and the principal still remember classroom developments. Principals can bring into the school resource persons (Leiva *et al.,* 2017) who would coach teachers and or learners in selected learning areas such as science and technology or visual and performing arts. Principals need to clearly communicate to teachers the reasons behind bringing in the resource person(s). This practice of bringing in expertise from outside can contribute to improved school performance (Leiva *et al.,* 2017).

Instructional leadership brings change to student performance because it is directly linked to increased learner academic attainment (Bush, 2013; Spillane and Kim, 2012). Through instructional leadership practices, school leaders execute actions and activities that improve learning. Niqab *et al*. (2014: 75) say, "Instructional leadership includes the effective development of teaching and learning activities, extensive coverage of the syllabus in time, and a keen method of supervision". Yunas and Iqbal (2013) contend that these actions can only happen when an instructional leader has deep content knowledge. Niqab *et al*. (2014) further state that promoting teamwork is critical to school leaders. Teachers, therefore, need somebody, an instructional leader who can set the direction on instructional activities (Desravines *et al.,* 2016). School principals' leadership roles are central to instituting and sustaining an operating school. Effective principals work with other members of staff on curriculum matters (Horng and Loeb, 2010: 66). Hallinger and Wang (2015) expect school leaders to exhibit their abilities in leading schools. Instructional leadership pays much attention to the main aspects of the school (Badenhorst and Radile, 2018). School principals indirectly influence learner performance. It, therefore, signifies that a cordial working relationship between the principal and the teachers forms a base for effective instructional leadership (Robinson, 2010). Principals and teachers both perform instructional leadership functions which make their behaviours part of instructional leadership practice (Spillane *et al.*, 2004).

Desravines *et al.* (2016) advocate that principals use four key levers to improve performance in schools. They align the curriculum to state standards. In such cases, principals and teachers collaborate in defining and implementing instruction. For improved instruction, principals give support to their teachers and monitor their progress to ensure consistent high-quality classroom practices, routines, and instructional approaches across classrooms. Principals support teachers in

their focus on learner activities. The tailoring of instruction to students' learning needs leads to student achievement. Desravines *et al.* (2016: 68) argue that "As leaders we need to know the instructional improvements teachers must make, provide coaching and support to help them make those improvements, and monitor implemented strategies". When engaged in instructional leadership activities, principals get involved in varied activities with the aim of improving the academic performance at the school (Shaked *et al*., 2017). Of importance is the acquisition of a wide knowledge base on planning and implementing learner-centred activities. Instructional leadership practices would be constrained if leaders' pedagogical content is not strong. In addition, school principals must encourage excellent relations with and among teachers and other stakeholders. This enables quality improvement in teaching activities.

v. Providing incentives for teachers

Different nations have different reward systems for their schools. Rewarding behaviours that contribute to instructional effectiveness in teachers is the principal's role to create a positive learning climate. A positive learning environment supports instructional activities. Mestry (2013) asserts that as an active and joint form of leadership, instructional leadership involves teachers, learners, and principals. Considering all the responsibilities that principals undertake, there is a need to share responsibility for improved instructional activity and healthy learning environments.

A widespread movement by teachers changing schools because of working conditions can undermine policy efforts of developing high-quality personnel. To combat this, some schools introduced financial incentives to retain high-quality teachers. Fulbeck (2013) conducted a study in Colorado that focused on the relationship between teacher mobility and financial incentives. Comparisons were made of high performing schools whose teachers received incentives and those that did not. Findings showed that there was a decrease in the number of teachers from those who received incentives who wanted to leave their schools when compared to those who did not receive incentives. The results suggest that teacher turnover can be caused by low salaries, thus by offering them financial incentives boosts their job satisfaction and continued stay at their schools. It, therefore, needs effective principals who can acknowledge the power incentives have over teachers that they incentivise their staff members.

A study to find the impacts of relatively low-cost performance-based incentives on teachers and learners was conducted in Tanzanian secondary schools by Filmer *et al.* (2020). A randomised two-phase sample was used in the study. A sample of 420 teachers, learners and head teachers was selected from three provinces of Tanzania. Observations and questionnaires were used to collect data. The awards were in money and material form such as book vouchers, medals, smart phones and certificates. For learners, awards included book vouchers, certificates, and medals. These were designed as school-based competitions. Learners were incentivised basing on their academic performances in examinations and for teachers, they were based on the performance of their learners in Maths, English, and Kiswahili examinations. The findings showed positive learning impacts on the schools where both teachers and learners received incentives. They also noted that learners' performance levels were not affected by withdrawal of teacher incentives. High learner performance was found in schools where both teachers and learners were incentivised than in schools where learners only were incentivised. The results of the study show the role incentives play in the school system. It is an important characteristic of leadership to effectively implement reward systems that sustain high performance in both teachers and learners in schools. The low-cost incentives in Filmer *et al.* (2020) study showed that it had impact on both learners and teachers. It, however, needs effective principals to evaluate and find out whether the reward system has any impact on both teachers and learners, otherwise there might not be any change in performance if the rewards are not valued by the recipients. It is also crucial that the reward system is clearly spelt out and well understood by all for it to have impact.

vi. Providing incentives for students

It is the role of the principal to develop a school climate that enables learners to value academic work. Frequent rewarding and recognising of learners' academic achievement in and outside the classroom contributes to their improved performance. Principals are key factors that link the classroom and the reward system of the school (Geleta, 2015). Reward systems in schools are aimed at improving learner academic performance. Angrist and Lavy (2009) carried out a study on the effects of the cash incentive programme to high school learners in Israel for learners who progressed from tenth to eleventh and to twelfth grades and for passing the Bagrut examinations. Forty high schools that were randomly selected took part in the study. Findings showed that the pass rates increased by 6–8 percent. This showed the effect that incentives have on the performance of learners.

vii. Enforcing academic standards

It is an important role for principals to enforce high academic standards in schools. In a study carried out by Hallinger and Hosseingholizadeh (2019) it showed the important activity that principals carried out of enforcing academic standards. Hallinger and Hosseingholizadeh (2019) conducted a study that focused on understanding the instructional leadership practices of principals in primary schools of Iran and whether there was a difference between high and low-ranked Iranian school principals in their enactment of instructional leadership practices. The PIMRS was used to guide them in their study. The researchers employed the mixed methods research design to gather quantitative and qualitative data from principals and teachers. The researchers first collected data using the PIMRS questionnaire from 535 teachers and 70 principals then from the results of the quantitative research they selected four highest and four lowest performing principals and interviewed them using open-ended interviews. This was done to understand the leadership activities performed by the principals in the schools. Their key findings showed that the principals carried out varied activities that characterised instructional leadership. They emphasised quality teaching and learning, monitored student learning and created collegial environments in the schools. It is critical to use appropriate methodologies to gather relevant data. The mixed methods used in this research signifies a move away from the use of a single paradigm that may produce limited versions of successful leadership. This, increases understanding because of synthesised results from different methodological perspectives that provide detailed accounts to support improved practice (Day *et al.,* 2016). The varied activities performed by the principals characterise instructional leadership and the aim is improved performance in schools. By emphasising high-quality teaching and learning and giving teachers feedback, the principals contributed to improving teachers' instructional capacity. Through creating positive school environments principals provided an incessant improvement in instructional activities (Hallinger and Wang, 2015).

Bhengu *et al*. (2014: 204) state that "... instructional leadership focuses on teaching and learning and on the behaviour of teachers in working with learners in order to achieve improved academic outcomes." Though most studies on the construct instructional leadership and distributed leadership were studied separately in American schools (Spillane, 2005), with very little done in African schools, a deduction portrays distributed leadership being able to unleash the potential in instructional leadership for improved school performance. O'Donovan (2015) believes that school leadership is all about achieving high academic results.

2.6 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ZIMBABWE

Generally, the expectations of the Zimbabwean community are for principals to be more of administrative than instructional leaders since most of the principals spend the greater part of their time on administrative work, being in the office, meeting parents and or attending meetings. Leadership structures in Zimbabwean primary schools officially include the school head (principal) and a deputy head (vice principal). These are the official appointments that are made by the Ministry. They are the formal positions in primary schools that have salary grades pegged to them. On the structure is also the post of the teacher in charge (TIC). Appointment to this post and that of senior teacher is made by the school principal. These are internal appointments of teachers to leadership positions meant to enable the smooth flow of operations in a school. These school appointments do not have specific salaries pegged to their leadership positions. Learning area committee leaders are also often appointed within schools based on their capacity to lead others where they have expertise. Varied learning area committees exist and these focus on various learning areas, such as languages or sciences. The leaders of these committees interact with the school principal and teachers on selected topics in the contexts of their schools. Interactions take place in different ways among staff members focusing on achieving leadership tasks.

Most leadership studies conducted in Zimbabwe, focus more on leadership styles that include democratic or autocratic leadership styles (Majoni, 2015; Moswela and Kgosidialwa, 2019) and very little on instructional leadership. Most school heads focus more on administrative tasks (Phillips, 2009) than on instructional leadership. Among the few studies on instructional leadership is one conducted by Sandada and Makamani (2016) in Zimbabwean schools. They investigated the extent to which instructional leadership contributed to the performance of schools in Harare province of Zimbabwe. Their conceptual framework was based on the conception that instructional leadership positively affected school performance thus covering teacher and learner performance. They argued that school leaders had four aspects they must perform for improved performance in their schools which are being a resource provider, instructional leader, good communication and being visible in the school. The belief is that the performance of these by school heads results in improved teacher and learner performance. The attributes listed form part of activities that characterise instructional leadership, therefore, the performance of these activities by school heads improves school performance. It can, therefore, be said that instructional leadership is the precursor to improved school performance. The

researchers used a quantitative research approach where they developed questionnaires. These were either hand delivered or emailed to respondents. Varied items found on the questionnaire were activities that are expected of school heads, these included supervising and evaluating the curriculum, monitoring the progress of learners, the coordination and management of the curriculum, provision of advice and support, maintaining visibility, the promotion of school improvement and professional development and being achievement oriented. The respondents were sampled from council primary schools, government primary schools and government secondary schools. The data were analysed using the descriptive, correlation and regression analyses. Their findings showed a substantial relationship between instructional leadership and the dimensions of school performance which are teacher and learner performance. Despite this, it appears school heads in Zimbabwe do not understand much about instructional leadership.

Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013) carried out research in three provinces of Zimbabwe and found out that school principals did not understand much about instructional leadership practice. They discovered that the focus of school principals was more on financial matters, sporting activities and on improving the physical outlook of their schools at the expense of instructional supervisory activities. They recommended the use of effective instructional supervision models by school principals to improve teacher activities. Vengesayi (in Muranda, 2015: 16) says the important function of school principals is supervising the implementation of the curriculum in schools. Thus, school principals need to supervise teachers to ensure learning takes place in classrooms and for them to understand what would be taking place in the classrooms then, if need be, help teachers (Muranda, 2015). Principals must understand instructional leadership and the importance of distributing it. Research literature has, however, shown that it is not sustainable to place all focus on principals as the sole drivers of instructional leadership practices (Goksoy, 2015; Grenda and Hackmann, 2014). This indicates that instructional leadership on its own is not enough to improve school performance to high levels. A combination of distributed leadership and instructional leadership is likely to lead to high pass rates.

The study conducted in Botswana by Mphale (2015) in junior and senior secondary schools proved that shared leadership led to successful schools. In the world of today, leadership of schools has become complex and difficult such that it has become cumbersome for lone individuals to provide for all situations. It, therefore, requires collaborative work efforts between subordinates and leaders to achieve effective school leadership. Mphale (2015) investigated the

perceptions of school heads in Botswana secondary schools on shared leadership practices. A survey research method was used. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data from participants who comprised of fifty junior secondary school heads and twelve senior secondary school heads. The questionnaires were hand delivered and six were posted because of the geographical positions of the schools. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was used to analyse the data. The findings showed that principals were aware of the importance of sharing leadership and that they practiced it. The leadership of schools today is no-longer a one man's job. It needs collaborative efforts for schools to excel in their performance. The findings are crucial to the education fraternity in that principals need to recognise that the old tradition where school heads were regarded as the masters of everything is no-longer viable. This is in consideration to the accountability issues of schools and the fast-changing global world which needs combined efforts for school improvement. Through shared leadership, it is possible to achieve school goals since teachers and school leaders work as a unified force (Mphale, 2015). It suggests then that instructional activities by school principals are effective when they are shared with other members at the schools. Such as when formulating the vision of the schools, it needs cooperative effort to produce a consolidated vision and mission statements of the schools. This shows that distributed leadership is needed for effective instructional leadership to take place. Since that study was conducted in secondary schools, it remained to be seen whether primary school principals in my study shared leadership activities.

2.7 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

In complex systems, such as schools, leadership does not take place through a single individual, but through a set of collaborative practices among professionals in the school context. In leadership, principals interact with other staff members in the contexts of their schools and on precise responsibilities (Spillane *et al*., 2004). Limitations exist when leadership is focused on one individual, the principal, without considering the existence of other school leaders such as the vice principals, the teachers in charge and subject specialists who are crucial in the school system. It needs the enactment of distributed leadership, a framework that is quite useful when studying leadership practice. A distinctive feature of this framework is the involvement of various members in leadership activities. In the following section, the origin and aspects that make up distributed leadership are discussed.

2.7.1 An overview of distributed leadership

The distributed leadership model is a product of the Distributed Leadership Study that was carried out in Chicago Public Schools by the Northwestern University School of Education and Social Policy in 2004 (Spillane, 2005). Distributed leadership, which dates to the mid-1920s or even earlier, came into prominence because of the complexity of current leadership positions. Bolden (2011) posits that distributed leadership, as a perspective, has grown in popularity since the year 2000. Its focus is on a systemic view where leadership is a shared social activity. Distributed leadership came in as a relief to schools because of the challenging burden on school principals of being single heroic leaders, who were expected to lead schools to great heights single-handedly (Spillane, 2005). The emergence of distributed leadership can be explained in two ways which include the failure by the hero aspect and the demands on school leaders for accountability on learner performance by stakeholders (Lynch, 2012). Through distributed leadership, school effectiveness is enhanced. In a study by Yangaiya and Ali (2013), their findings showed that distributed leadership brings effectiveness to schools. Their study focused on examining the relationship between distributed leadership and school effectiveness. Questionnaires were used to gather data from a sample of 499 secondary school teachers in Katsina State, Nigeria. Their findings showed that distributed leadership predicted school effectiveness. School effectiveness is regarded as an outcome of schools in terms of learners' academic outcomes. These are found at the end of learners' formal academic learning and after assessments. To have effective schools it means that school leaders need to be effective leaders who distribute instructional leadership to school members for the benefit of both the teachers and the learners. This stems from the understanding that the challenges and the changing government policies in todays' education system cannot be met successfully by single leaders. Principals must share, stretch, and distribute leadership to other members to successfully meet their school goals.

Yangaiya and Ali's (2013) study was anchored in the distributed leadership theoretical framework. They believed that schools need a complete shift of focus in their leadership if they are to produce learners who can fit into today's world. Schools today face over crowdedness, teacher attrition, new technology, a change in government focus, all which cannot be handled by lone individuals, thus require distributed leadership. Though this study was conducted in secondary schools, I believe the distributed framework used in this study can produce valid results to my study in primary schools.

The distributed leadership concept has been defined variedly. It is sometimes taken to mean collaborative, shared or democratic leadership (Bolden, 2011). Distributed leadership is more than that; it is made up of dynamic interactions that take place between leaders and followers in the different contexts of their schools. Although leadership can be shared or in some situations be democratic, this does not imply that it is distributed leadership. Even though the concepts delegated, or shared leadership might have a similarity with distributed leadership, they are not the same. Spillane (2006) points out that by stretching leadership to many members in a school, does not mean it is democratic. Shared, democratic or delegated leadership cannot be interchangeably used with distributed leadership. It is a perspective that results from the interactions of many people (Bolden, 2011).

Distributed leadership acknowledges the presence of other members in a school and is more concerned on the interactions of the members than their actions (Spillane *et al*., 2004; Harris and Spillane, 2008). Though what individual members do in schools is important to leadership, it is crucial to know how leadership practices are enacted for improved school performance. It is crucial to note that some principals distribute leadership to other members with built-in restrictions. In a study by Hairon and Goh (2015) conducted in Singapore, their findings showed that though principals distributed leadership there was some bounded rationality in the distribution. Their study which was conducted in primary and secondary schools and colleges comprised a sample of 1232 participants made up of principals, vice principals and heads of department. Their focus was to find out the perceptions of principals' distributed leadership practices. The survey method was used to collect data. Their findings showed four possible factors of distributed leadership that included "… bounded empowerment, developing leadership, shared decision, and collective engagement" (Hairon and Goh, 2015: 703). Under bounded empowerment, it was found out that teachers could make decisions for their work, but these were within set limits and boundaries of their work scope. This showed the extend of willingness by the principals to relinquish a certain amount of power to followers. Though the principals allowed teachers to make decisions, they saw it being their role to align the decisions with the school framework. The principals developed leadership capacities of their teachers; they empowered their teachers to lead. This was done under trust that teachers could make decisions that could lead to the desired learner academic outcomes. All the same, the principals saw the accountability of the school performance resting on them. This, therefore, determined the way they enabled decisions to be made in schools. This suggested that the principals distributed

leadership but retained their positional power and authority. The principals encouraged shared decision-making, but this was done cautiously since the principals provided regular guidance after giving teachers leadership responsibilities. This shows the extent that Singaporean principals relinquish power and authority. This is contrary to distributed leadership where when power to decide is given to followers, the decisions they make are shared and leaders are informed of the decisions made. The principals supported staff engagement through the provision of varied platforms for teamwork. There is the involvement of all staff members in tasks at hand, thus getting the contributions of the different talents from the different staff members in the schools. This aligns with the view of leadership practice (Spillane, 2004) where leaders and followers interact in their situations.

Even though distributed leadership includes leadership practices which involve delegating and empowering others to lead, it is more than delegated leadership because in delegated leadership, an individual is given authority to lead and can lead single-handedly relying on the authority given. Delegation involves giving responsibility to others. An aspect of interaction in a context exists in distributed leadership practice. The heroic leader is not valued by researchers in distributed leadership (Spillane, 2005) since leaders cannot effectively run schools as sole individuals (Bolden, 2011; Mestry and Pillay; 2013). Through interactions, expertise from different sources is fused to the benefit of the learners. This pooling of knowledge and expertise from different leaders makes it different from delegated leadership where one individual is given the authority to lead others. The baseline of distributed leadership is leadership by many. Goksoy (2015: 113) posits that an outstanding element in distributed leadership "… is the fact that distributed leadership includes many elements related to education and is almost fed by educational environments."

2.7.2 Aspects of distributed leadership

The main activities of instructional leadership can be understood when one observes principals and teachers interacting in the context of their schools (Spillane and Diamond, 2007). This explains the focus on elements of instructional leadership (Neumerski, 2012). The distributed view of leadership can be used to explore leadership activities in schools (Spillane, 2006). The day-to-day activities of principals can be analysed through the framework provided by the leader-plus and practice aspects (Spillane and Diamond, 2007b). Bennett *et al.* (2003: 7) point out three principles of distributed leadership which are as follows:

1. A network of interacting individuals, which stresses interaction. This can be equated to the practice aspect by Spillane (2005).
2. No limits to leadership which suggests the involvement of all members in the school organisation.
3. Varied expertise that is distributed to many showing the involvement of different members in leadership. This corresponds to Spillane's (2006) leader-plus aspect which acknowledges the existence of different leaders.

a. Leader-plus

The leader-plus characteristic acknowledges the existence of varied members taking part in leadership and management practice (Spillane and Diamond, 2007b). The leadership and management of schools involve many individuals in addition to principals. These include those in informal management positions who provide mentorship and leadership in specific curriculum areas (Spillane and Healey, 2010). This perspective only deals with part of distributed leadership. Lee *et al*. (2012) state that "… multiple individuals enact instructional leadership through mentoring peers and providing professional development." Under the leader-plus aspect, there is the possibility for individuals with or without formal leadership designations to take leadership responsibilities. The leader-plus characteristic asserts that varied leaders exist in distributed leadership and are needed in leading a school. This includes those holding formal and informal positions. Formal leaders hold posts of authority that are designated by the MoPSE and these include the school principals, vice principals and teachers in charge (TIC). Informal leaders are those without formal appointment into leadership positions by the Ministry but hold the positions such that they lead other members in working over tasks to their completion. Spillane and Diamond (2007: 7) advocate that the involvement of other leaders should not be taken as an undermining of the position of the principal but as an acknowledgement of the expertise in other members of staff. Spillane *et al.* (2001) do not acknowledge the use of resources to build the knowledge and expertise of a sole leader, but of various leaders. It may exist that in some schools, principals may not support others with their work, they would regard expert teachers as threats to their positions. This results in school principals failing to give proper support to other leaders, neither would they define their role properly. The distributed perspective does not value standalone leaders. It recognises the existence of varied leaders at the school besides the principal. Principals, therefore, should stretch their leadership practices to include other members in the school. School principals need to have a change in roles from that of a sole individual at

the top of the organisation with all decisions centred on them to recognising the development of their members' leadership capacities.

b. Leadership practice

Leadership practice is concerned with the interaction that occurs between leaders, followers, and their situation (Spillane, 2006). It foregrounds the practice of leading and managing (Spillane and Healey, 2010). Leadership practice involves many people within a particular context. The idea behind is that one person cannot single-handedly lead an organisation effectively to high performance (Spillane, 2005). Spillane and Diamond (2007: 6) advocate that, the "… actual doing of leadership in particular places and times" makes up the practice. Leadership activity involves interaction in the school (Spillane, 2005) when certain leadership tasks are being undertaken. The three elements that make up leadership activity are as shown in Figure 2.1. In leadership practice, teachers can hold the leadership post up to completion of task and relinquish the post depending on the situation. Leadership practice includes the ability to delegate to other staff members because it is impossible to be effective and successful without the assistance of others. Leadership, in this case, is viewed as the interactions between leaders and followers at various times and conditions (Aliakbari and Sadeghi, 2014). Leadership practice is of benefit to schools because of the joint expertise of members. By facilitating members' human capacity development, principals increase the relations between followers and the leader. Followers in this instance include classroom teachers and administrators.

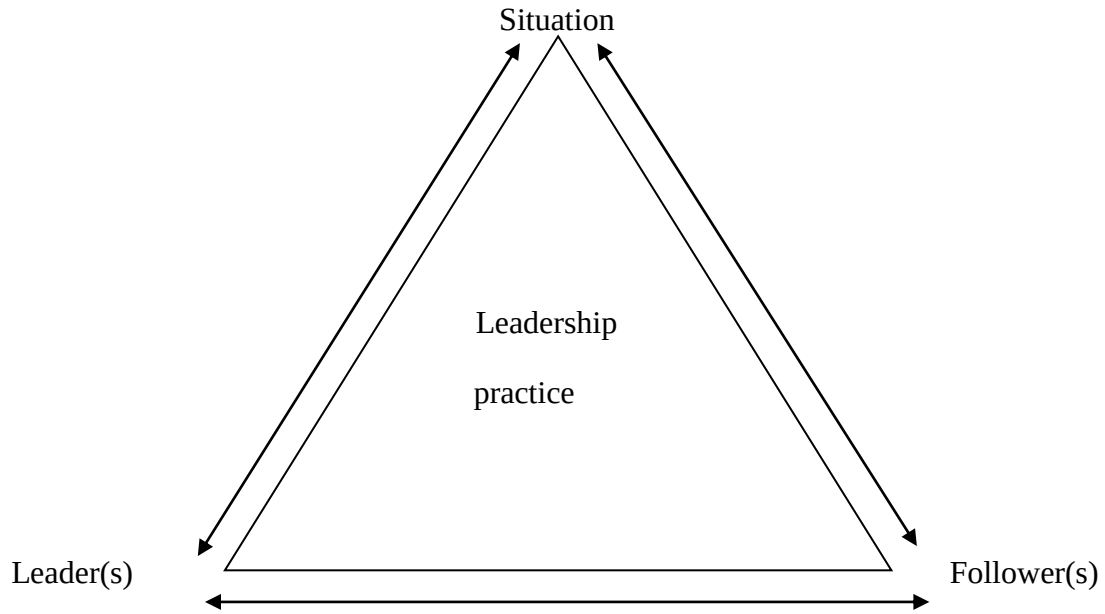


Figure 2.1: Elements of leadership practice

Source: Spillane *et al.,* (2004: 11)

Leaders influence and are also influenced by followers (Grenda and Hackman, 2014). The reciprocal influence crops up in the sense that principals direct the school in a way they regard as the best, and they direct the efforts of members towards their vision of the school. Teachers also influence leaders through the ideas they bring to the school because of their expertise and experiences. The expertise in members is quite valuable and should be embraced, and teachers must use their expertise for school development. Since teachers work directly with learners, they have considerable influence on their academic performance. Teachers can take part in particular tasks at the school and ensure that the tasks are completed and, in some instances, lead in the carrying out of tasks such as when leading subject committees, thus being both followers and leaders (Spillane, 2006).

The situation that leaders exist in at their places of work contributes to their daily routine of leadership practice. Leaders' interaction within a situation is a crucial aspect of the concept distributed leadership. In the situation, lie tools and routines that are used by schools in influencing people and the prevailing school environment draws teachers and learners into being part of the school. Leadership practice exists in an atmosphere made up of tools and artefacts. Norman (in Spillane *et al.,* 2001: 26) advocates that, "Artefacts and tools are externalized representations of ideas and intentions used by practitioners in their practice." Routines and tools contribute positively to leadership practice. Leaders use tools and artefacts to exert influence. In the process of doing their work, leaders interact with followers (teachers) in the context of their situations (schools). Artefacts are important in distributed leadership since teachers enhance learner outcomes using artefacts such as learners' achievement data. Tian *et al.* (2016) regard the utilisation of artefacts as an important element supporting distributed leadership. An in-depth analysis of routines and tools enhances an understanding of distributed leadership. Varied routines and tools affect the leadership of schools, and they also have different effects in different contexts. Collaborative lesson planning and study groups form examples of routines. Gunter *et al*. (2013) listed the development of teachers and meetings of curriculum committees as helpful routines for collaborated distribution. Interactional routines show how distributed leadership is practiced in real-life. Lee *et al*. (2012) state that scores of tests, the set standards of districts, technology-based tools and curriculum outlines are all tools used by leaders as they carry out their work. These are used in schools to manage the work done by various leaders.

Distributed leadership enables a realistic view of roles of the principal. Mayrowetz's (2008) study on distributed leadership came up with four uses of the concept in schools. These are distributed leadership as a theoretical lens and three prescriptions on how shared leadership improves practice. The four ways of using the concept have their own strengths and weaknesses. Descriptive definitions of distributed leadership are used to improve and in developing school leadership whereas the prescriptive definitions use the theoretical and empirical research frames. Distributed leadership can be used when focusing on democracy, in building worker capacity and as a theoretical lens for activity leadership. Spillane *et al*. (2001) contend that the distributed leadership framework enables principals to consider their leadership practice with an aim of producing the highest quality of education at their schools. The achievement of such is dependent on many factors chief among which are leaders in schools who assume leadership roles. To have successful schools needs the services of effective leaders (Salfi, 2010) who distribute instructional leadership practices.

Salfi (2010) conducted a study to identify leadership practices by head teachers that led to secondary school improvement in Pakistan. The study was a descriptive survey type. A sample of 351 secondary school heads, 702 elementary and government secondary school teachers were selected. The schools were identified based on their reputation of high learner academic outcomes over time. A mixed-methods research design was used to gather data. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from school heads, teachers, parents, and learners. Their findings showed the existence of distributed leadership practices in successful schools. Varied activities carried out in the schools, portrayed features of distributed leadership practice. Vision formulation was shared among teachers and collaboration, support and trust were encouraged among members in the schools. The school heads empowered teachers to lead, and they distributed leadership responsibilities to other members in the schools. They emphasised the professional development of all members in their schools and involved parents in improving their schools. The principals encouraged and maintained good relationships with the school community.

The successful school heads in the study showed their focus to be the participation of the whole school. This lies in the distributed leadership tenet which calls for leadership to be stretched across members in the whole school. Johnson (2004) posits that the use of distributed leadership is a cure for a top-down type of management where authority is dispersed to staff members.

Since distributed leadership calls for shared leadership, it is, therefore, efficient that teachers with the requisite expertise engage in leadership activities. Such teachers with considerable knowledge and skills on instruction can effectively be used if leadership practice is distributed to them taking advantage of their knowledge. Distributed leadership leads to improved effectiveness of schools. This arises from the fact that if all the expertise in a school cooperatively works towards a common problem there is likely to be an improvement in instruction. Not evident in the activities carried out by the school principals is how they were enacted in the schools for improved school performance. My study tried to find out how instructional leadership activities were enacted through distributed instructional leadership.

Distributed leadership enables principals to have a better and realistic view of their roles (Mayrowetz, 2008). It allows for capacity building of workers who learn from each other. It aids the collective capacity of teachers. This leads to schools being able to address their own problems. This is in line with Harris' (2004) definition which focuses on leadership as a cooperative activity that develops teachers' expertise through working together. It is, however, suggested that distributed instructional leadership could produce high performance in schools where it is practised. Goksoy (2015) states that schools engaging in distributed leadership share leadership activities and teachers willingly conduct their roles just like their main tasks. Tasks are distributed to both leaders and audience in distributed leadership. At a school organisation, leadership functions are conducted by various individuals at varied times as organisational tasks are distributed to the whole organisation. Leadership is distributed to all members in the organisation instead of being focused on the school principal only. Distributed leadership involves cooperative leadership activities by teachers. It enhances the expertise in other members. There is redistribution of power through distributed leadership and there is a rearrangement of expertise and authority.

2.7.3 The significance of distributed leadership

The enactment of distributed leadership in schools impacts positively on learners (Harris and Spillane, 2008). It enables school principals to make use of the expertise that exists in all staff members at the school. Its use in schools is because the leadership perspective can be exercised right through the school involving different members in various positions. Klar (2012: 177) advocates that emphasis is on recognising the teamwork by various teachers. By recognising the efforts and contributions of other members in the school, it can lead to higher performance by

both staff members and learners. It is, however, prudent to note that by having leadership stretched to all members in the school organisation does not mean that everyone leads or that principals will lose their authority. Although distributed leadership advocates for various people in leadership positions, not all members are leaders (Harris, 2007). Only those with expert knowledge and skills that benefit the school can lead tasks, such as chairing a procurement committee on teaching and learning materials. This shows an acknowledgement by principals of expertise resident in teachers. The existence of mutual trust between principals and teachers is needed before teachers can lead activities.

Distributing leadership to other members at the school depends on how much trust the principal would have on followers. A school principal engages in distributed leadership basing on the trust that teachers would work to complete their tasks successfully. In turn, the teachers trust the leadership of the principal. This mutual trust is critical without which respect and relationships would be compromised. Distributed leadership also takes cognisance of mutual trust between teachers through acceptance of the leadership potential of their peers. This is complemented by the teachers' show of confidence that they can lead others. In addition to stretching leadership across members in a school, distributed leadership also promotes a system of mutual interdependence with members being held accountable for the contributions they make to the final product (Harris, 2005). Goksoy (2015) points out that distributed leadership develops leadership potentials of staff members and provides equal opportunities for members to realise school goals. The supposition that one individual can lead for change to take place is not acceptable in distributed leadership. Goksoy (2015) views the basic philosophy of distributed leadership as shared wisdom and common sense through the creation of synergy among school members. School structures are regarded as too complex to be effectively managed by one individual.

Varied school members with expertise can take part in school leadership activities. Some principals distribute leadership activities to staff members whereas others do not. According to Grenda and Hackman (2014), formal leaders include the administrators and those that hold titles in the school organisation; these include people, such as language coordinators, disciplinary team leaders and subject committee leadership. The stretching of leadership to different people is because of different committees that exist in the school, such as the procurement committee, subject panels, sport committees. For the smooth function of the school, these committees need

leaders who can steer the committees to work towards the achievement of their goals. A sole individual cannot be the leader of all the committees in a school and successfully lead other members in all school tasks as this will overwhelm the leader (Grenda and Hackmann, 2014). This results in different educators leading different groups. One can be a leader of the procurement committee and in some circumstances when out of the procurement committee can be just a member. A leader in the sports department can be a committee member or neither when in the grade level meeting which, for example, has the task of setting examinations at grade level. Through distributed leadership, members pool their ideas together for the benefit of learners. Spillane (2005) believes that the benefits to schools of such a leadership perspective emanates from combined knowledge, skills, and interaction of principals with specialised leaders working towards a common goal. They further contend that an outcome from leadership teams is greater when compared to the sum of the individualised actions of leaders. The focus is on expertise across members in the school organisation rather than on individuals. There is the sharing of tasks and members work towards the achievement of common goals. The emphasis is on continued interaction rather than single individual effort. Teacher competences are developed with the assistance of other members with expertise. By giving assistance to teachers, the knowledge, skills, and leadership density of the teachers is improved (Smylie *et al.*, 2007). It, therefore, suggests a complete change from the traditional notion of one person knows all to the involvement of other members.

2.7.4 Distributed leadership in schools

Different departments exist in primary schools, such as the Infant and Junior departments. For successful instructional leadership activities to take place, these departments need the collaborative efforts of principals and teachers. Spillane (2006) advocates for an understanding of leadership practice and how it takes place in schools. In their daily activities, leaders provide direction and exercise influence. Three distinct implications can be deciphered from these leadership activities, namely, that goals are not forced on members, instead they are collectively set out to increase accountability. Secondly, leaders work with other people to get work done and realise their objectives. They also assist in setting up environments for effective performance. The third implication is that leadership is all about functions that are performed by leaders at varied stages at the school.

Instructional leadership is all about developing a common virtuous learning programme, developing cordial work relations, and supporting the innovativeness in members (Jones, 2010). Phillips (2009), however, argues that most principals pay more attention to administrative tasks and very little to instructional activities. The activities that principals engage in are less connected to instructional leadership activities; thus, an engagement of other members of staff is needed to assist the principals in instructional leadership. This shows the need to stretch instructional leadership to other members and to make use of the skills in different teachers.

Moswela and Kgosidialwa (2019) assert that the use of ideas and talents of team members leads to successful schools and committed members because their ideas would have been implemented. The leadership of the school principal results in either mediocrity or excellence depending on how leadership is stretched to other players in the school. School principals cannot be found everywhere at once, thus cannot successfully lead in all disciplines. Teachers, who are the followers need to be in the leadership process while the principal acts as the overseer for accountability purposes in the case of a drop in school performance. School principals, as school leaders, have the responsibility of improving their relations with teachers and the local community to have improved school performance. Since they are both school and instructional leaders, principals promote the best practices in instructional activities to enable the academic success of learners (Salo *et al*., 2015).

Another important practice in effective schools is the cultivation of leadership in school members. Effective school leaders make use of the expertise among teachers at school. Principals encourage those with requisite skills and experiences to take leadership roles for the benefit of learners who would learn from their wealth of knowledge. When principals spread leadership to other members in the school, learners benefit in that a variety of experiences and knowledge can be tapped from the various members. The adage “two heads (or more) are better than one,” by Cole (2004: 178) suggests that varied ideas brought in by different people are better when compared to those by sole individuals.

Principals encourage and support shared leadership where teachers lead subject committees. Depending on school context, such committees spearhead the teaching of learning areas in the school from infant to junior grades. With leadership stretched to other members, there exists a shift of emphasis on ideas from those of a single leader to those from varied members working

on different tasks. The stretching of leadership to other members in the school is an acknowledgement by principals of the different skills and expertise residing in staff members. This acknowledgement is a source of motivation which might lead to increased performance by teachers. Teachers have untapped capabilities suitable to improve schools. With positive climates, the untapped skills can be put to school advantage. Hughes and Pickerel (2013) believe that involving learners and teachers in making decisions about instructional work, leads to sustained change, commitment to quality practice and implementation of decisions. School leaders, who nurture their members, make them better performers as a team.

An important practice by school principals of providing positive climates at their schools brings in a sense of belonging to teachers and an improvement in learner academic performance. Hughes and Pickeral (2013) advocate that, principals need not work in isolation since increased performance in schools need the support of those members who make it a community. Principals, therefore, need to develop enabling school climates where teachers feel free to put into practise their knowledge and skills for learner benefit. Hughes and Pickeral (2013) put forward five strategies that lead to collaborative effort, a positive school environment and improved instructional practice in schools. The first strategy focuses on partnership. This is a practice where school principals set clear structures in schools with members given real authority to make decisions that would be upheld by the principal. Teachers in leadership positions have the courage to implement team decisions when they have the support of their school principal. As a subject committee, teachers can agree on putting into effect new teaching strategies that need resources. With the support of the school principal the resources needed can be provided.

Members in a school need to have a common position, a common goal so that they all focus on achieving that goal. More can be achieved when there is a unity of purpose. A study conducted in British Columbia schools by Cherkowski, and Brown (2013) showed vision formulation being distributed in schools. The study examined the understanding of distributed leadership practices by four principals from elementary and secondary schools in one district in British Columbia. Three provincial leadership standards were used as an organising framework. These were vision formulation and sharing, leading with character and integrity, and helping others become leaders. The use of these formal designs reflected distributed leadership practices. In-depth interviews were held with each participant. This data collection method increased knowledge of the participants' views on distributed leadership. Findings showed that the distributed leadership

practice was coherent with the development of a sustainable learning community and the provincial standards. There was collaboration among teachers and principals in formulating visions for their schools. The shared visions served as tools that enabled the principals to step away from being the sole leaders in the schools. The principals believed that the visions jointly developed provided the parameters in which the learning community could work and be autonomous. The time and effort put in crafting and communicating strong visions meant the visions served as the schools' guidepost for the teachers. This freed the principals from being gatekeepers for all the initiatives of the schools.

In promoting leadership with integrity, the principals encouraged moral leadership among the teachers. The principals modelled strong characters, integrity, and moral courage in teachers. In the relationship domain, principals encouraged intrapersonal relationships among teachers. Through building respectful relationships in the schools, the principals were able to distribute leadership to teachers and developed their capacities to lead. The act of providing teachers with time to develop their leadership capacities in areas of their interest prepared them for more challenging leadership roles. The safe space created by the principals enabled teachers to develop their leadership voices. The principals in the study sustained organisational capacities using structures that supported teachers' leadership. Cherkowski and Brown's (2013) advocate that, principals used structures to create leadership opportunities that could be shared and distributed. This qualitative study suggests that effective distributed leadership can be achieved if aligned with shared school visions and their goals (Leithwood *et al.,* 2007). The three areas focused on by Cherkowski and Brown's (2013) study form part of the activities that principals carry out in schools as instructional leaders. It remains to be seen how these relate to my study which focuses on high performing primary schools.

A shared sense of purpose and focus leads to high learner academic performance in a conducive learning climate. When leadership is distributed, different members have responsibilities that they are accountable for. Such members become active in their roles to achieve their goals. When empowered to work towards a common goal, teachers understand their responsibility and the importance of their contribution at the school (Hughes and Pickeral, 2013). School principals need to empower teachers to be independent workers. They also need to acknowledge teachers' contributions if high performance is to be sustained.

Another important strategy in effective schools is the respect of divergent views by members towards achieving the school mission. When leadership is distributed to varied members this means different experiences, ideas and skills will be proffered for a quality learning environment and school performance. Besides teachers at the school, an important constituency of schools is the community. Distributing leadership to community members leads to stakeholders supporting school efforts. The involvement of families in school activities strengthens school and parent relations and enhances instructional programmes due to contributions from parents. In a study conducted by Erol and Turhan (2018) in Turkey secondary schools showed that parents' level of involvement in school activities and in the education of their children increased as was their positive perceptions about distributed leadership in schools. The study investigated the relationship between distributed leadership and family involvement in school activities from the parents' perceptions. One thousand four hundred and eighty-eight (1488) secondary school parents from 60 secondary schools participated in the study. In this correlational study, questionnaires were used to gather data.

Parent involvement in schoolwork implies their participation in school activities, giving academic support to their children at home and holding consultations with teachers on the progress of learners to raise standards of learning (Erol and Turhan, 2018). The involvement of parents in school activities shows the trust that principals have in parents' ability to contribute to the welfare of the schools and of learners. This proves a departure from the hero principals of the past to instructional leaders who distribute leadership. What remains to be found out is whether principals in my study distributed leadership to the community and how that was done. The correlational method was used as it enabled the examination of the relationships between distributed leadership and parents' involvement. It examined the relationship between the two variables and the degree of the relationship (Johnson and Christensen, 2014). Variables are key elements of quantitative research, thus this study made use of questionnaires. My study is a qualitative study which seeks to find out how distributed leadership practices are applied in schools. The methodology used by Erol and Turhan (2018) assisted in my selection of the most suitable methodology to use.

Recognising and acknowledging different contributions from different stakeholders is an important distributed leadership practice by school principals. They contribute to the achievement of school goals. High instructional performance in schools cannot be possible with

the leadership of a lone individual (Davis and Bourdreaux, 2019), thus principals need to develop and recognise leadership in different members. When leadership is engrained in members, it capacitates them towards realising the vision of the school. Alam and Ahmad (2017) advocate that committed teachers perform highly leading to high learner academic achievement. Leadership, therefore, should be distributed to other members. Hughes and Pickeral (2013: 4) believe that since people "… have high expectations that all students can learn, principals must have high expectations that students, parents, teachers, and staff can lead." Since leadership can be distributed to different teachers, this study sought to find out how this is done in high performing schools.

A study of two charter schools by Davis and Boudreaux (2019) resulted in them listing five leadership practices they believe characterise effective principals. The first practice is the crafting of resounding vision and mission statements. School performance does not need school leaders and departments to operate in isolation nor as standalone units. It needs collaborative effort to meet the school objectives. In high performing schools, principals ensure the existence of a clear vision that the whole school shares, thus leading to commitment by all members to the achievement of common school goals (Sergiovanni in Noman *et al.,* 2018: 484). The communication of a vision to staff members can be done during different times of the year and at different platforms, such as staff meetings and during meetings with parents and other stakeholders. It is an important practice by school principals to appropriately communicate to all members the purpose and direction of the school. The second practice focused on making a maximum use and preservation of instructional time. To ensure there is improved instructional activity in schools, principals make themselves visible and offer immediate assistance where there is need, both in and outside classrooms. Principals make use of this time to meet and talk to learners about their academic performance. Such occasions also enable the principal to chat to teachers informally on instructional activities at the school and how they can be improved. The creation of opportunities by the principal to be visible and chat with teachers enable teachers too to freely offer their contributions about the working environment at the school. The third practice was the support of teachers' professional development. Effective principals support their teachers' professional development and encourage them to attend meetings that professionally develop people and make them effective at their work (Davis and Boudreaux, 2019).

DeMatthews (2014) conducted a study in six public elementary schools in West Texas that had effective professional learning communities. The study focused on how principals distributed leadership across schools to create effective professional learning communities (PLCs). With teachers and principals working together, PLCs can be powerful tools for the improvement of schools. A qualitative multi-case design was used in the study. In-depth interviews were conducted with principals, vice principals, instructional coaches, and teachers. Observations and document analysis were also conducted. The findings showed that teachers were engaged in professional learning. The professional development in their schools enhanced their instructional prowess. The teachers supported each other and were also supported by their principals and their ideas were listened to and considered. The findings showed how the principals distributed leadership. The principals acknowledged the importance of teacher leadership in improving teaching practices. They supported teacher leadership through offering opportunities for teacher leadership, they gave feedback to teachers after observing them in action. Teachers were encouraged to share ideas, opinions, and experiences that contributed to school improvement. The use of the different data collection methods enhanced the validity of the data collected in that data collected through interviews can be checked through observations and document analysis. The use of in-depth interviews enables researchers to gather detailed information about a phenomenon under study (Creswell, 2012), thus deepen researchers' understanding. Qualitative researchers make detailed explanations of their findings and research reports thus methodology enables researchers to make detailed explanations of their studies thereby availing detailed information to readers of the research results. The research study was carried out in Texas and my study in Zimbabwe. The differences in research contexts can produce different results in terms of principal distribution of leadership. I, therefore, want to find out whether principals in high performing Zimbabwean primary schools distribute leadership and support their teachers in terms of professional development and when conducting school business.

The restructuring of schools during the 1990s in North America led to researchers popularising the concepts shared, transformational and distributed leadership. "The emergence of these leadership models indicated a broader dissatisfaction with the instructional leadership model, which many believed focused much on the principal as the centre of expertise, power and authority" (Hallinger 2003: 330). Sebastian and Allensworth (2012) believe it to be a limitation to focus on school leadership only without focusing on other leadership types, which include distributed and shared leadership. This calls for another leadership model which advocates for

the stretching of leadership to all members in the school organisation. Whereas instructional leadership is critical to learner academic performance, research suggests that it is rarely practised in schools since principals spend merely a tenth of their working time on instructional leadership (Geleta, 2015). They cite lack of time and competency for not practising instructional leadership (Salo *et al*., 2015*).* Ibrahim and Al-Teneiji (2013) point out that some school principals might have less expertise compared to the teachers who they are supposed to supervise. This results in them paying more attention to administrative tasks than instructional leadership. Such principals distance themselves from the classroom and do not have time to engage in instruction. It is crucial that principals put greater emphasis on instructional leadership activities (Şişman, 2016).
Principals occupy important places in schools. They set the direction and pace at which instructional activities are done in their schools. Because of the decentralisation of powers to schools, such as in Zimbabwe where school heads (principals) are given the authority to lead the successful implementation of the curriculum, their responsibilities have increased, this has made them the face of schools (Shava, 2015). As instructional leaders, school principals determine school objectives, coordinate programmes, organise enrichment programmes, are didactic, undertake evaluation of examinations, conduct remedial action, and create a conducive environment for instructional activities (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2005). School leaders play key roles in setting direction, motivating staff, and promoting the success of schools in challenging circumstances. They set clear goals, provide resources to instruction, and ensures teaching and learning takes place through monitoring lesson delivery, plans and evaluating teachers' work (Taole, 2013). Setting clear goals that are shared by all members of staff encourages members to pursue a common agenda. Sharing the same focus with their leaders motivates teachers to higher performance. School leaders need to have expertise, experience, and theoretical knowledge about schools to be effective in their work, this might be lacking in principals resulting in them not fully taking part in teaching activities.

Samkange (2013: 635) asserts that "Schools in Zimbabwe, regardless of whether they are government or non-government, have the school principal as the chief executive officer." They are considered as the people who can drive schools to excellence and are given all the authority to lead by MoPSE. Principals must ensure that teaching is effectively conducted in schools. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) assert that the 1970s and 1980 studies on effective elementary schools indicate that instructional leaders are strong, directive and they succeed in improving

their schools. Thus, schools with instructionally effective practices have strong instructional leadership. Besides instructional leadership, principals also attend to administrative tasks. It, therefore, needs principals who can balance their time to give more time to their core activity of instructional leadership. Attending to both administrative and instructional leadership has made it difficult for some school leaders to successfully carry out their responsibilities (Day and Sammons, 2013). When principals are overwhelmed by administrative tasks, they have difficulty in executing instructional leadership tasks. To place more emphasis on an individual to be the only one who can effect change in a school, negatively affects school improvement since principals do not have all the expertise needed in school programmes. Literature has it that it is not sustainable to place all focus on principals as the sole drivers of instructional leadership (Goksoy, 2015; Grenda and Hackmann, 2014). On its own, instructional leadership appears not enough to increase instructional activities in schools. A combination of distributed and instructional leadership is likely to lead to high pass rates. A gap exists then on how distributed instructional leadership practice is enacted in Zimbabwean primary schools. Principals, therefore, need to distribute leadership to other teachers, thus making use of the expertise in other members of staff and in turn reducing the burden of work on themselves.

2.7.5 Distributed instructional leadership practices

Instructional and distributed leadership are two constructs with a link in the education system leading to distributed instructional leadership. The close link is a result of distributed leadership which enables instructional leadership practices to be stretched to other members in a school and not only principals or vice principals (Hairon, 2017). This distribution of the instructional leadership practices make teaching more effective at school. The link between the two is well pronounced. Lee *et al.* (2012) examined the distribution of instructional leadership responsibilities in International Baccalaureate (IB) schools in East Asia. Five international schools in Thailand, Vietnam, Hong Kong, and China were the research sites chosen on the basis that they offered the full range of the IB's three programmes which included the primary, middle and the diploma programmes. The schools also had high learner academic outcomes. A sample of 68 teachers and administrators and 25 learners were involved. Observations were also used as a data collection method in the study. Their study found out that there existed three broad leadership practices, curriculum articulation, cross-programme activities, and strategic staffing that enhanced curriculum consistency and coherence across the three IB school programmes. They found out that distributed leadership increased professional interactions across programmes

and departments in the schools. This resulted from the articulation of school documents that necessitated interaction among teachers across the schools. The importance of distributing responsibilities for instructional leadership throughout schools can be seen. It could not have been possible for school principals as lone individuals to effectively articulate and implement instructional information across different grades and schools. There is curriculum articulation and implementation in schools, an activity that principals perform and support (Lee *et al.*, 2012). The involvement of different teachers in the articulation of the school documents indicate that principals effected distributed leadership. This results from the ever-increasing complexities in education that need instructional decisions to be distributed to other staff members (Hairon, 2017). How effective distributed leadership practices are in enhancing instruction depends on how well school principals stretch instructional leadership practices to staff members. Since the impact of principals on learners is rated as second when compared to classroom teaching, it makes sense that those who have the most impact on learners get involved in school processes. This results in teacher leadership in varied school activities.

2.7.6 Teacher leadership in schools

The distributed leadership perspective clarifies the aspect of teacher leadership because it takes into consideration the various groups in a school that work towards instructional improvement (Spillane *et al.,* 2001). Stretching leadership to several individuals working on different or related tasks signifies leadership socially distributed. In such cases, work is done and completed through the cooperative work of leaders. Thus, the sharing of ideas enhances instructional implementation. This, therefore, implies that for improved school performance, instructional leadership must be distributed to various members. Hairon (2017) believes that an increase in distributed leadership results in increased leadership by teachers. Leadership by teachers is an expression of distributed leadership. They hold responsibility posts in addition to being full time classroom practitioners. They contribute to school improvement through influencing other teachers towards improved teaching practices and through the spread of virtuous practice and ingenuities created by the teachers. Through the model of teacher leadership, different teachers in a school have an opportunity to lead. Teacher leaders work in collaboration with other members to improve teaching and learning. Teacher leadership can be explained from four fronts namely: in the classroom, when working with others and guiding the learning process of students, when working with other teachers on curriculum and extra-curricular activities, leading in varied school activities and lastly leading in community tasks. In teacher leadership there is

encouragement of cooperative activities among teachers and within the department on the articulation of documents on teaching and learning. This is evidenced during mentorship of novice teachers. The existence of teacher-teacher relationships is equally important as the principal-teacher relationship since it impacts on learner academic achievement. Alam and Ahmad (2017: 384) advocate that "… the availability of professional communities for teachers enables teachers to take mentoring roles among themselves to guide, administer and motivate fellow teachers. This not only improves one's teaching but also subsequently impacts student achievement." The development and implementation of new teaching strategies is also enhanced through teacher-teacher interactions on teaching and learning. An important aspect in teacher leadership is the collaboration that takes place among teachers. With the appropriate support systems, distributed leadership mechanisms in place and with teacher expertise acknowledged, teachers can take on leadership posts and school performance is likely to improve. This indicates the importance of distributing instructional leadership in schools.

Active learning is an effective instructional practice that can be used in schools (Quinn, 2002). Teachers must actively involve learners in the classroom for them to demonstrate their learning. This is an active involvement of learners by the teachers. Principals and teachers must provide opportunities for active learning by students. The success of learners is the critical goal of schools; therefore, instructional leadership is needed to prop up active learning in classrooms. Quinn (2002) believes that school principals who only focus on management issues would be doing a de-service to teachers and learners. Strong instructional leaders encourage high learner involvement. Principals should build up cordial working relationships and an environment of trust and patience in schools. Nawab (2011) posits that one strategy to lead schools to effectiveness is through a strategy of giving teachers authority and trusting the teachers. Seong *et al.* (2015: 512) posit that, "Principals today are required to enact a wide range of functions such as developing staff, coordinating the school curriculum, creating a conducive environment for learning, balancing school budget and so on." The knowledge that their efforts are valued, motivates teachers to higher performance. Teachers have the potential to lead, what they only need is confidence. This can be developed by school principals as they develop school capacities. When developed, it is likely that teachers bring in new innovations and be able to influence their colleagues to work towards improved performance. The provision of prospects for teachers to capacity develop each other through sharing of knowledge motivates teachers. It is an important strategy that can be used in schools to motivate teachers to increase performance. Principals need

to model their schools in such a way that there is value for continual learning and the pursuit of success. Principals have the responsibility to support standards and practices and the mission of their schools.

A key attribute in distributed leadership is shared powers to make decisions within certain boundaries to staff members in schools (Hairon, 2017). This interdependence of instructional and distributed leadership is highly credible. Leadership is found to work best when it is distributed in schools where there is collaboration, trust and shared visions between leaders and followers (Mitgang, 2012). Bush (2014b) argues that the form of leadership that focuses mostly on the principal is unsustainable considering the complex diversity in school organisations and the pressures on schools for improved learner performance. The idea behind the enactment of instructional leadership is to improve learner academic outcomes through the performance of varied instructional activities. In addition to instructional leadership activities, principals also manage the daily operations of schools (Leithwood *et al*. 2004). The pressures of these responsibilities on principals make it impossible for them to manage the increased workload alone. Principals are often regarded as the knowledgeable ones with all the ideas to lead and ignoring other potential leaders who they treat as less important. Heller and Firestone (cited in Spillane *et al*., 2004) argued that school leadership was not only meant for school principals since teacher-leaders and other professionals also contribute to the improvement of instructional activities. The result is distributing leadership to other members to effectively implement instructional leadership. While instructional leadership encourages teamwork (Niqab *et al.,* 2014), distributed leadership encourages the stretching of leadership to different teachers. This enables the capacities in varied individuals to be shared among members for the improvement of learning. Combining the two constructs enhances leadership in schools and this benefits learners. The varied activities of creating a vision and mission, staff developing teachers, and managing instructions are instructional leadership practices performed by successful leaders as advocated by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). These enable us to construe that instructional leadership practices are best achieved when distributed to varied members at the school. How the activities characterising instructional leadership are distributed in Zimbabwean primary schools is the focus of this research.

An increase in distributed leadership results in an increase in teacher leadership, thus showing the need for distributed instructional leadership practice. Enabling a change in teaching practices

directly impacts on teaching and learning. Another teacher leadership practice which has the potential to affect instructional activities is the promotion of teacher development and learning. Spillane (2006) emphasised the significant distributed leadership practices in schools in quest of improving performance. Interactions in schools take place between and among individuals working for a common goal. When distributed instructional leadership is in use, principals cease to be the sources of complete authority as the authority would be shared (Badenhorst and Radile, 2018). The focus of the principals will be on creating conducive conditions for other members to lead rather than for the principals to lead from the front. In this instance, the principals guide other members on how to effectively manage schools. Distributed instructional leadership is regarded as a practice that is made use of by people at various levels (Klar, 2012). Leithwood *et al*. (2004) believe that enacting distributed instructional leadership in large amounts in schools has positive effects on schools. Empowering members in critical areas leads to improved learner performance.

2.7.7 Challenges schools face in enacting distributed leadership

The different definitions of distributed leadership made it difficult for principals and teachers to understand it (Harris and Spillane, 2008) resulting in the concept being equated to shared, devolved, or dispersed leadership. The lack of clarity deters its wide use in schools. Also, the nature of appointment of principals by MoPSE makes them operate at unequal levels with teachers. Roles of principals in Zimbabwe as stated in a Vacancy Circular Number 18 of 2019 is the assessment of teachers' performance and writing reports on their observations. This does not make it easy to distribute leadership in schools, as some school principals fear a misconception among teachers that they are equals to school heads (principals). To maintain their positions, the school principals maintain the distance between them and the teachers, thus failing to effectively make use of distributed leadership. The traditional authority and control embedded in principals' positions and the structure of schools pose a possible threat to effective distribution of leadership (Bush and Ng, 2019). Since principals are answerable for all school developments, the need for accountability discourages them from stretching leadership to other school members, this leads them to decide on what to retain for themselves or let other members of staff do (Huggins *et al.,* 2017). The decision by school principals on what leadership activities to let other members handle might lead to lack of distributed leadership since principals can choose to be the centre of all authority in the school.

Context, people, and practice restrain the distribution of leadership. In Zimbabwe, the supervision of teachers by vice principals, school principals and district schools' inspectors (DSIs) is a known practice. The frequency of school-based supervision rests with each school. The supervision by DSIs is usually a one-off event in a year because of the many schools they must visit and the issue of resources (Gutuza and Gazimbe, 2015). Schools associate the DSIs' supervision visits with fault finding and the supervision as more evaluative rather than supportive (Ndebele, 2013). Since the visits by DSIs is infrequent, it explains why school principals may want to lead in all areas, so that they are prepared for the DSI's visit. Williams (2011) maintains that the authoritarian culture still permeate the education system at different levels. This limits the distribution of leadership in schools with principals preferring to be the main source of information. In a study conducted by Naicker and Mestry (2013) where they investigated teachers' experiences and views about distributed leadership practice in public primary schools of Soweto, South Africa. Their sample was composed of 15 teachers from three primary schools. All participants had no formal leadership positions. In-depth focus group interviews and document analysis methods were used to gather data. Their findings showed that leadership was rooted in the traditional leadership practices. Efforts to implement distributed leadership practices were seen to be hindered by autocracy, school structures and the lack of participative decision-making by teachers. Negative school climates, ineffective communication characterised by lack of meetings and no opportunities for teacher leadership existed. These affected staff relations, teacher morale, job satisfaction levels and instructional activities. The findings showed an absence of distributed leadership and the resultant effects this had on teaching and learning. School principals, thus need to practice distributed leadership to improve the effectiveness of their schools. This is because solutions to challenges schools may face are likely to develop through distributed leadership and very unlikely through individual sources (Leithwood and Mascall, 2008).

Another study showing the challenges of implementing distributed leadership was a wide-ranging case study by Torrance (2012) in three Scotland schools. Three challenges to the distributing leadership were noted. Teachers were reluctant to be informal leaders. Teachers' argument was that they did not possess leadership qualities and could not lead their colleagues. Such teachers lacked courage to even apply for leadership posts, let alone to take up posts of responsibility in schools. The teachers also cited the issue of workloads as causative factors that deterred them from taking up leadership posts. The issue of perception towards the posts without

legitimate appointment showed that it was another cause for teachers without formal appointment to be unwilling to take up leadership posts. These challenges exist in schools, and they slow down the development of distributed leadership since members would be reluctant to be informal leaders. It thus needs principals who distribute their instructional leadership to curb the challenges. Leithwood *et al.* (2004) posit that teachers occupying leadership posts would be more effective if principals support and acknowledge their efforts. The most supportive principals work with their teachers. Principals cannot carry out all instructional leadership activities on their own because they do not have the expertise in all areas at school (Göksoy, 2015). Therefore, they need to utilise the expertise in teachers to improve instructional activities, thus distributing instructional leadership. Sharing of instructional leadership between teachers and principals leads to changes in learner performance. Distributing instructional leadership to teachers helps to tap the expertise in the different members for the benefit of learners. When all members of staff in a school combine their efforts and work together, this will be more effective when compared to the total efforts of individual actions. This shows how crucial distributed instructional leadership is in schools.

Another study showing the challenges of enacting instructional leadership was conducted by Tahir *et al*. (2015) in three Malaysian primary schools. They focused on challenges school heads faced in employing the distributed leadership approach. Three school heads were engaged as participants in the study. They used semi-structured interviews to gather data from three case studies. The results indicated a lack of confidence in senior teachers to make decisions on instructional activities. The teachers continually sought approval from the head irrespective of the school head having empowered them to make decisions. They were also unwilling to hold posts of responsibility. This study shows the challenges school principals face in distributing leadership in primary schools. Such challenges contribute to low performance in schools since teachers may not be forthcoming in offering support to school improvement efforts. The study portrays a departure from the tradition where the school principal is the sole source of leadership. A conflict of priorities, goals and the timelines may crop up among leaders. Tahir *et al*. (2015: 850) advocate that, "Distributed leadership depends on the growth state of the school, its readiness to change, its culture and its developmental needs, as well as the pattern of distribution and its purposes." This, therefore, shows how crucial the context of a school is in employing the distributed leadership perspective. In fact, distributed leadership practice is a result of interactions between the leader and subordinates in the context of their environments (Spillane,

2006). This shows the importance of school contexts in distributing instructional leadership. Schools should be in a state of preparedness to change so that they can effectively employ the distributed leadership perspective. Members of staff in a school should be prepared to accept change, have a culture of development and be willing to change old methods of operation. Besides that, distributed leadership might fail to bear fruit when teachers are not supportive of school programmes. An understanding of the benefits of distributed instructional leadership practices is needed if it is to be effectively applied in schools. Williams (2011) points out that actualising distributed leadership practices can be difficult if the education system is still infused by the authoritarian system. The fear by principals to lose power if they engage other stakeholders in leadership practice (Mphale, 2017), may lead to challenges in distributing instructional leadership. This is because once principals practice distributed leadership possibilities are high that other people might exercise influence in the schools, these include parents, learners, and other members from the wider community (Leithwood and Mascall, 2008). This explains why some principals are reluctant to practice distributed leadership. This points to the need for a clear understanding by schools of the benefits of instructional leadership.

2.8 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The distributed leadership theory by Spillane (2005) informs this study which explores distributed instructional leadership practices in high performing Zimbabwean primary schools. The theoretical framework describes fundamental traits in leadership as a process that is stretched to all members in a school organisation. Distributed leadership is of the view that multiple leaders exist in schools where leader activities are stretched within members of the organisation. The theory views leadership as a practice of managing learning and teaching that involves people working collaboratively with some interdependence (Spillane and Diamond, 2007). It is a diagnostic tool that makes use of artefacts to focus on core tasks. Using distributed leadership, school leaders can coordinate teaching activities at school and effect changes where there is underperformance. To curb underperformance, it needs the collaboration of school leaders and teachers to initiate programmes that enhance learning. It is also a design tool which focuses on leadership practices that take place in schools. There are different school contexts in which distributed leadership exists. Context signifies the existing available circumstances for school leaders and learners. It determines the level of interaction that may exist in schools between principals and teachers and among teachers in schools. Varied members are expected to put their efforts towards achieving school goals irrespective of them being formal or informal.

When members work as a team, they have higher chances of achieving school goals. This framework is used to guide this research.

Principals are key parts of flat organisations and members of a team, rather than very important individuals operating at the peak of the school organisation. A common vision, high learner academic performance with all members in a school sharing that dream is the focus of distributed leadership. It is a suitable framework to use in studying leadership practice as it "… offers a new and important theoretical lens through which leadership practice in schools can be reconfigured and reconceptualised" (Harris, 2004: 11). The study of leadership, through the distributed leadership perception, puts more attention on the leadership activity rather than the leader (Spillane *et al*., 2004). Key to the distributed leadership framework is leadership stretched across different teachers in a school (Spillane, 2005). Timperley (2005) argues that with the high expectations placed on school leaders by parents and communities for high learner academic pass rates, the perception of principals being the heroes in schools cannot be sustained, thus, the need to stretch leadership across members in the school.

Conditions that principals set in schools determine the success of other members as leaders. The efforts by school principals to develop other leaders can be gauged by school improvements. By stretching leadership to different members in the school organisation, the expertise in different members can be tapped for the improvement of the school. Teachers in schools have different untapped skills which school leaders must make use of for improved learner academic performance. Those occupying formal leadership positions also assist in developing informal leaders as they interact at work. Thus, distributed leadership can be regarded as capacity building. Teachers may not have the confidence to lead but the potential is there. This confidence can be developed by school principals through developing the teachers' capacities. Primary school teachers have whole classes of children to teach for the whole day. They concentrate on learners in their classroom. Their expertise will be a waste if principals do not make use of them by assigning them leadership tasks. School principals should tap the expertise in teachers through distributing leadership organisation wide.

Distributed leadership is "… the sharing, the spreading, and the distributing of leadership work across individuals and roles across the school organisation" (Smylie, 2007: 470). Harris (2005: 14) says it is "… a form of collective agency incorporating the activities of many individuals in a

school who work at mobilising and guiding other teachers in the process of instructional change." Of note in the definition is the spread of leadership to varied members who in turn guide others in implementing the curriculum. The importance of involving staff members in school activities is shown by Chidakwa's (2016) study on internal efficiency of Zimbabwean primary schools which received the Secretary's Merit Award of Quality for several years. It was observed that principals showed concern over the welfare of their teachers. This practice motivated teachers so much that they increased their performance of offering quality education to the primary school learners with the aim of making them pass their grade seven examinations. The performance in the schools showed changes because the contribution of the teachers to school improvement had been acknowledged and appreciated. This practice by school principals benefited learners.

New programmes introduced in primary schools in Zimbabwe show that principals cannot be the sole leaders in schools as they cannot implement the programmes successfully on their own, the participation of teachers is greatly needed. These programmes were introduced with a focus to improve learner academic performance through empowering teachers. The Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) that was introduced in 2016 by MoPSE addressed learning gaps in grades 3 to 7 learners through improving teachers' skills in providing learners with catch-up activities. Another programme introduced in 2015 by MoPSE was the Teacher Professional Standards (TPS). It maximised teacher efforts through offering them direction. The Early Reading Initiative (ERI) (2015) focused on improving teaching in the Infant department. The programme developed teachers and supervisors' capacities on the teaching of Early Childhood Development learners. A quick view of the programmes shows the need to distribute leadership for successful implementation of school programmes. School leaders must create conducive working environments that enable teachers to lead other members. This approach is achieved through distributed instructional leadership which stretches leadership to different members in the school.

2.9 SUMMARY

Various scholars were consulted in reviewing related literature on instructional and distributed instructional leadership. Empirical literature on instructional leadership practices was discussed and activities school principals perform that characterise instructional leadership were discussed. Literature on distributed leadership centred on the stretching of leadership to all school members.

From the empirical studies cited in the literature review, there appears to be variations in instructional leadership practices applied by school principals in schools that portrayed distributed leadership. The review of literature suggests that the leadership practices as described by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) are widely used in schools.

The distributed leadership theoretical framework was used to find out how distributed instructional leadership is enacted in the selected primary schools. This theoretical framework is regarded as the main pillar in enabling research on instructional leadership. The relation between instructional and distributed leadership was explored and a suggestion was to combine the two perspectives to have distributed instructional leadership. Very little research on instructional leadership has been done in Zimbabwe. Most studies explored tend to focus on how democratic or undemocratic principal leadership is and a few focused on instructional leadership in schools. Literature on distributed leadership is even more sparse, let alone on the enactment of instructional leadership in schools. It is, therefore, the focus of this study to close the gap through research on primary schools where instructional leadership is practised. The following chapter presents an explanation on how the study was conducted.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the approaches and methods used to gather data, why I used the selected approaches and how the data were collected. Detailed explanations of how the research was conducted are made. The interpretivist research paradigm used in this research is explained. Further, discussed is the qualitative research approach and the justification for its choice. An explanation is also made of the research design, participants and the methods adopted when gathering data. A clarification is made on how the data are analysed and interpreted. Ethical issues are crucial when conducting research, these are explained in detail in the chapter. The data gathered centred on the main research question: How is distributed instructional leadership practice enacted in some high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe for instructional improvement?

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM

Hua (2016) has defined a paradigm as an all-encompassing outline and meta-thinking behind research. A paradigm has also been defined by Johnson and Christensen (2014: 79) as, "… a worldview or a perspective about research held by a community of researchers that is based on a set of shared assumptions, concepts, values, and practices." Kuhn (as cited in Cohen *et al.,* 2018: 8) defines a paradigm as a way of researching a phenomenon. In all the definitions, a paradigm is all concerned with conducting research and making sense of the world. It is a lens that enables people to know much about the world. Researchers use this worldview to create knowledge. Paradigms, therefore, guide and direct researchers towards the selection of suitable research designs, methods of collecting data and data analysis (Hua, 2016).

This study on distributed instructional leadership practice is conceived within the interpretive research paradigm. It lays emphasis on the meanings that people attribute to their world. The interpretive paradigm enabled me to gather data on instructional leadership practice from participants while in their schools and enhanced the understanding of the meaning that they attribute to their work. Klenke (2016) points out the views held by interpretivists that people are not machines, they have many realities which must be understood while in context. Positivists,

on the other hand, believe that, to describe the social world, people must find out how language, symbols and meaning are used to come up with social practice. They also believe that social description can only be regarded as complete when the meaning in human actions is described. School principals and teachers carry out instructional activities within the context of their schools. It is in these natural school environments that I observed the activities and behaviours of teachers and principals to understand how distributed instructional leadership practices were enacted in high performing primary schools. Interpretivism holds that individuals create meanings of their world as they interact with others. This approach enabled me to observe and hear participants interacting with others and to figure out the meanings of their actions in relation to instructional leadership. The interpretive paradigm aims to understand the perspectives of people on their life experiences. As a researcher, I had to understand the meanings of human actions in the schools. The use of interviews and observations coupled with document analysis made possible the gathering of information on participants' perspectives about instructional leadership.

The use of this paradigm made it possible to seek participants' views on the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice. People give meanings to events and situations (Leavy, 2017). By the interpretive research paradigm, I made sense of the varied meanings that participants ascribe to different leadership practices in their schools. The critical aspect is interpreting and understanding phenomena and making meaning in the process of doing this. Understanding peoples' actions is important since the actions have meaning. In the process of collecting data, principals and teachers were observed conducting their work. I interpreted their actions and behaviours to understand leadership practices in the schools. The interpretivist paradigm enables the description of events through thick descriptions (Hua, 2016). Detailed descriptions were done in this study to enable clear understanding of the concepts under study. I observed and made descriptions of behaviours of participants carrying out their everyday work activities in their schools. Field notes taken from the interviews conducted, observations of school activities, and from analysed documents were used to compile a detailed report of the collected data. The detailed descriptions enabled the answering of the research questions. Hua (2016) advocates that interpretivists make thick descriptions of the behaviours they observe while in their contexts. These descriptions are essential in that they improve people's understanding of how leadership is distributed in schools.

Social reality results from personal interpretations of situations by people. Therefore, the social world, as Yin (2011) puts it is created by individuals basing on their life experiences. It, therefore, suggests that people's knowledge emanates from their thoughts and socially formed meanings. Interpretivists aim at analysing situations and providing insight into how people perceive their situations. Interactions at schools were analysed to understand leadership activities in the schools. Reality is linked to a specified situation in terms of setting, space and time; therefore, it cannot be generalised. It must be interpreted in line with the meaning people give to their life world. Leavy (2017) contends that the key factor characterising the interpretivist paradigm is the understanding of people's experiences subjectively. An interpretivist understanding of the world is subjectively created, this is so because knowledge is subjective and is generally shaped according to individual thinking. As I observed participants in schools, I placed emphasis on understanding their social world as they participated in social events. This paradigm is crucial in this study as it enabled me to understand the main activities that characterised instructional leadership practice.

3.3 THE QUALITATIVE APPROACH

This study focused on how teachers and school principals enacted distributed instructional leadership practice in schools for improved learner academic performance. The characteristic nature of the qualitative research approach made me choose it for this study. It enables the natural flow and holistic study of participants. Its main characteristic is non-interference with participants' normal flow of life and behaviour. Klenke (2016) regards the qualitative approach to research as a naturalistic exploration that seeks a deep understanding of a phenomenon and takes place in the participants' natural environment. I made use of this aspect to find the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice in the selected primary schools. It unpacks meanings people assign to activities that characterise instructional leadership. Qualitative research is more concerned with "why" instead of "what" of social events. It concentrates on the direct practices of people as they make sense of their daily lives. This was important in this research as participant's direct experiences were observed and interpreted to get the meanings behind actions portrayed. I gained insight and understanding of people's perceptions on instructional leadership through direct contact with the participants while they were in their stations. The glamour of qualitative research is that it enables the carrying out of in-depth studies on selected topics in commonly used language. Qualitative research enables researchers to have freedom of selecting areas of research of their interest. My interest was to

examine distributed instructional leadership practices in Zimbabwean primary schools. Through the qualitative research approach, I was able to collect, analyse, and interpret data that Anderson, (2010) says cannot be reduced easily to numbers. This relates to the social world and the behaviours of those involved in research. Qualitative research enables focus to be made on the social interactions and behaviours of principals and teachers as they do their work.

Several qualitative research aspects have led to its selection for this study. The following characteristics of qualitative research that were identified by Klenke (2016: 9) are important to this study:

1. Qualitative research is carried out in natural settings.
2. Qualitative research makes use of purposive sampling.
3. The data obtained through qualitative research derive from the viewpoints of participants.
4. Qualitative research designs are flexible as they can be changed to suit the activities of the research.
5. Qualitative research results in descriptive reports which show the actual responses of participants and their life experiences. The reports are descriptive and the language used is very communicative.

The qualitative research approach enables the study of school principals and teachers in their natural settings which are schools (Creswell, 2014). Teachers' instructional leadership activities take place in their classrooms. I spent at least four months in schools gathering data from the high performing primary schools. During this period, I attended meetings at the sampled schools, interviewed participants and made observations of principals and teachers conducting their daily activities. I also observed interactions between and among the participants in their workplaces. Minichiello and Kottler (2010: 12) point out that "… qualitative researchers observe people in their natural setting so that they can learn from them about what they are thinking, and more importantly, why they think and act the way they do." The qualitative approach values depth of meaning and the subjective experiences of people. The approach enhances researcher knowledge and understanding on instructional leadership in schools and unpacks meanings that people attribute to their activities and situations in life (Leavy, 2017).

I purposively sampled three high performing primary schools from a list of schools that were obtained from the District Office. The schools are familiar because of their high pass rates and

are led by dynamic school principals who participate in instructional activities. The selected participants are believed to have information suitable for answering the research questions. The use of purposive sampling enabled an intentional selection of information-rich participants with deep knowledge of the phenomenon under study (Klenke, 2016). An important characteristic feature of purposive sampling is that researchers select cases with information that answers research questions. Cresswell (2012: 205) states that, "… in qualitative research, we identify our participants and sites on purposeful sampling, based on places and people that can best help us understand our central phenomenon." The researcher had the conviction that the selected individuals would provide detailed information for the study. Much information on instructional leadership was gathered from participants by way of interviews and observations.

The qualitative research approach enables the understanding of views and perspectives of participants. The events and ideas that emerge represent the meanings people give to real-life situations. The real voice of participants is heard during interviews. I heard and recorded the lived experiences of participants (Leedy and Ormod, 2013). I interviewed school principals and teachers to find out the instructional leadership activities carried out in their schools. I observed interactions between principals and teachers and attended meetings to see how leadership is carried out in the schools. This helped me in understanding the meaning that participants attached to instructional leadership activities in their schools. Qualitative research is predominantly about the interpretations that participants make of those circumstances they found themselves in. Leadership activities were, therefore, described basing on the experiences of the participants while in their separate schools.

Participants are regarded as co-creators of the research process in qualitative research, as they can cause for a change in the research process. This approach brings the researcher closer to research participants. "Qualitative data provide depth and detail through direct quotation and careful, thick description of persons, situations (contexts), events, interactions, and observed behaviors" (Klenke, 2016: 8). This study made use of narrative accounts, descriptions and interpretations of school principals' and teachers' behaviours and responses to the interviewer's questions and observations. The qualitative research approach made it possible for me to understand the significance of events, experiences and the behaviours of the participating teachers and principals (Gall *et al.,* 2007). An understanding of the participants' behaviour and why particular events were undertaken made me have a full picture of the participants' day-to-

day activities. I collected, integrated and presented data from the varied sites. The study of different sites produced varied data; this has warranted the use of different methods to collect the data. The use of different methods of collecting data made triangulation and cross-checking of the collected data possible. This enhanced the study's credibility and trustworthiness.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

"Every research study has a research design, whether implicit or explicit. Researchers seek to use strong designs to strengthen the validity of their studies and to ensure that the data to be collected properly addresses the research topic being studied" (Yin, 2011: 75). It is a plan of action in conducting research (Kuada, 2012). Pandey and Pandey (2015: 18) say, "A research design is simply the framework or plan for a study that is used as a guide in collecting and analysing the data." It can be understood as a strategy of implementing research that is used to find answers to research questions. It lays out clearly the sequence of activities and links in the research questions of the project, the methods of collecting data, how the data are analysed and the methods of presenting results and conclusions. It clearly outlines research activities from start to finish, that is, from stating the research question to data analysis. Well-crafted research designs usually decide the realisation of any research. The elements of research designs as Kothari (2004: 32) states, are (1) the research problem, in a clear statement; (2) a clear indication of the measures and methods to be used when collecting data; (3) the population; and (4) the methods used to process and analyse the data. Kumar (2011) advocates that research designs have two functions; first, they relate to the process of identifying and developing procedures and logistics that are needed when undertaking a study. They also emphasise quality procedures to make certain of their validity, objectivity, and accuracy. Research designs are ongoing processes where the choices of approaches and participants are continuously updated. Kothari (2004: 32) advocates that research designs are needed because in research they facilitate "… the smooth sailing of the various research operations, thereby making research as efficient as possible, yielding maximal information with minimal expenditure of effort, time and money."

3.4.1 A case study

Case studies provide rich data which is thick in description and that portrays participants' lived experiences, thoughts, and feelings of a particular situation. They focus on real life situations and can establish causes and effects of events in real life contexts. Creswell and Creswell (2018:401) defines a case study as, "… a qualitative design in which a researcher explores in depth a

program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals." Cohen *et al.* (2018) defines a case study as, "… an investigation into a specific instance or phenomenon in its real life context." Kothari (2004) views a case study as a qualitative analysis that encompasses careful and thorough observations of a social unit which can be an individual, family or the whole community. It thus can be viewed as a rigorous examination of a specific unit under consideration. It emphasises in-depth to breadth. Through the use of a case study, personal experiences and forces that drive man to adopt certain behaviours can be revealed. Denscombe (2003:30) posits that social research has made use of case studies widely because of the following characteristic features:

1. They draw attention to one case in point. Case studies mainly focus on individual cases with an aim of illuminating the general using particular cases.
2. There is an in-depth study. Individual cases can be studied in detail. Detailed studies are believed to lead to the discovery of more information about particular situations.
3. A focus on relationships and processes within social settings which tend to be organised and interconnected. Case studies offer opportunities for cases to be studied in their entirety, leading, therefore, to a discovery of how individual parts affect each another. It shows that case studies are 'holistic' and do not deal with 'isolated factors.' Case studies also offer opportunities for explanations on why certain outcomes happen.
4. Natural setting. A case is something that already exists and is the basis of the investigation. A case is a phenomenon that naturally occurs such as a school under study, is something that exists well before research starts, and is hoped that it will continue to exist even if the research is complete.
5. Several sources and methods that allow the use of varied sources of data, different data types and research methods for research. Observation of events can be combined with document analysis and with informal interviews.

The multiple case study design was selected for this study because of its focus on participants' lived experiences in instructional leadership activities. In addition, the results of a case study approach can be understood easily by a wide audience because of the everyday language that is used. It suits my study which contains more than one single case. Yin (2014) advocates that a study may comprise two or more single cases. When more than two single cases are used, the study becomes a multiple case study design. Punch (cited in Cohen *et al.* 2018:375) defines a case as, "…an individual, a group, an organisation, a community or a nation." Yin (2018) views

a case as a unit of investigation in a case study. Creswell (2012: 465) advocates that a "… 'case' may be a single individual, several individuals separately or in a group, a program, events, or activities (e.g., a teacher, several teachers, or the implementation of a new math program)." In this study, I used four single cases in each of the three research sites to find out how distributed instructional leadership is enacted in the schools. The research sites were three primary schools. The aim of using the multiple case study was to achieve credible results. I believed that the results from a multiple case study design are more compelling and convincing when compared to those from a single-case design. In the three sites, I focused on school principals and teachers as standalone persons and as elements of the school community as they interacted in the schools. Twelve participants comprising three principals, and nine teachers made up the cases. Three teachers per school were purposively sampled as participants in this study. Kumar (2011) advocates that the purposive sampling technique is often used by researchers when selecting cases. Yin (2014) propounds that the complexity of a case determines the number of cases to be investigated. Thus, the choice of a multiple case study design in this research enabled each school to present a different context of how distributed instructional leadership practice was enacted. The use of this research design was also aimed at attaining compelling results which could be compared. The involvement of teachers was because they work closely with learners, they understand them better. Leithwood (2004) advocates that teachers have more impact on learners than principals. Their inclusion in the study enhanced an understanding of leadership activities in schools. The contexts of schools are unique and ever-changing; therefore, case studies offer the opportunity to investigate real-life situations in the unique schools and report on them. Being in the schools, observing interactions in the schools between and among members, interviewing school principals and teachers and analysing documents offered me an opportunity to experience the different school environments. I sought participants' views about the main activities characterising instructional leadership practice in their schools and I analysed them to find out how the major activities exhibit features of distributed leadership practice.

Interviews and observations made of the participants at their work over a prolonged period, offered an opportunity for me to experience different school contexts and interactions at different levels. During the field study period, I observed people interacting freely in their own language and terms (Gall *et al.*, 2007) without any manipulation or interference from me. As a major component in the data collection process, observation enabled me to get the feeling of how leadership activities are distributed in schools that lead to high performance by learners. My stay

in the selected schools was over a period of four and a half months. This prolonged stay helped in reducing participant reactivity to my presence in the schools. It also helped in producing credible and trustworthy results. School activities continued as usual as the teachers got used to seeing me and fully understood that my presence in their schools was for study purposes only. In order not to manipulate the participants, I made sure that my interactions with them had very little interference with their work. Through the multiple case design, I was able to observe the interactions and activities that took place in the schools and as Leedy and Ormrod, (2013) say, to have a cross case analysis. The use of this design afforded me the opportunity to interact with participants and hear their voices on instructional leadership (Clark and Ivankova, 2016).

Although case study designs have limited generalisability (Leedy and Ormrod, 2013), using the multiple case study involving twelve participants is likely to make the sample enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of the gathered data. This probably would enable the research findings to be transferred to other similar contexts. My long stay in the schools contributed to reducing researcher bias and subjectivity. It also reduced researcher reactivity in participants. In addition to this, I audio recorded interviews and wrote thick descriptions of observations made on interactions in the schools between and among the principal, teachers, and their environments. I carried out a pilot study, wrote field notes and triangulated data to reduce personal bias and subjectivity. I found the multiple case study, which is of an exploratory nature, very appropriate for this study. The case studies made possible the examination of the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice in schools and how they exhibited features of a distributed leadership practice for improved academic performance.

3.5 RESEARCH SITES

Creswell and Creswell (2018) advocate that qualitative research enables research to be carried out in natural settings. To carry out this study, I purposively sampled three primary schools in Goromonzi District in Mashonaland East Province of Zimbabwe. The selected schools had the characteristics that I needed, these were, a reputation of practising distributed instructional leadership and a record of high grade seven pass rate over a period of at least three consecutive years. The schools had high pass rates of 91 to 100% with the exception of one of the schools that obtained 89% in one of the three years I considered. The school regarded this as a low mark in that year since their pass rate was usually over 91%, but when compared to other schools in the district it was high. The other criterion was that the principals had been at the schools for the

past three years and had been commended by the District Office as effective principals. Taylor *et al.* (2016: 32) say "The ideal research setting is one in which the observer obtains easy access, establishes immediate rapport with informants, and gathers data directly related to the research interests." I believe that these schools were ideal for my research and that I got appropriate data for this study. I interviewed participants while on my school visits. Through visiting schools, I gained insight into instructional leadership activities that existed in the schools and how these instructional leadership activities exhibited features of distributed leadership. The participants were observed while in their natural settings (Kothari, 2004). The prolonged stay at the schools enabled me to establish good working relations with the participants and to gather adequate data on the leadership activities and academic performance of the schools.

3.6 MY POSITIONALITY

A qualitative researcher has a central role in the study. Klenke (2016: 10) points out that qualitative researchers "… are the primary data collection instruments in a qualitative study." This is because the researchers can decide on what is important or not and what to or not to record (Johnson and Christensen, 2014). During the four and a half months' period, I observed the participants doing their work, interacting with others and how they related with learners and the principal. I personally gathered data for this study through interviewing participants, observing their behaviours as they conducted their day-to-day activities and analysed policy documents on school leadership, reports on school supervision and instructional programmes (Creswell, 2014). Even though I used some instruments to gather data, I was the one collecting the data. I ensured that my personal influences did not have an influential factor in the research process. As someone who has been a teacher and deputy head (vice principal), I kept in mind the importance of remaining neutral as I collected and analysed the data. I informed participants that my presence in their schools was not for assessment but only for research on distributed instructional leadership practices. I personally went to the selected schools and collected the research data. I employed varied strategies to validate the information (Yin, 2014). I incorporated a pilot study as a precursor to the actual study where I conducted document analysis, interviews, and observations to depict participants' perceptions on instructional leadership (Creswell, 2014). My experience of fourteen years as a senior teacher, three years as a deputy school head and three years' experience as a teacher educator were made use of in making considerations on what I consider as valid information concerning distributed instructional leadership.

3.7 PARTICIPANTS

The research participants were comprised of three primary school heads (principals) and nine teachers. They were purposively selected from high performing primary schools. Leaders and followers are important elements in the distributed leadership framework, so I had to select principals and teachers (who are the leaders and followers) and collect data from their perspectives on activities that characterise instructional leadership practice. The selection of principals from different schools provided a variety in background of the school principals and school contexts. The principals had varied lengths of stay at their schools, each of which was more than three years which was the minimum I expected. This provided varied purposively sampled participants. To get three high performing primary schools, I approached the District Education Office and requested for recommendations on schools which demonstrated distributed leadership. From the recommendations by the District Office, I purposively sampled three primary schools that had performed well in public examinations for a period of at least three years and with a reputational recommendation for improved performance and instructional leadership. The selected principals were regarded as effective by the District Schools' Inspector and were considered high performers. They were seen to be knowledgeable of how their teachers performed.

3.7.1 Selecting participants

For this research, principals and teachers were purposively sampled. The major reason behind the use of a purposive sample was to have individuals with information on the phenomena, which is distributed instructional leadership. Creswell and Creswell (2018) advocate that, qualitative researchers select participants that help them to answer the question under research. It means that the selected participants can provide relevant information. Schools were selected basing on their grade seven examination results and their reputation in the district for their distributed instructional leadership. The selected teachers are those with high content knowledge and whose learners had high pass rates. The participants had relevant information for this research. Selected participants had the requisite characteristics that I was looking for (Cohen *et al.,* 2018). I purposively sampled teachers with the requisite qualifications to teach at a primary school in Zimbabwe which are a minimum of either a Certificate or a Diploma in Education. The purposive sampling technique was quite relevant since it enabled me to select participants who contributed to my understanding of how instructional leadership activities are distributed in schools. The selection of cases was intentionally done to get relevant and abundant data (Yin,

2011). The sampled participants were interviewed, observed while conducting their work and when they interacted with other members. School documents were analysed to get more data on instructional leadership practices in the schools.

The selected teachers had a minimum of three years working experience in primary schools. They consented to take part in this research. Basing on the teachers' experience and professional qualifications, I anticipated that the teachers had sound knowledge of instructional leadership activities at their schools. I used different names to identify the schools and participants for ethical reasons. Schools were Matanga, Bepura and Chrim primary schools and the principals were Mrs Muzuwa, Mr Shama and Mr Kanyo. Teachers were Mr Muko, Mrs Rega and Mrs Sora from A Primary School; Mrs Ndaba, Mr Ngata and Mrs Koni from B Primary School and Mr Nyika, Mr Hasva and Mrs Manaki from C Primary School.

3.8 ETHICAL ISSUES

Ethics are the anticipated standards of behaviour that guide people in a particular profession. In research, ethics are the values that a researcher must respect when carrying out research (Neuman, 2014). Cohen *et al.* (2018) regard ethics in research as concerned with what researchers must do or not do and how to behave. Ethics, therefore, provide guidelines to researchers on how to act and behave morally when conducting research. In research, people must be honest in how they collect data, analyse, and interpret it (Walliman, 2011). All processes taken in the quest to answer the research question are explained. Important characteristics needed in researchers include honesty, frankness, and the upholding of personal integrity. In addition to these, is the way the researcher respects participants in the research in terms of informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, and courtesy (Walliman, 2011). All findings are reported honestly and truthfully. Creswell (2013) warns against falsifying findings as it constitutes an ethical misconduct. Each participant's story was told honestly without any exaggeration. By so doing I maintained my integrity. To honour the integrity of participants, I explained in full the purpose of my research, did not hide my identity and I asked for their informed consent. The following are some ethics that I followed as a researcher in education; seeking permission from MoPSE Head Office, Provincial and District Offices then the schools where I would carry out my research. I also sought voluntary participation from participants, informed them of their anonymity as participants, the confidentiality of information obtained from them and my honest reporting. Yin (2014) points out that participants must be protected from physical and

psychological harm, this includes stress, loss of self-respect during observations and or interviews and any other activities that they might be engaged in.

3.8.1 Permission to conduct research

To conduct fieldwork, I started by seeking permission from the University of the Free State. When granted conditional approval, I then sought approval from MoPSE to conduct research in Mashonaland East Province. After obtaining permission from the MoPSE, I then applied to the Provincial Education Director (PED) for Mashonaland East Province, who controls all schools in the province. With the letter of permission from the PED, I approached the District Schools Inspector (DSI) for Goromonzi District to seek permission to get into schools in Goromonzi District. After obtaining permission from the District Office, I then went to negotiate entry into primary schools. When I got permission from three principals to carry out my study at their schools, I sent the approval letters to the University of Free State Ethics Committee and I was granted an Ethical Clearance Letter. Armed with these letters, I started field visits.

3.8.2 Participant informed consent

I approached school principals and explained why I had visited their schools; it was to get approval from them so that I could carry out my study in their schools. I explained to them that I was a University of Free State student carrying out a study on distributed instructional leadership practice. I explained that my study would be a case study involving a prolonged engagement with the principals and teachers and that I would be at their schools for a period of at least three months collecting data. Upon getting approval, I then asked for names of teachers who were high performers and had high class pass rates. I sampled three teachers from the list of the teachers I had been given and these were from different grades. When I met the teachers, I introduced myself then explained the scope and reasons of my study. I asked the participants to sign consent forms as evidence of informed consent and voluntary participation. It was essential that I sought the informed consent of the principals and the participating teachers. The research being of a qualitative nature, required me to carry out a detailed study of distributed instructional leadership with participants in their natural settings (Yin, 2011).

3.9 COLLECTING DATA

I used varied methods to collect data to allow for methodological triangulation as this ensured credibility of the findings (Clark and Ivankova, 2016). Interviews, observations and an analysis

of documents were methods used to gather data. The three methods were used to enhance trustworthiness in the qualitative study. I gathered data when I visited the sampled schools. I observed and interviewed principals and teachers during field visits. I closely observed how the participants related with others when at school and how instructions were given out by principals and how teachers responded. I conducted interviews with the school principals first, then with teachers. This was done in the first week of getting to schools on days and dates agreed on by the interviewer and the interviewees. Interviews were conducted individually to obtain everyone's independent view on instructional leadership in their schools. Semi-structured interviews were used. These enabled me to guide dialogues to remain focused on the topic under discussion (Leedy and Ormod, 2013). I observed the principals when they were doing their work. I also observed school life aspects which included interactions between principals and teachers, and among teachers during meetings, at assemblies in the morning, during tea and lunch breaks and the rapport with learners. I attended meetings that took place in the schools during my visits. This was to observe leadership practices in the schools. The analysis of documents enabled the comparison of findings with those from interviews and observations. The use of the three research methods made triangulation possible. This increased the credibility of the study (Clark and Ivankova, 2016).

3.9.1 Pilot study

This is a crucial activity in research. Hazzi and Maldaon (2015) point out that the carrying out of a pilot study is not an assurance of the success of the main research but that it increases the chances of its success. Pilot testing has an informative role as it helped me ascertain the usefulness of research instruments and the need for their improvement. It also enabled me to find out how effective the research tools would be when used in the field. I used similar methods of data gathering to those I used in the main study. The interview, observation and documentary analysis protocols were put on trial. This was to assess the appropriateness of the protocols and the relevance of the participants' responses in relation to instructional leadership when carrying out the main study. It enabled me to assess the suitability of the protocols and to improve them before the main research. Leedy and Ormod (2013) believe that the aspects of methodology that relate to the provision of relevant information about field questions and other logistics are improved during a pilot study. I carried out the pilot study at a reputable school closer to my home for convenience and easy access. After getting approval from the Ministry I approached the principal of a nearby school and sought permission to conduct a pilot study at the school. I

sampled two teachers who met my purposive sampling criteria of having been at the school for the past three years and having produced high pass rates to be part of the participants in the pilot study, they were a male and a female. The principal also participated in the pilot study. I pilot tested all the three instruments I used in field visits, the interview, observation and document analysis protocols. After the pilot study there was no change on the observation and document analysis protocols. I made a few improvements on the wording of teacher interview protocols and a rearrangement of questions on principal's interview protocols to enable a smooth flow of generated data.

3.9.2 Interviews

These are research tools used to collect data. Johnson and Christensen (2014: 317) say, "An interview is a data-collection method in which an interviewer asks an interviewee questions." They involve interactions between two or more people, with one part asking for information and the other supplying the information. When interviewing participants, I asked and recorded their responses. Interviews are an interpersonal encounter, I therefore, established rapport with the participants to avoid being given biased data (Johnson and Christensen, 2014). To get the participants' trust, I explained why I was conducting the study. I guaranteed the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. I made use of semi-structured interviews. The use of face-to-face interviews provided opportunities for me to hear the participants' personal experiences on instructional leadership from their own mouths.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured questions were used in interviews because they enabled me to explore participant's lived experiences with instructional leadership in their schools (Mligo, 2016). I personally interviewed the participants on a one-on-one basis, and all interviews were electronically voice recorded. I also took notes during the interview sessions. O'Gorman and MacIntosh (2015) advocate that, interviews involve the researcher conversing with the participant directly or indirectly to collect data. I used interviews because they made it possible for me to ask the participants questions and get responses (Yin, 2014). School principals and their followers provided data since they were the fundamental components in the distributed leadership framework.

Interviews enabled me to understand participants' views on instructional leadership in their schools. Interview protocols set for principals and for teachers were used. Each interview lasted at least sixty minutes. I conducted interviews at the beginning of the field visits to understand the participants' perspectives about their schools and instructional leadership. I also conducted interviews at the end of the field visits to validate the data that I had obtained through observations and document analysis. A total of twelve interviews were conducted within the four and a half months' period with two interviews being conducted with each participant. The aim being to gather as much data as was possible about the participants' views on instructional leadership in their schools.

Through interviews, I was able to probe for detailed information about the participants' understanding of the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice at their schools (Yin, 2011). The responses given helped in answering the research questions. Interviews also helped confirm the correctness of interpretations that I made from observations made during school visits and from document analyses. Interviews are important as they can lead to a researcher getting some information that would not have been possible to get through observations or document analysis (Creswell, 2012). By using interviews, I was able to observe non-verbal cues, such as gestures from participants. I created rapport with the principals and teachers to build trust between them and myself. This made the participants open up and give more information (Yin, 2011). Pandey and Pandey (2015) advocate that when good rapport exists between the interviewer and the interviewee, a free mutual flow of ideas between them takes place.

I closely observed each participant's gestures during the interviews. It is crucial that the interviews remain focused. To achieve this, I used interview guides during the interviews. Interview guides help ensure similarity in questions asked in each interview session. They also make it easier when making comparisons of participants' responses. Interviews were conducted to get participant's views about instructional leadership practice in schools. All interviews were audio-taped then transcribed verbatim.

Interviews and ethics

Participants took part in the research voluntarily. No participant was coerced to participate. I gave participants consent forms to sign as evidence that they had agreed willingly to participate

in the study. I informed teachers of their freedom during the research process and that they could end their participation without being asked why.

Anonymity and confidentiality

To protect the identity of the schools and participants and ensure their anonymity I used pseudonyms (Johnson and Christensen, 2014). Giving them new names also ensured their confidentiality and my abidance by research ethics. Leedy and Ormrod (2013) caution researchers not to disclose findings from observations, documents or interviews with other teachers or administrators at the research sites since this information might be used against the participant(s). I never divulged information to other teachers in the schools where I carried out my fieldwork.

3.9.3 Observation

Observation enabled me to examine how instructional activities took place in schools. They provide first-hand information as opposed to information obtained from interviews (Merriam, 2009). This made me select observation as another effective way of collecting detailed information about how schools enacted instructional leadership. "Observation is recognised as the most direct means of studying people when one is interested in their overt behaviour" says Pandey and Pandey (2015: 63). Through observations, I gained a deeper understanding of the participants' thoughts that they might have been reluctant to divulge during interviews. This enabled me to see how instructional leadership activities were being enacted in the schools to improve instruction.

Observation enables the collection of data when people are in their natural environment. During the four and a half months of field visit, I observed participants carrying out their everyday school activities and recorded their behaviour while in their social and natural settings. Pandey and Pandey (2015) contend that data gathered through observation is more real and true when compared to other data generated through other methods. I regarded observation as an appropriate method that would allow me to gather relevant and reliable data on the main activities of instructional leadership practice. Through observations, I got first-hand information on how leadership activities were practiced at the research sites. Through observation, I found out what people think and do by looking and talking to them as they expressed themselves in various school situations. Normal school day activities took place during the visits, and I

observed and recorded what was taking place. Observations make significant contributions to qualitative multiple case studies (Creswell, 2014). They enabled me to find out what schools do in their quest to improve pass rates. Observations made possible the verification of information I collected from participants during face-to-face interviews and from analysing documents (Leedy and Ormod, 2013). I made observations of school principals interacting with teachers in different situations while conducting their daily activities (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). I observed leadership activities at play during school and subject committee meetings. Observations enabled me to see what people did in their daily routines and how they did it.

While interacting with participants, I noted down all the information I got that I might have failed to understand by mere observation. I developed rapport with the participants for them to accept me as a colleague and researcher. That enabled me to ask questions freely during the field visits. The interactions I held with the participants generated detailed information about the major instructional activities that principals performed in the schools. I would ask for clarifications when not sure about my observations in meetings and/or when interacting with the participants. During interactions with participants, I also found out their background information, their school values and practices, the idea behind being to get more knowledge of participants' insights of distributed leadership. I also analysed the documents I came across during the process of observation to get more information on instructional leadership practice in the schools and for triangulation purposes. I made use of an observation guide which I prepared before the field study which has aspects on what to observe during the field study. The observation guide comprised of open-ended questions; whose answers I took down as field notes.

3.9.4 Document analysis

To understand why certain activities were done, I interviewed the participants and cross-checked the data from documents. School documents were analysed to complement the data gathered through observations and interviews. Document analysis is likely to produce authentic data since the documents are meant for the schools' records and not for the researcher (Yin, 2014). The documents that were analysed included circulars from the Ministry, supervision reports at the school, staff development programmes and minutes from meetings. I believed that through analysing these documents more data on instructional leadership activities would be obtained that would help in cross-checking on data that had been collected during the first interviews.

Document analysis was done after the first interviews to cross-check on information got from interviewees.

Documents or records are written by those who partake in an event or a witness to an event, these are produced to transmit information for future use (Pandey and Pandey, 2015). They are a stable source of data which are time convenient for the researcher (Creswell, 2013). The use of document analysis in gathering data produced authentic data since the documents were not produced at my initiative (Yin, 2014). Document analysis complements the observation and interview methods and, in a way, enhances the trustworthiness of gathered data. Documents can be revisited and re-analysed at any time by a researcher since they would always be available. The documents that were analysed include the national curriculum handbook, Education Secretary's Circulars used in schools related to leadership, Ministry handbooks for administrators, school documents which included minute books with minutes from school meetings, notice books, supervision reports by the principal, staff development records, teachers' schemes of work and lists of leadership positions for teachers in the schools. An analysis of these documents enabled me to gather information on the main activities that characterised instructional leadership practice in the selected primary schools.

Records of meetings enabled me to note how teachers participated in meetings as these documents indicated the contributions by members, the input by the school principal and by subject leaders and the recommendations, if any, that would have been made and by whom. I believed that such documents provided information that helped in answering the research question. Documents, such as minute books, lists of responsibilities for staff members and staff development programmes can signify the presence of distributed leadership.

3.10 DATA ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT

Qualitative research studies result in great amount of data being collected and these must be analysed. Data analysis is done simultaneously as data collection proceeds. Neuman (2014) advocates that the analysis of data is a logical way of combining, arranging, and examining data to find patterns and associations in the information. Analysing data improves the understanding of collected data. The following section explains the process of data analysis.

3.10.1 Data analysis

Data analysis produced practical findings. Interview data were transcribed word for word and then the information gathered was content analysed. Information gathered from observations and responses from participants were coded and then classified into categories of different themes. A thematic analysis of data gathered was done. The process of analysing data started when the field work began. It was an on-going activity which was conducted daily after fieldwork up to the end of the field visits. The digitally voice recorded interviews were transcribed and analysed. Also analysed were the data gathered through observations and document analysis. The interpretation and analysis of data started by considering emerging themes, then classified data into categories for coding. Data analysis in qualitative studies is a process that begins with the first phase of data collection through fieldwork, post-fieldwork phases up to the production of the final report. The primary mode of analysing the data was coding. I subjected all interview transcriptions to content analysis by creating categories and themes. During document analysis, I wrote down the main points from the documents and made comments in the margin of my notebook. These comments pinpointed important points and emerging themes that enabled the classification of data. The process of analysing data comprises three stages: condensing the data, displaying it, and drawing conclusions (Miles *et al.,* 2014). Data analysis took place during the process of gathering data up to the end of the research (Chilisa and Preece, 2005).

I checked on researcher effects to avoid partial coverage as my presence as I might have affected the research and on the other hand, the case might also have influenced me. I explained the reasons of my presence and intentions to reduce influences on participants and them influencing me. I conducted interviews at the times and venues set by the participants. To remain focused, I was guided by my interview protocols and the participants did most of the talking. While in the schools, I maintained a low profile and blended well with the participants (Miles *et al.,* 2014). Triangulation was evident during data collection as data were obtained through varied methods. This was done to minimise bias. The interactions I held with principals and teachers helped me understand how instructional leadership activities were implemented in the schools. The use of interviews, observation and document analysis provides diverse data that needs verification. As an example, when a subject committee leader talks of having chaired various meetings on professional development of teachers, this can be checked and confirmed from reports of the meetings held. Confirming findings during data collection is believed to result in trusted results. The end process of analysing data comprises the compiling of results (Johnson and Christensen, 2014).

3.10.2 Coding of data

The broad themes that were used for coding in this study were formed from the research questions and framed by the distributed leadership theoretical framework whose key tenet is that leadership is stretched to different members in the school (Spillane, 2005). These were decided before collecting any data and were informed by the literature I reviewed. The pilot study helped me decide on sub-themes and codes for my data. Data from interview transcription, observation guides and notes from document analysis were coded. Cohen *et al.* (2018: 525) defined coding as "… the ascription of a category label to a piece of data, that is either decided in advance or in response to the data that have been collected." The codes that were common were attached to similar data in relation to the themes and sub-themes and in line with the research questions. This enabled the retrieval of the most meaningful material from the bulk of research data and its classification into related categories that could be condensed into analysable units.

A summary of themes, sub-themes and categories that developed from analysing the gathered data is given in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Sub-questions, themes, sub-themes, and categories

Sub-questions	Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
1. What are the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice of selected high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe?	Theme 1: Activities characterising instructional leadership practice	Sub-theme 1.1: Visioning schools	Category 1: Creating school visions
		Sub-theme 1.2: Managing instructional activities	Category 2: Supervision of teachers and learners
		Sub-theme 1.3: Creating a conducive school environment	Category 1: Professional development
			Category 2: Principal teaching
			Category 3: Creating positive environments
2. How do the major activities of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe align with and/or exhibit features of a distributed leadership practice, if at all?	Theme 2: Linking instructional and distributed leadership	Sub-theme 2.1: Collaborative vision formulation	Category 1: Vision formulation
		Sub-theme 2.2: Stretching leadership to staff members	Category 1: Staff development
			Category 2: Class allocation tendencies
			Category 3: Opportunities for leadership
3. How can the activities and practices of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools be understood and/or explained?			An analytical question which will be answered in Chapter 5 by inferring to the responses given by the respondents under themes 1 and 2.

3.10.3 Data synthesis

After coding, I placed the data from the case studies into different categories then analysed, compared and synthesised the data to see how instructional leadership activities were distributed in the schools. “Synthesis is the process of building up separate elements, especially ideas into a connected whole”, advises Schulze (cited in Shumba and Zireva, 2013: 22). The analysis and synthesis of data were done to find common and unique practices of leadership practice as it is understood in the schools. Analysing cases from the three schools enabled me to come up with conclusions on school principal and teachers’ sense-making of distributed instructional leadership activities that improve performance of both learners and teachers in schools. The conclusions from data analysis and synthesis enhanced researcher knowledge on how the activities of instructional leadership practice can be understood.

3.10.4 Data organisation and management

The digitally recorded information of the school principals and teachers was organised into folders which were stored in a computer with a password. It is only me, who can access the information. The documents were organised by dates. I also kept hard copies of notes from interviews and observations. Such notes would be on the biodata of participants and any relevant information that I would have collected from observations during school visits. All the field notes, document analysis reports and transcribed data were stored under lock and key in a steel cabinet at home. I made sure that all the research documents were well secured so that no other person would tamper with them. I used pseudonyms for all participants and their schools. This is to conceal the actual identities of the participants and to adhere to the principles of confidentiality and anonymity.

3.11 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY OF STUDY

When considering qualitative research, the concepts believability and credibility of the research results replace validity and reliability. Credibility in qualitative research represents internal validity which relates to how truthful the findings are, let alone the research (Connelly, 2016). Reliability is seen to mean how dependable the research results are (Gunawan, 2015). It also refers to how stable data collected is over time. Like objectivity of research, confirmability focuses on whether findings are constant and can possibly be repeated. Varied data gathering methods were used to increase the trustworthiness of the findings of the research. The trustworthiness of findings is a debatable area where positivists think the notions of validity and

reliability are not well covered in qualitative studies (Chilisa and Preece, 2005). This stems up from the fact that qualitative research involves interactions by people which is impossible to repeat in the same way and get similar findings when compared to natural and physical sciences. The accuracy and authenticity of qualitative research is considered as its trustworthiness, credibility, dependability, confirmability and transferability (Chilisa and Preece, 2005). Creswell (2007) advocates that the trustworthiness of research refers to the degree to which study findings can be understood and relied on so much that other researchers can repeat the study under similar environments.

To ensure the credibility of my study, I used a multi-case study design which was made up of appropriate participants. Credibility focuses on how realistic and convincing research results are. I also increased the credibility of my study through a prolonged stay and persistent observations in the schools. Data collection was done over four and a half months, where I was in the schools interacting with participants, making observations, and conducting interviews. The prolonged engagement with participants enabled me to ask questions that followed up on the observations that I had made about instructional leadership practices. Triangulation is another strategy that I used to enhance the reliability of the study. To get dependable results, the research process is clearly stated in a logical manner and in such a way that it can be traceable.

I also offered participants the chance to verify the correctness of the transcriptions I made of their responses in interviews and from the descriptions of observations I made in the schools. The observations made on leadership activities in the schools were densely documented so that a transfer of the research findings could be possible. The idea was to provide as much information as possible to allow readers to draw up their own conclusions from the research results. Triangulation was used as a strategy to ensure that the findings are dependable (Creswell, 2012). How dependable this study is, rests on the reports from different data collection sources that were used to examine how the major activities of instructional leadership were distributed in the high performing primary schools. To enhance confirmability of this study, Chilisa and Preece (2005) say the research findings can be traced back to the research sites and participants.

I took note of my personal biases and reflected on my own personal preconceptions so that they did not encroach into my study as these can saliently infuse into the process of collecting and analysing data. Findings need to be dependable. Being a trained primary school teacher and currently a teacher educator, I tried to guard against my interest in school leadership that could

have had some indirect influence on my perceptions of participants' knowledge of distributed instructional leadership. During the period I spent visiting schools, I conducted interviews, interacted with principals and teachers and analysed documents to come up with first-hand information on how instructional leadership activities are enacted in schools. The purpose of interacting with each teacher was to get their opinions on instructional leadership activities at their schools. Having a prolonged engagement with the participants helped in building up rapport with participants for them to open-up and give frank sentiments on leadership in their schools. Creating rapport with participants resulted in trust and confidence which afforded me an opportunity to find out more about the participants' knowledge of instructional leadership. It also enabled me to go beyond the surface level and unravel the fundamental factors that influenced and shaped its implementation. Through a long stay in the schools, the observer effect on the participants' behaviours was reduced. Best and Kahn (2006) explains that the observer effect is when participants in a study change their behaviours after realising that they are either being observed or interviewed by a stranger. Through my prolonged stay, the participants got used to me and realised that I was in their schools for study purposes only. This may have led the participants to behave naturally and made me generate credible data.

3.12 SUMMARY

The qualitative research approach was adopted to find the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice. The multiple case study design was used to gather data from different participants and contexts. Through the multiple case study design, data were gathered from individuals while in their natural environments. The views of principals and teachers were obtained through interviews, observations of meetings and document analysis. The participants were purposively selected because of their high-class pass rates and information on instructional leadership practice. A pilot test was carried out to refine research tools before the main research. The use of varied data gathering tools enabled triangulation to take place thereby enhancing the quality of the research. Data analysis started when field work was still underway. Collected data were organised, classified into themes, coded and interpreted. The themes were based on research questions. An extensive presentation of research findings is done in chapter four.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of the data gathered from three research sites. The data were gathered through interviews, observations, and document analysis. All was to gain a deeper understanding of how instructional leadership practices were distributed in high performing Zimbabwean primary schools for improved performance. The data were gathered from nine teachers and three principals in three primary schools. The main research question of the study was, how is distributed instructional leadership practice enacted in some high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe for instructional improvement?

In the sections that follow, I report on the research findings of this study and in doing so I begin by reporting on the research sites and then reports from participants. I started by presenting an overview of each research site followed by the background information of the principals and then of the teachers. I then went on to present the data gathered under each theme starting with the data gathered from principals followed by that from teachers. The data falls under seven themes which are background information of the participants, creating school specific vision, supervision of teachers, creating a conducive environment, staff development, opportunities for leadership, and class allocation tendencies. For the sake of keeping the identities of the participants and the research sites anonymous, I created pseudonyms for all the participants and the schools for the purpose of this study only.

4.2 REPORTS FROM MATANGA PRIMARY SCHOOL

An overview of the school

Matanga (pseudonym) Primary School is a Government Primary School that was established in 2002. It is one of the three schools that participated in my study. It is in a low-density suburb less than twenty-five kilometres from the capital city, Harare. It has a durawall right round and has a gate that is manned by security guards throughout the day. The enrolment of learners during the time of my visit in 2020 was at 1695 and a staff complement of 35 teachers. There were double sessions at the school, the morning session and the afternoon session for grades three to five. They alternated in using their classrooms. The morning session started at 0800 hours and finished at 1300 hours. The afternoon session started at 1000 hours and finished at 1500 hours.

Grades one, two, six and seven did not share their classrooms. These had one session. A characteristic of most urban schools in Zimbabwe is that there are more female teachers than male teachers. This was the same trend at Matanga Primary School, there were 27 females and eight males making a total of 35 teachers. The school was under the leadership of Mrs Muzuwa (pseudonym) since 2010. When I visited the district offices seeking permission to carry out my study, Matanga Primary School was one of the schools that the District Schools Inspector (DSI) recommended as an ideal school for my study on instructional leadership. Three teachers, Mrs Sora, Mr Muko, and Mrs Rega participated in the study (all pseudonyms).

4.2.1 Background information of the participants

Mrs Muzuwa was the principal of Matanga Primary School, which was a big day primary school that is less than twenty-five kilometres from the capital city, Harare. She has been the principal of the school for over 10 years. She is a qualified primary school teacher with a Certificate in Education, a Bachelor and a Master of Education in Educational Leadership and Management degree. She is in her late fifties and has over 20 years of experience as a school principal. She was promoted from being a teacher to a vice principal post which she held for four years before being promoted to a principal post. She also had a brief stint as an Acting Education Officer at district level. She is one of the school principals that the District Schools Inspector recommended to me to conduct my research on instructional leadership at her school because of her instructional leadership prowess. In addition to the principal, three teachers took part in the study, and these were, Mrs Sora, Mr Muko and Mrs Rega. Mrs Sora is about 45 years old, and her highest qualification is a Diploma in Education which she obtained from a local primary school teachers' college. Her work experience spanned over 17 years. She started teaching in a different province before transferring to Matanga Primary School in Mashonaland East Province about five years ago. During the years she has been at Matanga Primary School, she taught grades three and four. During the time of visit, she was teaching a grade four class. She was the school's health chairperson, and at the school they call her the health mistress.

Mr Muko is about 45 years old and holds a Diploma in Education that qualified him to teach at a primary school. His experience spanned close to 20 years. At the time of visit he was teaching a grade six class. He had been teaching grade five and six alternatively for close to 10 years. He was the fundraising chairperson, soccer coach and agriculture chairperson at Matanga Primary School. He transferred to Matanga Primary School from another school in the same district.

Mrs Rega is just over 50 years old and holds a Diploma in Education as her highest qualification. She is quite an experienced teacher, having been in the teaching field for close to 30 years. She was the teacher in charge (TIC) at Matanga Primary School. She supervised the school's Infants Department which comprised of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) A and B classes and grades one and two. She was one of those teachers who had been at the school for long. She taught grade two at the time of visit in 2020.

Having given an overview of the Matanga Primary School participants' background, the following section now presents data under varied themes. To begin with, the focus is on visioning of schools.

4.2.2 Visioning Matanga Primary School

Visions and missions are crucial elements of schools which show the direction of schools and how they want to get to their destinations (Allen *et al.,* 2018). Principals are expected to ensure that their schools have a vision and a mission that all members work towards achieving. As instructional leaders, principals take an active role in crafting a school vision, aligning instruction to the school vision, coordinating the implementation of the school curriculum, and creating a supportive working environment (Dong and Seong, 2014). To find out about the formulation of the school specific vision and mission at Matanga Primary School, I started by asking Mrs Muzuwa, the principal, whether the school had a school specific vision and mission besides the one from the Ministry of Education, which all schools are mandated to have. She affirmed the existence of the school vision and went on to show me the school specific vision and mission statements (See Appendix 13). These documents were lying on her table and not displayed anywhere in the office. Visibly displayed on the walls of the office, instead, were the vision and mission statements from the Ministry (Appendix 14).

To understand the important process of envisioning at the school, I asked how they came up with the vision and mission statements to which Mrs Muzuwa responded as follows:

> *Over the years, we have been getting awards of, the best school; the best grade seven teacher at cluster and district levels. We want to maintain that standard. We have what I can refer to as shared leadership, whereby everybody is a leader. Everybody is a participant in the production of good results. So, to come up with our school vision we got input from teachers through their representatives. We have various committees in the school, and these are led by different teachers. From the teachers' input, the head, deputy head and TIC sat down and crafted the school vision and mission statements and shared them with teachers. You will find*

> *as you meet our teachers, that most of them are very much intrinsically motivated. They are in a system where they share information to produce good results.*

The quote above suggests that the process of developing the school vision and mission was intrinsically linked to maintenance or improvement of instruction and students' outcomes. Mrs Muzuwa talked about 'maintenance of standards' and 'production of good results' which suggests the link between the development process and instructional goals of the school. So, clearly the process was located within the instructional leadership function of the school. The description of the process of developing a mission and vision of the school also speaks to the participation by all staff, with some earmarked for leadership roles within the process. Mrs Muzuwa identified this as 'shared leadership', which she proceeded to explain as involving various committees, wherein teachers participate, and feed information through specific teacher-representatives, and the engagement of formal leaders such as the Head, the Deputy Head, and the Teacher-in-Charge (TIC) to finalise the document. I became curious to probe the idea of intrinsic motivation of the teachers which she brought up to partly explain the active engagement of the teachers in the processes of developing a mission and vision. Here is how she explained further:

> *When you are posted to Matanga Primary School, naturally you fall into the category of teachers who are here. If you are not a hard worker, you will find yourself with the lowest pass rate, especially during the end of term meetings. We have a system whereby we share our results in those meetings. It will not be nice to see some people having 98% pass rates while you have 54%. So, everybody works towards a goal.*

The intrinsic motivation seemed to be driven by the desire for excellence in terms of student outcomes. Again, the open and collaborative platforms for sharing results per subject and grade seemed to create a certain coherence towards excellence. I further asked how teachers viewed the school vision and mission statements and Mrs Muzuwa said:

> *They like it, they like to be associated with success. Even our grade seven results this year* (2020), *where we have been disturbed by COVID-19, we still expect good results because we had done all the preparations. By the time we closed in March, we were almost done with our grade seven students. So, we still expect good results. Whenever teachers come to Matanga Primary School, they know they are supposed to produce good results.*

The quote suggests that even teachers who may not have been part of developing the vision and mission of the school, who might have been recruited after the development, identify with the vision because of its focus on student outcomes and success generally. Matanga Primary School created a school specific vision and mission that catered for its needs. This is an important

instructional leadership practice where schools craft visions for their needs apart from the broad ones from the ministry. Mrs Muzuwa's response described how the teachers took part in crafting the school specific vision and mission statements. Her statement, "… whereby everybody is a leader …" suggests a spread or distribution of leadership to other members in the school. This suggests an understanding that leadership can exist in different players in the school (Bolden, 2011), an important characteristic of distributed leadership. The announcement of class pass rates in a meeting was regarded by Mrs Muzuwa as a compelling factor for hard work on the part of the teachers to achieve the goals of the school. This is believed to have encouraged teachers to improve their performance to produce high academic results and attain the school vision. Mrs Muzuwa indicated that teachers valued being associated with success, and that this was likely to have made them be more supportive of the school vision. Turkoglu and Cansoy (2018: 38) advocate that a school vision "… create[s] a sense of common purpose in staff and students …" Thus, the crafting and sharing of the school vision is an important activity in instructional leadership since visions direct teachers and learners towards a common purpose of improved school performance. The specific visions crafted by schools often explain their intended destinations.

Mrs Muzuwa's statement where she indicated that "… everyone is a leader ..." was substantiated by Mrs Rega, the TIC who had been at the school for long. She remembered very well that teachers contributed to the crafting of the school vision. She narrated how teachers teamed up to come up with the school's vision. This suggested a distribution of instructional leadership to other teachers by the principal. By creating a school vision for Matanga Primary School, Mrs Muzuwa conformed to the dictates of the Ministry as observed in the documents analysed. The Handbook on School Administration for Heads (1993) requires school principals to create vision and mission statements that cater for the individual needs of schools. The handbook also gives an outline of the functions and responsibilities of principals in schools. Though not an exhaustive document, it has been used at the school in conjunction with circulars that are sent from the Public Service Commission and the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. I was eager to know how useful the handbook was to Mrs Muzuwa, so I asked her, and she responded saying,

> *Sometimes you need to refer, things are changing, like in finance, there are certain issues that we need to constantly refer to, so you can't run without those documents*

The handbook served as a reference book on Ministry requirements, thus prompting Mrs Muzuwa to refer to the book for guidance as she performed her leadership work. The ever-changing world seemed to have made it necessary for Mrs Muzuwa to always refer to Ministry documents to find the basic standards expected from schools. The Ministry documents appeared indispensable to Mrs Muzuwa who pointed out that she could not run the school without reference to them. Appendix 19 indicates some of the Ministry documents that guided Mrs Muzuwa as she performed her leadership activities. Since the principal had said her story on visioning their school, I now wanted to find the teachers' perceptions on the school's leadership practices focusing on visioning the school.

Teachers' responses

My first port of call on teachers was Mrs Sora whom I asked about her understanding of their school vision. Her response was: *It means teachers have to work hard so that children pass and also that we achieve the school goal of having a high pass rate.* The quote by Mrs Sora appeared to indicate that the school vision meant hard work by teachers and improved pass rates. This, however, was an oversight of the vision of the school which covered more than this. Speaking of the vision for Matanga Primary School as shown in Appendix 13, its focus was to produce educational excellence in academic, sports, arts and culture to produce a wholesome child who is an acceptable and useful member of society. With this as the vision, it therefore, suggests that Mrs Sora did not have a full understanding of the vision. The vision not only concentrated on academic excellence, but it also aimed at producing a wholesome learner whose sports, arts and culture faculties are developed in addition to their academic astuteness. With what she had said as her understanding of a vision, I was prompted to further ask whether Mrs Sora took part in formulating the school specific vision to which she said,

> *When I joined the school, the school vision and mission statements were already in place. What I did was to fit into the existing structures and to support the vision and mission through my hard work.*

This statement appeared to confirm Mrs Muzuwa's statement that once posted to Matanga Primary School teachers naturally fitted into the category of hard-working teachers at the school to produce high learner academic performance. This suggests the school's major focus, high output in terms of learner results. Mrs Sora was not part of the crew that created the school vision because she had not yet joined that school. By the time she joined the school the vision had already been created and what she did was to respect what existed. Her response indicated that, although she was not part of the creation of the school vision, it was important that she fell

into the existing systems at the school. Out of interest, I further asked whether the principal explained to her about the school vision since she was new to the school. She responded saying,

> *The school is concerned with results. The head talks about pass rates more often than about the school vision. When I transferred into this school, the head told me that the school produced good results, and that she expected hard work from me. She talked about high pass rates and not the vision.*

The quote suggests a concentration of focus on pass rates by the principal to maintain the school standard. Little focus appeared to be paid to explaining the school vision to teachers. This was despite the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education School Leadership Handbook (2019) emphasising the need for principals to familiarise new teachers with the school's vision, policies, procedures, the school structure, and department functions. This explains the principal's responsibility of disseminating information about the school to all teachers, new and old. In addition to the vision, the Ministry Headership Handbook also indicates that principals must introduce policies and procedures found in the school to new teachers. Hallinger (2011) advocates that it is the principal's role to make sure that a school develops and communicates a clear vision to stakeholders. It, therefore, appeared that Mrs Muzuwa's focus was on the production of high pass rates more than anything else. Having learnt of Mrs Sora's story, I sought to hear from another teacher, Mr Muko.

Mr Muko fell in the same category with Mrs Sora in the sense that he also transferred to Matanga Primary School from where he was teaching. It, therefore, meant that he did not participate in the crafting of the Matanga Primary School specific vision. Despite this, I was keen to learn whether he understood the vision of the school. I asked him and he responded saying; *The school vision is there to enlighten teachers on what they should do to make children learn.* His perception, as indicated by his response, was that the vision informed teachers on what they had to do to enable learning in children. Upon getting this response, I became interested in knowing whether he knew the wording of the school's specific vision. I was not interested in the Ministry vision since this was generic to all schools. The school's specific vision was my centre of focus because of its focus on individual school needs. His response was,

> *I know the school has its vision, but I don't remember the wording as it is. The head talks about meeting the school vision and making our children pass whenever we hold meetings. I have not seen the vision displayed.*

It was very open that he could not recite the school vision even though he knew that it existed after learning about it from the head since it was not displayed. The aspect that the school

specific vision was not displayed was characteristic of the school since I also observed that it was not displayed when I asked the principal about it. A similarity existed between Mr Muko and Mrs Sora, who had all transferred into the school when the school vision had already been set and they both showed little understanding of the school vision, and neither could they recite the vision of the school when interviewed the first time. They had different views about what a vision was. Mr Muko saw the school's vision as what teachers were supposed to do to enable learning in children, whereas Mrs Sora viewed the school vision in terms of hard work by teachers to make children pass. Though the different perceptions between the two, a common thread that seemed to appear in their explanations is the element of hard work and student learning. The common focus of the participants interrelated to that of the principal appeared to be high pass rates. Though Mr Muko could not recite the vision, it was evident that he knew that something existed that guided teacher focus. The similarity of Mr Muko and Mrs Sora's situation suggests that new staff members were not adequately inducted about the school vision, with greater focus put on improved pass rates. This can be related to the principal's words when she said, *Over the years, we have been getting awards of the best school; the best grade seven teacher at cluster and district levels. We want to maintain that standard.* It could, therefore, mean more focus was on maintaining high pass rates at the school.

The aspect of new staff lacking full information about the school vision was confirmed by Mrs Rega's knowledge of the school vision. Mrs Rega was among the few teachers who had stayed long at the school so much that she understood most of the school processes. She was already at the school when the school vision was created. It could be the reason for her being able to explain what is meant by a school vision when she said: *It means where the school wants to be in terms of performance.* Her explanation signalled an understanding of what a school vision entailed. The mention of performance in the quote suggested the importance placed on school performance by school members. By being one of the long serving members at the school, meant that she was part of the team that formulated the school-based vision. She agreed to this when she said:

> *We sat down as staff and discussed the vision and mission statements. I remember that time, some years back we would ask questions like, why are we here or what is it that we want to do to our learners, to our community and to the country. That is how we came up with the vision and mission statements.*

Mrs Rega's quote somewhat corroborates the development process as outlined earlier by Mrs Muzuwa. The participation of teachers in the development process comes through, thus

suggesting distributed leadership. As highlighted earlier, I discovered that teachers who were present when the school crafted its vision were indeed involved in crafting the school's vision and mission statements. I noted this when Mrs Rega said, *"We sat down as staff and discussed the vision and mission statements. I remember that time, some years back …"* The statement suggests a degree of teacher participation in this instructional leadership activity. Hallinger and Hosseingholizadeh (2019) advocate that, principals have a role to work with teachers in crafting goals that focus on learner academic performance. The goals derive from the vision of the school, thus teachers need to understand the school vision, so that they all work towards a common purpose. The glue at Matanga Primary School appeared to be hard work to increase high learner academic performance. This was evident when Mrs Muzuwa pointed out that teachers posted to Matanga Primary School had to join the bandwagon of hard workers at the school. This suggested some level of coherence at the school regarding the instructional goals. Besides visioning schools as an important activity in instructional leadership, it also emerged that the supervision of teachers was a crucial activity that characterised instructional leadership practice and in the following section, I present data gathered on the supervision of teachers.

4.2.3 Supervision of teachers at Matanga Primary School

Alhouti and Male (2017) point out that effective school principals supervise teaching and learning to improve learner outcomes. This activity informs principals of what takes place in classrooms. Lesson observation is one way of supervising teacher activities and through such an activity principals assist teachers refine their competencies for effective instruction leading to the achievement of school objectives (Heaton, 2016). This activity was shared at Matanga Primary School by the school principal, vice principal and the teacher in charge (TIC). This was revealed by Mrs Muzuwa when she responded to what I had asked on how teacher supervision was done at Matanga Primary School. Her response was,

> *We have the Deputy Head, the TIC from the Infants Department and myself. Those are the three people who do the supervision.*

This was also confirmed by Mrs Rega, the TIC, when she responded to a question on who carried out lesson observations at her school. After getting information on who supervised teachers at Matanga Primary School, I then wanted to know how frequently they enacted lesson observations as one way of supervising teachers. This informed me of the extent of involvement of supervisors in instructional leadership activities. Mrs Muzuwa responded saying:

> *The strategy that we use is, we look at our teachers, obviously there are some teachers who are new in the system and then there are some teachers who need*

> *some help one way or the other, so we concentrate on those ones. If they improve, then it is done. Such teachers can be supervised teaching twice a term. I also use what I call random supervision, just to get into a classroom and sit and just talk to the teacher like we are doing. When you come into this office you start supervising and say what kind of a head is in this office, that is what I do. Sometimes, I just go and sit and ask how so and so is doing, I look at the wall charts, the floors, so I use random supervision. Sometimes I also write reports.*

The quote suggests that the principal engaged in some targeted supervision where she identified teachers that might have a need, either because they were novice teachers or those who might have been experiencing challenges. I took Mrs Muzuwa's statement to mean teachers whose classroom performance was below the school's expectations either because of lack of content mastery or lack of skill in lesson delivery when she said teachers who needed help. This was based on her statement that such teachers were observed teaching more than the others. Interesting to note in the quote are the strategies that the principal employed in the supervision of teachers. These included conversations, updates, random visits, and a targeted approach. If synergistically handled these strategies seemed to interact well for the improvement of teaching and learning. Through conversations with teachers and learners, this might improve the teachers' and learners' attitudes towards their principals and their work much to the benefit of learners. An improvement in teacher performance generally transcends to improved learner performance. Mrs Muzuwa talks of random supervision. This strategy enables principals to experience classroom life undiluted (Marshall, 2013). It can be argued that when teachers understand that the principal can visit any time, this might make them stay prepared. An interesting method of supervising teachers can be noted in the quote where Mrs Muzuwa talks of getting into a class and enquire on the performance of learners. Whereas the teacher's response is an update to the principal it can also be a way of finding out whether teachers knew the performance of their learners. Mrs Muzuwa also used the targeted approach where they focused on those teachers that showed under par performance. Such teachers received continued monitoring until their performance improved.

When I analysed documents in relation to supervision of teachers, I discovered that The Director's Circular Number 7 of 2003 explained the supervision of teachers as meant to assist them to improve their performance. It stipulated that, principals or their delegated ones could assess to find class progress and standards. The circular encouraged class visits while the classes are in session. This was meant to assess the strengths and weaknesses of teachers and to determine their achievement of educational objectives. Interesting to note is that the circular also

encouraged the allocation of more time to the supervision of new teachers and probationers, thus standing in agreement with the supervision stance by Mrs Muzuwa of under performers. It, therefore, suggests that when the principals visited classes to supervise teachers, they were fulfilling their mandate as stipulated in Ministry documents. She practically supervised teachers, thus portraying her practical engagement in instructional leadership.

Hallinger and Wang (2015) emphasise that high-quality teaching and learning and the giving of timely feedback to teachers improves teachers' instructional capacity. In addition, The Director's Circular Number 7 of 2003 also emphasised the need for feedback sessions to round off class visits. I was eager to find out when she gave feedback to teachers after a lesson observation, so I asked Mrs Muzuwa who responded saying: *I give highlights of my observations just after the lesson. As for the written report, if I observe today, I give feedback the following day.*

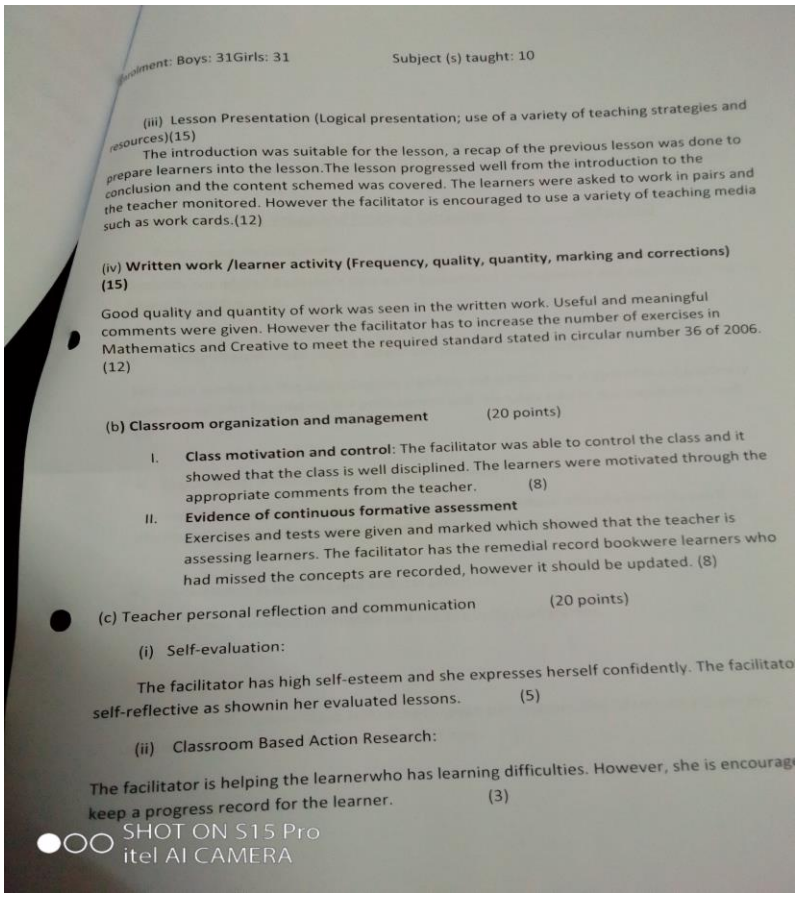
I attended one of the lessons that the principal observed. It was a Mathematics lesson on fractions. It was taught by Mrs Chiri who was not part of the research participants. She, however, knew why I was at the school since the principal had introduced me to all staff members. I sought permission from the principal to attend the lesson after she informed me that she was going for a lesson observation. She agreed and I joined her in the lesson. I wanted to observe how supervision activities were conducted at the school. We were greeted by the teacher and the learners as we entered the class. After exchanging greetings, we sat down. The teacher introduced me to the learners as another learner just like them but, with a different study level to theirs, in that I was studying at university level and as someone who wanted to learn how teaching and learning was done at Matanga Primary School. After the introduction, the teacher started teaching. The teacher's documents were well set at the table since she knew of the principal's visit from the supervision programme. During the lesson the principal wrote down her observations of the lesson delivery. She also went through the teacher's records and the learners' exercise books that had been brought to her table in sets of five. After the thirty-minute lesson, the principal thanked the teacher and the learners, and we left the classroom. The teacher advised her learners to continue with their written work and she accompanied us outside. When outside we stood a few metres from the door and the principal said,

> *Thank you, mum, for the lesson. You spaced your lesson activities quite well making it easy to follow. I will complete the narrative report and then will discuss it together, alright.*

That was all the principal said and as we left, I asked why she did not give the whole feedback at that moment and she said,

> *We are very conscious of children's learning time. If I give the whole feedback, it means children will be alone in the classroom and it may take time. So, I will complete the narrative report then we discuss after lessons. The teachers are used to that.*

The following day I saw Mrs Chiri being invited to the principal's office at 2.30pm for her narrative report (Figure 4.1).



Enrolment: Boys: 31Girls: 31 Subject (s) taught: 10

(iii) Lesson Presentation (Logical presentation; use of a variety of teaching strategies and resources)(15)
The introduction was suitable for the lesson, a recap of the previous lesson was done to prepare learners into the lesson.The lesson progressed well from the introduction to the conclusion and the content schemed was covered. The learners were asked to work in pairs and the teacher monitored. However the facilitator is encouraged to use a variety of teaching media such as work cards.(12)

(iv) **Written work /learner activity (Frequency, quality, quantity, marking and corrections) (15)**

Good quality and quantity of work was seen in the written work. Useful and meaningful comments were given. However the facilitator has to increase the number of exercises in Mathematics and Creative to meet the required standard stated in circular number 36 of 2006. (12)

(b) **Classroom organization and management** (20 points)

I. **Class motivation and control**: The facilitator was able to control the class and it showed that the class is well disciplined. The learners were motivated through the appropriate comments from the teacher. (8)

II. **Evidence of continuous formative assessment**
Exercises and tests were given and marked which showed that the teacher is assessing learners. The facilitator has the remedial record bookwere learners who had missed the concepts are recorded, however it should be updated. (8)

(c) Teacher personal reflection and communication (20 points)

(i) Self-evaluation:

The facilitator has high self-esteem and she expresses herself confidently. The facilitato self-reflective as shownin her evaluated lessons. (5)

(ii) Classroom Based Action Research:

The facilitator is helping the learnerwho has learning difficulties. However, she is encourag keep a progress record for the learner. (3)

SHOT ON S15 Pro
itel AI CAMERA

Figure 4.1: Part of Mrs Chiri's narrative report

The discussions were all centred on the narrative report which contained the principal's detailed observations. She went through section by section making comments about her observations. She commended the teacher for good syllabus interpretation, planning for her work and a well taught lesson. Mrs Chiri was advised to update her records and to increase the number of exercises she gave to learners. The principal explained that updating the records would help Mrs Chiri in checking learner progress. Mrs Chiri listened as the principal went over the report. When the principal asked for Mrs Chiri's comments after the feedback, all she said was; *Thank you mum for the feedback, I will attend to the areas you highlighted*. This feedback session took about

thirty minutes after which Mrs Chiri and the principal appended their signatures to the narrative reports and Mrs Chiri left with her copy and the principal retained a copy for the school file. I then realised why she did not give the whole feedback just after the lesson, it would encroach into learners' time.

Through observing the process of lesson observation and feedback session it was evident that Mrs Muzuwa was used to supervising teachers. The report covered various aspects from the teacher information, school information, syllabus interpretation, availability of lesson plans, lesson delivery, achievement of objectives, strengths and weaknesses of the teacher and recommendations. After analysing the report, I understood why the principal pointed out that she normally gave detailed feedback in written form a day after the observation. The narrative report was detailed. Having heard from the principal on how supervision and feedback were given to teachers, I then wanted to find out what the positions of the teachers were in relation to these activities.

Teacher responses on the supervision of teachers

I started by asking Mrs Sora on how lesson observations were conducted at her school to which she responded saying:

> *The school head, deputy and TIC supervise teachers at this school. I am supervised by the deputy head who shares his supervision calendar at the beginning of the year. The calendar shows grades and months. Teachers approach their supervisors and give them dates, time, and subject they can come for lesson observation. If, say, the supervisor wants to see a different lesson, they can always say it, and we always agree on date and time. We are normally observed teaching once in a term.*

The quote by Mrs Sora indicated that three members supervised teachers at Matanga Primary School. This agreed to what the principal had stated on who supervised teachers. In addition, the narrative reports and book inspection reports in teachers' files indicated that these were conducted by different supervisors. Mrs Sora pointed out that teachers gave their supervisors the dates, time and the subject for assessment. These were, however, subject to change if a supervisor made a request to see a different subject than the one planned for. This was very possible and an agreement was always reached. Mrs Sora pointed out that under normal circumstances, they were observed once in a term. The principal talked about targeted supervision whereas Mrs Sora talked about being supervised at least once a term. The difference in statements was a result of who the supervisor was. Mrs Sora's supervisor was the vice principal, who made sure that he observed teachers in session. Mrs Rega pointed out that, the

TIC supervised grades one and two while the principal supervised grades six and seven and the vice principal supervised grades three, four and five. It might be that her supervisor ensured that all those under him were supervised at least once a term, thus leading to Mrs Sora's statement that "We are normally observed teaching once a term. Mrs Sora's statement could also be a signal that the vice principal conformed to The Director's Circular Number 7 of 2003 which emphasised class visits by the principal or delegated members for the purpose of observing teachers practically teaching. An interesting aspect to note from Mrs Sora's statement was that there was normally an agreement of dates and times of lesson observations between supervisors and teachers. This suggested shared responsibility by the supervisors. After having learnt that the vice principal observed his classes at least once in a term, I was interested to know how he gave feedback to teachers after lesson observations. I, therefore, asked Mrs Sora who responded saying,

> *The vice principal would ask you to give learners work to do then he would take five to ten minutes discussing the lesson. As for the narrative report, he sends it to me with an instruction to read and sign and if there is something I don't understand, to go and discuss it with him.*

The quote shows that the vice principal enacted his supervision practice in a slightly different way to that of the principal. Whereas the principal gave brief highlights just after the lesson, the vice principal gave it just after the lesson and for the narrative report, he would send it to the teachers unlike the principal who invited the teachers to her office for the feedback. Since I had learnt of when the principal produced her narrative reports, I was eager to know when the vice principal did, so I asked Mrs Sora who said,

> *He is fast in producing reports. When not pressed with work we can get our reports the same day of the observation or a day after.*

Mrs Sora's responses appeared to suggest that the vice principal's instructional leadership practice was to ensure all the teachers he supervised were observed at least once a term and given immediate feedback. After hearing Mrs Sora's side of the story, I was now keen to hear from Mr Muko who was a grade six teacher with his supervisor being Mrs Muzuwa, on how supervision was conducted at the school. His response concurred with that of Mrs Sora and the principal that supervision activities were done by the Head, the Deputy Head and the TIC. He responded saying:

> *The Head, the Deputy Head and the TIC are the supervisors in this school. The Head generally, supervises the whole school, but she normally focuses on grades*

> *six and seven when observing lessons. The TIC supervises the Infants Department and the Deputy Head supervises grades three to five.*

Mr Muko further explained that the principal was the overall supervisor at the school who supervised all teachers. This, therefore, suggested that the principal superintend over the whole school, thus it was her responsibility that all teachers performed up to the school standards. However, this as it might be, it could not have been possible to observe all the teachers teaching, thus she concentrated on grades six and seven classes and the other classes were shared between the vice principal and the TIC. This practice of sharing classes with the TIC and the vice principal conformed to the dictates of the Ministry Administration Handbook (1993) which urged principals, or anyone delegated by them to observe lessons in session to assess teacher's progress and performance levels. Thus, as Mr Muko pointed out, the principal did not singly supervise the whole school, she involved the TIC and the vice principal, hence suggesting distributed leadership. Mr Muko taught grade six at the time of the study, thus, visits to his class were made by the principal. Mr Muko made no mention of ever teaching grade seven after having taught grade six, but grade five. This could prove the principal's point that she made serious consideration before allowing a teacher to proceed to the next class. It could be that Mr Muko did not reach the standard that the principal wanted to proceed to grade seven. His classes were five and six.

When I asked about the frequency of visits to the class by his supervisor, Mr Muko said; *The principal visits this class twice or thrice a month.* I thought he was one of those low performers because of the number of times he said the principal visited his class and I probed further to find out whether it was for lesson observation. He responded saying,

> *She did not write a report. The last time she wrote a report was last month. I think she will be checking to find out how I will be doing my work. When she comes around, she would greet the class then ask how I would be progressing. After telling her that all was well, she would then leave.*

When Mr Muko indicated that the principal visited his class more than twice a month, I thought that he might have lowly performed along the way and that the principal was making constant monitoring to see if there was improvement. After his explanation which indicated that they were routine checks by the principal, it appeared the principal was making a follow up on the class teacher's progress since in the principal's last visit she had indicated that Mr Muko was supposed to make new wall charts with current information as the ones on the walls were overused. I also discovered that there was a comment that encouraged him to ensure that

learners' exercise books were covered. Thus, the principal's frequent visits might have been targeted to monitor compliance by the teacher on the comments on the reports. By mere getting into the class and looking around, it could have been enough for the principal to assess Mr Muko's compliance to the improving on wall charts. The principal's visits demonstrated her instructional leadership practice of walking into classes just to find out what would be happening and leave. Mr Muko had experience of this.

I further probed to find out how and when the principal gave feedback after observing him teaching. He responded saying:

> *The office of the principal is a busy one. She normally would give highlights of how you would have performed just after the lesson. That's orally, then for the narrative report, it depends on how busy she is, it can be after a day or two days. Normally it doesn't take four days before getting the report.*

Mr Muko's statement justified why the principal took a day or two to produce a narrative report, the principal's office was a busy one. His response indicated that the principal gave feedback within a timeframe of not more than four days, that is, the feedback in the form of a narrative report. Ikegbusi and Eziamaka (2016) advocate that the supervision of lessons and giving feedback are effective mechanisms of ensuring the achievement of school goals. Samkange (2013) argues that some principals fail to enact crucial instructional leadership activities under the pretext of pressing administrative activities. This then divorces the principal from the knowledge of activities in classrooms since it is only through class visits that the principal is in touch with classroom activities. Thus, Mr Muko's statement signified that even though the principal's office was a busy one, she engaged in instructional leadership activities. The brief oral feedback given at the end of a lesson observation was enhanced by a detailed discussion of the narrative report. By giving a time frame that within four days the narrative report would have been produced seemed to confirm that no matter how busy the principal's office was, she was sure to produce the narrative report within reasonable times. Mr Muko's comments tallied with my observation of how and when feedback was given to Mrs Chiri after she was observed teaching. It was brief feedback just after the lesson then the narrative report was given to her after a day. Yunas and Iqbal (2013) emphasise that such feedback to teachers leads to improved performance in schools. The fact that the principal supervised teachers, observed lessons and gave feedback, signalled her involvement in instructional leadership activities. Hence, Mr Muko viewed the principal as a busy person who effectively did her work.

The importance of supervision in schools has been stated by Donkor and Asante (2016) as that of helping teachers to improve instruction. In performing this activity, Mrs Muzuwa was assisted by the TIC and the vice principal. This was confirmed by Mrs Rega who was both a TIC and the Infants Department supervisor. Mrs Rega concurred to this when she said:

> *These* (lesson observations) *are conducted by the school head, the deputy head, and the TIC. Normally it is supposed to be once a term, but because our school is a very big one, I am the TIC and I have a class to attend to, so I sometimes skip. Roughly, we must make at least one lesson observation per term.*

Mrs Rega's statement conformed to the dictates of the Director's Circular Number 7 of 2003 that allowed principals to rope in other members to assist in the supervision of teachers. It was also aligned to Mrs Muzuwa and Mr Muko's statements that lesson observations at Matanga Primary School were done by the three supervisors. This instructional leadership practice suggested distributed leadership. Mrs Rega pointed out that she failed to meet the expected number of class visits of at least once a month per teacher (as directed by the Director's Circular Minute Number 7 of 2003) because of pressure of work since she had a class to teach in addition to being a TIC who supervised ten teachers in the Infants Department. When she talked of the numbers in the department and of double sessions at the school, I was interested to know whether Mrs Rega was responsible for the two sessions in the Infants Department, and she responded saying:

> *Fortunately, the Infants Department is advantaged. We do not have hot sitting from ECD A to grade 2. The administration recognised that for us to develop our learners, more time was needed because that is the stage, they need a lot of time so we thought they should not do hot sitting. Double sessions are done by grades three to five, grades six and seven do not do hot sitting.*

Mrs Rega regards the Infants Department as fortunate for not having double sessions. This pointed at the attitude people had towards double sessions. It suggested a negative attitude. This might imply that those that were involved in double sessions were considered unfortunate, since they shared classes and as Mrs Muzuwa and Mrs Sora lamented, double sessions had affected the conduciveness of the school.

The idea behind not involving the Infants Department in double sessions was to give ample time for class activities to the learners. The mention of the administration team and the statement, "… so we thought they should not do hot sitting," suggested collaborative action between the principal, the vice principal and the TIC in making instructional decisions.

As both a supervisor and a supervisee, the aspect of feedback was important to her. As a supervisee, the principal was her supervisor who rarely came for lesson observations as indicated by Mrs Rega. I, therefore, asked her about feedback to her supervisees in relation to observed lessons. She explained as follows,

> *I usually give a few highlights of the teacher's performance just after the lesson while we all still remember how the lesson would have progressed. This does not take long because our learners, being young cannot be left unattended for long. As for the narrative report it is usually after two to three days. I would give the teacher the report to read then sign. If there are any aspects the teacher might want to raise, they then come to my office, and we discuss.*

The practice of feedback just after the lesson seemed to be a characteristic of the supervisors at this school. Whereas Mrs Muzuwa would call a teacher and discuss the narrative report with him/her, this was unlike the TIC. After completing the form, she would send it to the teacher to read and sign as evidence that she had seen and read it. If the teacher had anything to ask, that is when discussions were done. As pointed out earlier, she also had a class to attend to, therefore, it appeared she held discussions only when it was necessary. The narrative reports I analysed were detailed and self-explanatory so much that they were easy to understand.

4.2.4 Wishing for a conducive working environment

Fessehatsion (2017) advocates that principals make reforms to sustain the quality of education and they also create positive school climates for effective implementation of the curriculum. In addition, Seong *et al.* (2015) also talk of principals creating conducive school climates to improve learning. These show the importance of positive climates in schools. To find out how the working environment was at Matanga Primary School, I asked Mrs Muzuwa who responded saying:

> *This school has been one of the best schools in Goromonzi District and in Mashonaland East Province, but as school development committees (SDC) come and go the way they perceive things differ. This has also affected the school. When I joined the school in 2010, it was a good school and we maintained that. Now, so many things affect the school such as politics. Top politicians send their children to the school no matter from what background because it is a good school. Such children are unlike our children we would have groomed here.*

In the quote Mrs Muzuwa portrayed Matanga Primary School as a good school that she wanted to maintain in the state it was, had it not been for the sake of the School Development Committee. A contradiction was experienced here; the principal saw the school as a good school that was slowly changing. I probed further to get a clarification on what she meant, and she said:

> *People wanted to bring their children to this school because we produce good results. Our facilities could not allow us to enrol many children, so most parents had to find places for their children in other schools. Now, as the SDC members come and go, they had different opinions to ours on results. To please their electorate, they pushed for double sessions in 2018, something we did not have at the school. It now means we are working from 8am to 1pm then another session gets into classrooms left by those of the morning session to three o'clock.*

A change in the way of operation of the school appeared to have affected the working climate of the school. This sentiment was echoed by Mrs Sora, a grade four teacher, who pointed out that double sessions had affected teachers and learners since they were not used to sharing classrooms. From Mrs Muzuwa's sentiment, the introduction of double sessions was beyond her control, and it meant extra effort for them to maintain the usual standards. Whereas she wanted to maintain the school in the state it was before the introduction of double sessions, circumstances beyond her control acted against her. Her response indicated that the SDC members that came into office had their own perceptions about the school which were not congruent with hers.

Considering the type of children at the school, she believed the children they groomed at the school from an early age to later grades where of a different calibre to those who joined the school mid-stream. The mention of politicians bringing in their children to that school irrespective of their educational background appeared to have some connotations. Since the school produced good results, the politicians wanted their children to be at that school. A concern for the conduciveness of the school by the principal showed her inclination to instructional leadership. Instructional leaders, as indicated by the Ministry Administration Handbook (1993) need to create conducive environments for teaching and learning at their schools. It appeared this was the focus that Mrs Muzuwa had but was disturbed by double sessions.

Teachers' views of the schools working environment

I had gathered data from the principal, now I wanted to find out what teacher sentiments were concerning their work environment. I asked Mrs Sora and below was her response; she said,

> *The school environment is conducive; we get all the materials we want for use in class. The only thing that makes it not so conducive is hot sitting*.

Mrs Sora explained her statement that the school environment was conducive because of the availability of instructional materials, thus also commending the role the principal in providing

instructional materials to teachers. Among the documents analysed, was the School Leadership Handbook (2019: 21) which emphasised the provision of teaching media by the principal. It stated that principals must "… influence teachers to use appropriate teaching and learning media that motivate learners to discover knowledge through the provision of reality in every learning area." Thus, the comment by Mrs Sora that the school had teaching and learning materials signified that the principal provided resources to teachers.

Her second statement indicated that the aspect of hot sitting had affected the operations and climate of the school. Hot sitting is a system of double sessions that is used in schools with large numbers of students but with few classrooms (Kurebwa and Lumbe, 2015). In such situations, those classes with double sessions have some coming in the morning and others coming in the afternoon. The observations I made of the double sessions indicated that the morning session started at 0800 hours to 1300 hours and the afternoon session started at 1000 hours and ended at 1500 hours. While waiting to get into the classroom, those in the afternoon session start by having oral lessons while outside then they would do written exercises as they enter the classroom when those in the classroom finish and leave the classrooms. I observed that classes with double sessions were grades three to five. Grades one, two, six and seven did not have double sessions. Since Mrs Sora taught grade four, she was involved in double sessions. This is what could have caused discomfort at her work. This practice was introduced when Mrs Sora was already at the school. Her seemingly negative perception of double sessions was shared by the principal, Mrs Muzuwa, who bemoaned the introduction of double sessions at the school having been influenced by the SDC. The negative sentiments about double sessions might have been a common feeling among those teachers affected by double sessions.

Bellibas and Liu (2016) advocate that, principals who engage in instructional leadership create positive environments for their staff members. This points at the importance of conducive environments for teachers' improved performance at workplaces. After hearing Mrs Sora's story about her working place, I was interested in finding out Mr Muko's views. When I asked about how conducive the working environment was, he responded saying:

> *So conducive, very conducive. We have materials to use in classrooms unlike other schools.*

The aspect of the availability of instructional resources as something that increased the conduciveness of the work environment cropped up again, since it was also mentioned by Mrs Sora. As he talked about the conduciveness of the school, he stood up and opened the door to his

storeroom to display the materials he had in the storeroom. There were boxes of chalk, manila sheets, mighty markers, crayons for use by learners, textbooks neatly arranged on shelves, bond paper and newsprint. These were for his class. Since his class was a grade six class, it signalled that the principal ensured that the grade six and seven classes had enough materials to use in their classrooms. It could have been another reason the principal advised Mr Muko to put up new charts on walls to replace overused ones. She was aware that the school had enough materials for the teachers. I asked why he kept all that stationery instead of having it kept in the school storeroom and request for only what he wanted to use. His response was:

> *That is why I said the working environment is very conducive, we have materials to use. We did not have such materials at the school I was before I transferred to this school. All grade seven and six classes have storerooms, and they keep their stationery. We keep a record of usage. The head does not want teachers to waste time waiting for materials from the store's office, so we are given materials in advance. I just keep a record of the materials I received and used.*

Mr Muko was again at it making comparisons of schools. He indicated that his previous school did not have enough materials when compared to the current school. This made the current school more conducive than his previous school. The practice of providing enough materials to grade six and seven classes seemed to indicate the principal's interest to improved performance to these grades. It could mean the principal did not expect low performance from teachers because of lack of instructional resources, thus this instructional leadership practice at the school where grade six and seven teachers are well catered for in terms of teaching and learning materials. The practice thus portrayed the principal as an instructional leader who provided resource materials to the school.

Since instructional materials are a necessity in schools for effective lesson delivery, it therefore, needs effective instructional leaders to provide the necessary material resources to teachers (Bellibas and Liu, 2017). Ihekoronye (2020) maintains that the school environment is an important factor in teaching and learning that determines the achievement or non-achievement of school aims and objectives. Saiyad (2020) adds on saying a positive and conducive educational environment improves learner performance, hence attaining intended outcomes. Armed with this knowledge, I asked the TIC about the climate of the school, and she said,

> *It looks like very hard-working people were put in one place; I do not know how that happened. I have discovered that people here are socially positive. They are people who do not give you problems, they are people who can work without anyone pushing them.*

Mrs Rega's perception of the work environment of her school was based on the attitudes of the people towards their work. She perceived teachers to be friendly, committed, and hardworking so much that they did not give problems to supervisors of needing constant supervision. It suggests that teachers were satisfied with their working environment which Saiyad (2020) comments on saying when teachers are satisfied with their educational environment the result is high instructional performance and less stress. It appeared that there was a culture of hard work and success at the school, thus showing an important instructional leadership strategy by the principal. This was also commended by Mrs Sora who said, "… *teachers just get to work as a team without being coerced."* This suggested self-drive among the teachers. This culture of hard work was also applauded by the principal, Mrs Muzuwa in her parting words at the end of the interview when she pointed out that she was going to retire from work with a happy heart since she had managed to make teachers identify with the school. This suggested the confidence she had of having succeeded in developing teachers' instructional leadership efforts.

Teachers were socially positive and did not cause problems to supervisors, this made the working environment conducive as propounded by Mrs Rega. As a supervisor, it meant she superintended over teachers with different characters that could possibly have negative effects on the working environment. She, therefore, openly indicated that the teachers did not cause her any problems. Her perception of the teachers appeared to confirm the principal's belief of teachers identifying with the school. She also explained that the school was conducive because of the support teachers received from the principal as they implemented the curriculum. She singled out her Infants Department specifically when she said,

> *As a department, the head supports us a lot. Sometimes she just comes to the Infant Department and say, "You know, I am so proud of this department. If we have visitors, I would like them to come and see this department. I am so proud of you." That motivation of people showing them that they are worth is important. Had it not been the economy that is down, the school wanted to build an Infants Department. We were supposed to have a big Infants Department, a stand-alone department, but that could not be done because of the economy. Our head is such an individual who feels for her teachers, teachers can explain their problems to her, and she understands. Such leadership is hard to come by.*

Mrs Rega was quite appreciative of the support and appreciation the principal showed to the Infants Department. The principal is said to have shown her appreciation of the Infants Department when she declared her interest to show visitors the work that was done in that department. The TIC was grateful of the principal because of the attention she gave to the department, the motivation, the plans for a big ECD centre and the issue of no double sessions in

the Infants Department. The praise the principal gave to teachers appeared to have a positive effect on teachers and this illustrated an important instructional leadership practice.

Another characteristic by the principal pointed out by Mrs Rega that made the school environment conducive was the principal's understanding of teachers' social problems. She described the principal as somebody who had a listening ear which made teachers comfortable to confide their social problems with her. Mrs Rega's comment that such leadership type was hard to come by indicated the positive attitude she had towards the principal and the school.

4.2.5 Staff development at Matanga Primary School

Seong *et al.* (2015) are of the opinion that the provision of opportunities for continuous staff development is an aspect that characterises a conducive environment. Investing in teachers through staff development is an advantage for the teachers themselves and their schools since this contributes to improving instructional practice (Sleegers *et al*., 2014). It is, therefore, an important instructional leadership practice for principals to support staff development at their schools. Mrs Muzuwa appeared to have supported continuous learning by teachers at her school when she said:

> *We conduct staff development at grade level. I usually utilise staff development of teachers at grade level. If it is in the Infants Department, we usually combine grades one and two teachers. This is because the grade one teachers would be preparing to go into grade two and these are closely linked, so I normally do the Infants Department on its own. Sometimes I take grades 3 to 5 on their own then grades 6 and 7 on their own. At times we conduct staff development for all teachers. For an example, when the new curriculum was introduced, those teachers who had an idea of how it was done helped in making clarifications for other teachers.*

From the quote, it can be suggested that Mrs Muzuwa focused staff development activities to concerned people only. The idea of departmentalising their staff development activities appeared to aim at effectiveness. The strategy of staff developing small groups suggests an understanding of the benefits of small group training. This staff development strategy signifies an important instructional leadership practice enacted at the school. The minute books that I analysed indicated records of staff development activities that were held. The records indicated that targeted training was effective. Important to note was the acknowledgement by Mrs Muzuwa of the knowledge about the new curriculum that some teachers had. Such teachers were made use of as resource persons in explaining about the new curriculum. This suggested distributed leadership by the principal, she enabled other teachers to take lead besides herself. This practice

suggested a characteristic of an effective leader who made use of skills in other members (Chan, 2019). After hearing about how staff development activities were enacted at the school, I further probed to find out how they came up with topics for staff development. She responded saying,

> *These come from both the supervisors and the teachers. I usually encourage teachers to staff develop each other in their departments, so it means they come up with their topics. If topics come from supervisors, they usually concern all teachers, so we find someone to staff develop all teachers.*

An outstanding feature about the staff development activities was that the topics for staff development were generated either by supervisors or the teachers, thus indicating a shared responsibility. An important approach found in the response is targeted staff development where the principal talked about staff development in departments.

Teachers' responses

After hearing the principal's story about staff development, I then wanted to find out what the teachers had to say. I started by asking Mrs Sora whether the school offered teachers an opportunity for staff development, and she said:

> *Staff development programmes are important to teachers. Four to five years ago, we used to have staff development workshops outside the school where we would go to another school or other districts and attend a workshop, for example, on teaching essay writing or netball coaching. It is very rare these days. It has all stopped. The cause might be the country's economy which is down. We have school-based staff development programmes though not many, one or two a term. These are the ones we attend if they are in line with our grades. I attended one which was on the teaching of the new curriculum, and recently on COVID-19.*

Mrs Sora began by acknowledging that staff development was important to teachers. She bemoaned the biting economy which she regarded as the determining factor affecting the holding of workshops in other schools or districts. She pointed out that in the past teachers used to attend workshops outside the school which now were very few because of the bad economy. What still existed were school-based workshops which she attended though these were not many. Mrs Sora concurred with the principal on the matter of grouping teachers when holding staff development workshops to improve on effectiveness to teachers. She pointed out that she attended staff development workshops that were aligned to her job. This suggested a practice of targeted workshops. It thus suggested that if the workshops were not aligned to her grade she did not attend. She indicated that she had attended some staff development workshops that were held at her school that were on the teaching of the new curriculum and another one on COVID-19.

I witnessed the practice of a targeted school-based workshop at Matanga Primary School which was chaired by Mrs Sora and facilitated by the principal and the vice principal. It was on preparing for grade seven examinations. It was attended by twenty-two teachers who were to invigilate the grade seven examinations. It focused on preparing learners for examinations, the procurement of materials needed, venue arrangements, sitting arrangements, supervision by teachers, packaging examination scripts and their transportation to the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC). It was on a Thursday afternoon at 1330 hours when the meeting started, and it ended at 1600 hours. The principal spoke on the importance of the grade seven examinations in schools and the preparation of the learners for the examination. The rest was delivered by the vice principal. An interesting observation I made about this workshop was that it was chaired by a teacher thus, showing the possibilities of distributed leadership. When I asked how she had been selected to chair the meeting she said,

> *I am not aware. I only saw the notice of the workshop and my name written as the chairperson of the meeting. I am not surprised anyway because this is typical of the principal to appoint anyone to chair meetings without even asking them.*

Mrs Sora's statement indicated that she had been made the chairperson of the workshop without being notified. This practice concurred with the principal's statement that she could ask any teacher to chair a meeting. Mrs Sora appeared to be used to this practice since she did not show any surprise by being appointed the chairperson. This appeared to be the principal's way of involving teachers in leadership activities.

I further probed to find out how the school came up with topics for staff development and she said,

> *The supervisory team comes up with topics. At times teachers make suggestions through their committees or at grade level and usually these are considered.*

Mrs Sora pointed out that although the supervisory team chose topics for staff development, they also considered requests by teachers. Teacher involvement in coming up with topics at grade level also came up in Mrs Sora's response, thus concurring with what the principal said. Another aspect that she raised was the use of committees at the school, thus suggesting shared responsibility at the school. Mrs Rega, the TIC, also pointed out that teachers in her department normally gave topics for staff development at the beginning of the term which she later considered for staff development.

Niqab (2014) emphasises the need for school authorities to organise in-service training and seminars on instructional activities and behaviour changes in teachers. I, therefore, wanted to find out what Mr Muko's perception was in view of this, I asked him, and he said:

> *Normally she* (the Head) *conducts some of the staff development workshops. Sometimes she calls for resource persons to deliver some techniques and methods of teaching. I attended a workshop on resource mobilisation and composition writing that were facilitated by Nguko and Mogoro School heads. Recently, we had a workshop here at school on COVID-19 awareness, it was facilitated by the head and the health chairperson. We benefited a lot from the staff development workshops because we learnt new things.*

Mr Muko's response was a mixed bag. He talked about the head staff developing teachers, his attendance to workshops outside and within the school and the head and the TIC facilitating in school workshops. His statement indicated that staff development took place at his school. He pointed out that it was either the principal who staff developed teachers, or a resource person was appointed by her, thus signifying a concurrence with the principal that the school had staff development activities. He cited a staff development workshop on the awareness of COVID-19 that was facilitated by the principal and the health chairperson, Mrs Sora. The practice where other teachers could staff develop other members suggested the principal's acknowledgement of the skills and knowledge in other members that could be tapped for the benefit of the school. This practice can be aligned to Spillane's (2009) analysis that teachers play a central role in the principal's workday through taking responsibilities of activities at school and through co-performing activities with the principal. Mr Muko had the privilege to attend training outside the school that was facilitated by school heads from other schools. This signalled the principal's support for teachers to be staff developed whether at the school or outside, thus showing instructional leadership.

I was eager to know whether teachers contributed topics for staff development, so, I asked Mr Muko, who replied saying:

> *With this new curriculum, the head allows us to explore some teaching methods. We are still new in it, so she accepts teacher suggestions.*

The Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 set out what learners must know, understand and be able to do after learning interactions at school, thus, to achieve this it needs innovative teachers who can deliver both content and practical skills to learners. This, therefore, meant that cooperative efforts were needed in schools to comply with the dictates of the new curriculum. Hence the principal had to allow exploration by teachers on

effective ways of imparting knowledge to learners, thus Mr Muko's comment that the principal allowed them to explore different ways to implement it. It was highly likely that the situation the school was in made the principal accept suggested staff development topics from teachers. The principal's statement when she said teachers who had some knowledge on the new curriculum were asked to share their information with others through training workshops further explained the need to consider teachers' suggestions. This portrayed the principal's acknowledgement of the knowledge imbedded in other teachers and her interest in distributing instructional leadership.

Mrs Rega, the TIC, was the other participant in my study. This is what she said when I asked whether the principal offered teachers an opportunity for staff development:

> *Yes, she* (the Head) *does, especially being a very big school. I remember recently she* (the Head) *said "Don't wait for us to have your staff development workshops, make sure you do your own things there, if I have time, you can just call me then I can come and see what you will be doing but if I don't get the time, go on and staff develop each other so that you keep the school going." We have staff development on reading. Sometimes we have new teachers coming into the school, we train them in phonic activities. Our learners generally are very good readers. So, to maintain standards we do a lot of staff development in reading. Teachers from within the department conduct the staff development, we do not call people from outside because we have a lot of people with the capacity to staff develop others.*

The principal authorised staff members to conduct staff development programmes in their departments without having to wait for her. By empowering the TIC to staff develop each other as a department indicated her acknowledgement of the capacity of the teachers in the department to staff develop each other. The principal's support in staff developing teachers in the school is evident here and her interest in the distribution of instructional leadership to other teachers. The aspect of targeted staff development was evident here where the principal encouraged the TIC to staff develop each other in their department with or without her presence. Mr Muko also indicated that the principal supported staff development activities at the school. Although Mrs Sora bemoaned the reduction in the quantity of outside the school workshops, she was quick to point out that internal workshops were still being held and were helpful, thus indicating the enactment of instructional leadership by the principal. Concerning how they come up with staff development topics, Mrs Rega explained as follows:

> *At the beginning of the term, we have our first meeting as the Infants Department. We find out from teachers if there are problem areas, they need to be staff developed in. The teachers can give specific areas they need guidance on. Also, if*

> *I notice anything lacking among teachers as they teach, I can include it in our staff development programme so that we develop each other.*

Topics for staff development were not solely from the TIC, there was the involvement of other staff members, thus suggesting instructional leadership activities stretched to other members. Niqab (2014) advocates that such conducive school environments that allow teacher participation improves school performance. As a department, they organised topics for the term. These were, however, not cast in stone since the TIC could add other topics basing on what she would have observed in class visits. The instructional leadership practice to involve teachers in coming up with topics for staff development that was experienced in the Infants Department could be aligned to Mrs Sora's highlights that teachers contributed staff development topics through their committees and at grade level. Mr Muko, on the other hand, argued that the coming in of the new curriculum framework 2015-2022, led supervisors to be receptive to teachers' suggestions on staff development topics since all were new to it and wanted to learn.

The TIC was quite confident of the effectiveness of activities in her department. When I asked about the effectiveness of staff development programmes at the school she responded focusing on her department. She said,

> *From the Infants Department, they are very effective because you know the Infants Department is a department that needs someone with a lot of experience in working with children. Theory is needed yes, but mostly needed is the practical experience of teachers.*

The TIC's explanation indicates an experienced teacher with credible knowledge about the department. The many years of experience in teaching in the Infants Department were evident in the TIC's response. Though teachers could be knowledgeable theoretically, the TIC regarded the practical experience of teachers in dealing with the young learners as more critical when teaching in the Infants Department. Such an understanding of the learning process in a school is an important characteristic of instructional leadership practice at a school.

4.2.6 Opportunities for leadership

The adage "Two heads (or more) are better than one," by Cole (2004: 178) suggests that different people working on a task are geared to produce credible results than sole individuals. In a similar lane, principals need teachers for the successful implementation of the curriculum. To

find out whether this was true at Matanga Primary School, I asked Mrs Muzuwa who responded saying:

> *Yes, for example, we have the sports director, when doing catering, we have someone responsible for catering, we have someone responsible for subject coordination and we have someone responsible for the social club, for the social life of the school. If I were to do all those things, I would end up exhausted, so I try to delegate, at the same time I will be building leaders.*

Mrs Muzuwa's response suggested the involvement of teachers in leadership activities at the school. The practice of having teachers leading different programmes such as sports, catering, and subject coordination at the school suggested distributed leadership. Mrs Muzuwa explained that teacher leadership of certain programmes in the school was necessary since it was not possible for her to effectively carry out all the tasks single handed. This then brought in distributed leadership as she delegated tasks to other members. In addition to delegating, she regarded herself as nurturing talent among teachers for future leadership positions.

Teachers' responses

The principal indicated that opportunities for leadership for teachers existed at the school. To confirm this, I had to ask teachers and to begin with was Mrs Sora who said:

> *Different teachers have different areas where they lead. The school head gives us opportunities to lead in areas of our choice. I am the school health mistress. At the beginning of each year, the school head calls for a meeting and it is in this meeting that teachers choose areas of interest where they would be responsible. I see this as a way of grooming teachers to leadership positions. It gives all members in the school an opportunity to lead.*

The response by Mrs Sora indicated that there were opportunities for leadership in the school. There were different areas at the school where teachers could lead. She was open in saying the principal offered teachers leadership opportunities. This signified distributed leadership. She was herself the school health chairperson hence indicating that she led health related activities at the school. This leadership practice was also highlighted by the principal who indicated that the school had different teachers who were responsible for different activities at the school. The principal pointed out the different sections in the school which included sports, catering, subject coordination, and the social club which were led by teachers. To show her interest in having other people leading the different sections she pointed out that trying to perform all those activities would exhaust her and probably fail to effectively deliver. This practice suggested a

distribution of leadership at the school. Hughes and Pickeral (2013) advocate that, principals cannot effectively lead schools as lone individuals; they need to rope in other members.

It was easily noticeable to see Mrs Sora performing her health duties at the school. She arrived at the school earlier than others around 0730 hours whereas school started at 0800 hours. She would physically check that water buckets at the school entrance had water. Only one gate was being used, the other gate was closed so that all people who entered the school premises would be sanitised at the entrance by the security guards. This was an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19. I also saw her one of the days bandaging a grade three child who had accidentally tripped and fell while they were playing in the playground at break time. The child had been bruised on the knee and was bleeding. She dressed the wound with ease that I commended that she had the knowledge to handle such injuries. She responded saying,

> *That was a minor injury, I could easily handle it. I did a First Aid course before I transferred to this school, so I can easily attend to minor injuries. If they are major injuries, I recommend people to go to the clinic.*

Her statement coupled with the assistance she gave to the child explained why she opted for the health mistress position at the school. She had some training in First Aid and her involvement in health activities showed that she was passionate about it. Mrs Sora saw the practice of affording teachers' opportunities to lead as opportunities for teachers to showcase their leadership acumen. She also saw it as a way of nurturing teachers for future leadership positions.

I further on asked Mr Muko on whether the principal offered leadership opportunities to members of staff. He responded by saying:

> *All of us have different passions, some have a passion in sports, some in home economics, they like cooking, some have a passion in agriculture, even in business. So due to those passions, teachers choose areas where they feel free to work at.*

The response suggested that the principal stretched leadership activities to other teachers. The fact that teachers were free to choose areas where they felt free to work in at their school suggested that the principal availed leadership opportunities to other teachers. This was unlike in the allocation of classes where it was the administration team that assessed the performance of teachers before they allocated classes. In this case, the teachers chose an area to attach themselves according to their interests, whether sporting activities, agriculture, or any other area. His interest was in sporting activities thus he chose to be the soccer coach. This, he indicated at

the beginning of the interviews with him. Similarly, Mrs Sora, the health chairperson had a flair in health, thus, she joined the health committee where she was the chairperson. The statement that teachers were free to choose sections where they had passion in agreed with that by Mrs Sora where she pointed out that the principal gave teachers the opportunity to lead in areas of their choice, be it in sports, health, subject areas or in the social welfare committee. The principal also indicated that teachers were free to participate in the different activities that took place at the school. She talked of the school having different committees that were led by different teachers, thus suggesting distributed leadership at the school.

When I asked whether the principal offered leadership opportunities to teachers, Mrs Rega said:

> *I think a leader who decentralises leadership is a good leader because if you hold on to power you will have a lot of problems. Sometimes you must decentralise power and you will discover that work is done much better than when you hold on to power. So, I think it is good leadership if a head sheds off power. I have seen it creating a lot of problems if a head holds on to power.*

Mrs Rega suggested that decentralising leadership to other members of staff is characteristic of good leadership. She regarded schools where the leaders regard themselves as the powerhouses as characterised by problems because all activities centre on the principal. This affects school processes since it is impossible to effectively run a school single-handed. It needs other helping hands; one person cannot be everywhere at the same time. The principal, Mrs Muzuwa also acknowledged that it was impossible for her to run all subcommittees, that would exhaust her and, in the end, fail to achieve anything. Mrs Sora pointed out that the practice by the principal to shed power to others helped to unlock talent in many teachers. This can be aligned to Mrs Rega's statement where she said: *Sometimes you must decentralise power and you will discover that work is done much better than when you hold on to power.* This suggests the possibility of teachers effectively accomplishing their tasks when power is decentralised than when it is concentrated on one individual. Speaking about teachers and principals working together at school, Chan *et al.* (2019) advocate that when principals and teachers work together, the resultant effect is school improvement.

When I further asked for clarification on whether the principal stretched leadership activities to other members she said,

> *There are different committees here that are led by different teachers, which means the head shares some leadership activities with staff members. I lead the*

Infants Department as the TIC, and the vice principal supervises grades three to five, so, I can say yes, she shares some leadership activities with us.

She cited examples that depicted the stretching of instructional leadership activities to staff members. She mentioned the different committees at the school as suggesting that the principal distributed instructional leadership to other members.

4.2.7 Class allocation at Matanga Primary School

The allocation of teachers to public schools in Zimbabwe is done by the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, whereas the allocation of teachers to classes is done at the schools. Principals allocate teachers to classes as they see fit. In a response to a question on how she allocated classes to teachers at Matanga Primary School, Mrs Muzuwa said:

> *First, I say, for example, who was taking grade one A last year. If it was Mrs Rega, I look at her strengths and weaknesses. If I see that she had a lot of weaknesses, I will then look for another teacher who can make up for those weaknesses in the following year. We have no policy to say you are in grade one you just proceed to grade two, no, you are in grade six, you just proceed to grade seven, no. We really sit down and look at the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers and we also look at the classes. That is the other reason why I go into the classrooms to teach. I want to see the performance of the classes. So, when allocating teachers to classes, I allocate appropriately, depending on the performance of the class and the teacher.*

The allocation of classes at Matanga Primary School was done after careful consideration of teachers' performance. Mrs Muzuwa's explanation suggested that only high performance was the route for teachers to proceed to the next grade with their classes, besides that the school had no policy for automatic progression. She pointed out that by teaching some lessons she was able to understand the performance of teachers. She, therefore, used the information when allocating classes to teachers. Mrs Sora concurred with the principal on how class allocation was done, she pointed out that the principal considered the pass rate of each class before allocating classes. She also pointed out that there was no guarantee that teachers would proceed to the next class with their classes. All this depended on how the principal perceived each teacher's performance.

When Mrs Muzuwa explained how the allocation of classes was done at her school, she pointed out that they sat down. I then asked what she meant by '*We sit down*" I wanted to know who these were. She pointed out that she meant the principal, the vice principal, and the TIC. She said it was this team that allocated classes since they knew of the teachers' performance after having

supervised them. As stated by Mrs Muzuwa, class allocation was not done by a lone individual, it involved the administration team. The practice suggested the case of shared responsibility since the principal indicated the involvement of other members. I further questioned on the effectiveness of this strategy, and she said,

> *Very effective, because if you were in grade six A and I say you are not proceeding to grade seven A, I will then pick another teacher. The next time you work hard because you want to proceed with your class and if you do not perform to my satisfaction, you will not proceed. If you were in grade one A and you wanted to proceed to grade two A, you will not go there unless you perform.*

Mrs Muzuwa was confident that the strategy she used to allocate classes was effective since only effective teachers had the opportunity to proceed to the next grade with their classes. It also served as an encouragement to other teachers to improve their performance. It appeared Mrs Muzuwa openly told teachers about their classroom performance, thus making it easier when allocating classes. This is an important instructional leadership practice that alerted teachers of their performance and Gumus and Bellibas (2016) regard this as an important instructional leadership practice.

Teacher presentations on class allocations

I had to find out how teachers felt about class allocation at their school, so I asked Mrs Sora, who responded saying:

> *I was given a class to teach by the school head. The school head looks at the pass rates of each class, then allocates classes. There is no guarantee at this school that you will proceed to the next grade with your class. I once cried when I was given a different class when I thought I would proceed with my class. The head was never moved, she stood by her word.*

Contrary to what the principal said that the administration team sat down to allocate classes, Mrs Sora pointed out that she was given a class to teach by the school head, thus suggesting that the head did the allocation. She went on to explain that the principal allocated classes after a careful analysis of the pass rates of the school. The activity by the principal suggested an instructional leadership practice where the principal analysed the pass rates of the school first before allocating classes. Mrs Sora concurred with the principal on the aspect of no automatic progression at the school. The principal pointed out this when she said that it was not obvious that a teacher in grade one would automatically proceed to grade two with his/her class. Proceeding to the next class was dependent on the performance of the teachers as pointed out by the principal. Mrs Sora remembered vividly how she once cried because she had been denied

taking her class to the next grade when she thought she would proceed to the next grade with her class. The principal had other perceptions as she recalled.

Teachers are an essential component of the educational system which can determine the overall performance of schools (Getahun *et al*., 2016). It is, therefore, important that they have a deep understanding of their learners' interests and their styles of learning and what they teach (Sieberer-Nagler, 2016). Since teachers play a key role in the determination of quality instruction, it thus needs careful allocation of classes to teachers. Niqab *et al.* (2014) advocate that the principal analyse personalities, strengths and weaknesses of their teachers and allocate classes accordingly. It is believed that teachers with active personalities perform actively in their roles (Alam, 2012), thus resulting in high pass rates among learners.

The allocation of classes at Matanga Primary School appeared to be influenced much by the principal. This could be interpreted from the quote by Mr Muko when he said,

> *That much is the head who just decides. No one can just come and say I want to teach such and such grade. In fact, it is the head and the administration that decides. The administration decides according to the results and other criteria I might not know.*

He began by pointing out that it was the head who allocated classes to teachers and that no teacher could declare that they wanted to teach this or that grade. It appeared that was the prerogative of the principal. This was also an indication of how class allocation was done at the school, decisions were made at the top. Mr Muko went on to say that it was the head and the administration team that allocated classes. The statement by Mr Muko might have been an indication of the amount of influence the principal had in the allocation of classes and her involvement in instructional activities. With the second statement where he talked about involving the administration team, this might suggest an afterthought that the principal shared the allocation of teachers with the vice principal and the TIC. This was likely since other teachers indicated that it was the principal who allocated classes. Mrs Sora pointed out that the principal considered the pass rates of each class then allocate classes to teachers. Mrs Rega, the TIC also indicated that it was the principal who allocated classes to teachers after considering their strengths. Though the principal talked of involving the vice principal and the TIC in class allocation it appeared she had the overall say on who was allocated to which class.

In the quote, Mr Muko indicated that the criteria for class allocation were class results and probably any other criteria that he might not have been aware of. Basing on the principal's explanation, the allocation was based on pass rates and teachers' performance at work. Since teachers are an essential component of the educational system (Olorunfemi, 2008), a careful determination of teachers' strengths and weaknesses must be done before allocating them to classes.

The principal indicated that she involved the TIC and the vice principal when allocating classes, Mrs Sora said it was the principal who allocated classes and Mr Muko appeared to have a mixed feeling as to whether other supervisors were involved. When I asked the TIC, Mrs Rega about class allocation she said,

> *The head allocates classes. She looks at one's strengths. I remember one year when there was this class and the head called me as the TIC and said, "Look at how this class is performing in comparison to other classes, it is lagging behind." She went on and said, "So we are giving teacher X this class." When you know the performance of that class you would even be afraid of taking the class because you would be knowing that it is lagging. Sometimes she just uses her authority and ask you to take the class to help the learners. If we leave the learners with the same teacher, the teacher might be having problems. So, I discovered that it has helped the school a lot. But it is very unfair at times, especially to the one who would take the class that would be behind.*

Mrs Rega openly stated that it was the principal who allocated classes to teachers. When interviewing the principal, she indicated that she worked with the vice principal and the TIC in allocating classes. Mrs Rega's statement indicated that the principal had the final say in the placements even though she might have asked for other supervisors' contributions on teachers' performance and placements as indicated by the TIC's statement. The TIC also stated that the principal sometimes stamped her authority in allocating classes signifying that it was her who placed teachers. Despite this practice, the TIC regarded the method employed by the principal of placing teachers as effective since it helped improve performance at the school though it sounded unfair at times in cases where teachers were asked to take over classes that had poor results.

Out of interest, I further asked how the TIC could say she did not participate in allocating classes, yet the principal asked for her comments about teachers. Her response indicated that she had a different perspective on class allocation. She responded saying,

Though I am not complaining of how classes are allocated, I would have liked a situation where we would sit down as supervisors and allocate classes as a team. While doing this, we would share our views about the performance of teachers.

It appeared the TIC had a different view of allocating classes. Though the principal asked for her views about certain teachers concerning class allocation, her wish was to have sat down as supervisors and allocate classes. Since the principal had her own way of doing it, she appeared not to have any qualms about it. The response suggested that the principal was concerned more about the academic outcome of learners than teachers' choice of classes to teach. Though some of the decisions might have been unpopular with teachers they produced fruits at the end.

4.2.8 Closing the participants' stories

Mrs Muzuwa's story suggests that she had an interest in high instructional performance. She aimed at maintaining the high pass rates despite external forces such as politicians and SDC members whom she regarded as entering the school leadership with their own agendas. Notwithstanding this, she was confident that the school remained one of the best schools in her district.

The different instructional leadership activities that she carried out suggested that she was interested in distributing leadership to other members in the school. Her sentiment that if she was to do all the instructional activities at the school, she would end up exhausted, suggested her interest in distributing instructional leadership activities to other teachers. As parting words Mrs Muzuwa said:

As I am reaching my retirement age, I think I have managed to make teachers at this school have ownership of programmes, to say, this is our school. If you remember, if you went to school some years ago, we used to have a poem where we would say, "This is our school, let peace dwell here." So, I think each member can say this is our school and are accountable for the product that comes out of this School.

She appeared happy with her achievements at the school as she neared retirement. She found solace in that teachers identified with the school as their own.

Mrs Sora appeared to have learnt that to survive at Matanga Primary School one had to work hard. Though there were double sessions at Matanga Primary School which Mrs Sora said had reduced the conduciveness of the school, it appeared the school was still a good place to work at since they had instructional materials for use at their work. Even though she was sometimes

denied the opportunity to proceed to the next grade with her class, she still regarded the principal as a focused hard worker. She viewed the principal as an individual who was interested in hard work. Her perception about the principal was that she distributed leadership activities to other teachers.

Mr Muko appeared very comfortable working at Matanga Primary School because of the school environment he regarded as conducive. He was not affected by the double sessions at the school and did not share his classroom with another teacher, this made the school environment conducive to him. Though he was not part of the team that created the school vision because he had not yet transferred to the school, his support of the school vision was through working hard to ensure that learners pass their exams. He viewed the principal as one who participated in instructional leadership activities since she involved herself in school activities such as providing instructional materials, supervising teachers, and allocating classes to teachers. This, therefore, indicated that the principal was an instructional leader.

Since Mrs Rega was the TIC, she doubled up as a class teacher and a supervisor for the Infants Department. She superintended over teachers in her department, informed them of the level of their performance and staff developed them, thus displaying characteristics of instructional leadership. Since she also had a class to teach, it was not possible for her to visit all classes in her department every month to observe them teaching, thus displaying how busy her portfolio was. She applauded the principal's enactment of distributed instructional leadership. She, however, had a different opinion on how she was involved as a supervisor in class allocation. Mrs Rega was a hard worker who led a department that the principal was proud of.

Having presented the data collected from participants at Matanga Primary School, the following section presents data from participants at Bepura Primary school.

4.3 REPORTS FROM BEPURA PRIMARY SCHOOL

An overview of the school

Bepura (pseudonym) Primary School is an urban council school that was established early 2015. It has classes that run from Early Childhood Development (ECD) A, ECD B then grade one to seven. The school is in a low-density area and has a durawall round the perimeter of the school. During the time of the visit in 2020, the total enrolment of learners was 2023 and there were 58 teachers indicating that it is a big school. It was the biggest school among the three in my study.

The school had a track history of producing good results and because of this it attracted many learners. It was a popular school in the district. The District School's Inspector recommended the school as a good place for me to carry out my study on distributed instructional leadership. Three teachers and the principal at this school participated in the study. These were Mr Shama, the principal, and three teachers, Mrs Ndaba, Mr Ngata, and Mrs Koni (all pseudonyms). The school was characterised by more female teachers than males.

4.3.1 Background information of Bepura Primary School participants

Mr Shama is an elderly man who has been in the service for many years. He is an experienced man who taught in different schools before being appointed to a vice principal post which he held for nine years. From a vice principal post, he was appointed to a principal post which he has held for over twenty years. He holds a Master of Education Degree as his highest qualification. He also has a Bachelor of Education degree in Educational Administration and a Certificate in Education with a speciality in primary school teaching.

Mrs Ndaba is a vibrant seasoned teacher who taught grade seven at Bepura Primary School during the time of the visit. She is slightly over 50 years old and holds a degree in Education specialising in music. She had also studied with a local university for a master's degree in music and was awaiting graduation. She showed liveliness when responding to questions. She has had an experience of over 25 years teaching in different primary schools. In addition to teaching, she also chaired the discipline and entertainment committees at the school. When she transferred to this school from another district, she was allocated grade four. She progressed with her class up to grade seven which she was teaching when I visited the school. It was her first year to teach grade seven and was confident of producing good results. Since the principal was very particular about who taught grades six and seven, her scheme books, record books, children's work, and the orderliness in her classroom were proof of her hard work, no wonder why she managed to progress from grade four to seven with her class.

Mr Ngata is a Physical Education specialist teacher who is slightly above forty years of age. He is a tall guy with an athletic body which matched quite well his area of expertise. One impediment I noted on him was that he had a challenge in hearing so much that I had to raise my voice when talking to him so that he could hear. This, however, did not affect our working progress. He holds a Diploma in Education with a speciality in Physical Education as his highest

qualification. He has a teaching experience of eight years with three of them having been obtained while at Bepura Primary School and the other five at another school he was posted to after graduating from college and before he transferred to his current school. He teaches Physical Education from grade one to grade seven. He was also the school's soccer and athletics coach.

Mrs Koni is a qualified primary school teacher who taught grade one during the time of my visit. She holds a Diploma in Education as her highest qualification. She did not hold a leadership post but was a committee member in the examinations committee. She has been teaching at Bepura Primary School for more than three years. She transferred to this school to be closer to her home which was a walkable distance away from the school.

4.3.2 Visioning Bepura Primary School

Allen *et al.* (2018) state that a school vision, "… outlines the school's purpose and defines the context, goals, and aspirations that govern the institution." Tian and Risku (2019) advocate that leadership works best when stretched to all members, and with the school principal sharing the school vision with other members. In line with this, Mombourquette (2017) advocates that clearly stated visions are a necessity in effective schools. This points at the importance of schools having visions, they spell out the purpose of a school, and when shared with all staff members makes school leadership effective.

After observing clearly displayed vision and mission statements in the principal's office, I was eager to know how these had been created. I thus asked Mr Shama, who responded with his focus directed at the displayed vision and mission statements on the office walls (See Appendix 15 for the vision and mission statements). He said,

> *We got input from committees, we have got teachers who are in committees, we got their input then we sat as a committee. The chairpersons of the committees represent the committees in the organogram so that is how we get input from stakeholders. We also got input from parents through the school development committee and from children through the prefects' board. That is how we came up with the vision and mission statements. It is not like we take everything, but we take the salient issues guided by policy.*

Mr Shama's response suggested the participation of other school members in the formulation of their school specific vision. By mentioning committees at the school, he indicated the involvement of teachers in the vision formulation process. He also indicated corroboration in the vision formulation process by committees, parents, through the School Development Committee

(SDC) and from learners through prefects. Mbera (2015) advocates that it is crucial for principals to collaborate with the school community in drafting and fusing the school vision into the structures and activities of the school since it informs members of what their schools must become. The practice of involving other members in vision formulation suggests a sharing of instructional leadership activities. Since vision formulation is an important instructional leadership activity, principals are expected by the Ministry to have visions for their schools. The Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 stipulates that, principals are key actors in the process of teaching and learning, thus must cooperatively work with stakeholders and craft school visions that are aligned to the Ministry direction. It thus corresponds to Mr Shama's statement that they were guided by Ministry policy as they crafted the school vision.

When I probed about the policies that he referred to in his instructional leadership practice he said:

> *We have policy guidelines that we refer to.* (He stood up and withdrew a box file from among other files that were on a bookshelf). *We have several policies among which is the Statutory Instrument 1 of 2000. It is the one we use because it has been drawn from the Education Act.*

The file had different circulars and policies. He referred to Statutory Instrument (SI)1 of 2000 as a policy he often referred to in the process of carrying out his duties. He was very confident when he was talking about the availability of the circulars he had. One thing I noted was that he had knowledge of the information in the SI of 2000 but had missed it when he said it was made from the Education Act. The SI of 2000 are regulations set by the Public Service Commission to regulate all civil servants in different ministries not necessarily Education Ministry only. Its broad topics cover appointment, performance appraisal and career mobility of civil servants, resignation, termination of employment and retirement, grading and salaries, disciplinary and grievance procedures. It covers personnel related issues. The instrument clearly outlines procedures that are followed in dealing with different matters. This might explain why Mr Shama was more interested in using this instrument in his instructional leadership practice. When I asked him about instructional matters since the SI of 2000 was related to the human element, it appeared he realised that he had missed the teaching and learning aspect then he said,

> *Oooh yes, we have the administration handbook and the new curriculum framework, they guide us on what we teach in schools. We have different circulars from the Ministry as you can see in the file that we always refer to.*

It appeared that Mr Shama's focus was initially on leadership of teachers and not focused on the instruction aspect. The instruction role appeared to have latter rang a bell in his mind and he remembered the regulations he used as he performed instructional leadership activities. The handbook emphasised effective management and leadership of human and material resources and the provision of conducive working environments that improve teaching and learning in schools. The various circulars that were in files covered varied aspects pertaining to school leadership.

Even though the principal had explained how the school vision was created, I had to find out what teachers had to say, I asked Mrs Ndaba who had this to say:

> *We have a vision and mission statement from the Ministry and as a school, we also came up with our own vision and mission statements from that of the Ministry. It adds on, and points in the same direction as that of the Ministry. We asked ourselves on how we were going to attain the Ministry vision and mission as Bepura Primary School, so we formulated our own vision, mission, and objectives.*

Mrs Ndaba began by reiterating that the school had its own vision statement that was crafted out of the generic Ministry vision. The aim was to achieve the needs of the school and at the same time achieve the Ministry vision from which the school vision was crafted. The quote "… we came up with our own vision …" suggests the participation by many in the exercise thereby portraying distributed leadership. To understand who the other people were, I asked Mrs Ndaba who explained as follows:

> *The vision and mission statements were crafted by everyone because I remember when we started crafting it, everyone was involved, but however, there was a taskforce to guide people to keep on focusing on the vision of the Ministry so that we stand guided. So, there was a committee that worked with teachers and parents to come up with our vision and mission.*

The quote suggests an important instructional leadership strategy employed by the principal of involving teachers in crafting the school specific vision. Mrs Ndaba talked of every member being involved, thus suggesting a broad base of ideas that the task force could choose from to come up with a solid vision for the school. The creation of a taskforce by the principal enabled a few members to harness all the ideas from the broad base and came up with a concrete vision for the school. A collaborative exercise took place in this activity. This collaborative practice conformed to Spillane's (2005) comment that principals cannot lead schools to greatness as lone individuals, they need the participation of other members. This also concurred with Mr Shama's statement that the creation of the school vision was a result of a collaborative process between

teachers, parents, and the organogram, hence suggesting that a lone individual could not effectively produce a solid vision individually.

When I asked Mr Ngata about the creation of the vision for Bepura Primary School, he indicated that he was not involved in the creation of the vision since he joined the school when it had already been set. I further asked whether he knew the vision of the school and he responded saying:

> *I know about it. It is well displayed in the school office. Though I cannot recite it as it is but what I know is that it gives prominence to sport, culture, and quality education.*

The quote suggests that Mr Ngata knew that a school vision existed. He, however, could not recite it but gave excerpts of the vision. Since he was not part of the team that crafted the vision, I wanted to find out whether the vision was explained to him when he joined the school. There was no such induction found in the school records neither did Mr Ngata talk about it. I probed further to understand how new members got to know about the vision of the school. He said,

> *In opening meetings, the principal encourages teachers to work towards achieving school goals. By so doing he said we will attain the vision of the school. The vision is displayed in the school office for us to read. So that's how I came to know about it.*

Mr Ngata's explanation suggested that he learnt about the school vision from opening meetings when the principal urged teachers to work hard to meet the school objectives which had emanated from the school vision. Since the school vision was displayed in the principal's office, it was an opportunity for teachers in the likes of Mr Ngata to read the school vision when they got into the principal's office. There was no mention of the principal explaining the vision to the new teachers, hence, to find out whether he understood the school vision, I probed further, and he responded saying,

> *It means we must work very hard to achieve certain goals and targets that are set by the school. As a teacher, I feel that I need to respect the vision, because when we are talking about the vision, it is the target that we want to achieve.*

Mr Ngata was hesitant before he responded. It appeared the school vision to him meant hard work and the targets that teachers intended to achieve. His explanation suggested a lack of full understanding of what a vision is. There appeared to be lack of explanations by school principals of school visions to new teachers resulting in them having limited knowledge about the school vision. This was like Mrs Sora and Mr Muko's stories from Matanga Primary School where the school vision was not explained to them with the principal focusing on pass rates. Dishena and

Mokoena (2016) emphasise the induction of new teachers as contributing to their professional development, this explains the need for principals to introduce school visions to new teachers to the schools. Mombourquette (2017) explains that school-based visions can be used to influence the learning practices of students, hence leaders need to ensure that all members of a school understand them.

Since visions outline the purpose of schools (Allen *et al.*, 2018), teachers must understand them if they are to work towards a common purpose. When Mrs Koni transferred to Bepura Primary School, the school vision had already been crafted. She was aware of the generic and school specific visions since they were clearly displayed in the school office. I, therefore, wanted to find out about her understanding of the vision. I asked her, and she said: *A vision statement shows what the school wants to achieve in terms of learner performance.* It appeared that she had limited knowledge about what a vision was nor what their school vision was. Her statement was aligned to objectives, thus suggesting a lack of full knowledge about a vision. I probed further to find out whether the principal explained to teachers about the school vision. Her response was,

> *I learnt most of the school activities through other teachers and the TIC. From the TIC it was much on how to teach the little children. Not much was from the head except telling me of the starting and finishing times and to maintain the school's performance standards.*

An interesting similarity struck here between the principal at Matanga and Bepura Primary Schools. It appeared they paid much attention to their schools' pass rates to the extent of overlooking their vision statements, particularly when it came to new teachers to the schools. Mrs Koni's quote reveals the principal's major interest in the teachers' work, the production of high pass rates.

4.3.3 Supervision of teachers at Bepura Primary School

Brandon *et al.* (2018:1) advocate that effective supervision of teachers is a practice that promotes teacher growth and quality teaching. It, therefore, entails that the idea behind educational leaders supervising teachers is instructional support that facilitates teaching and learning. Fessehatsion (2017) advocates that principals, as instructional leaders, must visit and work with teachers and learners in their classrooms to improve teaching and learning. In line with this, the Director's Circular Minute Number 7 of 2003 made it mandatory for principals or their delegated persons to visit and observe teachers while teaching as part of the supervision process. This shows the importance of instructional supervision. Mr Shama, therefore, conformed to the dictates of the

circular where he supervised teachers. He stated this during a discussion of his instructional roles, he said,

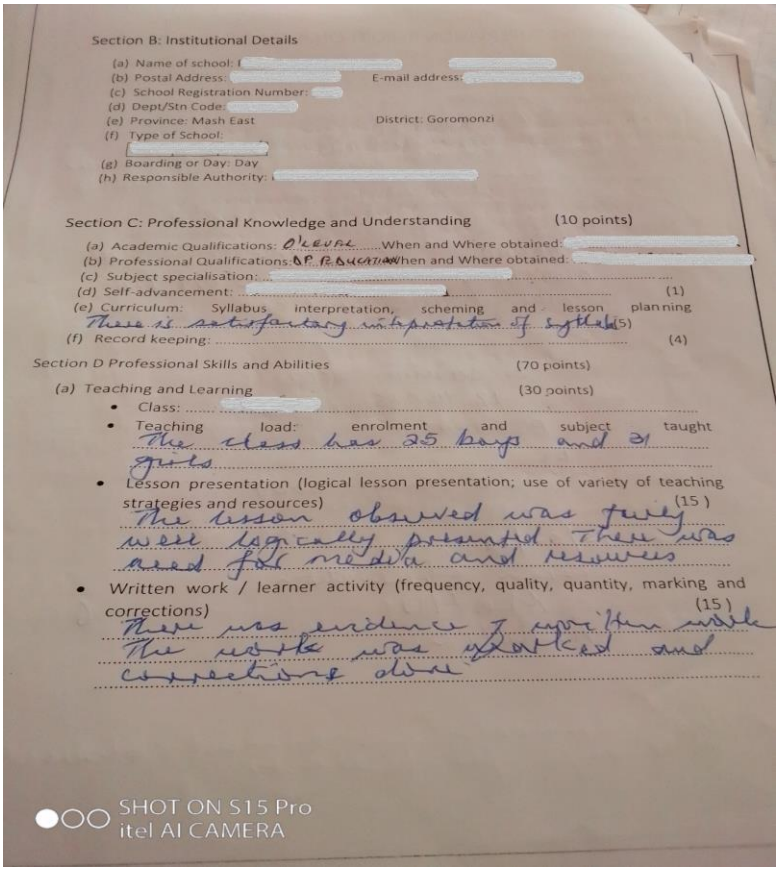
> *My role is to supervise teachers and advise them in the sense that sometimes I go out to class to supervise and if I think there is need for advice, then the advice would be given. If there is an adverse report or problem, I will demonstrate.*

Mr Shama confirmed that teacher supervision and giving advice were his roles as a principal. He talked of giving demonstration lessons in cases where he noticed low performance in teachers. This supervisory role is an important instructional leadership function that Manaseh (2016) says most principals do not prioritise. However, Jita (2010) emphasises that learning is improved when a school leader has an instructional focus and positioned closer to the classroom. It is, therefore, important for principals to enact this important instructional leadership activity in schools. Mrs Koni, an Infants teacher, also stressed the importance of principals enacting the instructional leadership role of supervising teachers and the effective use of learners' time.

I understood Mr Shama's explanation that his main role was to supervise teachers and assign other members such as the TIC and the vice principal to supervise other teachers. I, therefore, asked how supervision of teachers was done to which he responded saying,

> *Lesson observations are done by the school head, the deputy head, and the TIC. The TIC is responsible for the Infants Department. The deputy head and I, take care of grades three to seven. We use a supervisory instrument that was produced by the Ministry.*

There was a distribution of the supervision load at the school since all the three made class visits and observed teachers teaching. This was a display of shared responsibility between himself, the vice principal, and the TIC. Jita (2010) believes that learning is likely to be improved when a school leader has an instructional focus and positioned closer to the classroom, thus when the principal observed lessons, it is highly likely that he noted the successes and challenges the teachers faced and probably assist where there was need. The principal talked about a supervisory instrument they used at the school; this is a standard form that was produced by the Ministry for schools. It has sections that a supervisor completes in the process of lesson observation, as shown in Figure 4.2 below.



Section B: Institutional Details

(a) Name of school: [redacted]
(b) Postal Address: [redacted] E-mail address: [redacted]
(c) School Registration Number: [redacted]
(d) Dept/Stn Code: [redacted]
(e) Province: Mash East District: Goromonzi
(f) Type of School: [redacted]
(g) Boarding or Day: Day
(h) Responsible Authority: [redacted]

Section C: Professional Knowledge and Understanding (10 points)

(a) Academic Qualifications: O'LEVEL When and Where obtained: [redacted]
(b) Professional Qualifications: D.P. EDUCATION When and Where obtained: [redacted]
(c) Subject specialisation: [redacted]
(d) Self-advancement: [redacted] (1)
(e) Curriculum: Syllabus interpretation, scheming and lesson planning
There is satisfactory interpretation of syllabi (5)
(f) Record keeping: (4)

Section D Professional Skills and Abilities (70 points)

(a) Teaching and Learning (30 points)

- Class: [redacted]
- Teaching load: enrolment and subject taught
The class has 25 boys and 31 girls
- Lesson presentation (logical lesson presentation; use of variety of teaching strategies and resources) (15)
The lesson observed was fairly well logically presented. There was need for media and resources
- Written work / learner activity (frequency, quality, quantity, marking and corrections) (15)
There was evidence of written work The work was marked and corrections done

SHOT ON S15 Pro
itel AI CAMERA

Figure 4.2: Supervisory instrument used in lesson observations. (A page from a participant's narrative report)

The form has different sections which include syllabus interpretation, written work, lesson presentation and recommendations. Supervisors fill in details according to what they would have observed during the class visits. When effectively completed, the form clearly indicates the level of performance of a teacher and the recommendations by the supervisor for improved performance.

To find out more about lesson observations, I asked about the frequency of class visits to which he said,

> *Teachers come from college when they do not have experience. They start to gather experience as they teach. For a beginning teacher and those with poor performance, there is a lot of supervision. For senior teachers sometimes we do not supervise, we just go there, sit, and observe how they teach and move out.*

New teachers and low performing teachers needed more support, thus the principal concentrated on these more than experienced teachers. The close monitoring of novice and low performing teachers concurred with Aunga and Masare's (2017: 42) analysis that "… a newly hired person

requires more supervision than an experienced employee". Mr Shama portrayed his knowledge of teachers, thus supervised accordingly. For seasoned teachers, the monitoring was not as close as for novice and low performing teachers. Mr Shama's strategy of supervising teachers was like that by Mrs Muzuwa. She also concentrated more on novice and low performing teachers just like Mr Shama. This was evident when she said: *The strategy that we use is, we look at our teachers, obviously there are some teachers who are new in the system and then there are some teachers who need some help one way or the other, so we concentrate on those ones.* This strategy concurred with that of Mr Shama. This showed the principals' enactment of instructional leadership.

From the documents I analysed, I discovered that Mr Shama conformed to the dictates of the Ministry policy on class visits as stated in the Administration Handbook (1993: 20) that, "It is important that all teachers be visited with special emphasis on new teachers, probationers and unqualified teachers." This suggested the reference to policy documents as he enacted the instructional leadership practice. It is a requirement, as stated in the Director's Circular Minute Number 7 of 2003, that supervisors give feedback to teachers after lesson observation. To find out if there was conformity to this instructional leadership activity, I asked Mr Shama about when he gives feedback to teachers. He responded saying:

> *Immediately after the lesson because if it takes time, you tend to forget or if you had written it down you might not remember exactly how the lesson went, but if it is immediately after then you can correct a few things and get feedback from the teacher also, like you could say, you left out so many record books. The teacher might say, they were there, you did not see them. So, it saves the supervisor and the teacher.*

Mr Shama's response explains the importance of timely feedback as an important instructional leadership practice. He preferred giving immediate feedback to avoid forgetting some aspects or arguments with teachers concerning the supervision, thus rendering it more effective than feedback given after some time. The response indicated an enactment of instructional leadership through feedback activities. His response suggested that he conformed to the dictates of the Director's Circular Minute Number 7 of 2003.

Wairimu (2016) advocates that supervision improves teaching and learning through emphasising excellence on the quality of instruction hence, principals should discuss findings of lesson observations with teachers to help the teachers correct any deviancies in their work performance.

This emphasises the importance of supervision and feedback to teachers. This role by the principal is essential since it helps to improve the performance of schools (Alam *et al.,* 2019).

Teacher responses on teacher supervision

When I asked Mrs Ndaba on how lesson observations were conducted at Bepura Primary School, she said:

> *Twice a term for each teacher. For the lesson observation visits, he would produce narrative reports which indicate the performance of the class. What he* (The head) *does is, he comes to us, and we agree on the timetable on when he would visit us for the term. So, he has a term plan that states dates and classes he would visit but on whatever other day he can just come in and see what would be happening.*

Mrs Ndaba reported that the principal supervised teachers and observed them teaching, thus indicating the enactment of instructional leadership. She explained that the principal wrote narrative reports after observing a lesson. This concurred with what the principal said that his role was the supervision of teachers. From the supervision of the teachers, he wrote reports (Example, Figure 4.2). When I analysed the narrative report, I noted that it had six sections. Section A of the report was on the personal details of the teacher. The name of the teacher, date of joining service, length of service, the purpose of the visit by the supervisor, the subject(s) observed, and the topic taught during the lesson observation were indicated in this section. Section B was on institutional details which included the name of the school, the province and district of the school location and the responsible authority. Section C required information on the professional knowledge and understanding of the teacher. In this section information about the teacher's academic and professional qualifications were required followed by their subject specialisation and any self-advancement the teacher would have done. The teacher's ability to interpret the syllabus, the detail in the scheme book and lesson plans were assessed in this section. The aspect of records was also looked at in this section. After assessing the professional knowledge and understanding of a teacher in Section C, supervisors then focused on the teacher's professional skills and attributes. Three aspects were considered in this section. Under teaching and learning, a teacher's ability to teach, their ability to use a variety of teaching strategies, and the quantity of work they gave to learners, were assessed in this section. Supervisors also looked at the quality of marking in this subsection. In Section D, a teacher's ability to organise and manage lessons was looked at. Here, supervisors focus on how teachers control and motivate their learners. Other teacher qualities supervised under this sub-section are

the teacher's ability to communicate and to evaluate their own performance. Section E was concerned about a teacher's professional values and work commitments. Aspects looked at in this section include how the teachers professionally developed themselves and whether teachers went an extra mile at their work for the benefit of learners. The final Section F was on conclusions and recommendations where the supervisors indicated the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers and made suggestions for improvement. The narrative report, in general, gave the overall outlook of the teachers. Mrs Ndaba's statement on the production of a narrative report after lesson observation concurred with the principal's statement that the supervisors used a supervision template from the Ministry to produce a report. The practice of teacher supervision at the school suggested the enactment of instructional leadership by the principal.

Another important instructional leadership practice in the quote was the principal and teacher agreement of date and time of lesson observation. An element of collaboration was displayed by the practice. However, the principal was not restricted to the stated dates and times only since he could visit any class at any time to monitor teaching activities.

Different explanations were noted on the aspect of feedback. Whereas the principal pointed out that he gave feedback just after the lesson, Mrs Ndaba indicated that feedback was normally received after a day or two. This was evident in her statement when she said,

> *After observing a lesson, the principal would stand up, then say "Thank you mum for the lesson," then he would leave the class. He would call me to discuss the lesson after a day or two when the narrative report is ready.*

The response indicated the use of a narrative report in giving feedback by the principal, thus resulting in him giving feedback after a day or two as stated by Mrs Ndaba, his supervisee. This resulted in the difference in when the principal said he gave feedback and when Mrs Ndaba said she received feedback. Mr Ngata, a physical education specialist at Bepura Primary School reiterated Mrs Ndaba's statement that feedback was obtained after a day or two. Wairimu (2016) advocates for a discussion of findings of lesson observations by principals and teachers to map a way forward, thus indicating the importance of this instructional practice in the school.

Mr Ngata concurred with the principal and Mrs Ndaba that the principal, the vice principal, and the TIC supervised teachers at the school. Mr Ngata was supervised by the principal along with the grade six and seven teachers. Mr Ngata indicated this when he answered the question on who carried out class supervision at the school. Mr Ngata was supervised by the school principal and as for the frequency of lesson observations, he said:

> *I cannot say how often, but physically he used to do it three times per term. There are some instances he* (the head*) says, I don't even come to you direct, but I will be watching you from a distance. For an example, when I am training children in the ground he can watch from a distance. I asked why he does that, and he said, if I come to you, I will disturb you. So, I do my own observations and write what I see from a distance. I was also surprised to see a written report on what I was doing. I will then just submit my scheme-cum plans to him. He can watch for ten to fifteen minutes from a distance. So, on time I cannot say he comes at such and such times.*

The above quote appeared to suggest that the principal used different methods to supervise Mr Ngata, the Physical Education specialist. The principal either observed him from afar or was physically present in the sporting field. This was because of the nature of his job which enabled the supervisor to observe him from a distance. This explained why he commented that he could not say how often he was observed teaching by the principal. What he remembered was that in the past he was observed three times a term. Mr Ngata was informed by the principal that he could observe him from a distance to avoid disturbing his lessons. Mr Ngata pointed out that on one occasion he had to submit his documentation to the principal since he had observed him from afar and was compiling a report. Whereas Mrs Ndaba pointed out that teachers were normally observed twice a term, Mr Ngata pointed out that he was observed teaching three times a term. Though there was this difference in number, my main interest was on the fact that the principal practiced instructional leadership. Ampofo (2019: 12) states that, "Teachers are expected to regularly assess students with the aim of enhancing students' performance, whereas school heads oversee the appropriate execution of teachers' assigned responsibilities, which includes assessment of students". It thus indicates the instructional leadership role that principals have in schools. Hence, having Mrs Ndaba saying twice and Mr Ngata thrice indicated that the principal supervised teachers, thus enacting instructional leadership. Mr Ngata's quote pointed at different supervisory approaches that the principal used. In addition to getting into the classroom and sit as indicated by Mrs Ndaba, the principal could observe a class from afar, or make a pass-through visit, thus increasing his visibility in the school. Observation from afar was possible for Mr Ngata who taught Physical Education in the sporting field.

On when he got feedback after lesson observation, Mr Ngata explained the positive feedback he obtained from the principal after his school athletics team won cluster and zonal competitions and after being observed teaching. His explanation was as follows:

> *When we went for athletics competitions at cluster level in the first term, almost 90% of our children did well and the head said, I thought you were not serious. From cluster competitions we went for zonal competitions and my students won.*

> *The school head saw me training kids for zonal competitions and when we won, he believed in what I did, and he said I now understand what you do, I will not disturb you. He also told others that how the children had performed was wonderful. So that is the feedback he gave after seeing children winning in competitions. When he comes to observe a lesson, he normally gives me feedback report after a day or two.*

An important instructional leadership practice by the school head was acknowledging teacher efforts. The principal acknowledged the good performance by Mr Ngata's team in competitions by positively commenting about the team in the presence of other teachers. Feedback after lesson observations by the principal where he visited the class was received after a day or two. Mr Ngata concurred with Mrs Ndaba on how they received feedback from their supervisor. They all pointed out that the principal discussed the narrative report with the concerned teachers. A crucial aspect was the practice of supervision and giving feedback.

Manaseh (2016) argues that observing teachers delivering lessons informs principals of the strengths and weaknesses of teachers. Since lesson observation is one way of supervising teachers, I asked Mrs Koni, a grade one teacher on how lesson observations were conducted in the Infants Department. She responded saying,

> *They are conducted monthly. We are observed by the TIC, grades three to five by the deputy head and grades six to seven by the head.*

Mrs Koni pointed out that lesson observations were conducted monthly in the Infants Department. The Infants Department was made up of the Early Childhood Development A (ECD A) classes, the Early Childhood Development B (ECD B) classes, then grades one and two. The ECD A are the youngest group (5 – 6 years old) in the school. After a year they progress to ECD B, a stage at which they prepare for grade one. From ECD B, a student enters grade one. This department was led by a TIC who was appointed by the school principal. As pointed out by Mrs Koni, the TIC supervised all teachers who were in the Infants Department. There appeared to be a distribution of the supervision load since the principal, the vice principal and the TIC shared the grades they supervised at the school. There appeared to be a shared responsibility among the supervisory team, thus suggesting a distribution of instructional leadership activities. The supervision of grades six and seven by the principal suggests his focus on the pass rate of the school. Mrs Ndaba, a grade seven teacher also indicated that she was supervised by the principal, thus aligning this to Mrs Koni's statement that the principal supervised grades six and seven. I asked about feedback from their supervisor after lesson observations and she said,

> *After a lesson she leaves the class, well after saying thank you to the children and me. She will then come back after lessons when children have gone home then we discuss the lesson. She highlights main areas she thinks I did well and those that she thinks I need to improve. She also makes suggestions on how I can improve my lessons.*

Feedback after lesson observation by the TIC was prompt since she discussed her observations the very day of observations with the teacher concerned. The quote suggests that she did not take learners' time discussing the lesson during teaching time. She waited for the teacher to finish off her work and when learners had gone home, she then went to the teacher's class to discuss her observations. This action by the TIC was an important instructional leadership practice in the school where she protected learners' time. The phrase. "… then we discuss the lesson …" by Mrs Koni suggested that there was interaction between the TIC and the teacher in the context of their environment. The deliberations were for the improvement of teachers' instructional performance. In a narrative report I analysed, I was interested in Section F of the narrative report which was on conclusion and recommendations. It was here that the TIC recommended strategies for improved instruction. Four subsections fall within Section F, these are the Strengths, Areas for improvement, Challenges and Recommendations. Under the strengths section, the following was written: *The teacher has scheme-cum planned all subjects; The teacher monitored learners' work when they were writing; Record books were neatly covered;* On the areas for improvement section, the following comments were written: *The teacher needs to improve the class learning centres. The teacher needs to discourage chorus answers.* On the challenges section, it was written: *High teacher-pupil ratio; torn textbooks.* The recommendations made were as follows: *The teacher is encouraged to keep up the good work observed and work to improve on the areas of weakness*. The purpose of the visit was to observe the teacher teaching a science lesson and make recommendations. This section summarised what the teacher did well, areas that needed attention and the suggestions for improvement. Of interest to me was the fact that the TIC, as part of the supervisory team gave feedback early to teachers. This suggests effective instructional leadership on the part of the TIC since feedback was given while they still remembered all facts about the lesson.

4.3.4 Wishing for a conducive working environment

Martin (2018) advocates that, effective instructional leaders create school environments that support teaching and learning. Hence, Seong *et al.* (2015) encourage principals to create conducive working environments for improved teaching and learning. This points at the

importance of principals setting positive climates in schools. In response to my question on whether the school environment was conducive for effective delivery of instruction by teachers Mr Shama said:

> *You want to make the best of your environment as a person because that is where we spend most of our time. The working conditions are okay. We start school at 0745 hours and knock off at 1530 hours. So, that is one of the things that we think teachers like. We provide lunch to teachers. We try to make sure that teachers feel comfortable. We also have a photocopier and risograph which teachers use to run homework for their students. We do not appreciate our teachers' writing homework on the board. We insist on teachers giving homework to their students.*

Mr Shama cited the various efforts that the school did to make the instructional environment conducive to teachers. He acknowledged that teachers spend most of their time at school, hence the effort to make them conducive. The practice of breaking early from work and the provision of lunch to staff members were efforts to make the working environment attractive. To make the teachers' work lighter, the school bought machines which teachers used to prepare learners' study materials. Since the school had a culture of giving homework to learners the use of the machines made the teachers' work lighter, hence making the school conducive. Whereas Mr Shama talked about the school being conducive because of the resources provided to teachers, at Matanga Primary School there was a different story, the issue of double sessions affected the working tone in the school, as pointed out by Mrs Muzuwa.

Mr Shama indicated that he had forgotten to tell me one of his achievements and something very important to teachers, the reduction of teaching loads. He explained this saying,

> *Another thing is the lowering of teaching loads. We have specialist teachers here, for Computers, Physical Education, Music, and Agriculture. So, out of the ten expected learning areas, our teachers teach six so the load would be lighter. In other schools the teachers teach ten learning areas.*

The lowering of the teaching load for teachers was an important instructional leadership practice found at Bepura Primary School. This was well appreciated by teachers as it reduced the teaching load. Mrs Ndaba also pointed out that the presence of specialist teachers had greatly helped by reducing the teaching load, thus making the school environment conducive. It meant teachers concentrated on a few learning areas since Computers, Physical Education, Music, and Agriculture were taught by specialist teachers. Ni (2017) commends the practice of reducing teaching loads in schools saying it allows active teacher engagement and commitment to their work.

I further probed on how he managed to have the specialist teachers when other schools did not have them. He responded saying,

> *These subjects are normally not taught well or not taught at all in schools by teachers that are not specialist teachers. So, with the introduction of the new curriculum, the subjects are being examinable, so I applied to the Ministry for the specialist teachers through the responsible authority and here we are, we have the teachers.*

As an experienced teacher and principal, Mr Shama displayed his experience of situations in schools. The experience could have prompted him to apply for specialist teachers to teach subjects that were often neglected by ordinary teachers. His actions displayed the enactment of instructional leadership.

Teacher responses

I asked Mrs Ndaba about the conduciveness of the teaching and learning environment at Bepura Primary School, and she said:

> *It could be better given the aspect that we, as teachers, are coming from different scenarios. I have been teaching for 27 years and have benefited some good things that education normally had. We have youngsters who have come out to join this service when things are not that well, but we have tasted the good pudding before, we have hope of things getting better and we have passion because we have come this far. I am nearing retirement, I do not want to spoil our sheets, but these youngsters we need them to have the same zeal and everything, but it is not easy because people have various difficulties. Generally, our environment is ok.*

Mrs Ndaba's great worry was the lack of passion for teaching that was displayed by the new breed of young teachers. She perceived the young teachers as lacking the zeal to teach when compared to her generation which joined teaching because of their passion in teaching. Her perception about teaching was congruent to Erdamar and Demirel's (2016) view that teaching was a profession that people should choose out of passion and not out of coincidence or duty. She blamed the economic situation of the country for causing anxiety among the young teachers leading them to having no passion in their job. As an old guard nearing retirement, her wish was for the country's economy to improve, the idea being that this would improve the attitude of the young teachers towards the teaching profession. Besides her worry about the attitudes of young teachers, she regarded the school environment as conducive. When I further asked about what made the school conducive, she said,

> *Our work was made easier when the school purchased a heavy-duty photocopier, we prepare our work and photocopy for learners. We have specialist teachers for Computer Education, Physical Education, Music, and*

Agriculture. These reduced teaching loads for us, thus leaving us with six out of ten subjects.

The provision of a photocopier at the school was a great development for teachers since it made work lighter for them. Mrs Ndaba had reams of bond paper in her storeroom which she used in preparing learning materials for her class. For teaching purposes, she would prepare one learning article then photocopy to have enough for all learners in her class. The photocopier was in the staff room where it was easily accessible to all teachers. She made booklets with revision questions and homework activities for each subject for her class. This provision made the working environment conducive for Mrs Ndaba. Another aspect that made the working environment conducive was a reduced teaching load since other subjects were taught by specialist teachers. This was a welcome development since it left her with six subjects to teach instead of ten. It, therefore, meant that she concentrated on fewer subjects. Ahmad *et al.* (2017) comment that when schools have conducive environments, it enhances the performance and comfort among teachers and learners.

In addition to materials and reduced teaching loads that contributed to making the school environment conducive, Mrs Ndaba, further narrated the leadership practice by the principal and vice principal as having contributed to the improved working environment and the high instructional performance at Bepura Primary School. I noted this when she said,

The head and the deputy head are liberal. They give way to teachers to explore. We dismiss late, we leave the school at 6pm and we can come as early as 6am. No-one says why are you still here. We have Internet where we can do our research. As grade seven, you know some children do research, so you must be on your toes with your information.

The above quote portrays the principal and the vice principal as professional people who allowed teachers to explore to acquire new knowledge and move with time. This was confirmed by the availability of Internet facility at the school which enabled teachers to research for current information. With the introduction of the new curriculum, this facility was very handy to teachers. Since she taught grade seven, the Internet facility enabled her to search for current information for her class. Since teachers could explore, they had the freedom to arrive early or stay behind for some time surfing the Internet. The provision of the Internet facility indicated the principal's interest in improved instructional performance at the school. Chukwueze (2021) emphasises that teachers are the interface in the spread of knowledge, they, therefore, must have appropriate skills if learners under them are to improve their academic performance.

I was interested in knowing how work relations were at the school in relation to the work environment, so, I asked Mrs Ndaba who said:

> *It is all well. It is a family relationship. If one has problems, we distribute the children to other classes and teach them. We have teacher representatives who see that every teacher is present and if not there to find out why. If someone gets sick or there is a funeral, we can distribute the children and teach them.*

Mrs Ndaba described the work relations at Bepura Primary School as cordial with teachers working as a family unit. Her description of the school relations suggested a culture of togetherness. There was composure at the school during my visits and I did not witness any disturbing situations. If a teacher was absent, learners were shared among the other classes and taught just like the other learners. She pointed out that there were teacher representatives who had the task of seeing that all teachers were present and if not, they would find out why. I learnt that the teacher representatives were members of the social welfare committee at the school. By finding out why a teacher was absent, the reason was to find out if social challenges had not affected a teacher, in which case they were supposed to assist. These focused on the welfare of teachers at the school such as when a teacher fell sick, the social welfare committee arranged for assistance to the teacher. Mrs Koni, an Infants teacher, also described the school relations as good, she cited teacher collaboration as the basis. A sharing of knowledge and skills on instructional matters appeared to exist among the teachers suggesting a conducive working environment.

When I asked Mr Ngata about how the working environment was, he said,

> *As a comparison, when I was at Kesi, we worked as a family, that is, one school not because the head said it. Maybe it was the head who made the environment conducive. The learners followed instructions from other teachers. It's unlike at this school. It is a big challenge. If you get to grade seven classes and say you need grade sevens here because the teacher is absent, they will not follow you. Even if you went to the ground to do physical education exercises, they would ask for permission from their teacher first. I have a challenge there which must be corrected.*

Mr Ngata responded by giving a comparison of his previous school to the current one. It appeared a family like close unit at his previous school, Kesi, did not exist at the current school. The crux of the matter was a clash of interests particularly between Mr Ngata and the grade seven teachers. His complaint was that grade seven classes looked down upon Physical Education and were reluctant to attend his lessons with preference given to examinable subjects. Whereas grade seven classes were more concerned with high pass rates, Mr Ngata was

concerned with his Physical Education lessons and winning in sporting competitions. Hence, by not releasing learners for sporting competitions caused anguish in Mr Ngata, though the curriculum framework 2015 - 2022 gave equal credence to all subjects, practically some subjects appeared to be given little attention by teachers in schools such as what was happening at Bepura Primary School. The unfortunate thing for Mr Ngata was that the principal was so concerned with maintaining the high pass rate of the school that one could see that though sporting activities were crucial these were given second preference to pass rates. This could be deciphered when the principal said,

> *Our challenge is from where we are coming from. When the school started in 2015, it started by recording a 91% pass rate. So, when teachers are teaching, they would be focusing on the 91%, they put most of their effort on the pass rate to the extent that it kills other aspects of the curriculum such as co-curriculum. However, our specialist teachers, like in Physical Education, take over sporting activities, music teachers, take over Music Education that is on co-curriculum activities, but most of the effort is geared on the pass rate.*

This was the principal's acknowledgement of the need for high pass rates by the school more than anything else. His remark that teachers focused on the 91% pass rate to the extent of affecting co-curriculum activities indicated the principal's instructional leadership interest. It confirmed Mr Ngata's plight that his area was being given second preference. Through my prolonged stay at the school, I observed that teachers' attitudes to sporting activities had improved as teachers started developing an interest in sports. I saw some teachers visiting the playing field during training sessions by Mr Ngata's team. This was an improvement since it was not characteristic of the teachers to go to the sporting field. This also suggested an improvement to the working environment for Mr Ngata.

When I asked about teacher relations at Bepura Primary School, Mr Ngata said:

> *What happens is that at each grade level there is unity among the teachers. They scheme together so that in the absence of one of them, they will attend to the other class or divide the class among other classes, they will be at the same level. Also, there is no competition where teachers say 'I want my class only to pass'. They work together and share ideas.*

Mr Ngata saw a unity of purpose among teachers at Bepura Primary School through collaborative scheming at grade level. This unity enabled teachers to scheme and plan similar topics. It appeared to be a tentative measure to alleviate the problem of teachers teaching different topics at each grade level in a term. That problem could be encountered when teaching a class whose teachers would be away from school. The practice of shared scheming is an

essential component of school life that features conspicuously in the principal's efforts to transform instruction (Spillane, 2006). It is, thus an important leadership activity that improved working relationships.

I also asked for Mrs Koni's views concerning the school environment at Bepura Primary School. She responded saying,

> *It is free. Our leaders are like parents to us. Even if I am at home, I would wish I were at work because they are not autocratic. The working environment is good. You are free when at work. We are not scared to go to the head or the deputy head and tell them when I am not feeling well. They are good leaders.*

Her view of the school environment was that it was free and conducive. She viewed the school leaders as having a parental attitude towards teachers, so much that teachers did not hesitate to approach the leaders to express their concerns. Such an instructional leadership practice where the school has a positive working environment enhances teaching and learning (Mestry, 2017). Mrs Koni's perception about the school concurred with that of Mrs Ndaba, the grade seven teacher who also perceived the school's working environment as conducive. By having a conducive environment at the school showed the principal's conformity to the dictates of the curriculum framework 2015 – 2022 which emphasised that principals had to provide positive teaching and learning environments in schools.

When I asked about working relations at the school, Mrs Koni said:

> *They are good. I can give an example of our Infants Department. Grade threes and fours seek assistance for their learners with reading or handwriting problems from the Infants Department. We can take the learners for two hours then they return to their classes. When making class displays some teachers may be good at drawing, we ask them for assistance such as in drawing the hydrological cycle. People help each other. When some teachers have gone, say for a workshop, we take over their children and teach them.*

Mrs Koni regarded work relations among teachers as cordial. She gave an example to qualify her perception. She pointed out that grade three and four teachers sometimes sought assistance from the Infants teachers when they encountered reading and handwriting challenges among learners and were readily assisted. She also pointed out that they were also assisted by those teachers who were competent in making teaching and learning aids, especially where it involved drawing of pictures. Mrs Ndaba agreed with Mrs Koni that a family like environment existed at the school. She also concurred with Mrs Koni on the distribution of learners to other teachers when their

class teachers were absent. Such a culture at a school suggested that teachers were at each other's service. It is also a signal of effective leadership where the leader promotes healthy working relations among teachers.

There was an agreement among the teachers that work relations at Bepura Primary School were cordial, hence contributing to effective teaching and learning. Concerning the aspect of the working environment at the school, the teachers at Bepura Primary School regarded their work environment as conducive thus showing a similarity to teachers at Matanga Primary School who were not involved in double sessions. Those affected by double sessions were not very happy about the arrangement hence regarded their school environment as not very conducive.

4.3.5 Staff development at Bepura Primary School

The School Administration Handbook (1993) encourages school principals to staff develop or to decide for teachers to be staff developed. I, therefore, asked whether Mr Shama staff developed or decided for teachers to be staff developed at Bepura Primary School. His response was that he staff developed his teachers. I further asked how they came up with the activities for staff development to which he said,

> *It comes from the heads of committees and in addition from the administration team depending on issues to be addressed. If it is feedback of information from workshops that we would have attended, that session would be from the administration team. If there are teachers who would have attended workshops other than us, then staff development would come from those who would have gone for the workshops.*

A collaboration existed between committees and the administration team in coming up with staff development activities at the school. Committees had opportunities to contribute topics through committee leaders and in addition, teachers had the opportunity to staff develop others. The practice portrayed the principal's interest in distributing instructional leadership. By having the administration team staff developing teachers indicated the enactment of instructional leadership at the school. The aspect of having feedback sessions from workshops attended outside the school suggested that the principal was a leader who kept teachers updated with current information. Beverborg *et al.* (2015) advocate that staff developing teachers improved their instructional practice and ultimately learner performance. This, therefore, points at the focus the principal had towards the staff development of teachers at Bepura Primary School and the subsequent benefit this had on learners.

When I asked about the frequency at which the staff development activities were held at the school, he said:

> *Nowadays, there are a lot of new things that we are doing so we do not have a clear-cut calendar for workshops, but we have many. The last staff development meetings we had were on the teaching of Physical Education and content reviewing of a new Shona textbook to find its suitability with the curriculum. Syllabus interpretation is one of the things we constantly look at because we want teachers to teach using syllabuses not textbooks. I usually do not facilitate, but if need arises, I will participate and advise accordingly. This is to staff develop juniors so that they have confidence in presenting.*

Though a calendar of staff development activities was not available, records showed that two workshops had been held in the previous term. The frequency of workshops was also highlighted by Mrs Ndaba who pointed out that the school normally had one or two workshops a term. It emerged in the interview that teachers also facilitated in staff development activities while the principal joined as a participant. This was meant to develop teachers for leadership positions. This practice indicated the principals' willingness to distribute leadership and to nurture teachers as they engage in leadership activities.

The records of the workshops indicated that all staff members attended the staff development meetings and that they were successful. One workshop that was held during my visits to the school was on COVID-19 awareness which was facilitated by the health master and the principal. These two had attended a workshop outside the school, thus they were in turn staff developing others. An important leadership activity was the involvement of a teacher in staff developing others. The principal showed interest in sharing leadership tasks with staff members.

To find out about teachers' views I began by asking Mrs Ndaba about opportunities for staff development at the school and she said:

> *Normally, once, or twice a term, we have some workshops in the school. We have people who go for workshops and when they come back, they give us feedback. At times we are given the honour to come up with some topics for workshops from what we would have observed from our teaching and say this needs staff development. The deputy head then draws up a programme for the whole year. At times certain issues crop up. These may overshadow whatever would have been planned because of their importance, so, we attend to those first.*

The quote indicates that staff development activities took place at Bepura Primary School. It indicated the principal's conformity to the Ministry's Administration Handbook (1993) which instructs school principals to promote staff development activities in the schools. It also indicated

the principal's enactment of instructional leadership in the school. She also pointed out that feedback meetings were conducted at the school where teachers were apprised of experiences obtained by those who would have attended meetings or workshops outside the school. These served to inform members of new developments in the education system. The practice of having feedback meetings portrayed the enactment of distributed leadership since the teachers who would have attended the outside school workshops would staff develop others. Instead of reporting back to the principal only, the feedback meetings were also held with teachers, with those who attended the outside meetings or workshops leading the process, thus indicating distributed instructional leadership.

The indication that teachers had the opportunity to contribute topics for staff development suggested distributed leadership. It signalled the principal's desire to involve teachers in highlighting problems that teachers encountered at their work. Rather it appears that the principal enabled teachers to present their challenges on their own. The suggested topics for staff development were later consolidated into one document that outlined the training programme for the whole year. This, she indicated, was not cast in stone since some important events could crop up that could overtake the lined-up staff development programme. An example that I noted was the school-based workshop on COVID-19 awareness. It was not among the topics listed for staff development, but due to its seriousness it was given first preference. The ability to make judgements by the principal on what to give first preference as indicated by the COVID-19 workshop signalled effective leaders bound on promoting the growth of schools. The frequency with which staff development activities were conducted at the school was also upheld by Mr Ngata. His response corresponded to that of Mrs Ndaba that workshops at the school were conducted once or twice a term.

I was also interested to hear Mr Ngata's views about staff development at their school. Here is how he responded,

> *One or two workshops are done at the school and at times we have teachers reporting back on workshops they would have attended. As for sport, I attended various meetings outside the school on the teaching of Physical Education, coaching clinics for soccer, athletics, and meetings for sports organisers, so I attend several sports workshops where I learn different activities about Physical Education and Sport.*

Mr Ngata's response indicated that staff development took place at the school. Report back meetings were also held at the school as indicated by Mr Ngata, thus showing the principal's enactment of instructional leadership. With the school's practice that teachers gave feedback of meetings and or workshops they would have attended outside the school suggested the principals interest in sharing knowledge.

Mr Ngata showed his passion for Physical Education and sporting activities through citing examples of his area of expertise and the staff development he went through. It appeared there was much activity in the sporting area in terms of meetings and workshops. These appeared effective since Mr Ngata acknowledged having benefited from them. There was a concurrence on the frequency with which staff development workshops were conducted at the school between Mrs Ndaba, Mr Ngata, and the information in the minute books. I experienced one which was on COVID-19 awareness that was conducted at the school. Such practice indicated the principal's enactment of instructional leadership at the school.

Though Mr Ngata had challenges with teachers' reluctance to release learners for Physical Education lessons and sporting activities when he wanted them, he had developed a positive attitude towards the school principal concerning staff development. He indicated this when he said,

> *He* (The principal) *is very supportive and wants me to go far with sport. If I say I want to attend a coaching clinic outside the school, he supports it.*

Mr Ngata acknowledged the support he got from the principal in relation to staff development. He pointed out that the principal supported his efforts for staff development. It could have been that the principal saw the potential in him to develop to greater heights in sport, thus the support for him to attend workshops outside the school. Through my prolonged stay at the school, I learnt that in the 2019 athletics competitions, the school had twenty athletes who went for the provincial competitions and the same year his soccer team ended up at provincial level. This achievement could have been the reason for an improved perception of him by other teachers and the principal. Mr Ngata's indication of the principal's support for teachers was echoed by Mrs Ndaba who said,

> *He* (The principal*) has a lot on his hands. Here and there he comes in for five or so minutes to see whether we will be working. He supports us. The school is big, it is three schools in one.*

Mrs Ndaba's statement indicated that Bepura Primary School was a big school resulting in the principal having a busy schedule. However, despite that he supported teachers. This was a confirmation of Mr Ngata's statement that the principal supported him when he wanted to attend workshops outside the school.

Mrs Koni had this to say in relation to staff development at Bepura Primary School,

> *We staff develop each other as Infants teachers and as Junior teachers then another week we may meet as both Infants and Junior teachers with a topic that is important to the two groups. Someone would present then we discuss. We learn a lot from the staff development activities.*

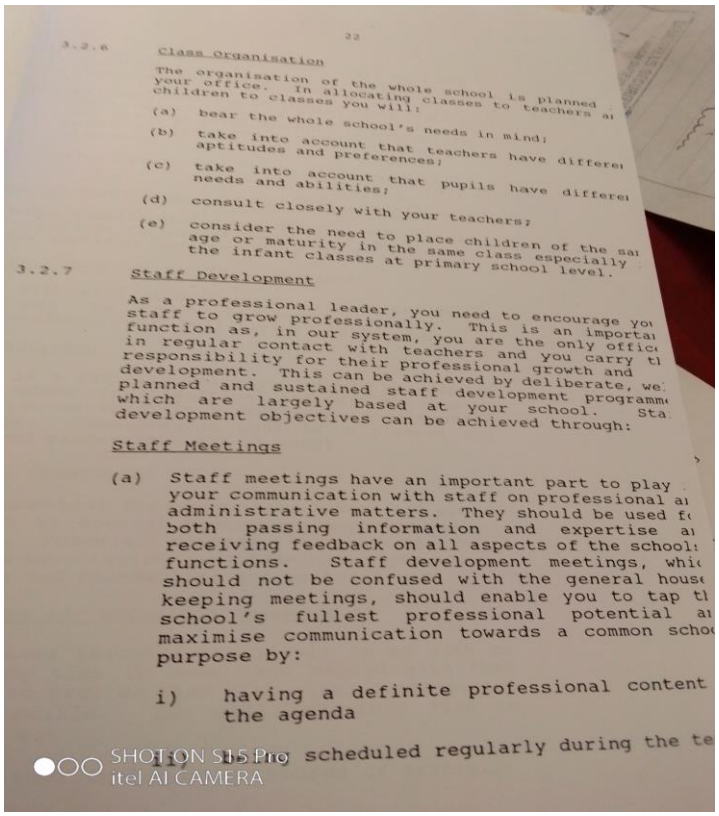
A practice of targeted staff development was highlighted in the quote, where the Infants Department and the Junior Department held separate staff development sessions and a combined session only when there was a common agenda. This was an effective staff development practice since only concerned people attended the training sessions. The records of the staff development activities I analysed showed more recordings of targeted staff development than those meant for the whole school. When probed on why there were more recordings of staff development activities in the Infants Department when compared to the Junior Department, Mrs Koni responded saying,

> *The little ones need careful handling, especially the ECD A class who are starting school for the first time. As the Infants Department that's where we introduce reading and writing and if a child fails to master at this stage, they will face challenges at grade three level. So, we have various staff development workshops in the department to conscientise each other on the best ways of handling the little ones.*

The explanation indicated the critical attention needed by the children in the Infants Department. So, to always remain effective to the department, varied staff development activities were held. It meant that more attention was needed for the children in the Infants Department when compared to those in the Junior Department. This explained why I noticed more records of staff development activities from the Infants Department than from the Juniors.

An important thing I noted about the targeted staff development activities was the prevalence of distributed instructional leadership. By staff developing each other in the departments signalled shared leadership. Authority was given to teacher leaders in the departments by the principal, hence the trainings. With a record number of 58 teachers, the school was big. No wonder why Mrs Ndaba said the school was "… *three schools in one,"* in relation to its size. It stands to

reason that for effective teacher development, and because of the size of the school, the principal had to distribute leadership to other staff members. Bellibas and Liu (2017) advocate that it is characteristic of instructional leaders to avail opportunities to teachers for continued professional development, thus I can label the principal at Bepura Primary School an instructional leader who supported the staff development of teachers and by so doing conformed to the dictates of Ministry Administration Handbook (1993) (see under the topic staff development in Figure 4.3 below).



3.2.6 Class Organisation

The organisation of the whole school is planned your office. In allocating classes to teachers a children to classes you will:

(a) bear the whole school's needs in mind;

(b) take into account that teachers have differe aptitudes and preferences;

(c) take into account that pupils have differe needs and abilities;

(d) consult closely with your teachers;

(e) consider the need to place children of the sa age or maturity in the same class especially the infant classes at primary school level.

3.2.7 Staff Development

As a professional leader, you need to encourage yo staff to grow professionally. This is an importa function as, in our system, you are the only offic in regular contact with teachers and you carry t responsibility for their professional growth and development. This can be achieved by deliberate, we planned and sustained staff development programm which are largely based at your school. Sta development objectives can be achieved through:

Staff Meetings

(a) Staff meetings have an important part to play your communication with staff on professional a administrative matters. They should be used f both passing information and expertise a receiving feedback on all aspects of the school functions. Staff development meetings, whi should not be confused with the general hous keeping meetings, should enable you to tap t school's fullest professional potential a maximise communication towards a common scho purpose by:

i) having a definite professional content the agenda

ii) be scheduled regularly during the te

SHOT ON S15 Pro
itel AI CAMERA

Figure 4.3: A page from a Ministry document emphasising staff development

4.3.6 Opportunities for leadership

Spillane (2005) points out that principals do not lead schools to greater heights as lone individuals, but that various individuals are involved. In line with this, Spillane (2009) states that staff members are seen to play central roles in the workday of the principal as they takeover some responsibilities to some activities done at the school, thus indicating the involvement of other staff members in instructional leadership activities at the school. To find out whether the principal made available leadership opportunities for teachers at Bepura Primary School, I asked Mr Shama who, after a pause said:

> *We do because leadership is not only about leading teachers. It also involves leading children in various disciplines. We have got co-curricular disciplines*

where teachers are in charge, so yes, we do. As I have said we have chairpersons in different committees, so leadership positions exist for teachers.

The principal's perception of leadership appeared to have been, a leader is a leader irrespective of leading teachers or learners. The principal indicated that leadership opportunities existed in the school since teachers led different co-curriculum activities, thus suggesting distributed leadership. He reiterated the existence of committees, thus suggesting leadership opportunities for the teachers in the school.

When I asked how teachers were allocated to the leadership positions he said,

We assign based on the teachers' flair, those that are keen in health, catering, sport, gymnastics, chess, girl guides, we assign them to those. As for committees, teachers choose areas they are interested in then others join them. We have the examinations committee, subject committees, welfare committee, sports committee, and the catering committee.

Co-curricular activities pointed out by the principal were made up of different categories led by different teachers, thus providing teachers with opportunities to lead. The teachers' interest in a discipline took centre stage in deciding an area they were allocated to. It thus showed that teachers were not just allocated to a discipline, it appeared the teachers had to display interest in the areas first then be allocated to a discipline. As for committees, teachers joined basing on their choice. The different committees at the school suggested the principal's interest in stretching leadership to other teachers.

Teachers' responses

Concerning her perceptions about the principal's interest in distributing leadership to other members, Mrs Ndaba said,

I do not think he holds everything to himself. He is very liberal. He normally uses committees. There are committees which encompass the deputy head, the TIC, the head and other senior teachers in the school. He does not do things on his own. Though here and there he can just point out that this must be done by so and so because time may not be available for him to have a meeting. Normally it is an all-agreed thing.

Mrs Ndaba's view about the principal appeared to be that of a leader with an interest in shared responsibilities. Her perception seemed to have been distributed leadership since the principal worked with committees that were at the school. She had a conviction that he did not hold things to himself without sharing since she regarded him as a liberal person. The use of committees at

the school was also highlighted by the principal when he pointed out that staff development topics came from heads of committees and the administration team. This suggested distributed leadership.

Though the principal worked along with committees, Mrs Ndaba was quick to point out that he sometimes used his authority to get work done especially on urgent matters. Besides that, the principal consulted the administration team and the committee leaders who represented the other staff members. This suggested the principal's interest in working along with staff members. In line with teachers' perceptions about leadership opportunities at the school, Mr Ngata also pointed out that the principal was such a leader who involved other members in instructional leadership activities.

Cole (2004) advocates that two heads are better than one, thus suggesting that shared instructional leadership activities benefit schools more than when done by a sole leader. When different people work on a task, they are likely to bring in different ideas that benefit learners. Mrs Ndaba was the chairperson of the discipline and entertainment committees. Being the leader of these committees indicated distributed leadership enacted in the school. I asked how she landed the two posts to which she responded saying,

> *I was approached by the leadership of the school saying, can you do this for us. Maybe it was because of my track record. I was once in leadership before, so I think they saw that I was a better candidate for the position. At times they approach a teacher, or you are voted in by other members.*

The quote appears to suggest that there are some school-based posts the leadership team considers sensitive to the school that they request some members to lead them instead of the usual trend of teachers volunteering. Mrs Ndaba explained that she was asked by the leadership team to lead the two posts. She believed her previous experience of being in the leadership position in her previous school could have made the principal and his team consider her as the ideal person for the posts. This practice aligns well with the principal's statement that teachers were appointed to varied disciplines based on their flair, thus Mrs Ndaba was regarded as being capable and appointed to lead the two posts. This indicated the principal's participation in instructional leadership activities and the acknowledgement of talent in teachers.

To learn more about the situation at Bepura Primary School in relation to the principal's interest in distributing leadership to other members, I asked Mr Ngata who responded saying,

> *The head delegates various activities to teachers. At this school if you say you want to see the medic of the school you will be shown, you will not be asked to go to the head. Even if you go to the head asking for some medication, he will ask whether you would have seen the school medic. He delegates to teachers. We can only go to the head maybe when there is a disagreement between teachers, otherwise the head will ask whether you would have seen the one in charge of the discipline first because he delegates. Even if he is absent, you would think that he is around because everything would be moving smoothly.*

Mr Ngata explained that the principal delegated varied activities to teachers, an indication that teachers took responsibility of some instructional leadership activities done at the school. The practice of delegating responsibility to teachers signalled that it was impossible for the principal to effectively carry out all leadership tasks as a lone individual. To stress the point that the principal distributed leadership to other members, Mr Ngata cited the medic and discipline as examples. He further gave an example that business went on as usual even when the principal was not at the school. This indicated that teachers took care of their responsibilities irrespective of being supervised or not. Since the principal preached about excellence and the set 91% pass rate, it seemed the teachers had a yardstick they measured themselves against, so they had to do their work irrespective of whether the principal was present or not. This might lead to Mr Ngata's comment that everything went on smoothly even when the principal was not at school. A sense of dedication to duty appeared to have been ingrained in teachers.

Through further probing, Mr Ngata revealed that the principal made use of committees in his leadership. He said,

> *We have different committees here whose chairpersons have different responsibilities. When in meetings, the chairpersons are given time to report progress of their committees and they also contribute agenda items for meetings. These chairpersons can call for meetings with their members if they want to discuss something about their tasks.*

Mr Ngata's statement was an indication that the principal shared some responsibilities with teachers through working with chairpersons of committees. Through having responsibilities in the school, it meant the chairpersons played a part in the leadership of the school. School records of meetings held in the past showed the contributions the committee chairpersons made to the meetings as they gave reports about their committee achievements. This practice suggested that the principal could not effectively lead all activities at the school alone, hence the involvement of other members in instructional leadership activities. Tian and Risku (2019) emphasise that leadership in schools is more effective when distributed among teachers with different skills and

experiences. They further point out that these instructional leadership teams, the committees, can drive for constructive change in schools.

To get a deep insight about leadership opportunities at Bepura Primary school, I also asked Mrs Koni who responded saying:

> *He* (The principal) *is a person who distributes duties. There are committees such as health, examination, disciplinary committees. These committees help him in running the school. He allows every teacher to be part of these committees. It's unlike in other schools where the head runs everything. The committees rotate every year. If this year, one is in the exam committee next year he/she will be in another committee.*

The principal's strategy of using of committees in his leadership was reiterated by participants thereby implying involvement of other staff members in school leadership activities. This practice suggests an acknowledgement and the tapping of crucial skills in teachers by the principal. Mrs Koni's quote concurred with Mrs Ndaba's comment that the principal was someone who did not regard himself as a know-it-all, he made use of committees in his leadership. On another note, Mr Ngata also pointed out that the principal delegated varied tasks to teachers. Hence the teachers agreed that the principal availed leadership opportunities to teachers at the school. The quote is in line with Hughes and Pickerel's (2013) comment that principals need to engage other staff members in their leadership activities.

A characteristic feature about membership of a committee was that it was not permanent but lasted for a year. When I probed further about this rotational practice, she said,

> *The principal wants to give every member an opportunity for leadership and to avoid some individuals overstaying in one committee. Also, some members were being idle in committees and were being covered up by others. He wants all members to be active, so membership of a committee changes after a year.*

An important instructional leadership practice noted here was the nurturing of leadership talents in teachers through rotational committee leadership. The practice encouraged active participation by all members and the removal of monopoly by committee leaders if they overstayed in a committee for more than a year. An important aspect about this rotational practice was that it gave different teachers an opportunity to hold leadership posts.

4.3.7 Class allocation at Bepura Primary School

In Zimbabwe, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) allocates teachers to public schools according to school requests. It is then at the schools that the teachers are allocated a grade to teach. How this is done depends on the leadership and the staffing position at each school. It is, therefore, at school level that decisions are made on what grade each teacher is allocated to teach. Bepura Primary School is one of those schools which received teachers from the Ministry and with class allocation done at the school. It is one of those schools the DSI recommended to me for my study because of its instructional leadership practices. I began by asking how classes were allocated at Bepura Primary School to which Mr Shama responded saying:

> *We assign classes to teachers based on ability to teach. Every term we write examinations, and the test results are published. When we look at the test results, we can see how one performed and compare with what we would have got during lesson observations. The new teachers, we give them grades four and five because we hope that the children can be uplifted at grade six. So, it is on an individual teacher's ability.*

Mr Shama clarified that a teacher's ability to teach was their yardstick when allocating classes to teachers. Other factors also considered when allocating classes were test results, teachers' performance, outcomes of lesson observations and teachers' experience at the job. The school allocated novice teachers to middle grades, four and five. The idea behind was novice teachers were inexperienced people, thus in case of poor performance by a teacher, the class would be allocated to an experienced teacher at grade six. The practice of allocating new teachers to lower grades is congruent to Sukirno and Siengthai's (2011) belief that schools whose teachers have more than five years of teaching experience do perform better than those with less than five years' teaching experience. The practice corresponds with the dictates of the School Administration Handbook (1993) which encouraged more supervision of novice teachers than seasoned teachers, due to the differences in their experience at the job. It suggests that novice teachers learn more about their job as they grow in the profession, thus the principals begin by giving them lower grades. Vikaraman *et al.* (2017) are in support as they say new teachers need to be professionally developed as they will be new to the profession, school and to the classrooms. They further emphasise the need for a strong support of new teachers through providing them with sufficient resources, constant supervision and making available positive working environments. This indicates that such teachers need assistance in their early years in classroom instruction. This, it appeared, is another assistance they were given by the principal of

being given junior grades rather than examination classes. The strategy employed by the principal in allocating classes was echoed by Mrs Koni who stated that the principal allocated classes according to a person's strength in teaching a particular grade. The principal's statement "*We assign classes …"* indicated the involvement of the administration team, thus indicating a shared leadership activity.

The strategy employed by Mr Shama in allocating classes appeared to be effective. This was depicted by his comment where he said,

> *It has been effective because those that we assign to grade six and seven, have done well for the school except one year when we performed badly in 2017 when our pass rate was 89%. We had never had a pass rate below 90% and we had to make a few changes.*

The principal commended grades six and seven teachers for having performed well and obtaining higher pass rates when compared to that of 2017 which he regarded as the school's worst pass rate. This leadership characteristic by effective leaders of acknowledging teacher efforts positively influences their sentiments (Lambersky, 2016). This suggested Mr Shama's enactment of instructional leadership where he analysed the school pass rate and made changes to grades six and seven teachers. Such actions by Mr Shama indicated his instructional leadership role.

Mr Shama's interest appeared to be on having a high pass rate. This was evident when he talked about a benchmark having been set by his predecessor; thus, he did not want to have pass rates below that mark. His remark was,

> *The teachers are committed and when we have our opening meetings we always talk of excellence. We guide everyone towards excellence in all things that we do. Before us, the school had a pass rate of 91% so that is what we are trying to follow and maintain.*

The quote suggests a principal interested in excellent performance to beat or maintain the 91% benchmark. This was the precedent that was set by the former principal hence he wanted to maintain that mark or surpass it. I could see why he was very particular about 2017, the pass rate was lower than the 91% mark, thus the changes in the allocation of classes.

I also asked Mrs Ndaba about class allocation at Bepura Primary School. She responded by explaining how she came to have the class she was teaching. She said,

> *It is a long story, when I came here four years ago, it was a swap with a lady who was in grade four. She wanted to join her husband in the Nomro area. I was coming from Nomro Primary School. When I came here, I just took over the grade four class. So, normally when you are new you are tempted with deep waters. I was allowed to take my class to grade five, six then now I have it in grade seven.*

It appeared the school had a practice where teachers who transferred through a swap would take up the class left by the leaving teacher, hence Mrs Ndaba swapped with a grade four teacher and had to take grade four. Her performance enabled her to proceed to the next grade with her class up to grade seven level. Grade six and seven classes were allocated to high performing teachers as indicated by the principal when he talked about allocating classes to teachers based on their ability to teach. It, therefore, suggests that Mrs Ndaba was a hard-working teacher who managed to move from grade four to seven with her class. The principal focused on the performance of the school thus, he allocated classes to teachers after careful consideration of their ability to teach. Her documentation had detail and were always up to date. Learners' work was marked, and comment written. She had passion for her job as displayed by her preparedness for her lessons. Her statement, where she lamented young teachers' attitudes towards teaching as compared to the attitudes of those of her age, indicated that she had passion in teaching despite the level of remuneration. By being allowed to take her class to grade seven was enough proof that she did her job well. It suggested a leadership strategy by the principal where he identified talent and utilised it for the benefit of the learners.

Since she had explained how she ended up in grade seven, the grade she was currently teaching, I further probed to find out how other teachers were allocated classes to teach. She responded saying,

> *Class allocation is done by the principal with the assistance of the vice principal and the TIC. They normally use a class teacher's performance record and the test results of their classes.*

The quote suggests that class allocation was a collaborative activity between the principal, the vice principal, and the TIC. Teachers were allocated classes basing on their performance and test results of their classes. Mrs Ndaba's statement concurred with that by the principal on class allocation that they allocated classes according to teachers' performance and test results of their classes. This indicated that the supervisory team collaboratively allocated classes to teachers.
When I asked Mr Ngata on how class allocation was done at the school, he responded by referring to himself first then the other teachers. He said,

> *I teach Physical Education, that's my area. When I came here, I was told by the head that I would teach Physical Education from grade one to seven. As for the other classes, teachers write down their choices and send to the head. The head, the deputy and the TIC then allocate classes using the end of the year test results. The head would then announce the final allocation.*

Mr Ngata had much interest in his area. He started by explaining how he was allocated classes to teach. It was the head who informed him that he was to teach Physical Education from grade one to seven. From his explanation, it appeared that there was room for teachers to make a choice of a grade to teach. However, it was upon the principal, the vice, and the TIC on who they would allocate classes to basing on the teachers' class results. The teachers could either get their choices or not. This was solely depended on the supervisory team.

An important practice in this instructional leadership activity was the involvement of the vice principal and the TIC in the allocation of classes. The roles they played in assisting the principal to allocate classes indicate their importance in the principal's workday. It was also an acknowledgement by the principal of the crucial role the vice principal and the TIC played in the school leadership activities that he involved them in class allocation.

Bepura Primary School had its benchmark pegged at 91% pass rate and above, of which anything below this was a low pass rate. In 2017, the school had a pass rate of 89% and the principal reshuffled teachers because of this pass rate. This action suggested that to have a high pass rate, class allocation had to be done diligently. I asked Mrs Koni the same question I had asked the others and she responded with a happy face that she was teaching a grade of her choice. She explained further saying:

> *The head asks teachers to write down the grades they want to teach. If the head sees that a person's strength is for grade three or four, he assigns the teacher to where his/her strength is. At times you can be assigned to a grade of your choice, and he would say I want you to teach and prove yourself. That's how I came to teach grade one.*

Mrs Koni's response indicated the possibility that teachers could be allocated to grades of their choice depending on the principal's evaluation of a teacher's strength in the teaching process. When teachers' grade choice coincided with the principal's positive consideration that they had the strength to teach the grade they would have selected, they were always allocated to those grades. By asking teachers to prove their worth when allocated a class to teach signified the principal's focus on pass rates. In fact, this was a hidden push on teachers to work hard to

produce good results and meet or surpass the 91% target. However, I discovered that the principal's instructional leadership practice of allowing teachers to indicate a grade of their choice was in concurrence with the dictates of the Ministry of Education and Culture Zimbabwe Handbook (1993) which stated that the principal had to closely consult with teachers in class allocation because of the different preferences and abilities of teachers.

I further asked whether the head allocated classes on his own since her response indicated that it was the head who asked teachers to write down class choices and allocated classes. She explained saying:

> *They sit and discuss who to allocate to what grade and class. When it comes to telling teachers, it is the head who does that. He may call one or two teachers to his office and ask them to work hard but in most cases, he just tells people to check the class allocation list on the noticeboard and that people need to prepare work for the allocated classes. He does this in the end of year meeting.*

Her explanation made it clear that class allocation was done by the supervisory team and that the announcement to teachers was done by the principal. It was evident from her explanation that the principal encouraged some teachers to work hard in the classes allocated to them. Most of the teachers had to check on the noticeboard for their names and classes allocated to them. The explanation portrayed the instructional leadership activities enacted by the principal in the school.

4.3.8 Closing Bepura Primary School participants' stories

Mr Shama was an instructional leader who had a focus on maintaining high performance at Bepura Primary School as indicated by a reshuffling of teachers at grade six and seven in 2017 after the school obtained a pass rate of 89% which was below their benchmark of 91%. He was a leader with a focus which made him provide facilities for teachers to use to make their job lighter. The innovations he made at the school appeared to have greatly contributed to Bepura Primary School being a conducive workplace. The provision of a photocopier, Internet, specialist teachers all made the teachers' work lighter. As a leader with a vision, having specialised teachers contributed to improved school performance and ultimately to high pass rates since specialist teachers took over those subjects that were normally not given much attention by teachers. His wide experience in the education system contributed much to his instructional leadership practice. As he had been in the education system for some time, he appeared to

understand teachers, hence he allowed them to explore to broaden their instructional knowledge. He worked along with committees, hence enacting distributed instructional leadership.

Mrs Ndaba's background details and the context in which she worked suggested that she was a hard worker. Her participation in the crafting of the school specific vision was evidence that the school encouraged collaboration among teachers. Records indicated that she was a hard-working teacher who managed to progress from grade four to seven with the same class. Getting to teach a grade seven class at Bepura Primary School was not meant for mediocre teachers, thus indicating that she was one among those who worked hard.

Mr Ngata appeared very dedicated to his work despite encountering some challenges at his job. Despite the challenges, the results of his efforts made other workmates change their perceptions of him, and resultantly their attitudes towards sporting activities. The introduction of the specialist teacher into the school was seen to ease the teaching load of teachers. This was an important instructional leadership activity enacted by the principal in the school. Besides reducing the workload, it was a practical way of attaining their vision of being a flagship in academic circles and in sport. Mr Ngata saw the principal working with committees and delegating responsibilities, thus was a leader who involved other members in instructional leadership activities.

Interactions with Mrs Koni and observing her at her work showed that she was happy teaching a class of her choice. She saw the instructional leadership practices at the school very effective since they made the school environment conducive. The feedback from her supervisor, the staff development activities contributed to enhancing her professionalism. Though she did not hold a leadership post at the time of visit, she was quite positive about the leadership practice at the school where the leadership of committees rotated, it gave all teachers an opportunity to practice leadership. The acknowledgement that class allocation was a shared activity by the supervisory team suggested the enactment of distributed instructional leadership.

4.4 REPORTS FROM CHRIM PRIMARY SCHOOL

An overview of the school

Chrim (pseudonym) Primary School is a private school with classes from Early Childhood Development (ECD) A, ECD B then grade one to seven. It was started in 2000 by Mrs Grace

(pseudonym) who is the Director of the school. The history of the school states that she started the school after having failed to secure a place for her grade one daughter at a reputable private school of her choice. Armed with the desire to provide her daughter with the best primary school education, she decided to establish a school with world class standards. She started operating as an ECD centre at her home for about four years. She then applied for land to build a school from the local authority and was given. She then started a school in 2009. The school is a formal, co-educational, non-denominational private school that provides primary education services to children of all races and nationalities. It has nine double classroom blocks that sit on 3,5 hectares of land in the heart of a low-density area. The school uses borehole water for its sanitary and drinking purposes. A durawall along its boundary boarders it with the outside community. Today the school is an established learning provider of primary school education. Even though it is a private school, its curriculum is based on the dictates of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE). It has a board of governors who are part time members, a school principal who is a full-time member of the school, the founder as the director and a Parents Teachers Association (PTA) that link the school to the community. The principal is responsible for all curriculum issues and links with parents and the board of governors. It is the smallest school among the three I engaged in my study. The school has a history of producing a 100% pass rate. The principal (school head) and three teachers participated in my study. The principal was Mr Kanyo, and the three teachers were Mr Nyika, Mr Hasva and Ms Manaki (all pseudonyms).

4.4.1 Background information for Mr Kanyo and the teachers

Mr Kanyo is the principal for Chrim Primary School. He retired as a principal from the Public Service Commission after reaching the retirement age of sixty-five. He was then hired by the private school as the school's principal. He has wide experience in the school system. He started by being a teacher, then a vice principal and later a principal. He has 28 years' experience as a principal. He once taught in Botswana for five years then returned to Zimbabwe. His wide experience in the education field earned him the role of principal at Chrim Primary School. He holds a Certificate in Education and a Bachelor's degree in Education Management. The school had a staff complement of eleven teachers and 250 learners. The wide experience Mr Kanyo had, and his leadership prowess contributed to the high performance of teachers at Chrim Primary School. He is one of the principals the District Schools Inspector recommended to me as an effective school principal at whose school I could conduct my study. This was revealed when I visited the district office seeking permission to visit schools and to find out information about the

schools. Besides Mr Kanyo, three teachers in the names of Mr Nyika, Mr Hasva and Ms Manaki participated in my study.

Mr Nyika is a seasoned 60-year-old teacher whose teaching experience spans over 30 years. He holds a Certificate in Education in primary school teaching and a Bachelor of Education degree in Education Management. He was the senior teacher at Chrim Primary School during the time of my visit. He has been at the school for the past seven years and has taught different grades during his stay. During the time of my visit, he was teaching grade five. He was the second oldest and most experienced teacher at the school after Mr Kanyo.

Mr Hasva is an Agriculture specialist teacher who teaches Agriculture from grade three to seven. He is just over thirty years old. He has been at Chrim Primary School for five years. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture. He is particularly an Agriculture person whose recruitment was based on his agriculture background. The school wanted someone who could teach as well as manage its fund-raising projects, thus he was recruited. Since the school is a private school, it was free to recruit teachers it wanted. Moreover, it is the school that pays its teachers' salaries. This is how he became the chairperson of the projects committee at the school. During my visits to the school, the projects were in good shape. There was a maize crop which looked healthy and there was work in progress with repairs to the fowl run being done and nearing completion. To acquire pedagogy, he was studying part time for a Post Graduate Diploma in Education with a local university.

Ms Manaki is slightly below thirty years old, and she taught grade three during the time of my visits. She holds a Diploma in Education as her highest qualification. She has been in the field for four years. Although she did not hold any post of formal special responsibility, she was a committee member in the social welfare committee. When she was still under training, she did her teaching practice at Chrim Primary School and was attached to another teacher. When the teacher transferred to another school she remained with the class as she was completing her training. After graduating she was offered employment at the same school. That is how she became a staff member at Chrim Primary School.

4.4.2 Visioning a private school

Allen *et al.* (2018) advocate that "Vision statements focus on the destination - where the school aims to go - whereas mission statements focus on the journey—how the school moves forward to

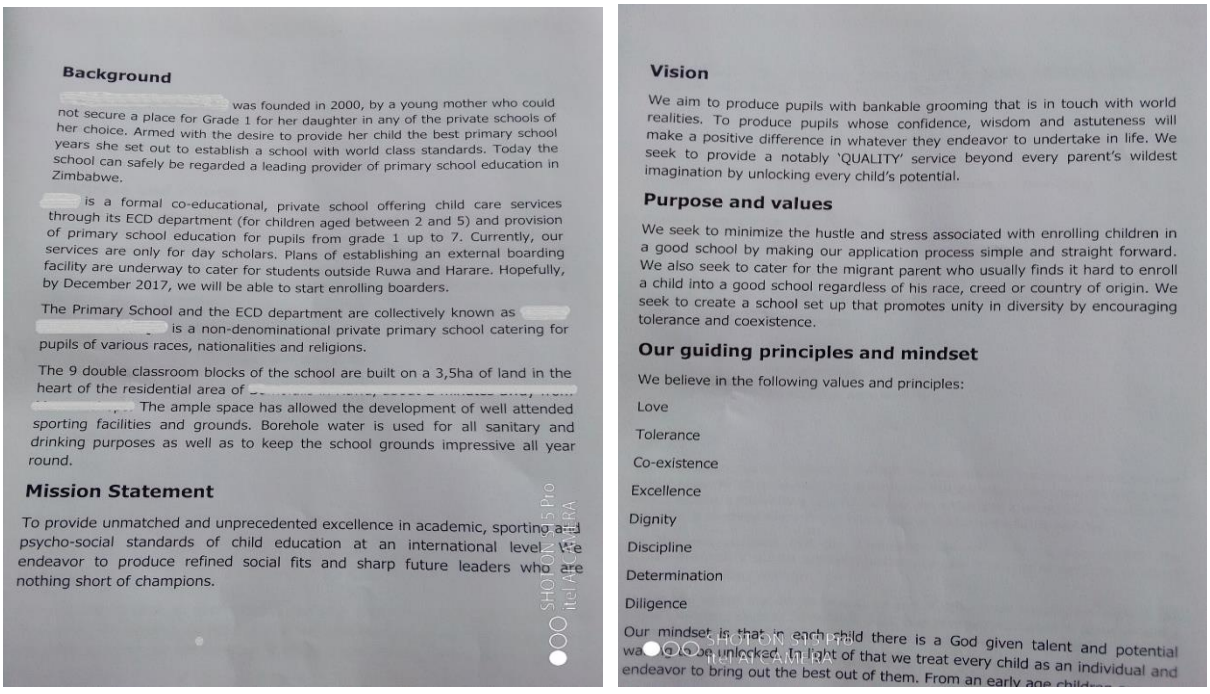
reach that vision." This implies that when in schools, members need to know where their school intends to go and how they will go there. For this to happen it means teachers are supposed to understand their vision. Murphy and Torre (2015) further point out that a school vision is a fundamental element in the improvement of schools. Turkoglu and Cansoy (2018) went on and stated that as instructional leaders, principals must have visions for their schools. With the afore statements expressing the importance of visions in schools, I looked around in the principal's office at Chrim Primary School in anticipation of seeing the school's vision statement displayed but did not find any. I, therefore, asked Mr Kanyo about what the school's vision was, and he responded saying: *To produce a child who will fit in the world as a global village.* He went further and said:

> *The school has its own vision and mission statements in addition to the Ministry vision and mission statements.*

He pointed out that the school vision pointed at the production of a product that could fit in the world. Since neither the school nor the Ministry vision were displayed, I probed further to find out why. He explained that the school office was under renovations, so displays had been pulled down. I noticed that the office was being repainted after the old paint had been scrapped off. I further asked how the school came up with its vision and mission and he said:

> *The one for the school was formulated by the Director and Founder of the school. She had her own vision, and she came up with the one we have.*

He showed me the school policy document which had the school vision (Figure 4.4).



Background

[redacted] was founded in 2000, by a young mother who could not secure a place for Grade 1 for her daughter in any of the private schools of her choice. Armed with the desire to provide her child the best primary school years she set out to establish a school with world class standards. Today the school can safely be regarded a leading provider of primary school education in Zimbabwe.

[redacted] is a formal co-educational, private school offering child care services through its ECD department (for children aged between 2 and 5) and provision of primary school education for pupils from grade 1 up to 7. Currently, our services are only for day scholars. Plans of establishing an external boarding facility are underway to cater for students outside Ruwa and Harare. Hopefully, by December 2017, we will be able to start enrolling boarders.

The Primary School and the ECD department are collectively known as [redacted] is a non-denominational private primary school catering for pupils of various races, nationalities and religions.

The 9 double classroom blocks of the school are built on a 3,5ha of land in the heart of the residential area of [redacted]. The ample space has allowed the development of well attended sporting facilities and grounds. Borehole water is used for all sanitary and drinking purposes as well as to keep the school grounds impressive all year round.

Mission Statement

To provide unmatched and unprecedented excellence in academic, sporting and psycho-social standards of child education at an international level. We endeavor to produce refined social fits and sharp future leaders who are nothing short of champions.

Vision

We aim to produce pupils with bankable grooming that is in touch with world realities. To produce pupils whose confidence, wisdom and astuteness will make a positive difference in whatever they endeavor to undertake in life. We seek to provide a notably 'QUALITY' service beyond every parent's wildest imagination by unlocking every child's potential.

Purpose and values

We seek to minimize the hustle and stress associated with enrolling children in a good school by making our application process simple and straight forward. We also seek to cater for the migrant parent who usually finds it hard to enroll a child into a good school regardless of his race, creed or country of origin. We seek to create a school set up that promotes unity in diversity by encouraging tolerance and coexistence.

Our guiding principles and mindset

We believe in the following values and principles:

Love
Tolerance
Co-existence
Excellence
Dignity
Discipline
Determination
Diligence

Our mindset is that in each child there is a God given talent and potential waiting to be unlocked. In light of that we treat every child as an individual and endeavor to bring out the best out of them. From an early age children

Figure 4.4: Chrim Primary School vision and mission statements

The principal indicated that it was the founder of the school who had created the vision of the school as indicated in the school policy document (Figure 4.4 above). The founder of the school had a vision which the school abided by. The vision stated by the principal was congruent with the one in the policy document, thus suggesting that the school abided by the policy of the school.

To further understand, I asked how receptive teachers were to a vision they did not create, and he said:

> *This is a private school. It has only one responsible authority and we try to work as a family as we have a mandate of fulfilling the vision. Once each member understands the vision and knows that they are part of a family, it will be easy to make them perform.*

The emphasis that the school was a private school with one responsible authority was enough an indication that staff members had to abide by the dictates of that authority. The school endeavoured to work as a family unit with a focus of attaining the set vision. The principal's conviction was that when members worked as a family unit and, in addition, understood the school vision, teachers' performance was likely to improve. Since he was the school leader, Aziz *et al*. (2017) emphasise that he had the responsibility to communicate the school vision and goals to teachers and other stakeholders.

From observations and discussions held with the participants, the principal was the second in command to the Director. The principal coordinated all instructional activities whereas infrastructural developments were coordinated by the director in consultation with the principal. Gungor and Aydin (2018) advocate that it is the principal's responsibility to interpret the goals of the school for the teachers. This keeps teachers focused on curriculum implementation. The principal in this case had an important responsibility in the school of accounting for the academic performance of the school and the realisation of the educational vision of the school and the country at large (Ghavifekr and Ibrahim, 2014).

An important aspect in the principal's quote was not who formulated the school vision, or that the principal and teachers were not part to the process of creating the vision. The crucial aspect was an understanding of who the authority was and the attainment of the school vision. Thus, to

achieve this were principal efforts for members to work as a coordinated unit. This appeared to have produced positive results since the school had a record of producing a 100% pass rate.

Teachers' responses

Teachers at Chrim Primary School did not participate in the formation of the school vision. I became interested to know whether they knew it. To find out, I began by asking Mr Nyika who responded saying:

> *We have a big role to play in making sure that we have achieved what we agreed on as teachers. So, teachers actually play an important role in making sure that the vision and mission statements are attained.*

In his response, Mr Nyika did not give the vision of the school, rather he explained what I suggest were his thoughts about what the vision meant. His statement appeared to show the school's expectations from teachers which, considering the stance of the principal, was to have a high performance by the school. What he was cognisant about was that teachers had a great role to play if the school vision and mission statements were to be achieved.

I further probed to find out what it was that they had agreed on and he said: *To maintain the pass rate of the school.* His response was very brief and somehow expressed the focus of the school principal, that of maintaining the high pass rate. From my analysis, it appeared the school concentrated more on academic work at the expense of other knowledge faculties such as the school vision. This perception was shared by Ms Manaki who pointed out that the mandate of the school was to produce good results, thus teachers aimed for that. It suggests that teachers concentrated more on making learners pass and maintain the school standard of achieving a hundred percent pass rate.

Gunawan (2017) advocates that principals refer to the school's vision and mission when developing a work programme for the school. He further goes on to say principals base on the school's vision when they direct teachers to implement learning that results in academic improvement in learners. With such an understanding and the response from Mr Nyika, I then became eager to know if the other teachers knew what a vision and their school vision were. I, therefore, asked Mr Hasva who responded saying,

> *The vision of the school is something that guides us, it determines what we are supposed to do at school. The vision and mission statements are meant to guide us.*

Though Mr Hasva appeared not very confident in responding to the question where he explained that the school vision gave guidance to teachers. It could have been that he was also thinking of the school vision as he was talking. Since he had not said the school vision, I thought he might not have heard my question, so I further asked him about what the school vision was. His response was:

> *I have forgotten the wording of the vision, but what I know is that it is about teachers maintaining the high pass rate at the school.*

My analysis from his responses was that more attention was given to learner academic outcomes rather than memorising the wording of the vision. This appeared to be the same scenario with Mr Nyika the senior teacher, who also could not recite the school vision in the first interview. Even though the principal was knowledgeable of the school vision, this was unlike Mr Nyika and Mr Hasva. I was interested in finding out whether the principal ever talked to teachers about the vision of the school and Mr Hasva said,

> *Here and there he talks about it in passing, like he says, we all need to focus on the school vision. What he talks about often is that when we are here at school, we should put our attention to the teaching and learning of children.*

Mr Hasva's view of the principal was that he talked more about learner academic outcomes than the school vision. Though the principal could have used the word vision less, it appeared by urging teachers to attend to their instructional activities for the benefit of learners, he worked towards the vision of the school. From the response, it was clear that constant conscientisation of teachers about the school vision was necessary.

I asked for Ms Manaki's understanding of a vision, and she gave a very brief response saying: *Integrity and expertise.* When I asked for an explanation on what she meant by that, she said,

> *Being honest and hard working to produce learners with high pass rates and maintain the school's standard of a 100% pass rate.*

From the quote it appeared the meaning of vision to her was hard work and the production of high learner academic results. What I learnt from her responses was that she did not fully understand what a vision was. What appeared important to her was the pass rate of the learners. When I asked her to state the school vision, she was honest and said she could not recite it off head but that she knew it was there. After realising that she lacked knowledge of the school vision, I asked how she contributed to the high pass rates at the school to which she said:

> *When I teach, my mandate is to produce good results, so I do everything I can, to help children so that I achieve the goal of the school as our mission directs us.*

Her response bares it all that her mandate was the production of good results. Since she indicated that she did all she could to achieve high pass rates, it appeared her focus was more on teaching her class to pass than anything else. Since the school wanted to maintain its 100% pass rate, it appeared she put all her efforts to ensuring that her class met the school standards. A characteristic feature I discovered about the teachers was that their focus was on maintaining the pass rates of their school.

4.4.3 Supervision of teachers at Chrim Primary School

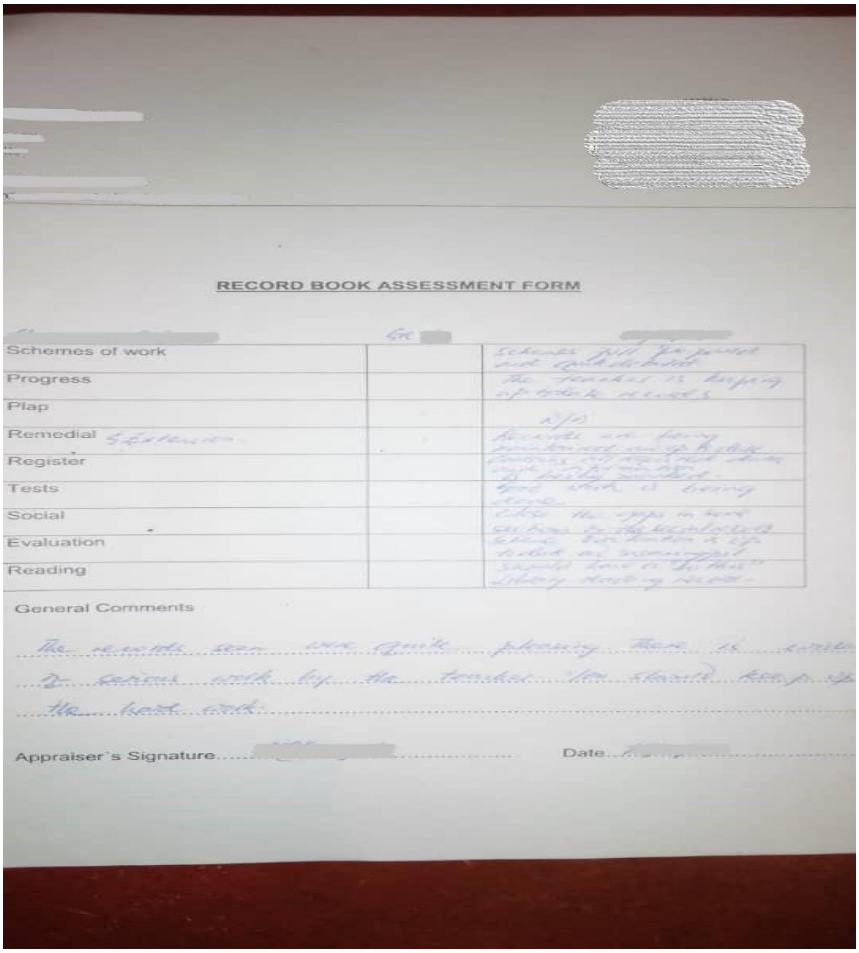
Aunga and Masare, (2017) encourage regular classroom visits by instructional leaders to have a direct observation of how work is done in classrooms and to understand classroom situations. Through this practice, principals would be able to give guidance to teachers for improved teacher and learner performance. To find out how this important instructional leadership activity was carried out at Chrim Primary School, I asked Mr Kanyo who said:

> *We have eleven classes here, so lesson observations are mostly done by the head and at times by the teacher in charge. Each teacher is observed at least three times a term.*

The quote indicated that lesson observations were mainly done by the principal and to a lesser extent by the TIC. This indicated conformity to the dictates of the Director's Circular Number 7 of 2003 which made it mandatory for principals to visit classes and supervise teachers and to have feedback sessions to round off the class visits. The school had eleven classes which made it possible for the principal to supervise all teachers. When I went over the file containing supervision reports, I discovered that there were reports on learners' exercise books, record books and narrative reports on lesson observations. There was a narrative report per term for each of the grade five, six and seven teachers, and for the others there were two or three reports plus book and record books assessment reports. Figure 4.5 shows an example of a record books report. Although the principal had indicated that he did three reports per teacher, my observation indicated seasoned teachers in grades five to seven were observed teaching only once a term and the other reports were on exercise books and record books. I asked Mr Kanyo about his statement that teachers were observed two to three times a term, he explained as follows:

> *Grades five to seven teachers are seasoned teachers, who have been at this school for more than five years. They know the standard of performance expected of them, so I usually focus on their scheme books, record books and learners' exercise books.*

The statement suggested that the principal knew the performance levels of teachers, so he supervised them accordingly. It appeared seasoned teachers did not require as much supervision as the other teachers, thus the variation in the number of assessment reports.



RECORD BOOK ASSESSMENT FORM

Schemes of work		
Progress		
Plap		
Remedial		
Register		
Tests		
Social		
Evaluation		
Reading		

General Comments

Appraiser's Signature..... Date.....

Figure 4.5: Record books assessment report

No mention was made of the vice principal supervising teachers, suggesting it was a role played by the principal. I asked for clarification on whether the school did not have a vice principal and he said,

> *We have, but because of the size of the school, the deputy head is a classroom teacher as well so mostly he stands in for the head when the head is away. We want him to be more effective in the classroom.*

The school had a vice principal who doubled up as a classroom practitioner. Thus, for effectiveness in the classroom, the vice principal concentrated more on his class than the supervisory practice. The vice principal, however, stood in for the principal when he was away from the station, hence enacting a leadership role. During my stay at the school, I never saw the vice principal supervising a class. When the principal was away, the vice principal would run the principal's office, but he never went to supervise teachers. Mr Nyika also confirmed that it was

the principal who mainly conducted lesson observations at the school and that this was done two to three times a term. On the aspect of feedback, Mr Kanyo said:

> *When I go for lesson observations, I give feedback to the teacher as soon as the observation is done, just a few minutes after the lesson. I give the highlights, the good and the not so good. Then, after writing a report we go through the report in detail with the teacher.*

The principal engaged in important instructional leadership activities where he supervised and gave feedback to teachers. His practice was to give feedback summarily after the lesson, though in brief, then a detailed discussion ensued where a narrative report was used. Mr Hasva, a specialist teacher at the school, concurred to how feedback was given by the principal. He reiterated that the principal commented about the lesson in brief just after the lesson then held detailed discussions after a day or two guided by a narrative report. Of importance was that the principal enacted important instructional leadership activities which Ghavifekr and Ibrahim (2014) laud when they point out that observing classroom teaching and giving teachers feedback contributed greatly to improved teacher performance.

Teachers' responses

Aunga and Masare (2017) further state that if schools are to achieve improved performance, principals must monitor the day-to-day classroom activities of teachers and correct anomalies if any. With that in mind and from what I had gathered from the principal, I now wanted to find out from teachers how supervision was carried out at Chrim Primary School, thus I started by asking Mr Nyika who responded saying:

> *The head conducts lesson observations. In some cases, he just goes into a classroom without even notifying the teacher just to see what the teacher would be doing. Then there are other lessons where the head notifies teachers that he would want to see a lesson, so the teacher(s) would prepare. So, there are some impromptu lesson observations and there are others that are planned.*

Mr Nyika's statement concurred with that by Mr Kanyo that it was the principal who mainly conducted lesson observations at the school. This was the principal's indication of the enactment of instructional leadership. The statement also revealed the principal's supervision strategy to assess teachers' level of performance. The principal had announced and unannounced visits to classrooms to assess teachers in session. As for the announced visits, teachers were informed of the principal's impending visit and that meant the teachers prepared for the principal's visit. Such visits resulted in narrative reports being written. In unannounced visits, principals just

visited classes without notifying the teachers. These were mainly routine checks to assess teacher activities in the classrooms. These activities suggested the enactment of instructional leadership by the principal. I further asked about the frequency of lesson observations and Mr Nyika said:

> *He normally comes two to three times a term for the planned ones. He may conduct two lesson observations and the third will be a book inspection, where he will see children's exercise books.*

Mr Nyika's statement on the frequency of lesson observations concurred with the number of times indicated by the principal. It appeared the principal varied his supervision mode by observing lessons twice and the third supervision being a book inspection, alternatively he could have all three being lesson observation visits. When I observed that the supervision reports in Mr Nyika's assessment file did not tally with what he had indicated, I asked him to find out why. He was quick to respond and said,

> *His standard is normally two to three times a term, but at times he may get busy and fail to come. He is not so fast with seasoned teachers but those new in the service and to the school. That is why I have few reports. In most cases he just passes through to assess whether learning is taking place without writing a report.*

A case of selective assessment was noted here where seasoned teachers were observed teaching a few times than novice teachers. It suggested the principal's conviction that seasoned teachers knew and did their job well that they did not need constant supervision unlike new ones who still had a lot to learn about the education system. These needed constant supervision. With such a supervision mode, a difference occurred in the frequency teachers were observed teaching. An important instructional leadership activity by the principal was being able to understand the different operational levels of teachers at his school and to supervise them accordingly. Since I had not heard Mr Nyika mentioning supervision by the TIC and or vice principal, I asked whether they did not observe lessons. Mr Nyika responded saying:

> *They all observe lessons. It is only that our school is a small one that the head can supervise all teachers. They have classes so most of the time they attend to their classes.*

The response concurred with that given by the principal that the vice principal had a class, so he concentrated more on his class than supervising teachers. Both the TIC and the vice principal were part of the supervisory team. It was only that preference was given to their classes than the supervision aspect which was left for the principal because of the size of the school. I went on and asked about how feedback was given to teachers by the principal, Mr Nyika said:

> *The feedback comes in different ways. There is immediate feedback just after the lesson, highlighting areas not done well and those done well before writing a report. He gives the feedback just after the lesson suggesting how a lesson could have been done. The narrative report would come after two days. That is what he normally does.*

Feedback is an important activity that the principal performed. This, therefore, characterised an important enactment of instructional leadership by the principal in the school. The act of writing narrative reports and suggesting ways to improve performance indicated that the principal was a leader who carried out his instructional leadership roles. There was consistency in the information by Mr Nyika and that by Mr Kanyo, the principal, on when feedback was given. Martin (2018) emphasised the giving of timely feedback as an important instructional leadership practice that provided teachers with curriculum direction. The principal gave verbal feedback just after the lesson, followed by a detailed written report after a day or two.

I also asked Mr Hasva about who supervised teachers at Chrim Primary School, and he said: *The school head is the one who conducts lesson observations and at times the TIC.* The response indicated that the principal and the TIC carried out lesson observations, thus signifying that the principal executed his role, as an instructional leader, of supervising teachers. Lesson observations by the TIC appeared to have been infrequent as indicated by Mr Hasva's response. I wanted to find out whether the vice principal did any observation of lessons, I, therefore, asked Mr Hasva who said: *He rarely observed lessons. Most of the times he will be busy with his class.*

The response concurred with that of Mr Kanyo and Mr Nyika that the vice principal concentrated more on his class than supervisory activities. This, therefore, suggested that the principal was concerned with learner outcomes, thus had the vice principal working on his class more than engaging in supervisory activities. I further asked about the frequency of lesson observations by the principal and Mr Hasva said:

> *Normally twice or three times a term depending on his schedule of activities. It is only when he has a busy schedule that he may ask the vice principal to assess children's exercise books.*

The response indicated the frequency with which lesson observations were carried out at the school and the circumstances the vice principal is roped in to supervise teachers. The determinant factor on the frequency of lesson observations, as he indicated, appeared to be the schedule of the principal, otherwise all teachers were observed at least once or twice a term

while teaching. Mr Hasva taught Agriculture only from grade three to seven. The reports I observed indicated that he was observed twice teaching Agriculture to grade three and six classes. An important finding here was that the principal carried out lesson observations, which is an important instructional leadership function.

I asked about when the supervisor gave feedback to teachers after observing a teacher in session. He responded saying:

> *He usually gives feedback just after the lesson. He points out the good and the bad and he gives suggestions for improvement.*

According to Mr Hasva, the principal gave feedback immediately after observing a lesson. His response differed from that of Mr Nyika about when the principal gave feedback. With the knowledge that the narrative form was a long document, I asked Mr Hasva whether he meant the principal wrote the narrative report while observing the lesson and completed. He indicated that he meant the verbal feedback. As for the narrative report, he indicated that he received it after a day or two. This then concurred with Mr Nyika's response. When I analysed the narrative reports in the school files, I noted that the teachers' signatures were a day or two after the date of class visit, thus signifying when the reports were given to teachers.

I also asked Ms Manaki about how lesson supervision was conducted at Chrim Primary School. She responded saying,

> *The head and the deputy head do the supervision of lessons. But in most cases, it's the head. When coming to observe a lesson the principal normally tells teachers that this week, I will be coming for lesson observation. He does not give the time or date.*

There was an agreement in her statement with other teachers that the principal was the main supervisor when compared to the vice principal. It was the principal who, in most cases, visited classes to observe lessons. Wairimu, (2016) emphasised that by undertaking this activity, the principal enhanced teacher effectiveness and attainment of school goals. Another supervisory activity she pointed out was being informed of the impending supervision visit by the principal. This instructional leadership practice appeared to alert teachers of the impending principal's visit. To fully understand the supervision matrix at the school, I asked why the TIC, and the vice principal did not observe lessons. She responded saying,

> *It's not that they do not conduct lesson observations completely, they do, but at distant times, especially when the head has a busy schedule. Since they have classes to teach, maybe the head wants them to concentrate on their classes.*

An explanation given was that they concentrated more on their classes than on observing lessons. This left the principal being the main supervisor, thus enacting instructional leadership. When I asked about the frequency of the class visits for lesson observation, she said,

> *I have been observed twice this term by the head and I am expecting another visit which could be a lesson observation or a book inspection to have a total of three reports a term.*

I went on and asked when she would be given feedback after the lesson observation and she said,

> *After the supervision, within twenty-four hours in both written and verbal form. He would give you a written report then explain some areas verbally.*

A difference occurred with the other teachers who indicated that the head gave them brief feedback just after the lesson then a detailed one after writing the narrative report. An important instructional leadership activity carried out by the principal was the giving of feedback after observing lessons. I observed that written reports enabled teachers to keep a document for future reference. Bellibas (2015) advocates that the practice of working with teachers helped improve instructional activities. The giving of feedback was important since it informed teachers of instructional areas that needed improvement.

4.4.4 Creating a conducive work environment

Ahmad *et al.* (2017) advocate that a conducive school environment is important for effective instructional activities to take place. It, therefore, points at the need for principals to create conducive school environments for both teachers and learners. Fessehatsion (2017) encourages principals to set intellectual and interpersonal tones that enhance teachers' work in schools. To find out how the working environment was at Chrim Primary School, I asked Mr Kanyo who responded saying:

> *Well, you know how it is with our economy, it has been difficult for the past few years. This is a private school which funds all its activities and expenses from the fees paid by the learners. It is very difficult to satisfy the expectations of the teachers, but we have been able to make them understand that the school is doing the best that it can under the prevailing circumstances. Recently, we decided to motivate our teachers and we started an agriculture project so that we raise some funds. We are also constructing a fowl run so that at least we generate funds to give to our teachers.*

The biting economic situation in the country negatively impacted on the school which depended on the fees paid by parents for its operations. This posed challenges in motivating teachers, thus forcing the principal to explain the financial position of the school to teachers. To ameliorate the hard economic situation that faced the school, two income generating projects were started (Figure 4.6). The fundraising projects were targeted at raising funds for school operations and for teacher incentives. An important leadership activity was devised to motivate teachers. Though it was not very clear on how much was expected and how much was to be used for incentives from the projects, of importance in leadership was the development of the idea to motivate teachers. The maize project was doing well, and the poultry project was still at the fowl run building stage. The idea of fundraising projects was commended by Oralu and Oladele (2015) who point out that schools can raise funds through varied revenue yielding projects. The idea of generating funds through projects suggests an effort by the principal to make the working environment appealing to teachers. Mr Nyika, one of the experienced teachers at the school pointed out that the school was a conducive working place.

Figure 4.6: Income generating projects at Chrim Primary School (A fowl run under construction and a maize field)

Mr Kanyo also made efforts to make the working environment conducive by providing instructional materials. He explained his practice of gathering teaching and learning materials by saying,

> *I taught in public and rural schools for a long time. I used the concept that once a teacher sees something useful for his/her class he takes it, a teacher is a*

> *scavenger. I have always done it. If I come across something I know might be useful to teachers, I collect it and say to teachers, I think you can make use of this. It is suitable for this or that.*

The principal boasted of a wide experience in teaching in rural and urban schools. It appeared the old phrase that a teacher is a scavenger was ingrained in him since he boasted of having practised that since his old days and was still practising it. It was meant to provide resource materials to teachers. By making suggestions on how different resource materials could be used demonstrated the principal's knowledge of instructional activities in their efforts to improve instructional performance. This effort by the principal was echoed by Ms Manaki who pointed out that Mr Kanyo was very supportive of teacher efforts through availing teaching and learning materials. I found out that the availability of instructional materials for teachers to use was a motivating factor to all the teachers in the schools. This practice was commended by Mrs Sora and Mr Muko from Matanga Primary School and Mrs Ndaba at Bepura Primary School and now Ms Manaki at Chrim Primary School. It thus shows that it is an important instructional leadership activity executed by the principal. Ghavifekr and Ibrahim (2014) emphasise the importance of teacher support by instructional leaders through the provision of resources and guidance for improved teacher performance.

To find out how conducive the school environment was, I started by asking Mr Nyika who responded saying,

> *I have worked in different schools, both government and private schools, the environment here is very conducive. I have not seen anything that distracts learners and teachers, so far, the environment is very conducive.*

Mr Nyika gave an outline of his working experience and concluded that the environment at Chrim Primary School was more conducive than at other schools. He had not encountered any disturbing events that might have caused despondency among both staff members and learners. I went on and asked about teacher relations to which Mr Nyika responded saying:

> *We have different categories of teachers here in terms of age, young and old teachers. Young teachers have new ideas and old teachers have old ideas. These teachers interact on a personal and professional level and learn from each other. There are no problems on the relations among teachers, they exchange ideas here and there.*

Mr Nyika's quote suggested that work relations among staff were cordial irrespective of the different age groups that existed at the school. He took that as a benefit to the school since the

blending of old and new ideas enabled the members to learn from each other. Mr Hasva, the Physical Education specialist also consented to the school environment being conducive to teaching and learning. During my visits at the school, I did not witness any chaotic situations among teachers, neither between teachers and parents nor with learners. This suggested an enabling environment that encouraged teaching and learning to take place.

I went further and asked Mr Hasva how conducive the school environment was, and he responded saying:

> *The work environment is quite conducive. It allows us to express ourselves and to go an extra mile. It enables us to achieve the goals set by the school administration.*

The quote pointed out that the school environment was conducive so much that individuals could fully express themselves. He explained that the environment enabled him to improve his performance and meet the school goals. I further probed to find out what those goals set by the administration were. He quickly responded and said, *High teacher performance and a pass rate of 100%*. The quick response was indicative of the focus by the administration team. It can be suggested that the conducive environment might have been meant to increase teacher performance and resultantly high learner academic performance.

In response to how work relations were at the school, Mr Hasva said:

> *They are good. Teachers are very cooperative here. If you run out of, say chalk or mighty markers, fellow teachers can easily give them to you, if say you run out of stock and not the day to collect stationery from the school secretary.*

Mr Hasva's narration indicated that teacher relations at the school were virtuous. His explanation concurred with that of Mr Nyika who indicated that even though the staff members were made up of different age groups, work relations were cordial. The practice of sharing instructional materials suggested that the teachers had a common focus, high academic performance by learners at the school.

When I asked Ms Manaki about how conducive the school environment was, she gave a very brief response, she said: *Very conducive.* I further asked her to explain her response and she said*: There is motivation by the school head, and the salaries are good.*

Ms Manaki's response acknowledged the presence of a positive working environment at the school. From her point of view, she experienced motivation at the school, this made the environment a conducive working environment. She also enjoyed the salaries at the school, thus making the school environment very conducive to her. All the three participants in the study concurred that the school offered a positive working environment. Mr Nyika even went on to the extent of making comparison of his present school to the other private and public schools that he worked at before and concluded that the working environment at his current school was very conducive. Even though the principal lamented the biting economy as having affected operations at the school, it appeared Ms Manaki was happy about her earnings. Thus, by being able to create a positive working environment at the school, appeared to make the principal an effective instructional leader.

When I asked about work relations at the school she said: *Teachers are united, they share ideas, and they help each other.*

She pointed out that there was teacher unity at the school suggesting that the teachers were a united force that had a team spirit. She viewed teachers as willing to share ideas and to help each other for the benefit of the learners. During my stay at the school, I experienced an interpersonal tone among the members. Of note, was one Thursday morning after assembly when the health master asked about how the school could increase safety measures against the COVID-19 pandemic at their school. An open discussion ensued with teachers giving their suggestions. From the varied suggestions made by the teachers, the principal recommended the buying of water buckets for each class so that each learner washed hands upon entering their classrooms. This was in addition to the learners having been sanitised at the main school entrance. Of particular importance was that the principal paid heed to teachers' suggestions and acted. This indicated value placed on other members' suggestions and their importance to the school.

4.4.5 Staff development at Chrim Primary School

Kosgei (2015) advocates that education is dynamic, thus the curriculum and the education system always re-orient to meet the current demands. Hence, for teachers to remain competitive in such a dynamic environment there must be continuous staff development for them to be able to address emerging issues in society. Aligned to this, the Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 emphasises the need for in-servicing teachers and their continuous professional development. The idea behind this instructional leadership activity is to

improve the quality of teaching and student outcomes. This is an important activity in schools that principals are expected to undertake as part of their instructional leadership activities. Mr Kanyo indicated that the school had staff development activities and he explained how they came up with topics for staff development when he said,

> *As I supervise the teachers, I notice some gaps or areas that need more attention, so we take those. I also consult the teachers before preparing the schedule on areas of their concerns and weaknesses and then we come up with topics for discussions.*

Mr Kanyo's response showed the importance of supervising teachers through lesson observations. As he pointed out, it was through this practice that he identified gaps for staff development. In addition to areas he identified, he indicated that he had self-reports by teachers. He said, *... syllabus interpretation and the implementation of the new curriculum ...* were some of the topics that were listed by teachers. The consultation of teachers suggested a sharing of instructional responsibilities with other members. The three teachers concurred with Mr Kanyo that teachers contributed topics for staff development at their school. This indicated the value Mr Kanyo placed on teachers who spend more time with learners than principals themselves. This is supported by Leithwood (2004) who advocates that principal leadership comes second to classroom instruction among the factors that relate to what is learnt by students at school. This portrays that, teachers are an important force in the school who need to be consulted on staff development topics.

When I probed further to find out the level of teacher participation in the staff development activities, Mr Kanyo indicated that teachers highly participated in the activities. He revealed this when he said,

> *It* (teacher participation) *is very high. As the head, I believe every teacher who was recruited in the school has something special to bring in, I involve them so much. At times I even give them topics to research on. I even ask teachers to present papers and staff develop others in their areas of strength.*

Mr Kanyo indicated that there was high teacher participation in staff development workshops. This was supported by Mr Nyika who commended the contributions that were made during a discussion of a demonstration lesson that they were very helpful, thus indicating teacher participation. In addition, Ms Manaki also indicated teacher participation in the staff development activities when she pointed out that teachers contributed what they knew, this was in relation to the PLAP workshop that was held at the school. Mr Kanyo believed that each

individual teacher had something important to contribute to the development of the school hence he involved them in different school activities. When he talked about giving teachers research topics, I discovered that this was in conformity to the policy of the school that teachers had to be involved in some research activities. When I analysed the school policy document (Appendix 16), I discovered that under the section of activities and clubs was a statement that encouraged research by teachers. Bland *et al.* (2014:1) have echoed the importance of staff development when they stated that, "Once recruited, qualified teachers must be improved through on-target, on-time, and on-task staff development programmes …".

In finding out about staff development programmes from teachers' perspective, Mr Nyika agreed that the school held staff development activities. He pointed this out when he said,

> *The school has programmes for staff development. Normally we hold three staff development activities per term. Also, if there are training programmes at the District Office some teachers attend and when they come back, they staff develop others.*

Mr Nyika pointed out that the school normally held two to three staff development programmes in a term. In addition to this, teachers also staff developed their colleagues after having attended workshops outside the school. When I asked whether teachers were involved in setting up staff development topics, this is what he said,

> *… teachers are sometimes asked to submit topics through their committees, but largely topics are set by the head and his team members.*

The involvement of other members suggested shared responsibility hence the possibility of distributed leadership. In response to what staff development activities had been conducted at the school to help teachers implement the curriculum, Mr Nyika had this to say,

> *We had a staff development meeting where the principal talked about syllabus and policy interpretation. He is very good at that. We also had a demonstration lesson in the teaching of Religious and Moral Education by Mr Pari and recently the head and the health mistress taught us about COVID-19 after they had attended a COVID-19 workshop at the District Office.*

Mr Nyika pointed out that the head was good at syllabus interpretation. Syllabuses are important documents from the Ministry which articulate learning objectives, learning content, suggested teaching, and learning approaches and the outcomes expected (Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022). Staff developing teachers in syllabus interpretation was an important development towards successful implementation of the

curriculum by teachers. This topic was also highlighted by the principal as a needy area for training by teachers. Staff developing teachers in the area suggested its importance to the school. Since Mr Nyika mentioned having a demonstration lesson, I asked why it was necessary, especially for seasoned teachers like himself who had seen it all. He responded and said,

> *Things change, the curriculum framework is something new that was introduced by the Ministry, so we learn a lot from these presentations, especially from colleagues who have a better understanding of the curriculum framework. In addition, contributions that come out from the discussions of the lesson are very helpful.*

Staff developing each other was effective as stated by Mr Nyika since teachers with content knowledge shared their knowledge with others, thus signifying distributed leadership. Hence, the demonstration lesson was quite a relevant instructional activity which enhanced the tapping of skills and talents in teachers for the benefit of the school.

When I asked Mr Hasva about staff development at Chrim Primary School, he indicated that the principal was very supportive of this aspect. Here is what he said,

> *Yes, staff development activities exist at the school. The head recently staff developed us on syllabus interpretation in accordance with the curriculum framework. He urged us to write our schemes of work from the syllabus. He also encourages teachers to professionally develop themselves. If you ask for permission to go and register for a certain course the head is very supportive, he urges you to move on.*

His example of staff development in syllabus interpretation concurred with that identified by Mr Nyika on recent staff development activities that had been carried out at the school. Correct syllabus interpretation is also an item that teachers were assessed on during class visits by supervisors when they assessed teachers' use of syllabi in scheming their work. Thus, by staff developing teachers in this area the principal enhanced teachers' skills in syllabus use. Correct syllabus interpretation was an item on the narrative report under section C (see Appendix 17 area highlighted in blue).

Mr Hasva also indicated that the principal encouraged teachers to advance themselves and was supportive of teachers who advanced themselves both academically and professionally. Self-advancement and professional development were items that were on the narrative report (see Appendix 17 underlined in white) and for professional development it was the first item under Section E: Professional values and commitment. Teachers were also assessed on whether they

were professionally developing themselves. In addition, the MoPSE through the Secretary's Circular Number 18 of 2014 rolled out a teacher capacity development programme where the Ministry funded teachers to capacity develop themselves. Interested teachers applied to the Ministry and when selected teachers were funded to pursue studies at a university identified by the Ministry to be offering that programme. Thus, the principal's actions were in line with the dictates of the Ministry, hence enacting his instructional leadership role. Moreover, Mr Hasva was studying for a post graduate diploma in education, hence the support by the principal was a welcome development to him.

The principal shared responsibility through consulting teachers on topics for staff development. This was portrayed by Mr Hasva when he said,

> *Yes, we are consulted but most of the time it is the head, the deputy and the TIC who come up with activities.*

This was in relation to teacher involvement in listing topics for staff development. Though the statement appears to suggest that teachers were involved on a small scale, giving teachers an opportunity of coming up with training areas for staff development suggested the principal's acknowledgement that teachers spend more time with learners than any others, hence they knew needy areas. In line with this, Leithwood *et al.* (2004) state that teachers have more influence on learners than the school principal, therefore, enabling them to raise training topics showed a sharing of responsibility.

Ms Manaki also concurred with the other teachers that the principal supported staff development activities at the school and that they were staff developed in syllabus interpretation and PLAP. She indicated this when she said,

> *The head supports staff development activities at the school. We had a staff development workshop on the performance lag address programme (PLAP) facilitated by the head. Teachers contributed what they knew and finally the head told us how it is done. We were also staff developed by the head on syllabus interpretation. We benefited a lot.*

School records indicated that the staff development activities mentioned by Ms Manaki had been held at the school with the principal as the facilitator. She pointed out that teachers participated through making contributions of what they knew about PLAP and the principal adding on to that. The Performance Lag Address Programme (PLAP) was introduced in 2016 by MoPSE to address learning gaps in grade 3 to 7 learners through improving teachers' skills in providing

learners with catch-up activities. Thus, staff developing teachers improved their instructional performance and effectiveness (Ikegbusi and Eziamaka, 2016). The fact that teachers were staff developed in syllabus interpretation as mentioned by both Ms Manaki and Mr Hasva, suggested its importance to curriculum implementation. She indicated having benefited from the staff development activities.

The aspect of suggesting topics for staff development by teachers appeared to be out of choice since the final decision was done by the principal and his team. This was pointed out by Ms Manaki when she said,

> *Teachers can suggest topics and subject areas for staff development and send to the deputy head. From these and their own, they choose on what will be done first and last.*

There was an agreement among the three teachers that opportunities existed at the school for teachers to suggest topics for staff development and that the final selection was done by the leadership team. These activities show the importance of staff development in schools. Osamwonyi (2016) advocates that teachers are the hub in the development of education, therefore, they need to be staff developed to acquire new skills and methods of doing work. These skills and methods help close the gaps in the instructional activities of practicing teachers, thus improving their performance and ultimately learner academic outcomes.

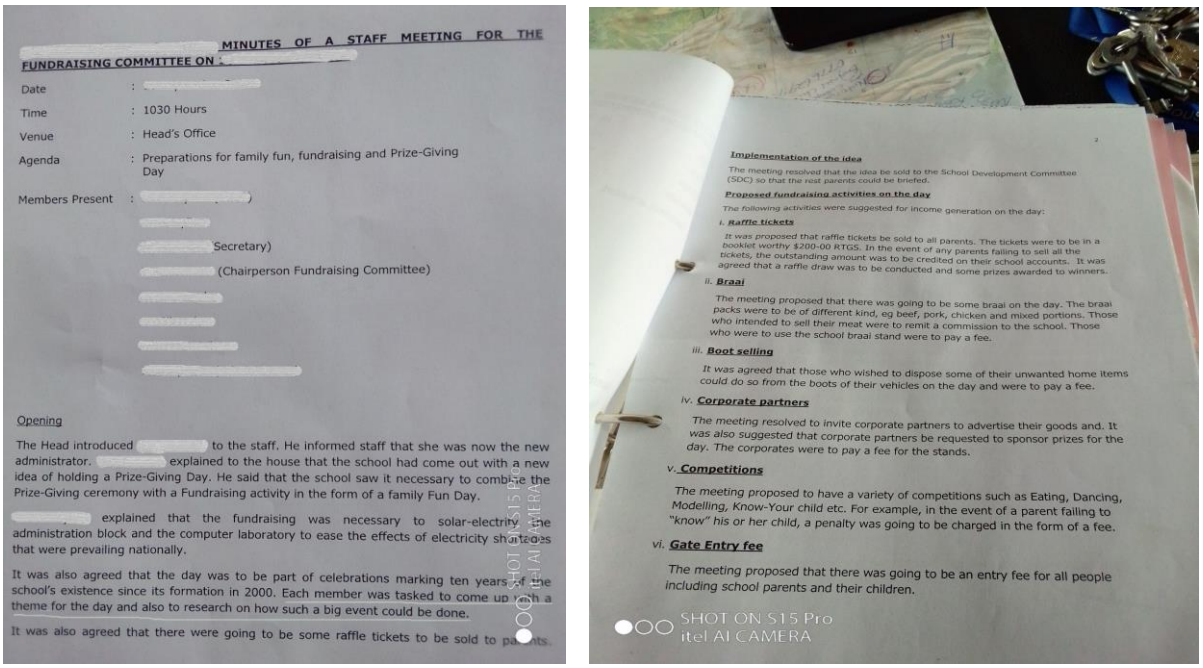
4.4.6 Leadership opportunities at Chrim Primary School

Nawab (2011) posits that one strategy to lead schools to effectiveness is through giving authority to teachers and trusting them. This is somehow an indication of sharing instructional leadership that results in effective schools. Under this theme, the focus was to find out whether the principal distributed leadership as he enacted instructional leadership activities. How the principal did this is also the focus of this section.

When I asked Mr Kanyo whether he afforded teachers leadership opportunities at Chrim Primary School, he said these were available through varied activities. This is what he said,

> *Yes, we do. We have various committees like the tours committee, entertainment committee and once an activity is about to come up such as a tour, that committee and its chairperson are fully responsible. They then report periodically as we monitor their progress. If we are going to have a speech and price giving day at the end of the year, we say to the committee, look, this is what we expect, we want this, do this.*

The school had different committees which focused on different areas suggesting that leadership opportunities were available for teachers, thus indicating distributed leadership. The different committees that existed had different chairpersons who presided over each committee, thus indicating that the principal shared responsibilities with other staff members. The committees reported progress to the principal at specifies times. The principal's practice was in conformity to the school policy which urged teachers to be in committees (see school policy document Appendix 18, section highlighted in blue). In addition to school policy document I analysed, I also went through the school minutes which showed a record of a fundraising committee meeting which was preparing for a fun day to raise funds for their solar power project. The school wanted to electrify their school using solar power energy.



MINUTES OF A STAFF MEETING FOR THE FUNDRAISING COMMITTEE ON :

Date :
Time : 1030 Hours
Venue : Head's Office
Agenda : Preparations for family fun, fundraising and Prize-Giving Day
Members Present :
Secretary)
(Chairperson Fundraising Committee)

Opening

The Head introduced to the staff. He informed staff that she was now the new administrator. explained to the house that the school had come out with a new idea of holding a Prize-Giving Day. He said that the school saw it necessary to combine the Prize-Giving ceremony with a Fundraising activity in the form of a family Fun Day.

explained that the fundraising was necessary to solar-electrify the administration block and the computer laboratory to ease the effects of electricity shortages that were prevailing nationally.

It was also agreed that the day was to be part of celebrations marking ten years of the school's existence since its formation in 2000. Each member was tasked to come up with a theme for the day and also to research on how such a big event could be done.

It was also agreed that there were going to be some raffle tickets to be sold to parents.

SHOT ON S15 Pro itel AI CAMERA

Implementation of the idea

The meeting resolved that the idea be sold to the School Development Committee (SDC) so that the rest parents could be briefed.

Proposed fundraising activities on the day

The following activities were suggested for income generation on the day:

i. **Raffle tickets**

It was proposed that raffle tickets be sold to all parents. The tickets were to be in a booklet worthy $200-00 RTGS. In the event of any parents failing to sell all the tickets, the outstanding amount was to be credited on their school accounts. It was agreed that a raffle draw was to be conducted and some prizes awarded to winners.

ii. **Braai**

The meeting proposed that there was going to be some braai on the day. The braai packs were to be of different kind, eg beef, pork, chicken and mixed portions. Those who intended to sell their meat were to remit a commission to the school. Those who were to use the school braai stand were to pay a fee.

iii. **Boot selling**

It was agreed that those who wished to dispose some of their unwanted home items could do so from the boots of their vehicles on the day and were to pay a fee.

iv. **Corporate partners**

The meeting resolved to invite corporate partners to advertise their goods and. It was also suggested that corporate partners be requested to sponsor prizes for the day. The corporates were to pay a fee for the stands.

v. **Competitions**

The meeting proposed to have a variety of competitions such as Eating, Dancing, Modelling, Know-Your child etc. For example, in the event of a parent failing to "know" his or her child, a penalty was going to be charged in the form of a fee.

vi. **Gate Entry fee**

The meeting proposed that there was going to be an entry fee for all people including school parents and their children.

SHOT ON S15 Pro itel AI CAMERA

Figure 4.7: Minutes of a fundraising committee

The minutes in Figure 4.7 above depict a sharing of ideas among committee members where each member was tasked to come up with a theme for the event they were preparing for. From the different themes, the committee was to come up with one theme for the day, thus showing a collaborated activity among the members.

Mr Kanyo's wide teaching and school leadership experience might have taught him that leadership did not lie in people with formal positions only, but that it included those occupying

informal positions. His remark concerning factors that contributed to the high instructional performance at the school suggested this. He said:

> *We have always believed that parents should be well informed in the education of their children, so we always try to bring them in. They must manage, monitor, and help with the children's homework. Parents are expected to sign every homework done by their children. If the homework is not signed the teacher has the right not to mark the homework. We also believe that children should be involved as much as possible in their education, they should be interested in the school activities. We also believe that as teachers, we always say if it were your child how would you want the child to be treated. So, the staff take the children, if we are talking of loco parentis is to the word. It is not just a matter of business as usual and get a salary at the end of the month.*

The inclusion of parents in the activities of the school appeared to have been an important move by the principal since the school had a high pass rate, 100%. Asking parents to manage, monitor and assist their children as they did their homework suggested a leadership strategy of sharing the responsibility of the learners' education. By emphasising strict adherence by teachers to assist learners signifies the value the principal placed on instructional activities.

Mr Nyika concurred with Mr Kanyo that he availed leadership opportunities to teachers at the school. This was evidenced when he said,

> *I have worked with the head for some time, I have not seen dictatorial tendencies. I have seen him trying to share responsibilities. Even some activities that you would have thought the head would do, I have seen him asking teachers to do some things for him.*

After having worked with the principal for seven years, Mr Nyika was confident to say the principal shared responsibilities with other members. The principal's sharing of responsibilities with other teachers was evident in a fundraising meeting referred to above (Figure 4.7, underlined sentence) when the principal tasked each individual member to research on how the event could be made a success and to come up with a theme for the fundraising event. Otherwise, he could have dictated it. The principal's interest in research cropped up again as he asked members to research on how best the activity could be made a success. If viewed from the angle of nurturing leadership talents in teachers, the assigning of tasks to teachers by the principal suggests a great move towards developing them. The practice of involving other members in school tasks by the principal was also echoed by Mr Hasva who pointed out that the principal delegated different tasks to teachers.

Mr Nyika further gave an example of the principal's involvement of teachers in leadership tasks at the school when he said:

> *He* (the head) *has on many occasions asked teachers to represent him at meetings outside the school such as at the District Office when it was him who was supposed to attend. You hear him say, let the young ones attend, they still have a long way to go with their profession. He remains at school and continues with his daily work.*

Mr Nyika revealed the principal's level of delegation, that he even asked teachers to represent him at meetings outside the school. The reason behind was that he believed the young teachers still needed to develop their career and leadership skills, thus they had to have the practice through attending workshops and or meetings outside the school. The idea behind was to nurture other teachers who still had many years in the service. When back, the teachers gave feedback to the principal and other teachers. I further asked how teachers felt about that practice and he said:

> *The teachers are usually excited about that. A classroom teacher going to mingle with heads of schools makes them feel great. Their feedback is testimony that they like it. This does not happen in many schools.*

The quote suggests that the practice had a positive effect on teachers. The fact that the teachers had an opportunity to dialogue with principals from different schools was a positive development to them. Mr Nyika pointed out that the feedback the teachers gave after having attended such meetings and or workshops was indicative that the teachers liked it. Since the practice did not exist in other schools, the principal was believed to be enacting an important instructional leadership activity of developing teachers' understanding of leadership.

Mr Hasva agreed with Mr Nyika and the head that the head delegated different activities to teachers and that committees existed at the school respectively. This is what he said,

> *The head always delegates when there is something to be done and this creates responsibility on the part of the teacher carrying out the task. We have several committees, so the head assigns a teacher to be the leader of each committee where they will be accountable and responsible.*

Mr Hasva viewed the practice of the head, of delegating tasks to teachers, as creating responsibility in the teachers. He pointed out that when a task was delegated, this created an obligation on the part of the teacher to successfully complete the task. When I asked Mr Hasva about leadership practices that were introduced by the head to show his willingness to distribute leadership to other members, he said:

> *The introduction of clubs has enabled teachers to play leadership roles as they lead the clubs. We have three or for teachers in a club with one teacher leading. So, by doing that, he has allowed some teachers to have leadership roles.*

The aspect of clubs at the school was also a conformity to the school policy dictates as this was stated in the school policy document that teachers would be assigned to clubs (See Appendix 16). Mr Hasva saw this practice nurturing leadership talent in teachers for future leadership positions, since each club had a leader who had the responsibility of leading club activities.

Ms Manaki had the following to say about leadership opportunities at Chrim Primary School:

> *He* (the head) *doesn't do things on his own. He always seeks advice. He wants to hear from others on what they think. We* (the head and teachers) *usually come up with one thing.*

By stating that the principal did not do things on his own suggested that the principal shared responsibilities with staff members. I probed further to get a clear understanding of what she meant by, "He always seeks advice." She explained saying,

> *He asks for teachers' opinions when he wants to start projects that would involve teachers. He would say what do you think of this idea, may you go and think about it. We would then discuss this as a school on another day and is very receptive to people's ideas. That is what he did when the school started the maize project.*

Ms Manaki's statement appeared to indicate the strategic way the principal had of introducing projects in the school, by asking for teachers' opinions. This appeared to be a way of getting buy-in from the teachers. This practice showed shared responsibility among members in the school. From the data gathered from the teachers, it was evident that the principal availed leadership opportunities to teachers, thus signifying distributed leadership.

4.4.7 Class allocation at Chrim Primary School

Chrim Primary School is a private school where the teachers are not on a government payroll. They employ their own teachers and pay them from their own sources. The school, therefore, has the freedom to employ the calibre of teachers they want. All teachers to the school pass through an interview that is chaired by the director, assisted by the principal and the vice principal. After passing through interviews all the other processes such as introducing the school policy document to the teacher and class allocation are left for the principal to organise. In line with this, Mestry (2017) advocates that principals have a responsibility to effectively manage resources to improve best instructional activities. By enacting this responsibility in schools,

principals play a significant role in developing and maintaining academic standards. Teachers, an important resource in a school, need effective management to produce quality academic results, thus how they are allocated to classes plays a crucial role in the results they produce. Armed with this information, I thus wanted to find out how the principal allocated classes to teachers to ensure a 100% pass rate. In explaining how the school manages to score a 100% pass rate, Mr Kanyo said: *We look at the qualifications, experience, age, and maturity of the teachers.*

The characteristics the principal considered for placement purposes were evident in grade five, six and seven teachers. These were mature people who had been in the service for long. One of the members was Mr Nyika who was a participant in my study. He taught grade five and was an experienced teacher.

I further asked the principal who he meant when he said, "*We look at their qualifications …?"* He responded saying,

> *Normally class allocation is done by the head. In some circumstances, I consult the vice principal and the TIC. This occurs in situations where we have three high performing teachers vying for one class. We always reach a decision after looking at different qualities in the teachers and we allocate. Through supervision activities, I also know the level of performance of the teachers.*

It appeared it was only after encountering a challenge that the vice principal and the TIC were consulted. Mr Kanyo appeared confident with his practice of allocating classes at Chrim Primary School since he knew how they performed as their supervisor. I probed further seeking an explanation about the qualities he had indicated that he looked at for placement purposes and he said,

> *For seasoned teachers, placement is not a problem, but for novice teachers. These can have challenges with some grades such as grade one, six and seven. These classes need experienced teachers. Grade ones need mature people who understands them.*

The principal's stance was that mature and experienced teachers were allocated to teach grades six and seven. Allocating classes to novice teachers was regarded as a challenge unlike to seasoned ones as these are yet to gain experience. The principal's quote indicated the high attention he paid to grade one and grade seven, it showed that he did not deploy inexperienced teachers to those classes. As for grade one, the principal believed that mature people could understand the little ones, thus needed such teachers. The practice of allocating classes by the principal suggested that his principle was to allocate classes to competent teachers.

To gather more information from teachers about class allocation at Chrim Primary School, I went on to ask Mr Nyika whose response was,

> *Normally there is a discussion between the head and the teacher, one is not just given a class. The head would ask a teacher on what grade the teacher would want to teach. He would also be having his own idea that if a certain teacher is deployed to a certain class, good results would be produced. Discussions are held and a compromise is reached. It is not an issue of dictating.*

The quote indicated that the principal discussed class allocation with individual teachers before allocation. This instructional leadership practice suggested a sharing of responsibility with teachers. Though the principal held discussions with individual teachers on class allocation, he always had his own perception of who to allocate to which class. Despite this, Mr Nyika pointed out that a compromise was always reached without dictation.

Mr Hasva pointed out that he was allocated classes to teach by the head, this is what he said,

> *As for me, it was based on my qualifications, I am an agriculture expert, so I was assigned to teach Agriculture from grade three to seven. The head allocates classes at this school and usually grade six and seven teachers alternate classes each year.*

Mr Hasva was a specialised Agriculture teacher who was recruited to teach Agriculture at Chrim Primary School, so he taught one subject from grade three to seven. According to him, his qualifications determined the subject he taught. Although his case was obvious, it was the principal who allocated grades that he was supposed to teach, thus indicating that it was the principal's role to allocate classes to teachers. When I probed further to find out whether the vice principal and the TIC were not involved, he said.

> *I don't think he involves them, especially when it comes to class allocation, with the way he wants to maintain the standards at the school. Maybe he talks to them before he allocates classes to teachers.*

A difference occurred with what Mr Nyika stated and what Mr Hasva said. Whereas Mr Nyika talked of a consensus between the principal and teachers, Mr Hasva talked of the principal allocating classes. He even stated that the principal was concerned with pass rates, thus would allocate classes on his own. The quote suggests high importance placed on maintaining the standards at the school so much that the principal takes it upon himself to allocate classes to teachers. Though for other aspects of the school, the principal could engage the TIC and the vice principal, Mr Hasva saw the principal so occupied with allocating classes to teachers who could effectively teach them. Since the TIC and the vice principal were part of the leadership team, Mr

Hasva was not very sure if they were consulted first before the principal allocated classes but was doubtful. As far as Mr Hasva was concerned, the allocation of classes to teachers was an activity done by the principal. This practice thus showed that the principal engaged in instructional leadership activities.

Ms Manaki began by explaining how she ended up teaching at Chrim Primary School and the grade she taught at the time of my visit, this is what she said,

> *I was a student teacher at this school and after graduating they employed me here and I continued teaching the grade three class. Since then, I have taught grade three and four in different years. This year I have grade three.*

Ms Manaki was fortunate enough to have been employed at a school where she did her teaching practice which was about five years ago. Since then, she had taught grade threes and fours alternatively. The allocation of her into grade three and four was at the principal's discretion. His response on qualities of teachers he considered when allocating classes, he revealed that he had challenges when placing novice teachers since they lacked experience. Since Mrs Manaki was somehow their product, he understood her performance and placement was likely not a problem. In addition, since the school employed her after her training, it meant that they were contended with her performance. She went to explain that it was the principal who allocated classes to teachers at Chrim Primary School. This is what she said,

> *It is the head who allocates classes to teachers. He often tells us that our performance usually determined the grade we are allocated to teach.*

The allocation of classes was an instructional leadership activity done by the principal as indicated by Mrs Manaki. This was also highlighted by Mr Hasva. Mr Nyika's version differed from Mr Hasva and Ms Manaki in that he said the principal held a discussion with teachers before class allocation. As this was not evident in the principal's story, it could have been a particular case where that happened such as the senior members since the principal pointed out that class allocation for seasoned teachers was not a problem. Ms Manaki talked about the principal alerting teachers that class allocation was based on their performance, this suggests an encouragement on teachers to improve their performance, which was an important instructional leadership strategy by the principal.

4.4.8 Closing the participants' stories

Mr Kanyo's long serving experience might have been the rock behind his leadership that led to a 100% pass rate in the grade seven examinations. Though he was not part of the team that generated the school's vision, as part of the member of the administration team, he was exemplary at his work, thus driving other members to respect the school vision. His interest in instructional leadership saw him practically teaching some lessons to the grade seven class. This activity characterised instructional leadership. His leadership prowess saw him creating committees that played a part in the leadership of the school. This signified a movement away from the heroism syndrome found in principals who do not distribute leadership. In fact, Klar (2016) encourages school principals to distribute leadership tasks to other members to increase the schools' organisational capacity.

Mr Nyika's length of stay at Chrim Primary School made him understand the leadership activities at the school. Though he had been at the school for several years, he was not well versed with the school's vision. That might have been a signal of less attention given to what the vision of the school was by him and a concentration on instructional activities. He believed in the effectiveness of the principal's leadership since he supervised teachers and gave them feedback, thus displaying characteristics of an instructional leader. His view of the practice at the school where the principal shared responsibilities with other members of staff suggested distributed leadership. Thus, as far as Mr Nyika was concerned the principal was an effective leader who shared instructional leadership responsibilities with other members of staff.

Mr Hasva, the Agriculture specialist teacher, taught Agriculture lessons from grade three to seven at Chrim Primary School and so was not affected by the class allocations done by the principal at the end of each year. He regarded the allocation of classes as the prerogative of the principal. Despite this, he still regarded the principal as willing to engage others in the leadership of the school such as when he delegated tasks to members and the existence of clubs at the school. This meant taking up responsibility to achieve delegated tasks, in the case of delegation and in the case of committees it meant that there had to be a leader for each committee. Being a chairperson of the projects committee meant he experienced leadership. This signified a nurturing of the leadership talent in teachers and simultaneously a distribution of leadership roles.

In the interviews conducted with Ms Manaki, it was evident that varied activities characterising instructional leadership were enacted at the school. It was observed that the principal was the main supervisor in the school who observed lessons and wrote reports. He gave feedback to teachers after observing them teaching. This was meant to inform the teachers of their level of performance and to suggest to them ways of improving their performance. Ms Manaki agreed to have benefited from the staff development presentations by the principal. Important observations made were those various activities characterising instructional leadership practice enacted in the school which appeared to have increased the teachers' knowledge. What I observed among the instructional activities discussed with Ms Manaki was little knowledge about the vision of the school suggesting little attention having been paid to it by teachers while concentrating on making learners pass.

4.5 SUMMARY

The chapter presented the data I gathered from three schools through face-to-face interviews, document analysis and observations. I gathered the data during my stay in the schools. The data showed varied activities carried out in the schools that portrayed characteristics of instructional leadership practice. Each school operated in its own context, however, some commonalities existed among the schools. Despite the differences in the types of the schools all the principals in the schools played their roles in implementing activities that characterised instructional leadership. These activities ranged from visioning the schools, supervision of teachers, creating positive school environments, staff developing teachers and allocating teachers to classes with clear minds of their performance. Mrs Muzuwa's interest in teaching saw her teaching some lessons in particular the grade sevens. This practice enabled her to supervise teachers well at her school who in turn developed a culture of hard work. Although Mr Shama sometimes took time to teach, this was in selected instances for demonstration purposes. He had the conviction that by improving the working conditions for teachers, high learner academic outcomes would be possible. Mr Kanyo, the old and experienced man had a passion for teaching just like Mrs Muzuwa. This was found to have rubbed on to teachers who were so focused on maintaining the school standards. His interest in maintaining the school's pass rate saw him being the major player in class allocation and supervision of teachers at his school. In the process of enacting instructional leadership, features of distributed leadership were exhibited. In the following chapter, I carried out a cross-case analysis of the data I gathered from each of the three cases and I discussed the findings I made from the study.

CHAPTER 5

CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, I presented and analysed data on instructional and distributed leadership practices that I gathered from three high performing primary schools. This chapter presents a cross-case analysis of the data from chapter 4 on instructional and distributed leadership practices. The cross-case analysis provides a comparable presentation of the cases which was not done in chapter 4 where I separately dealt with individual cases. In presenting the cross-case analysis, I was guided by three themes which are, participants' background information, activities characterising instructional leadership practice and aligning instructional activities to distributed leadership practice. To begin with was a cross-case analysis of the background information of the principals followed by that of the nine teachers describing their professional contexts related to this study. This helped explain the participant's understanding of what major activities characterise instructional leadership and how they exhibit distributed leadership practice.

5.2 PARTICIPANTS' BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Table 5.1 summarises teacher profiles and indicates school names and types, and the leadership positions held by the participants in the schools. These were the teaching staff that participated in my study. All the schools were co-educational institutions. The specified teacher attributes provided bases for the understanding of the teachers' responses to the enactment of instructional and distributed leadership practices in schools. The participants' attributes, qualifications, experience, and perceptions on instructional leadership contributed to how the cross-case findings were interpreted.

Table 5.1: Profile of participants

School	Principal / Teacher	Gender	Age	Experience	Qualifications	Leadership Post	Grade Taught
Matanga Primary School	Mrs Muzuwa	Female	50+	24 years	Certificate in Education Masters in Education Management B.Ed. Education Management	Principal	-
	Mrs Sora	Female	45	17 years	Diploma in Education	- School health leader	4
	Mr Muko	Male	43	19 years	Diploma in Education	- Chairperson, fundraising & agriculture committees - Soccer coach	6
	Mrs Rega	Female	50+	28 years	Diploma in Education	Teacher in Charge	2
Bepura Primary School	Mr Shama	Male	50+	21 years	Masters in Education Management B.Ed. Education Management	Principal	-
	Mrs Ndaba	Female	50+	27 years	Masters in Music Bachelor of Education Music	- Chairperson disciplinary committee - Entertainment committees	7
	Mr Ngata	Male	38	8 years	Diploma in Education	- Physical Education teacher - Soccer and Athletics coach	1-7
	Mrs Koni	Female	37	13 years	Diploma in Education	- Examinations committee member	1
Chrim Primary School	Mr Kanyo	Male	65+	28 years	Certificate in Education B.Ed. Education Management	Principal	-
	Mr Nyika	Male	50+	30 years	B.Ed. Education Management	- Senior teacher	5
	Mr Hasva	Male	34	4	Bachelor of Science Agriculture	- Projects coordinator	3-7
	Ms Manaki	Female	28	4	Diploma in Education	- Social welfare committee member	4

The three schools had a track record of being in operation for more than five years and each of the principals had been in leadership for more than twenty years. All of them had been at their current stations as principals for more than five years. The principals are well experienced people who rose through the ranks from being teachers to vice principals and finally to principals. They were all recommended by the District Office as effective school leaders. I selected principals from different types of schools to get some variation in background and context (Harris *et al.*, 2017).

5.2.1 Principals' background

Mrs Muzuwa, the only woman among the three principals superintended over a big day primary school. Before being a principal, she was a teacher, vice principal for four years and had a stint as an Acting Education Officer at district level for four months thus gaining some experience about district leadership. Her wide experience in leadership positions appears to shape her leadership approaches and the school's performance at Matanga Primary School.

Mr Shama, the school principal at Bepura Primary School led the biggest school of the three principals. Bepura Primary School is an urban council primary school with a staff compliment of 58 teachers and 2023 learners. He is one of those principals who the District Schools Inspector (DSI) recommended as an effective principal leading a high performing school. His many years of experience coupled with his high qualifications seem to give him a better understanding of instructional leadership matters, thus creating a base for effective leadership.

Mr Kanyo is the oldest and most experienced among them all. He leads the smallest school of them all. He has also had a stint in Botswana where he taught for five years before returning to Zimbabwe. The wide experience Mr Kanyo has, earned him the role of principal at Chrim Primary School.

5.2.2 Teacher background information

I purposively selected three teachers from each of the three schools. From Matanga Primary School, there was Mr Muko, Mrs Sora, and Mrs Rega. Mrs Rega had been a TIC for over ten years. She effectively led the Infants Department to the principal's satisfaction. Mrs Ndaba, Mr Ngata, and Mrs Koni were the teacher participants from Bepura Primary School. Mrs Ndaba was a vibrant teacher, the oldest and most experienced among the three teachers at Bepura Primary School. She taught a grade seven class and was confident that her learners would come out with good passes. Among the three teachers at Chrim Primary School two teachers were committee leaders and the third one was a committee member. The teachers were Mr Nyika, Mr Hasva and Ms Manaki.

All the participants were qualified and experienced at their jobs. My observations were that even though the principals were of different ages, had different experiences and worked in different school environments, their lines of leadership were largely similar. As for the teachers, they all

had the basic minimum qualifications of either a Diploma or a Certificate in Education except for one teacher at Chrim Primary School who had specialised in Agriculture and taught Agriculture lessons only. All teachers who participated in the study at Matanga Primary School held leadership posts while at Bepura and Chrim Primary Schools there was Mrs Koni and Ms Manaki, respectively, who did not hold formal leadership posts but were committee members. The number of teachers with leadership roles at the school suggested that the schools had opportunities for teachers to take up leadership for teaching and learning at the school. The three schools were under different responsible authorities.

5.3 ACTIVITIES CHARACTERISING INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

This theme examines the main activities that the principals and teacher leaders performed in schools that characterise instructional leadership practice. I explored this theme under three sub-themes visioning schools, managing instructional activities, and creating a positive school environment. The sub-themes jointly answer my first sub-question: What are the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice of selected high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe?

5.3.1 Visioning schools

School visions provide treasured information about the purpose of a school's existence. It serves as an unspoken contract between the school and its stakeholders to strengthen their jointly agreed purpose. It is, therefore, crucial that teachers in schools understand their school vision. My first finding was that all the three schools had school specific visions whose generation was determined by the different contexts of the schools. Matanga and Bepura Primary Schools had their responsible authorities being the government and the urban council respectively. In these schools, the principals led the creation of school specific visions as the persons representing the responsible authorities at the stations. These were designed to suit the contexts of the schools. This was unlike at Chrim Primary School whose responsible authority was a private individual. In this case, the vision of the school was created by the founder of the school in collaboration with a school board whose membership were determined by the founder of the school. Of significance was the realisation by all the schools of the need for school specific visions which catered for the needs of individual schools aside from the generic Ministry vision. Though extant literature states that it is often the responsibility of principals to create visions for schools (Davis and Boudreaux's, 2019), I discovered that this depended on the type of school. Even though

Chrim Primary School was guided by Ministry policies, its operations were dictated more by the vision of the founder. Martin's (2018) study of USA Christian Schools show that the principals mostly created visions for their schools. From their study, Davis, and Boudreaux's (2019) also found that principals in Charter Schools in the Mid-South Region of the United States crafted resounding visions for their schools. They then concluded that it was the duty of the principals to make sure that their schools had visions that indicated what their schools intended to achieve. Though this was the case at Matanga and Bepura Primary Schools, the situation was dissimilar at Chrim Primary School. The principal's task at Chrim Primary School was to implement the vision than to create it. Each school appeared to have created a vision that was in sync with their contexts, thus the school specific visions differed from school to school unlike the generic vision from the Ministry which was a blanket statement for all schools. While we talk of creating visions in schools, literature suggests that this varies by school and by country. In a study by Kaparou and Bush (2016) of high-performing secondary schools in Greece, on whether the principals enacted instructional leadership, they found that principals focused more on targets as set by the Greek policy requirements compared to visions. Instead of visions, the principals formulated targets. This, therefore, meant that there were no shared visions with the teachers as they had to focus on the targets. This practice, however, can limit teacher creativity in enacting interventions outside the classrooms as they focus largely on attaining classroom targets. Thus, the practice of visioning schools is an important instructional leadership practice that enables teachers to have a common focus. When shared it exposes teachers to all school activities, thus ensuring teachers unlimited contributions to improved school performance. Thus, the context of each school determined how the school was visioned.

Zimbabwean schools are mandated to have the generic vision and mission statements from the Ministry. Effective schools, just like the ones I studied, seem to go a step further and created school specific vision and mission statements guided by the Ministry dictates. These are particularised visions that catered for individual school needs. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) argue that vision formulation in schools is one of the three important instructional leadership practices performed by school principals. Though the development of the school vision is a primary task of principals, Hallinger (2010) argues that it is not meant for them to define the vision alone but to involve other stakeholders. In a study of Singaporean primary and secondary schools, Dong and Seong (2014) emphasised the aligning of instruction to school vision, thus signifying the importance of this instructional leadership practice in schools. Their study

revealed that principals were active in vision formulation. The performance of this instructional leadership activity made the principals strong and effective instructional leaders. The findings by Dong and Seong (2014) corresponded to the findings I made of the two schools in my study where the principals and teachers crafted school specific visions. The difference was experienced at Chrim Primary School where the principal was not part of those who formulated the school vision. Mrs Rega, a long serving member at Matanga Primary School, recalled vividly the days when they created the vision of their school. She cited activities that took place as they formulated the school vision and mission statements saying, *I remember that time, we sat as staff members and were asking ourselves, why are we here, what is it that we want to do to our learners, to our community and to our country. That is how we came up with our vision and mission statements,* (Section 4.2.2). A critical aspect that can be deciphered from her statement is the strategy the principal employed in coming up with the school vision. Vision crafting was not a one-man activity, a view of Hallinger (2010), the principal engaged teachers in the crafting of the school's vision at Matanga Primary School.

Bepura Primary School clearly displayed its school specific vision and mission statements unlike at Matanga Primary School which displayed the generic Ministry vision and mission statements only. Since Matanga Primary School was a government primary school it seems they gave prominence to the generic Ministry vision and mission statements by displaying them alone. The situation was different at Bepura Primary School where they displayed the two, the Ministry and their school specific vision and mission statements clearly. This suggested that they gave equal value to their school specific vision and mission statements just as they did the one from the Ministry. The presence of the principal during the crafting of the school vision was highlighted by the principal in his statement when he said: *We got input from committees, we have got teachers who are in committees, we got their input then we sat as a committee,* (Section 4.3.2*).* This was an acknowledgement by the principal of his efforts and those of the teachers. An important aspect here was the acknowledgement of the importance of the school vision and his partaking in the instructional leadership activity. The situation at Chrim Primary School was such that the principals were hired to implement instructional leadership activities to attain the founder's vision since it was from the founder that they got the school specific vision.

Communicating school visions

Hallinger and Wang (2015) advocate that principals make available the school vision and communicate it to school members. If crafted and kept in a drawer, it would not serve any purpose. It needs to be communicated to stakeholders. It is the principal's responsibility to communicate it to teachers so that there is a common understanding. This was a challenge in all the schools studied, particularly to teachers who joined these schools after the visions had been crafted. Teachers who transferred to these schools, lacked knowledge about the vision and mission statements of their new schools. I noted this when Mrs Sora explained her understanding of the school's vision. She said: *It means teachers must work hard so that our children pass and that we achieve the school goal of having a high pass rate,* (Section 4.2.2). This was her understanding of the school vision. Mr Muko had also transferred to Matanga Primary School from another school. Though the principal rated him highly as having improved the performance of the grade six class, he had little knowledge about the school vision. His focus was more on obtaining a high pass rate than on concentrating on what the school vision entailed, to him it appeared the school vision meant making learners pass. It appeared not much attention was given to new teachers to the school in terms of induction related to the school vision. Like Matanga Primary School, Bepura Primary School also had Mr Ngata who transferred to the school after the school vision had been set. He had little knowledge about the school vision. His explanation of a school vision showed a lack of full understanding of the school vision. In fact, he could not recite it as it is. As he knew the principal talked about excellence, hard work was obviously involved. Thus, his response where he said: *It means we must work very hard to achieve certain goals and targets that are set by the school,* was all embracing of what teachers are expected to achieve in schools. This level of understanding of the school vision by individual teachers signalled the need for a constant reminder by principals of the school's vision. At Chrim Primary School, Ms Manaki also displayed little understanding about school vision. Her response about what the school vision meant to her was, *Integrity and expertise … When we teach, our mandate is to produce good results, so we do everything we can to help the children so that we achieve the goal of the school as our mission directs us.* A lack of a clear understanding of a school mission could be deciphered from the response. It appeared a school vision to her was producing good results.

A common finding among the schools was a streak of a lack of clear understanding of the school vision by new teachers. It appeared that teachers were highly inducted into a culture of hard work and high performance and less attention was paid to the importance of the school vision. A

similar finding where principals focused on one aspect of the learning process was made by Harrison and Allen (2015) in their study of six Association of Christian Schools. They discovered that principals tended to focus more on spiritual leadership than on the academic performance of learners and the professional development of teachers. In the case of my study, this then defeated the aspect of the schools developing all round learners found in the school specific visions while concentrating on the academic aspect only. Concentrating on academics only meant that the teachers at Matanga Primary School missed the opportunity to produce wholesome learners as stated in their vision statement, and at Bepura Primary School they missed the opportunity to produce learners with sport and cultural knowledge, while at Chrim Primary School they may have missed out on the opportunity to unlock the potential in learners as stated in their vision. Thus, communicating the school visions to all teachers may be an instructional leadership role that effective principals need to perform if the development of all round learners is to be achieved in schools.

Discussion

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) overly controls the education system in Zimbabwe. It does this through various instruments that are sent to schools in addition to Ministry officials who visit schools here and there to assess learning processes therein. The Handbook on School Administration for Heads (1993) was one such document that I found in all the schools, principals referred to this document. Even though Chrim Primary School was a private school, the principal, Mr Kanyo indicated that the school operated within the guidelines of the Ministry, thus showing the controlling hand of the Ministry. In addition to other aspects stipulated in the handbook by the Ministry, is the encouragement of principals to have visions for their schools. Hence, as principals developed visions for their schools, they at the same time were enacting an instructional leadership practice that conformed to the dictates of Ministry policies. Through creating school specific visions, the principals aligned the Ministry policies to their schools' settings and contexts. It is an important strategic leadership role for effective principals to have a clear direction for schools and to prioritise important aspects that concern learners (Naidoo and Pettersen, 2016). When visions are in place, it is crucial that they are communicated to all teachers both new and old, in the schools. Turkoglu and Cansoy (2018) emphasise the need for principals to explain the importance of the school's vision to teachers for all to have a common purpose of the school. Enacting this instructional leadership practice in schools appears to be a leadership strategy that improve teachers' instructional performance at

school. Schools had visions, however, what seemed to be lacking was a constant reminder of the existence of school visions to members of staff, particularly new staff members. The major focus was rather on getting high learner academic results. The findings made in this study suggest that though schools had visions, principals needed to constantly remind teachers of these if all round development of learners is to be possible. Developing the vision and communicating it characterised one instructional leadership practice that was enacted in the schools.

5.3.2 Managing instructional activities

This section 5.3's focus is on the activities that principals performed that characterise instructional leadership practice. We now turn our focus to the management of instructional activities through the supervision of teachers as a way of promoting effective teaching and learning in schools.

Promoting teaching through teacher supervision

A finding I made is that all the three principals took part in supervising teachers' instructional activities. The major strategies they employed in supervising teachers were walk-ins, lesson observations and giving feedback. This instructional leadership practice was aimed at improving teaching and learning and ultimately school performance. Manaseh (2016) emphasises that it is the principal's responsibility to manage instructional activities with the aim of improving the quality of teaching in schools. Since teachers are a crucial element of any educational system (Ricard and Pelletier, 2016), effective supervision practices must be implemented by principals to realise effective teaching and learning. Ismail *et al.* (2018) study of respected schools in Malaysia showed that principals' supervision practice had a positive impact on the instructional competency of teachers. It, thus, suggests that the principals' supervision of teachers contributed to instructional improvement. Horng and Loeb (2010) point out that through classroom observations, principals assessed the teaching strategies employed by teachers in classrooms. Since such practice enhanced principals' understanding of classroom life, it enabled them to develop the teachers' capacities by building on their strengths and reducing their weaknesses (Spillane and Zuberi, 2009). It was through such supervisory practices that Mrs Muzuwa was able to note the need for frequent lesson observations of those teachers who performed less optimally and that led Mr Shama to have demonstration lessons for struggling teachers while Mr Kanyo helped those who faced challenges in handling their classes. It was also from such visits

that the principals got additional information on teachers' performance that they used when allocating classes to teachers at the end of each year for the ensuing year.

The strategy that the principals used that resulted in written records for the teachers' continued reference were lesson observations. During such visits, the principals assessed the teachers' lesson delivery, scheme books, record books, learners' work, and other classroom activities. The assessment of the different aspects resulted in the supervisors producing detailed narrative reports about the teachers. The performance of this instructional leadership activity by the principals was like the Singaporean principals in Dong and Seong's (2014) study who supervised their teachers for instructional growth. The Singaporean principals observed classes and gave feedback to the teachers after lesson observations. Similarly, the principals from the three schools I studied conducted lesson observations and gave feedback. The feedback was both oral and in written form as narrative reports. The narrative reports were done on a pro forma that was obtained from the parent Ministry, MoPSE, which when completed had detailed information about a teacher's performance. Mrs Muzuwa supervised new and low performing teachers as well as grades six and seven. Grade seven classes are examination classes; hence the principal paid more attention to this grade to ensure that teachers maintained high quality teaching. The grade six class was taken to be a crucial class since it was preparing to enter grade seven. This suggested the reasons for the principal's concentration on these classes, they were grades that needed the most attention (Leithwood *et al.*, 2004). Through supervising teachers, the principal and fellow supervisors also monitored the performance of learners which they saw during their class visits. That was crucial since low performance in the learners could be noticed and assistance given. Another strategy I observed was the assigning of effective teachers who produced good results to teach grades six and seven classes. The need for good results was meant for the school to maintain its high academic standing. This was the principal's unwritten policy of assigning hard workers to teach grade six and seven classes and it seemed to yield good results. The supervision of grades three, four and five was done by the vice principal and the Infant classes by the teacher in charge (TIC), thus portraying a distributed leadership approach. This was confirmed by Mrs Rega when she said, "*These* (lesson observations) *are conducted by the school head, the deputy head, and the TIC.*"

Just like at Matanga Primary School, Mr Shama also concentrated his attention on grades six and seven. The TIC and the vice principal at Bepura Primary School also played the supervisory role.

The varied narrative reports in the principal's office confirmed Mr Shama's statement that the TIC and the vice principal were supervisory leaders. The involvement of the TIC and the vice principal appeared to be strategic efforts to ensure that all teachers at the school were supervised considering the size of the school and the principal's schedule of work. Findings at Chrim Primary School showed that teacher supervision was done mainly by the principal. Though the TIC made lesson observations in the Infants Department, largely it was the school principal who supervised teachers. As for the vice principal, very few reports indicated that they were done by him suggesting that he focused his energies more on teaching his class than supervising teachers. This was in line with an understanding that the real practice of principals, to evaluate classroom teaching and learning, is necessary for school effectiveness and for improved learners' academic performance (Leithwood *et al.,* 2004). In addition, the context of the school enabled the principal to effectively supervise all the teachers. With eleven teachers to supervise, it proved achievable for the principal to supervise all of them. Mr Kanyo confirmed that lesson observations were his prerogative when he said, "*We have eleven classes, so lesson observations are mostly done by the head and at times by the teacher in charge."* No mention was made of the vice principal suggesting less involvement of him in lesson observations. This left him with ample opportunities to concentrate on his class as pointed out by Mr Kanyo. Since the school was small, the principal was able to supervise all teachers. This was confirmed by Mr Nyika who said, "*The head conducts lesson observations. In some cases, he just goes into a classroom without even notifying the teacher just to see what the teacher would be doing."* A walk-in strategy as enunciated by Mr Nyika was also employed by the principal in his efforts to improve performance at the school. Thus, supervision of teachers was enacted at the school, thereby suggesting that the principal was able to enhance the quality of instruction through lesson observations and providing feedback to teachers.

All principals gave feedback to teachers after observing a lesson(s). This was in line with Mendels' (2012) recommendation that principals must discuss their findings with teachers after having conducted a classroom supervision. The aim being to assist teachers improve their classroom performance. Anderson (2010) stresses that giving teachers constructive feedback improved their instructional performance. Mr Shama pointed out that he gave feedback, "*Immediately after the lesson because if it takes time, you tend to forget …"* Mr Shama pointed out when he gave feedback and the reason behind the quick feedback. His argument was, if delayed he tended to forget how the lesson would have progressed. Since feedback was in verbal

and written form the rate at which the written form was done depended on the principal's schedule of events. Leadership models by Hallinger and Murphy (1985); Murphy, (1990) and Weber (1996) stress the importance of classroom management and the supervision of teaching and learning by principals. In line with this, Donkor and Asante's (2016) study revealed that the supervision and evaluation of teachers and learners by heads of basic schools in the Kwaebibirem District of Ghana were the main activities that were practiced by principals when compared to planning and organisation of the day-to-day school activities. The knowledge of activities taking place in classrooms is important to principals and is only obtained through conducting lesson observations. Lynch (2012) believes that it is those schools where principals spend time discussing instructional matters with teachers that perform highly.

Discussion

A common element among the schools was that the principals supervised teachers and the most only used method was lesson observations and walk-ins. Lesson observations resulted in written reports whereas walk-ins did not. The principals complemented their classroom observations with feedback sessions with teachers to improve their instructional performance. As instructional leaders, principals redefined their roles to being prime learners striving for quality in education (Manaseh, 2016). They worked with teachers in managing the curriculum and in addition, they helped build up the strengths and reduce the weaknesses in their teachers through supervision and feedback activities. The three principals supervised their teachers and gave them feedback, thus playing their role of instructional leadership. Principals have the responsibility to visit teachers in their classroom environment to monitor, guide and check for any deficiencies (Gungor and Aydin, 2018). Such visits enabled the principals to observe teaching and learning in practice and to offer help. Ghavifekr and Ibrahim (2014) talk of continuous monitoring of teachers' performance positing that the outcomes were observable in improved teacher and learner performance. This explains why monitoring instructional activities "… is one of the variables that characterises instructional leadership" (Ghavifekr and Ibrahim, 2014: 47). Lee *et al.* (2012) stress that when supervision is conducted with the spirit of assisting teachers, it leads to learners' academic improvement and teachers' professional growth. The principals' feedback was a helping strategy where they guided and assisted teachers to meet the set targets.

It was a common view in schools that the main activity that principals performed in relation to classroom practice was the supervision of teachers. This was revealed by Khan *et al.* (2020) in

their study in Pakistan Primary schools where they examined the relationship between the principals' instructional leadership and the performance of learners through teacher mediation. Their results showed that principals' instructional leadership practices influenced the academic performance of learners through the commitment of teachers to their schools. This, therefore, points to the importance of teacher supervision in positively affecting learners' academic performance. The narrative form proved popular in the schools since it was used by all the supervisors when writing reports on teachers. Its wide use was in part because it was a well-designed form that captured the varied faculties of a teacher. When effectively completed, it produced a detailed and informative report on each teacher. The observations made of the varied activities at the schools and the information from participants suggested that the supervision practice was effective. Hence Khan *et al.* (2020) further allege that an increase in teacher supervision and teacher commitment results in increased learner academic performance.

5.3.3 Creating a positive school environment

Under this sub-theme, the focus was made on staff development and the practice of allocating schools as aspects that determine a positive working environment. Yasser *et al.* (2015) advocate that school performance improves when principals create positive working conditions in their schools, thus showing the importance for principals to create such environments. Findings on principal's practices towards their school environments are discussed below.

5.3.3.1 Staff development of teachers

Staff development was a common practice at the three schools, and these were both teacher and principal driven. The teachers' responses and documents analysed indicated that staff development programmes that were done were quite effective in enhancing teachers' instructional performance. Mrs Muzuwa, for example, indicated her support for staff development at her school through explaining the strategy to ensure effectiveness of staff development. "*We conduct staff development at grade level. I usually utilise staff development of teachers at grade level."* Thus, Mrs Muzuwa as the principal sowed her acknowledgement of the importance of staff development activities at her school and went further to have a strategy that she regarded as effective, that of targeted staff development. This is where she indicated that she utilised the grade level strategy for particularised topics and for generic topics such as the implementation of the new curriculum, training was attended by all teachers. The teachers also concurred with Mrs Muzuwa concerning staff development at their school.

Mrs Sora acknowledged the importance of staff development activities to teachers. She went on to indicate that she attended "… *school-based staff development programmes though not many, one or two a term. These are the ones we attend if they are in line with our grades."* This concurs with the principal's strategy of the grade staff development approach. Her worry was that external staff development activities had reduced in number when compared to her past experiences when they used to attend these in other districts or schools. She attributed this to the country's negative economy that she said had impacted on such educational activities. She pointed out saying "… *we used to have staff development workshops outside the school where we would go to another school or other districts and attend a workshop, for example, on teaching essay writing or netball coaching. It is very rare these days. The cause might be the country's economy which is down."* Teacher participation in the staff development workshops took different forms, from chairing the training activities, contributing areas for staff development, to participating in the sessions. She chaired a workshop where the principal and the vice principal made their presentations on preparing for grade seven examinations.

Mr Muko indicated having had the opportunity to attend a staff development workshop outside the school and internal ones. The external workshop was related to his chairmanship of the fundraising committee, thus was able to attend. He further pointed out that he attended a COVID-19 awareness workshop at the school which he saw as being quite beneficial to teachers.

Mrs Rega, the TIC, indicated the principal's support for staff development activities in the school by explaining experiences in her department. She pointed out that the principal had given her the green light to conduct staff development workshops in the Infants Department with or without the presence of the principal. She pointed out this saying: "*Our learners generally are very good readers. So, to maintain standards we do a lot of staff development in reading."* This indicated the enactment of the instructional leadership activity of staff developing teachers in the school. By pointing out that the principal had encouraged them to staff develop each other as a department irrespective of her presence indicated her support for the staff development of the teachers. Mrs Rega pointed out that the head had said*: "Don't wait for us to have your staff development workshops, make sure you do your own things there …,"* which is an indication of the principal's support for staff development.

In relation to staff development at Bepura Primary School, Mr Shama supported staff development activities at his school and worked with teachers in coming up with topics for staff

development. His statement: *"They* (topics for staff development) *come from the heads of committees and in addition from the administration team depending on issues to be addressed",* indicated the enactment of staff development activities and the involvement of teachers in the practice. Even though he encouraged staff development, he indicated that he normally did not take part in the facilitation process to give teachers an opportunity to present so that they develop their leadership potentials.

Mrs Ndaba concurred with the principal on the prevalence of staff development activities at the school and the involvement of teachers in suggesting topics for staff development. Her words, *"At times we are given the honour to come up with some topics for workshops from what we would have observed from our teaching and say this needs staff development",* indicated teachers' involvement in their staff development. She further pointed out that even though the school was big to the extent of it being two schools in one, the principal supported teacher activities.

Just like Mr Muko, Mr Ngata had the opportunity, as a Physical Education specialist, to attend external workshops. The difference in their workshops was the content of the workshops. Mr Ngata saw the principal being supportive of staff development activities as he said, "*He* (the principal) *is very supportive and wants me to go far with sport."* This indicates an acknowledgement of the support he received from the principal in staff development activities.

Mrs Koni from the Infants Department indicated that they staff developed each other as a department. She said, "*We staff develop each other as Infants teachers ... we may meet as both Infants and Junior teachers with a topic that is important to the two groups."* This approach was like the staff development strategy postulated by Mrs Muzuwa. There we also increased staff development activities in the Infants Department just like at Matanga Primary School. "*So we have various staff development workshops in the department to conscientize each other on the best ways of handling the little ones."* This indicated the attention paid to Infant grades just as at Matanga Primary School.

Mr Kanyo got topics for staff development from the gaps he identified as he supervised teachers and in addition from teachers' contributions. "*As I supervise the teachers, I notice some gaps or some areas that need more attention, so we take those. I also consult teachers before preparing*

the schedule …" His belief was that all teachers recruited at his school had something to contribute to the school, thus his involvement of them in school activities. This tallied with other principals from Matanga and Bepura Primary Schools, who indicated the involvement of teachers in coming up with staff development topics.

Mr Nyika, the senior teacher, indicated the existence of staff development at Chrim Primary School. His stance on the inclusion of teachers was, "*Teachers are sometimes asked to submit topics through their committees, but largely topics are set by the head and his team members."* Unlike what the principal said that he involved teachers, Mr Nyika's statement suggests that all lied in the principal's hands.

Mr Hasva agreed with Mr Nyika that it was mostly the principal assisted by his team that came up with staff development topics. Ms Manaki saw the principal being a supporter of staff development. She said: "*The head supports staff development activities at the school … Teachers contributed what they knew and finally the head told us how it* (PLAP) *was done."* This was in reference to staff development at Chrim Primary School and an indication that teachers participated. Teachers are an essential element in the education process; thus, they need to be well informed if learning programmes are to be successful (Chukwueze, 2021). This explains the need to staff develop teachers if they are to remain relevant in the present-day system of education that demands for innovation among teachers.

Glanz's (2017) study of USA Jewish schools showed that the principals promoted the professional development of teachers. The encouragement of teacher professional learning is an important instructional activity that instructional leaders carry out. Their support and presence to the work environment determines the teachers' professional learning and development. Literature states that it is an investment to staff develop teachers since it improves their productivity and in addition benefits learners, most importantly, when high-quality staff development programmes are implemented (Bates and Watt, 2015; Turkoglu and Cansoy, 2018). Kosgei (2015) opines that staff development programmes serve to motivate teachers resulting in them being highly effective and extremely productive. The findings from my study agree with literature (Bates and Watt, 2015; Kosgei, 2015; Glanz, 2018) that staff development improves teachers' productivity. It can be argued, therefore, that staff development activities that were held in the schools exposed teachers to new content and pedagogical approaches necessary in the

teaching and learning process. Teachers' high instructional performance and the high pass rates in the three schools suggested high productivity by teachers.

Due to the different contexts of the schools, the methods of identifying topics for training and the organisation of training sessions differed. The principals' efforts in supporting teacher professional development can be viewed in the broader context of school development (Huggins *et al.,* 2017). The principal at Matanga Primary School used a strategy of targeted staff development to improve its effectiveness. Setting training groups in departments, Infants, Middle Junior, and Upper Junior served to improve the effectiveness of the staff development programmes. This arrangement appeared to benefit teachers since they spent time on relevant areas only. Teacher professional learning also took place at Bepura Primary School with the principal, in this case, using a slightly varied approach to that of Matanga Primary School. In this case, the principal divided members into two training groups, Infants, and Juniors to improve the effectiveness of the training activities. School operations normally depend on the contexts of the schools. Chrim Primary School being a small school had its staff development programmes as a single unit. Salo *et al.* (2015) emphasise that effective principals organise professional development activities to improve knowledge acquisition of their teachers. In line with this, Osamwinyi (2016) described in-service education as a necessary element in education which motivates and enhances teachers' work performance. Thus, the implementation of staff development to teachers in the three schools was an important instructional leadership practice enacted in the schools by the principals. Kosgei (2015) and Osamwinyi (2016) agree that staff development has a motivating power on teachers, thus suggesting the level of effect it has on teachers. In-service training as put forward by Barasa (cited in Kosgei, 2015: 35) is a form of a staff development programme carried out to develop teacher competencies, inform and re-orient them. Osamwinyi (2016) believes that a lack of in-service training leads to a retardation of teachers' professional growth. It is, therefore, important that attention is paid to the in-servicing of teachers at the three schools for their professional growth.

5.3.3.2 Allocating classes in schools

A common characteristic existed among the principals on how they allocated classes to teachers. This instructional leadership practice was taken seriously by the principals. All the schools wanted to maintain their high pass rates and high-performance tags in the district and province, thus they diligently allocated teachers to classes with special focus given to examination classes.

It was at this stage that the supervision reports and test results came in handy for placement purposes. There was no policy of automatic progression by teachers to the next grade with their classes in the schools, rather teachers had to work their way to get that honour.

In terms of allocating classes, Mrs Muzuwa did not like to take chances, thus she took great care when allocating classes to teachers particularly grades six and seven. As an instructional leader, she considered a teacher's performance before allocating classes. "*We really sit down and look at the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers and we also look at the classes",* Mrs Muzuwa remarked indicating the approach she used in allocating classes to teachers. Her class visits were meant to assess teacher and learner progress and for placement purposes. She valued her approach since it drove teachers to improve their performance if they wanted to proceed to the next grade with their classes. As the principal and instructional leader, Mrs Muzuwa was quite positive in making changes to the grade teachers. The focus was to improve learner performance through the collaborative effort of all teachers.

As far as Mrs Sora was concerned, the allocation of classes was the prerogative of the principal. "*I was given a class to teach by the school head",* she said about how class allocation was done at Chrim Primary School. This perception indicates the principal's stance towards high performance at the school. The principle of no automatic progression of teachers to the next grade with their classes as mentioned by Mrs Muzuwa was reiterated by Mrs Sora as somehow a way of urging teachers to improve their instructional performance. If the teachers upped their performance, it meant that learner academic performance was likely to improve, and the teachers stood a higher chance of being favourably considered when it came to class allocation.

Mr Muko appeared not to be very certain of whether the other supervisors were involved in class allocation, thus his response when he said: "*That much is the head who just decides".* He then went on and said: "*In fact, it is the head and the administration team who decide",* this indicates a ray of thought that might have come to his mind. Test results were the barometer for placement. It, therefore, meant that teachers had to improve their work performance to achieve high learner academic results.

As far as Mrs Rega was concerned, it was the head who allocated classes to teachers. Though she saw this method being effective, she saw it being unfair at times. "*The head allocates classes, …*

So, I discovered it had helped a lot, … But it is very unfair at times, especially to the one who would take the classes that would be behind." These sentiments were based on how she saw class allocation being handled at the school. As the TIC, she would have loved a situation where she was totally involved in the allocation process rather than partial involvement that she regarded as prevailing at the school. This, therefore, points at the fact that it was the principal who mainly handled the class allocation activity as also alluded to by Mrs Sora.

Class allocation at Bepura Primary School, was a collaborative activity between the principal, the vice principal, and the TIC with them considering teachers' ability to teach and test results just like at Matanga Primary School. "*We assign classes to teachers basing on ability to teach. … When we look at the test results, we can see how one performed …",* remarked Mr Shama when talking about class allocation. The school also employed the strategy where novice teachers were allocated to middle grades. Chukwueze (2021) advocates that beginning teachers are confronted with many challenges such as classroom control and motivating the learners that they cannot be allocated to examination classes or Infant grades. This practice showed the principal's involvement in instructional leadership activities and the maintenance of standards in the schools.

Though Mrs Ndaba taught grade four when she transferred into the school through a swap, she explained that class allocation was done by the principal and his supervisory team, thus following Hughes and Pickeral's (2013) view that principals must not work as lone individuals, but to engage other staff members as they carried out school activities. The use of test results was reiterated by Mrs Ndaba when she said, "*They, normally use a class teacher's performance record and the test results of their classes",* (Section 4.3.6) thus showing a similarity with Matanga Primary School: "*We really sit down and look at the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers and we also look at the class performance",* (Section 4.2.6) as pointed out by Mrs Muzuwa. Just like Mrs Ndaba, Mr Ngata the Physical Education teacher also explained that it was the head who told him the grades he was to teach when he transferred into the school from where he was. He, however, pointed out that class allocation was done by the supervisory team.

Mrs Koni concurred with the other members on how class allocation was done at the school. She went on a step further and indicated that at times the principal asked teachers to indicate their grade preferences which at times were favourably considered. This was what she did resulting in

her teaching in the Infants Department. Unlike the different sentiments found at Matanga Primary School, where the teachers expressed differences in who allocated classes to teachers, a total concurrence was found at Bepura Primary School that it was a collaborative activity among the supervisory team.

With eleven teachers, Chrim Primary School did not have the wide choice of teachers when compared to Matanga and Bepura Primary Schools. Despite this, the principal was the most experienced of them all so he had his approach when it came to class allocation. Just like the other two schools, Chrim Primary School had effective teachers allocated to grade six and seven, the exam class. This was meant to maintain the standards of the school. Mr Kanyo personally handled the allocation of classes at Chrim Primary School. Ikegbusi and Eziamaka (2016) argue that to achieve the goals and objectives of any organisation, certain mechanisms must be put in place to ensure its success. In line with this, Mr Kanyo himself allocated teachers to classes with the aim of improving school performance and maintaining the school standards. He openly said: "*Normally class allocation is done by the head"* (Section 4.4.7). In addition to the performance and experience of teachers, the principal also considered the teachers' qualifications, age and experience when allocating classes to them. This proved to be effective because the school had a track record of producing a 100% pass rate each year. A variation that occurred at Chrim Primary School from the other two schools was the level at which the TIC and the vice principal were consulted. This was in circumstances such as a clash of interests between high performing members. A similarity also occurred in the allocation of classes to novice and seasoned teachers at Bepura and Chrim Primary Schools. Novice teachers at these schools were considered for middle grades as compared to examination classes.

In the case of Mr Nyika, he saw the allocation of classes done after a discussion between the head and the teacher. This might have happened to him as a senior teacher as it was never mentioned by the other teachers. He said: "*Normally there is a discussion between the head and the teacher, one is not just given a class."* This was in reference to class allocation. This stance was different from that of Mr Hasva, who was assigned to teach Agriculture to grades three to seven classes by the principal. He clearly said: "*The head allocates classes at this school …"* He was confident that the principal did the allocation personally considering his interest in maintaining the school's pass rate. Mr Hasva and Ms Manaki concurred that the principal allocated classes. In fact, all the teachers concurred with the principal. It was only a variation by

Mr Nyika on how the principal did the allocation, otherwise allocation was done by the principal. Ms Manaki went further and explained that the principal usually told teachers that their performance would determine the allocation of classes.

Despite the different contexts of the schools, a common finding was that all the principals allocated classes diligently. The strategies the principals used to allocate classes to teachers portrayed important instructional leadership practices in the schools. A strong commitment to instructional leadership existed among the principals who ensured that teachers were allocated to classes they could effectively handle. Improved performance was, therefore, expected when teachers were allocated to classes within their competencies.

Discussion

Effective school leaders are resource providers. The principals provided opportunities for staff development. Encouraging teachers to staff develop each other was an important instructional leadership practice by the principals. It needs dynamic instructional leaders to support the professional development of teachers (Harris *et al.,* 2017). Shava (2015) opines that effective school leaders improve working conditions, motivate, and capacitate their teachers to achieve school goals. Moyo and Maseko (2016) advocate that the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education must work with schools in implementing programmes that enable skill development by teachers. Since principals aimed at maintaining high standards at their schools, it is crucial that they informed teachers of the expected teacher and learner performances at the schools and then support them as they work towards those standards. In fact, school principals must encourage best practices for curriculum delivery. Effective principals employ a practice of intellectual stimulation (Glanz *et al.,* 2017) where they expose teachers to new and current ideas on improving teaching and learning. Such principals stay well-informed about contemporary education developments, and they also encourage teachers to be abreast with current education information (Naidoo and Petersen, 2016).

The allocation of classes to teachers was an important activity that principals performed. The practice characterised instructional leadership. By diligently allocating classes to teachers, Sukirno and Siengthai (2011) argue that principals recognised that the performance of a job was an important factor that affected the school performance. Thus, to ensure effective performance of the teaching activity, the principals in the studied schools were quite thorough in the class allocation activities. The necessity of this can be explained in the sense that teacher performance

in schools had a strategic role which is a main factor in determining learner performance and ultimately the school performance. The careful allocation of classes led the principals into recognising that the transition time for teachers from teacher training to the teaching profession was a challenging phase for teachers (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011). This, therefore, needs principals who understand this phase and are working to assist beginning teachers. Mr Shama and Mr Kanyo assisted such teachers by not allocating them to challenging classes so that they gained experience first. This section focused on the cross-case analysis of the findings. The following section focuses on how the major activities of instructional leadership exhibited features of a distributed leadership practice.

5.4 ALIGNING INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES TO DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP PRACTICE

The following section presents a cross-case analysis of the findings which show an alignment of instructional activities to a distributed leadership practice. This is in response to the question, how do the major activities of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe align with and/or exhibit features of a distributed leadership practice, if at all? I explored these under the topics collaborative vision formulation, supervisory practices, and enhanced school environments.

5.4.1 Collaborative vision formulation

Collaborative efforts in visioning schools were found in the schools I studied with this practice conducted under different school contexts. The practice showed shared responsibility among the principals and teachers and at the private school it was between the founder of the school and board members who contributed to the visioning of the school.

Jamail and Don (2016) opine that leadership of organisations in today's changing world cannot be left to lone individuals and expect excellent outcomes. It, therefore, suggests that collaborative efforts are the order of the day if organisations are to improve their performance. Yangaiya and Ali's (2013) study found that there was an increase in both school effectiveness and learner academic outcomes when distributed leadership is enacted in schools. This, therefore, suggests that collaborative efforts often led to improvements in school performance. This was the case with the three schools I studied. There was high performance in the schools as evidenced by the learners' high academic results. The three schools enacted distributed

leadership practices which were enacted through different collaborative activities in the schools. The first instructional leadership activity that appeared to have contributed to increased teacher instructional performance after being collaboratively worked on was vision formulation. The creation of visions at two of the schools, Matanga and Bepura Primary Schools were a result of collaborative efforts of staff members and stakeholders. At Chrim Primary School the creation of the school vision was done by the founder of the school with board members. Although the vision was not formed by teachers it was collaboratively formulated and served as the guideline of the school. This appeared effective considering the high performance of both teachers and learners and the high pass rates at the school. When the visions were created and shared with all members in the school, it contributed to aligning members' attention towards a common goal.

Hallinger *et al.* (2017) found that even though the Vietnam's education system was highly centralised, principals collaboratively worked with teachers to produce school targets (visions). This was a similar activity I found in schools where principals worked with teachers to produce school-based visions. Responses from interviews and information from analysed documents indicated collaborative efforts in the formulation of school specific visions. The schools differed in who was involved in the formulation of the visions. At Matanga and Bepura Primary Schools, members involved the principals, the teachers, and other stakeholders whereas at Chrim Primary School, the founder and the school board crafted the school vision. The fact that the crafting of school visions was a collaborative activity, exhibited a distributed leadership practice at the schools. The act of involving other members in building up this instructional activity was an acknowledgement of the expertise resident in other teachers. When Mrs Muzuwa said, *"We have what I can refer to as shared leadership, where everybody is a leader, … so to come up with our school vision we got input from teachers through their representatives*," suggested a distributed leadership practice. Spillane (2001) reiterates that distributed leadership stretches leadership between and among two or more leaders. In this situation, instructional leadership activities were distributed among the teachers. Her comment suggests the existence of expertise among teachers and not in the principal alone (Goksoy, 2015). Mrs Rega's statement where she said, *"… we sat down as staff members and were asking ourselves, why are we here, what is it that we want to do to our learners, to our community and to our country."* indicated that the instructional activity was not conducted by a sole individual. A critical aspect that can be deciphered from her statement is that the principal enabled staff members to craft the vision and mission statements, thereby suggesting a distribution of leadership activities. Mr Shama, said, *"… we have got*

teachers who are in committees, we got their input then we sat as a committee. The chairpersons of the committees represent the committees in the organogram so that is how we got input from stakeholders. We also got input from parents through the school development committee and from children through the prefects' board." This suggested a distribution of leadership activities to teachers. The existence of committees suggests that the principal distributed leadership to other members in the school. By involving the school board in the formulation of the school vision at Chrim Primary School suggested a distributed leadership practice.

Spillane (2011) argues that distributed leadership results from the interactions between leaders and followers in their situation. It follows, therefore, that principals at Matanga and Bepura Primary Schools and the founder and the school board at Chrim Primary School combined their knowledge and expertise with those of other members to vision their schools. Interactions between principals and teachers concerning school visions at Chrim Primary School took place at the implementation stage. In all the schools, vision formulation seems to have been collaboratively done showing tenets of distributed leadership practice. The leader-plus characteristic of distributed leadership recognises the presence of different members in leadership and management practice (Spillane and Diamond, 2007b) as discovered in the schools. The management and leadership of schools include principals and other individuals in formal and informal positions implementing the curriculum. The involvement of stakeholders in vision formulation seems to be an acknowledgement of informal leaders in providing mentorship in specific curriculum issues (Spillane and Healey, 2010). Interactions took place between leaders and followers in their school contexts as they created and communicated visions, this depicted distributed leadership practice (Spillane, 2006). The idea behind leadership practice is that lone individuals cannot single-handedly drive organisations to high performance (Spillane, 2005), it needs other leadership players to build up a unified force.

5.4.2 Supervisory practices in the schools

Teacher supervision is an important instructional leadership activity aimed at assisting teachers improve their instructional performance as they implement the curriculum (Yousaf *et al.,* 2018). Common instructional leadership activities among the three Primary Schools that exhibited distributed leadership was a distribution of supervisory loads. These were done by the school leadership team which included the principal, the vice principal and the TIC. Horng and Loeb

(2010) advocate that, principals who work with other members of staff on curriculum matters are effective principals. Thus, the principals from the three primary schools were effective leaders because of their practice of involving staff members in instructional leadership activities at the school, ranging from supervisory activities to committee engagement. It appears the principals' approach of involving other members of staff in leadership activities contributed to improved teacher and learner performance since the schools had high pass rates. The contexts of the schools, however, determined the way supervision was done. For Matanga Primary School, the TIC and the vice principal were equally involved in teacher supervision and there was a clear indication on which supervisor supervised which grade. "*We have the deputy head, the TIC from the Infants Department and me. Those are the three people who do the supervision."* This was Mrs Muzuwa indicating who the supervisors were at Matanga Primary School. This showed that she shared instructional leadership activities with other members, the TIC, and the vice principal, thus depicting distributed leadership. Although Mrs Muzuwa was the overall supervisor, she could not supervise all teachers alone, thus her lesson observations were concentrated on grade sixes and sevens, which were regarded as examination classes. The instructional leadership practice at Matanga Primary School was such that some of the supervisors shared their supervision programmes with teachers. Mrs Sora indicated this when she said, "*I am supervised by the deputy head who shares his supervision calendar at the beginning of the year. The calendar shows grades and months. Teachers approach their supervisors and give them dates, time, and subject they can come for lesson observation."* The involvement of the vice principal in the supervision of teachers showed distributed leadership by the principal. Mr Muko also remarked that lesson observations were carried out by *"... the head, deputy head and the TIC."* He further clarified the principal's major focus when he said: *"The head generally, supervises the whole school, but she normally focuses on grades six and seven when observing lessons. The TIC supervises the Infants Department, and the deputy head supervises grades three to five."*

That supervision matrix indicated the principal's strategy in distributing leadership. This was in line with Spillane (2005) who argues that it is inaccurate to equate school leadership to a single leader, the school principal, since these cannot effectively run schools to stardom single-handedly. School leadership involves varied individuals who use varied tools and structures for effective school performance. The involvement of other members in supervisory activities indicated the distributed instructional leadership interest by the principal. Mrs Rega confirmed being the TIC and being one of the supervisors. She oversaw the Infants Department and showed

that she had the authority to supervise the Infants Department, thus depicting a distributed leadership practice. "*I am the TIC …,"* Mrs Rega confirmed her position in the school and involvement in instructional supervision as enunciated by the other participants.

At Bepura Primary School, distributed leadership was exhibited through a shared responsibility in the lesson supervision programmes which were jointly handled by the principal, the TIC, and the vice principal. This practice conformed to the dictates of the Director's Circular Minute Number 7 of 2003 which urged principals or their delegated ones to supervise teachers. It thus signified that the Ministry acknowledged that as single individuals, principals could not effectively manage all school responsibilities and instructional tasks, thus the involvement of other members would make the work get done. The Ministry, through the circular, thus encouraged a distribution of leadership to staff members with the requisite skills and knowledge. A confirmation by Mr Shama when he said lesson observations were done by the school head, deputy head and the TIC and that the TIC took care of the Infants Department and the vice principal and himself took care of grades three to seven, suggested shared responsibility at the school (Section 4.3.3). Mrs Ndaba's statement when she said: *"What he* (The head) *does is, he comes to us and we agree on the timetable on when he would visit us for the term,"* confirmed shared responsibility. Distributed leadership practice was evident here when the principal (leader) interacted with teachers (followers) in the context of their schools (situation) (Spillane, 2005). The idea of involving teachers in drawing up a lesson observation programme appeared to signify that the lesson supervision practice was not a secret. This practice was congruent with what was said by Mrs Sora at Matanga Primary School that the vice principal involved teachers in coming up with their supervision programmes. The practice revealed the principals' enactment of distributed leadership at the schools. Smylie (2007) defined distributed leadership as the sharing and distribution of leadership work across members in a school. Therefore, the principal's activities of sharing supervision activities denoted distributed leadership. Spillane (2006) advocated for substantial distributed leadership practices in schools in search for improved performance.

A different scenario existed at Chrim Primary School. The posts of TIC and vice principal appeared ceremonial when it came to lesson observation as a supervision activity. This was because their participation in lesson observations was very minimal. They were more inclined to classroom teaching than to supervisory activities. Though documents in the form of narrative

reports they wrote were evident, it showed that this takes place at distant times. "*We have eleven classes here, so lesson observations are mostly done by the head and at times by the teacher in charge."* This was Mr Kanyo indicating who did lesson observations at Chrim Primary School. This practice seemed to ignore the tenets of distributed leadership of engaging other members in instructional leadership activities. Though it was not an outright no to TIC and vice principal supervision, the frequency indicated that the principal was the main supervisor as he had indicated. Whereas Mr Hasva indicated that the vice principal would at times assess children's exercise books, Ms Manaki had her own views as she said: "*The head and the deputy head do the supervision of lessons. But in most cases, it's the head."* Like what Mrs Ndaba and Mrs Sora from Bepura and Matanga Primary Schools said, Ms Manaki went on to say: "*When coming to observe a lesson the principal normally tells teachers that this week, I will be coming for lesson observation. He does not give the time or date."* Some similarities thus existed in the schools on how supervisory activities were handled which depicted the enactment of distributed leadership by the principals. Since Chrim Primary School was a small school, the principal managed to observe all teachers at work. Another instructional activity found in the schools was unannounced visits as routine checks by principals. All principals enacted this activity to check on teachers' progress. Principals cannot be the sole brains for instructional improvement, hence the involvement of other members to complement them. The instructional leadership activities enacted at the three schools exhibited features of distributed leadership practice.

5.4.3 Enhanced school environments

Varied activities are discussed under this theme to show how instructional leadership activities enacted in the school exhibited distributed leadership practices. Two instructional activities under this dimension which exhibit distributed leadership are discussed in the following segment.

5.4.3.1 Capacity development of teachers

Dimmock (2012) believes distributed leadership is capacity building, in that distributing or extending leadership to school members has the potential of increasing the capacity of schools. In line with this, it can be said that principals and distributed leadership are leadership capacity builders. Capacity has been described by Huggins *et al.* (2017: 3) "… as the ability to do something." Therefore, building the leadership capacity of teachers entailed developing teachers' ability to lead different school tasks. My findings showed that principals supported teacher

capacity building activities and in doing so involved teachers. This developed the academic capital of teachers which in turn led to educational improvement. While capacity building took place in different ways, depending on school context, a common observation among the principals was their commitment to building the leadership capacity of their staff members by affording them opportunities to lead different committees. Their commitment started with their deliberate efforts to know the performance levels of their teachers which they did through lesson observations. There was time and effort investment by principals to develop leadership capacities of their staff members. This practice enhanced teachers' leadership skills and their ability to work on different tasks and got satisfaction from completing the tasks.

Mrs Muzuwa sought to capacity build teachers for them to meet the school's performance standards. To ensure the effectiveness of the capacity building programmes, she involved teachers in coming up with topics for staff development. This proved effective since teachers were staff developed in areas of their interest. This was an important practice of involving teachers in instructional leadership activities. "*These come from both the supervisors and the teachers. I usually encourage teachers to staff develop each other in their departments, so it means they come up with their topics,"* Mrs Muzuwa explained in reference to the involvement of teachers in staff development activities. This activity showed a shared responsibility among the school members. The principal could have solely come up with staff development topics but as Leithwood *et al.* (2004) state, leadership effects on student learning amount to a quarter of all school effects, it suggests the principal's recognition that teachers spend more time with learners, thus understood the challenges they experienced in classes more than them.

A further indication of the distributed leadership practice was pointed out by Mrs Sora when she said: "*The supervisory team comes up with topics. At times teachers make suggestions through their committees or at grade level and usually these are considered."* This shows a distribution of instructional leadership practice in the school. Allowing teachers to come up with topics for discussion explains the important position teachers occupy in school activities. In addition to that, Mr Muko pointed out that it was the principal who normally staff developed teachers, but sometimes engaged resource persons to conduct staff development activities (Section 4.2.5). The engagement of other resource persons, besides the principal, appeared to be an acknowledgement of the talents resident in other people, thus distributing leadership to them. When Mrs Rega pointed out what the principal had said: "*Don't wait for us to have your staff development*

workshops, make sure you do your own things there, …" clearly exemplifies distributed leadership by the principal. *"It meant that she was authorising the TIC to conduct staff development in her department irrespective of her being present or not."*

The findings from Bepura Primary School concerning staff development programmes indicated that they were collaboratively developed by teachers and the administration team. Mr Shama revealed this when he said, "*It,* (Staff development programmes) *comes from the heads of committees and in addition from the administration team depending on the issues to be addressed. If it is feedback of information from workshops we would have attended, that session would be from the administration. If there are people who would have attended workshops other than us, then staff development would come from those who would have gone for workshops."* This points out the principal's interest in stretching leadership roles to teachers and a commitment to teacher professional development. All was not centred on the principal. Committees were made use of as the medium through which teachers suggested topics to the supervisory team. The enactment of distributed leadership at the school was confirmed by Mrs Ndaba who talked of being allowed to suggest topics for discussion as teachers, thus suggesting a shared instructional leadership responsibility by the teachers. A similarity was noted in how the Infants Departments at Matanga and Bepura Primary Schools conducted their staff development activities as propounded by Mrs Koni from Bepura Primary School who said, "*We staff develop each other as Infants teachers …"* The quote informs us that the Infants Department at that school had the autonomy to conduct its business as a department. This explained the principal's stance in relation to distributing instructional leadership. Departments were authorised by their principals to staff develop each other, thus the enactment of this instructional leadership activity was made possible through distributed leadership.

All principals showed commitment to professionally developing their teachers. This was critical to schools as this improved teachers' instructional ability. Mr Kanyo showed his interest in distributing leadership to teachers when he explained how his school came up with staff development programmes. He said, "*… I also consult the teachers before preparing the schedule on areas of their concerns and weaknesses and then we come up with topics for discussions."*

Mr Nyika reiterated the practice of committee use at Chrim Primary just like at Bepura Primary School. This showed a similarity in the use of committees in schools. Mr Hasva concurred with

the principal that he distributed leadership to teachers when he said, "*Yes, they* (teachers) *are consulted but most of the time it is the head, the deputy and the TIC who come up with activities."* Though the quote suggests that most of the items were decided by the administration team, Mr Hasva acknowledged that teachers were consulted. A case of shared responsibility was evident here. The principals' investment of time and effort in developing the capacities of teachers suggested a benefit in the future (Huggins *et al.*, 2017). The principals appeared to have realised that investment in teachers today would increase the teachers' capacities over time. Thus, capacity building teachers can be viewed as a way of sustaining school improvement (Day and Sammons, 2013).

5.4.3.2 Leadership opportunities for teachers

Principals have the latitude to come up with positions that require instructional leadership, and which can be occupied by teachers at their schools (Jamail and Don, 2016). Findings from the study showed that such positions existed in the three schools that I studied. The schools had committees that were led by teachers. Such stretching of leadership activities to teachers motivated them to improved performance (Ghavifekr *et al.*, 2015). The committees found in the schools included the examinations, subject, sports, fundraising, catering, health, and the social welfare committees. Mrs Muzuwa acknowledged the importance of stretching instructional leadership activities to other members when she said, "*If I were to do all those things, I would end up exhausted, so I try to delegate, at the same time I will be building leaders"* (Section 4.2.6). Through taking leadership roles in committees, teachers developed their leadership skills. It, therefore, meant that those who chaired the different committees practised leadership and this showed distributed leadership by the principal. Mrs Sora said: "*The school head gives us opportunities to lead in areas of our choice. I am the school health mistress."* She oversaw the health committee leading members who joined that team. Thus, during her tenure, she would practise leadership, hence enabling Mrs Muzuwa to commend that she would be building up leaders through involving them in different committees. The principal there created leadership opportunities for teachers.

There was a wide use of committees at Bepura Primary School as indicated by the participants. Mr Shama's remarks indicated the existence of distributed leadership at the school. He said, "*We have got co-curricular disciplines where teachers are in charge, so yes, we do. As I have said we have chairpersons in different committees, so leadership positions exist for teachers."* Availing

opportunities for teachers to lead in different committees demonstrated distributed leadership. This instructional leadership practice was also mentioned by Mrs Ndaba who commended the principal saying: "*He normally uses committees. There are committees which encompass the deputy head, the TIC, the head and other senior teachers in the school."* Mrs Koni acknowledged the existence of committees and went further commenting that the committees helped the principal in running the school. *"He* (the principal) *is a person who distributes duties. There are committees such as health, examination, and disciplinary committees. These committees help him in running the school"* (Section 4.3.6). The fact that the principal distributed duties and made use of committees suggested that he shared responsibilities with other members of the school. The statement that the committees helped the principal run the school suggests the existence of interactions between the principal and the teachers in the context of their schools. This might also suggest that the principal was an effective leader who recognised the skills and expertise in staff members and tapped it for instructional improvement using committees. The increased use of committees by the principal appeared to answer Jamail and Don's (2016) call for increased opportunities for teachers to become leaders in varied areas in the schools. Committees existed in all the three schools and their operations depended on the context of each school. Mr Kanyo indicated that opportunities for leadership existed at Chrim Primary School principal when he said, "*We have various committees like the tours committee, the entertainment committee and once an activity is about to come up such as a tour, that committee and its chairperson are fully responsible. …"* The records I analysed indicated that the committees were operational, an example (Figure 4.7) was on minutes by the fundraising committee. The committees had the authority to operate from the principal and the school policy document which authorised the formation of these committees at the school (Appendix 7). This encouraged accountability among the teachers. Mr Hasva pointed out saying, "*We have several clubs, so the head assigns a teacher to be the leader of each club where they will be accountable and responsible."* Mr Hasva referred to the various clubs at the school. The school had both clubs and committees (Appendices 5 and 7). His statement revealed that opportunities for leadership positions existed for teachers through the leadership of the various clubs and committees. This suggested a distribution of leadership activities to other school members. The wide experience of the principals is highly believed to have made them recognise the value of distributing leadership to staff members in their schools for the benefit of the schools. Spillane and Diamond (2007b) are of the view that by enabling different members in the schools to take part in leadership and management activities showed an enactment of distributed leadership.

5.5 UNDERSTANDING THE ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICES OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN HIGH PERFORMING PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The third research question that focused on how the activities and practices of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools can be understood is answered in this section. The results of this study showed that the three principals were effective instructional leaders who distributed leadership to other staff members. The activities and practices of instructional leadership in the three primary schools can be understood in terms of Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) instructional leadership model and the distributed leadership model by Spillane (2005). The instructional leadership model highlights three leadership dimensions (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985; Lee *et al.,* 2012). Instructional leadership activities and practices as propounded by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) fall under three dimensions namely visioning schools, managing teaching and learning, and the development of an enabling school environment. The results of the study revealed that principals enacted instructional leadership roles that fell under the umbrella of the three leadership dimensions. The instructional leadership practices that principals enacted were complemented by distributed leadership practices leading to distributed instructional leadership practices. The principals worked with teachers in influencing the direction of teaching and learning in their schools (Hallinger and Murphy, 2012). The complexities of today's schools appeared to have made the principals enact distributed instructional leadership in their schools and to tap the knowledge and expertise in the teachers for the benefit of learners. The contexts of the schools in my study also determined how instructional leadership activities were enacted such as in the formulation of school specific visions. At Matanga and Bepura Primary Schools the visions were collaboratively formulated between the principals, teachers, and the parent community. Chrim Primary School, being a private school had its vision formulated by the founder and a board of governors that were appointed by the owner of the school. The principal and teachers, thus worked under the backdrop of this vision. Mombourquette, (2017) advocates that the fact that the visioning of schools was collaboratively done lies in the conception of distributed leadership. Despite the enactment of this instructional leadership role, I observed that some teachers were not well versed with visions. Two teachers at Matanga Primary School, one teacher each at Bepura and Chrim Primary Schools had little understanding of their school visions. This appeared to defeat Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) leadership activity that schools need to frame and communicate school visions to stakeholders. This led to teachers concentrating on the academic aspect at the

expense of developing all round learners with all faculties developed. This indicated the need to induct teachers, particularly those who join the school midstream and constant conscientisation of teachers about school visions. This goes a long way in directing teachers' attention to a common school goal.

Arlestig and Tornsen (2014) opine that, principals perform different management roles but their major one is instructional leadership which focuses on learner progress. The three principals had wide experience both as teachers and as principals, this appeared to have contributed to their understanding and enactment of distributed instructional leadership practices. With the varied tasks found in schools, it is impossible for principals to effectively lead them single-handedly. Mrs Muzuwa was of the idea that carrying out all instructional leadership tasks as a lone individual would exhaust principals (Section 4.2.6). This suggested the need for distributed leadership. Mr Shama's wide use of committees resulting in Mrs Koni saying the committees helped him lead the school (Section 4.3.6) is indicative of a distributed leadership practice found in the school. Mr Kanyo expressed his interest in distributing leadership when he pointed out that he gave teachers tasks to research on and present to other staff members (Section 4.4.5). Mestry and Pillay (2013) describe such schools with distributed leadership as effective schools.

Principals managed instructional activities at their respective schools through teacher supervision. All the school principals performed their instructional leadership roles of supervising teachers. To increase positive attitudes of teachers towards the results of the supervisory activities, schools used tactics of enabling teachers to draw up their supervision programmes and present to the supervisor, some supervisors drew up their programmes and displayed them, and still others alerted teachers of the approaching lesson observations. This appeared to motivate teachers since there were no suspicions by teachers of supervisors ambushing teachers. This is an important instructional leadership practice used in the schools. In addition to the strategy of sharing supervision programmes with teachers, principals engaged the services of the TICs, and the vice principals to assist them in supervising teachers, though this appeared to depend on the size of the school. This was effective since it ensured that all teachers were observed teaching and given feedback. Hallinger and Wang (2015) stress that timely feedback to teachers by supervisors improves teachers' instructional ability. Mapolisa and Tshabalala (2013) maintain that immediate feedback of teachers' performance motivated them to work harder. This suggested the value feedback has in enhancing teachers' classroom

performance. Classroom supervision and the feedback given to teachers formed important classroom management activities in the schools.

Since school pass rates in Zimbabwe are an indicator of how a school performs, I observed that the principals focused more of their attention on the examination classes and ensured that these classes were well resourced. At Matanga Primary School the teachers were given instructional materials in advance which they kept in their storerooms awaiting use, (Section 4.2.4). At Bepura Primary School (Section 4.3.4), the school had specialist teachers and had a photocopier which made it easy when it came to preparing teaching and learning materials. At Chrim Primary School, the principal started fund raising projects to boost their funds to incentivise their teachers. The principal also taught some lessons in compliance with Ministry policies and to improve learner's academic outcomes. I discovered that when the principals taught other classes besides grade sevens, it was mostly for demonstration purposes to assist struggling teachers as indicated by Mr Shama. Aziz *et al.* (2017) point out that such instructional leadership practices enable principals to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in classes. This practice gave teachers an opportunity to learn class management skills from principals. It also showed the high level of attention the principals paid to instructional matters.

The parent communities for the schools had some determining factors to the carrying out of instructional activities at the schools. Thus, the context of each school determined parents' involvement in the learning of their children. The parents supported their children's education through paying fees for them. At Matanga Primary School, the parents, through the School Development Committee went further and advocated for double sessions to accommodate their children at the school. Though large numbers of learners were accommodated, the principal, Mrs Muzuwa saw this affecting their work standards and the conduciveness of the school environment as teachers had to share classrooms. A different situation existed at Bepura and Chrim Primary Schools. At Bepura Primary School, the parents even took part in vision formulation under the leadership of the School Development Committee (Section 4.3.2). This indicated a shared responsibility and an acknowledgement of the importance of parents in school activities. Mr Shama pointed out that homework was a major learning component at their school, hence through positive working relationships with parents suggested they could assist their children with their homework. Chrim Primary School, being a private school depended on the fees paid by parents for its operations in addition to that, it got financial resources from fund

raising projects, to it, the parent constituency was very essential. In addition, the principal urged for a shared responsibility with parents in the learning of their children. The strategy used was encouraging parental assistance with their children's homework. El Nokali *et al.* (2010) emphasise that parent involvement in the learning of their children contribute to their good behaviour at school and to their classroom performance. Involving the parents proved that leadership also existed in those who did not hold formal positions in schools. Bryk *et al.* (2010) opine that parent involvement is an essential support to the education of their children.

Findings from the study showed that the three principals made efforts to make working environments motivating. Mrs Muzuwa acknowledged teachers' efforts through giving positive comments and provided teaching and learning materials. She even managed to cultivate a culture of self-drive and congenial staff relations among teachers that led to improved instructional performance at the school. Mrs Rega commended about the culture of people at the school as socially positive people who did not give supervisors any problems (Section 4.2.4), thus indicating how conducive the working environment was. At Bepura Primary School, teachers were provided with instructional materials and at Chrim Primary School income generating projects were started to raise funds for the development of the school and for teacher incentives. These principal efforts improved the work environments at the schools.

Teacher expertise was utilised in the three schools as principals engaged teachers in instructional leadership activities. The use of committees in schools enhanced the distributed leadership practice. Lee *et al.* (2012) posit that through committees, professional interactions across committees and staff members in the schools are enhanced. The different committees that existed in the schools were under the leadership of different teachers suggesting that principals distributed leadership of instructional activities to other staff members. Spillane (2005) advocates for distributed leadership, thus as the principals engaged different teachers in the leadership of different instructional activities, provides evidence of their alignment to Spillane's (2005) notion that heroic leadership may not be the preferred approach for effective school leadership.

5.6 SUMMARY

The chapter has presented a cross-case analysis and discussed the findings. The principals in the three schools were well experienced and qualified for their posts. These characteristics appeared to have played a role on how they enacted instructional leadership practices in their schools. The

varied activities that the principals enacted that characterised instructional leadership practice included, among others, visioning schools, managing instructional activities, availing teaching, and learning resources and creating conducive teaching and learning environments in their schools. The way the principals extended leadership opportunities to other members suggested the positive impact experience had on them. I found many common features in the way specific school visions were formulated. The visions were created by more than one individual in all the three schools signifying a collaborative activity. The principals managed the implementation of the curriculum through supervising teachers and learners and through participating in classroom teaching. The practice of classroom teaching by the principals set good examples among the teachers. Varied activities performed by principals in their quest to create conducive environments in schools were discussed. It was noted that principals enacted distributed instructional leadership practices through the varied activities undertaken in the schools. In the next chapter, I present a summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations on instructional and distributed leadership in schools.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This study examined the main activities that characterised instructional leadership practice in three high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe for instructional improvement and how these exhibited features of distributed leadership practice. This enabled me to provide an empirically informed account of how activities and practices of instructional leadership high performing Zimbabwean primary schools can be understood and/or explained. My prolonged stay in the schools enabled me to explore how instructional leadership activities were distributed in schools. This chapter summarises the main findings of the study, draws conclusions and offers recommendations on how distributed instructional leadership practice can be enacted in schools for instructional improvement.

6.2 MAIN FINDINGS

The section presents a summary of the major findings of the study.

6.2.1 Visioning schools

The first finding was that visioning the school was a key activity of instructional leadership in these successful schools. The schools had specific visions which were developed through collaboration among the principals, teachers, and the school community. This is an example of a distributed instructional leadership practice in the schools. Of interest, the visioning process continued beyond the drafting of the vision itself to being the guiding pillar for both the principals, teachers, and stakeholders. School specific visions catered for individual school needs. Schools with such visions emphasise quality education and the alignment of instruction to their visions (Dong and Seong, 2014). The practice was an important instructional leadership activity that gave direction to what the schools intended to achieve. A characteristic feature about the visions was that they were collaboratively produced regardless of the type of school. Cherkowski and Brown's (2013) study in British Columbian schools showed that vision formulation was a distributed leadership activity in the schools. There was collaboration among the principals and teachers in formulating visions for their schools. It would have been expected that the founder of Chrim Primary School, a private school, would have formulated the school's vision alone, but documentary evidence about the school showed that the board of directors were

involved. At Matanga Primary School, the teachers and the administration team created the vision for their school and at Bepura Primary School, the principal collaborated with the teachers, the parents, and the learners in defining their schools' vision, thus showing a shared responsibility (Hallinger and Lee, 2013). Leithwood *et al.* (2004) advocate that, teachers find happiness when they achieve set school goals, therefore, principals must clearly communicate visions to teachers so that they direct all their efforts towards a common purpose.

6.2.2 Supervision of instruction

The second key finding of this study is that in all the three successful primary schools managing instruction was prioritised by the principals who all took a distributed approach in executing this activity with their teachers. Principals managed instructional programmes in their schools. They did this through conducting classroom supervision where they observed classroom environments and teaching in progress. This helped maintain the impetus to the quality of instructional activities. Supervision of teachers is one of the core activities of principals. The aim being to improve the capacity of teachers in managing classrooms. In this sense, instructional leadership help develop teacher competences. Ismail *et al.* (2018) study found out that a strong connection exists between instructional leadership by principals and the functional competency of teachers. Principals serve as team leaders who assess instructional progress and the quality of learning by students for the purposes of improving instruction.

Spillane (2005) argues that equating school leadership to an individual is problematic since no lone individual can effectively lead a school to stardom because leadership involves different individuals with varied materials and structures. Hence, by sharing the supervision load in the schools, principals paid attention to the leader-plus aspect of distributed leadership that acknowledges school leadership as involving many individuals (Spillane *et al.*, 2008). As the principals, the TICs and the vice principals supervised teachers, interactions took place in the contexts of their environments, thus conforming to the leadership practice aspect of distributed leadership. The supervisory activities by the TIC and the vice principal complemented the supervision by the principal. Spillane (2005) emphasises that the interdependent actions among the supervisors interact to define a shared practice of supervising and assessing teaching. This leadership practice in schools suggests the principals' acknowledgement of the knowledge and expertise in other members of staff and the need to tap it for the benefit of improving school performance.

6.2.3 Feedback sessions

The third key finding of the study is that the schools relied on two major strategies to manage instruction and promote instructional improvement, that is, observation of teaching and feedback together with modelling of exemplary practice by the leadership team. There were feedback sessions in all the schools with the supervisors sitting down with the teachers and giving them feedback about their observations. Feedback was done two-fold, briefly after the lessons and in detail with the aid of narrative reports. This was done within the days of observations, the most being three days after observation, particularly when the supervisor is hard pressed with work as indicated by Mr Muko who said, "*Then, for the narrative report, it depends on how busy she* (the head) *is, it can be after a day or two days. Normally it doesn't take four days before getting the report."* (Section 4.2.3). Mrs Rega indicated that she took two to three days to complete writing the narrative report (Section 4.2.3), since she was a teaching TIC. She had her own approach of handling the narrative reports. After writing the report she sent it to the supervisee to read and sign. She only discussed the narrative report if a supervisee failed to understand some comments. The response from Bepura teachers indicated that brief highlights were given just after the lesson then the narrative report was after a day or two (Section 4.3.3). As for Chrim Primary School, the teachers and the principal concurred that written feedback was after a day or two from day of visit (Section 4.4.3).

The written reports were informative records that teachers kept in their files for future references as they do their work. The reports were on teachers' record books, schemes of work, learners exercise books and lesson observations. This instructional leadership practice enhanced the teachers' instructional performance. Desravines *et al.* (2016) emphasise that teachers need instructional leaders who set and show them the direction on instructional work. Thus, the leadership practice by the supervisors showed the teachers the direction to improved instructional performance.

Modelling of classroom teaching

The principals in this study took part in classroom teaching. Mrs Muzuwa and Mr Kanyo practically taught grade sevens. Besides having the interest to teach and making grade sevens pass, they complied with the Director's Circular Minute Number 15 of 2006 which specified the number of lessons that principals and vice principals are expected to teach in a week. Mr Shama's involvement in teaching did not match the other two. He only taught some lessons when

demonstrating quality teaching to teachers facing challenges in lesson delivery. The involvement by principals in this instructional activity appeared to suggest that they desired quality teaching in their schools and hence had to demonstrate to other teachers how quality teaching is done. This concurred with Hallinger and Hosseingholizadeh's (2019) findings which state that Iranian primary school principals emphasised quality teaching and learning, monitored student learning and created collegial environments in their schools. Getting into classrooms and teach was indicative of the need to demonstrate quality teaching.

Instructional leadership is an enduring leadership model that connects to and impacts on school and learner outcomes. The principals' involvement in teaching meant that they had to balance their administrative and teaching responsibilities. Teaching is an important instructional activity that many principals do not do, they leave it to teachers while they concentrate on administrative activities (Yasser *et al.,* 2015). Having the principals involved in teaching shows their instructional leadership practice. Glanz (2006) points out that good principals focus on instruction because this affects the performance of learners more than anything else the principals do. In their study among Israeli and United States of America (USA) Jewish schools, Glanz *et al*. (2017) reported that the USA principals paid much attention to teaching and learning among the other activities they carried out. This study emphasises the importance of principal involvement in teaching and the distribution of leadership activities. By practising teaching, the principals led by example, thus inspiring teachers to improve their performance. It develops the much-needed cooperation and interaction between the teachers and the principal, thus showing the practical necessity of distributed leadership (Jamail and Don, 2016).

6.2.4 Teaching and learning environment

The fourth and final key finding has to do with the creation of a conducive environment for teaching and learning through professional development and collaborative leadership practice. The context of the environment determines teacher effectiveness, hence effective principals make available conducive working and learning environments for teachers and for learners (Ghavifekr and Ibrahim, 2014). Such environments warrant the achievement of school goals. Double sessions at Matanga Primary School negatively affected the school conduciveness. Besides this, the schools' environments appeared conducive since the three principals employed different tactics aimed at making the school environments conducive. They provided adequate

resource materials, reduced teaching loads, reduced working hours, gave positive comments on teacher's performance, acknowledged teacher efforts, and encouraged research among teachers.

The three principals encouraged teacher professional development, improved their visibility in the schools, made use of committees and allocated classes fairly. These qualities fall under the third leadership dimension by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). Staff developing teachers benefit both the teachers and the learners they teach. Ghavifekr *et al.* (2015) suggest that instructional leaders must put more emphasis on teacher professional and instructional skills, thus enacting an instructional leadership practice, that of providing staff development to teachers. This enhances teacher effectiveness in classrooms. The strategy used by the principal at Matanga Primary School of targeted staff development helped improve teacher effectiveness. The leaders of the targeted groups took centre stage in the development of the teachers. At Bepura Primary School, committees came up with staff development activities. The committee leaders led the staff development of others, an authority they were given by the principals. The principal at Chrim Primary School collaborated with staff members in coming up with staff development activities, in addition to those he identified himself. Beverborg *et al.* (2015) emphasise staff development in schools since it improves teachers' instructional performance.

The wide use of committees resulted in some leadership tasks being handled by committee leaders thereby reducing the heavy leadership burden on the principals. The principals did not rely on single leaders in doing their work (Jita, 2010), they made use of the expertise in varied teachers. Hairon and Goh's (2015) study of Singaporean primary and secondary schools and colleges show four possible factors that affect distributing leadership. Principals can use bounded empowerment where they give authority to teachers to make decisions but within set limits. In the case of leadership capacities, principals empower teachers to lead basing on the trust that the teachers would make effective instructional decisions. Another way was shared decision-making, here principals give teachers leadership responsibilities but provide regular guidance. In collective engagement, principals support the engagement of other members in carrying out school tasks through providing a forum for teamwork. This enables the principals to tap the skills and knowledge in teachers. These four factors discovered in the Singaporean study can be associated with the way leadership is distributed in the schools. Teachers had the opportunity to make decisions but at the end of the day, the principal was answerable for the performance of the school, hence, principals always retained some power though it was thinly veiled. When Mr

Kanyo talked about committees and said, "*So, they do everything* (the fund-raising committee) *the planning, and the acquisition, what we do is just to approve and release the funds,"* suggests that the ultimate authority rested with the principal.

The membership of the various committees that existed in the schools was such that on the one hand, the teachers were leaders in one committee and on the other, they were committee members in other committees. Such was the case with the subject committees. The leaders of the subject committees were also members in the examination committees. In reference to committee membership, Mr Muko indicated that individuals had different passions which made them choose the committee to join (Section 4.2.6). Mr Ngata indicated that the school had committees whose chairpersons could call for meetings to discuss committee business (Section 4.3.6). Mr Hasva, indicated that there were several clubs led by different teachers at their school, hence showing the existence of multiple individuals in leadership activities (Section 4.4.6). Robinson *et al.* (2008) point out that the use of committees indicated the practice of task distribution and distributed influence in the schools. Since all formal responsibility rests in the principals' office which sought for improved school performance, all the activities by formal and informal leaders answered to the leadership distribution by the principals.

6.3 CONCLUSIONS

School principals are the first in command on the school organogram in public schools. This is unlike in private schools where the founder or board of directors have the final say. Despite this, the instructional leadership of principals determine the performance of schools since they stay on the ground and work daily with teachers and learners. This study concludes that the concept of heroism by principals was replaced by distributed instructional leadership practices which incorporated the vice principal, the TIC, and other staff members in instructional leadership activities. In such environments of distributed leadership, teachers took large leadership responsibilities.

Instructional leadership practices underpin the instructional performance of teachers. From the field visits, I discovered that principals focused on improving instruction through visioning schools, lesson observations, giving teachers feedback and creating positive school environments which enabled teachers to learn from each other. All these activities characterised instructional leadership practice. These instructional leadership activities were enacted in schools through the

engagement of vice principals, TICs, committees, and other members of staff with the appropriate knowledge and skills, hence resulting in distributed instructional leadership.

The study aimed at exploring how distributed instructional leadership practices were enacted in high performing Zimbabwean primary schools. Basing on the sub-research questions, the related literature review and the findings, the study concludes that principals engaged in instructional leadership, a crucial role in teaching and learning. Accountability and complexities in the improvement of schools made principals enact distributed instructional leadership to achieve school goals. Leading a school as a solo individual is not in line with the dictates of distributed leadership. It made sense for principals to closely tie instructional leadership to distributed leadership through engaging multiple individuals, thus having distributed instructional leadership (Hairon, 2017). In crafting the vision of the schools, the principals sought the participation of other members of staff. Where these were crafted by the founder, the principal shared the vision of the school with the school community to have a common understanding of the purpose of the school. All school activities revolved around the vision. This study, therefore, concludes that the combined effort between principals and teachers in visioning schools characterised distributed instructional leadership practice.

The study concludes that principals play crucial roles in managing instructional programmes. In carrying out their roles they conducted different leadership activities which constituted instructional leadership. Instructional leadership practices were enacted through varied leadership activities which included classroom supervision, lesson observations, giving feedback, participating in teaching, and assisting teachers in managing classes. The success of these instructional leadership activities was determined by how effectively they were carried out. The involvement of principals in teaching and learning kept them well-informed about current trends in classroom teaching and be able to assist teachers with the appropriate skills to handle classes.

The study established that there was a wide use of committees in the three schools. This increased the academic performance of the three schools and alleviated the burden of workloads on principals leaving them with time to teach. The study concludes that distributed instructional leadership practices were enacted in schools through the varied use of multiple players in instructional leadership activities.

6.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Further research may be inspired by this study since the limitations may point at areas that need to be improved in future related studies. A limitation of this study results from using a case study design. It was limited to high performing primary schools in a single district in Zimbabwe. This meant that instructional leadership practices in different schools were not studied. Studying all schools would have called for more time and resources than was available for this study. As the sample shows, it was comprised of principals believed to be effective. The extent to which their leadership practices are characteristic of principals in other primary schools is yet to be ascertained through wide scale research. The studied schools, however, enabled an understanding of how the three selected principals enacted distributed instructional leadership practices in their schools.

The use of the qualitative approach made the issue of generalising findings to other schools not possible since the study focused on a small sample of selected schools. To mitigate this limitation, a similar study could be carried out using the quantitative approach. This allows for the use of a larger sample and for generalisations. Similar or different results may be obtained if studies related to this one, are conducted in other districts. More resources would, therefore, be required. The solid descriptions made in this study of research sites can assist readers to assess whether research findings can be transferred to similar situations.

The existence of the COVID-19 pandemic had some impact on the school system. Schools opened their classes in phases starting with grades six and seven. This meant that I had to observe and interview only those I had sampled who were in grade six and seven then those from the other classes as they opened. The middle grades opened after a month and the Infants after a few weeks from when the grades six and seven opened. To gather enough data from all participants, I had to prolong my stay in the schools from the initial planned three months to four and a half months.

6.5 CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

Even though some limitations were experienced in the study as shown in the last section, it is my conviction that this study will contribute to scholarship on how distributed instructional leadership practices are enacted in high performing primary schools. A dearth of literature exists on how distributed instructional leadership is enacted in schools; therefore, this study will likely

contribute towards that understanding. This study highlights to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the benefits of school leaders carrying out their instructional leadership roles. The study further points out that because of accountability measures on schools, it is impossible for principals, as lone individuals, to lead schools to stardom, thus the need to distribute leadership to other members of staff.

This study has contributed a lot to my personal educational growth as an up-and-coming researcher in instructional and distributed leadership. Through this study, I have read widely on instructional and distributed leadership, thus broadening my knowledge about instructional and distributed leadership practices.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the distributed leadership perspective, principals cannot not be the know-it-all in school leadership, it needs the participation of other members. Accountability must be shared with other members of staff whose joint actions contribute to deciding school outcomes. It is recommended, therefore, that principals distribute leadership to those who spend more time with the learners. Nguyen *et al.* (2017) point out that the practice of sharing instructional leadership indicates an active teamwork between principals and teachers on curriculum and assessment matters. The magnitude of challenges principals face in leading schools to greatness needs an understanding of distributed instructional leadership.

6.6.1 Recommendations for practice

Principals lead the process of visioning schools. They need to constantly remind teachers of the vision of their schools so that teachers remain focused. Schools must develop all-round learners who are physically, mentally, and socially sound. Teachers need to understand the benefits of all learning areas and ensure learners attend to all learning areas instead of concentrating on examinable learning areas only. As instructional leaders, principals need to ensure that all learning areas are given adequate attention to develop all round learners. The introduction of specialist teachers in schools help in developing all round learners.

Distributing instructional leadership may be the way to go as it enables principals to tap the expertise in teachers for the benefit of learners. It is crucial that teachers understand that the distributed leadership approach promotes teacher leadership. Through this practice, teachers

grow professionally. It is recommended that workshops on instructional and distributed leadership be conducted in schools to enhance principals' and teachers' understanding of these concepts.

Principals' direct and indirect involvement in instructional leadership activities make a difference to teaching and learning. It is recommended that principals create conditions and structures that allow interactions among teachers and between teachers and the supervisory team. This is a significant way of indirectly contributing to teaching and learning by principals. Principals need not rely on actions requiring direct involvement in classrooms only but can make use of indirect means such as the creation of communities for learning. This study suggests that distributed leadership has a lot to offer to schools, thus through communities of learning both teachers and learners would benefit.

6.6.2 Recommendations for policy

The findings of this study point at the existence of distributed leadership in the schools. As leaders, principals carry out most of the community outreach activities which involve sourcing for resources, collaborating with council offices, school boards and government offices. Though crucial in schools, the activities are not directly linked to teaching and learning. It is, therefore, recommended that some of the workload that principals spend time on be removed so that they have ample time to focus on teaching and learning. Nguyen *et al.* (2017) adds on saying instructional leadership should not be confined to the principal alone but expanded to other members of the school irrespective of them holding formal or informal leadership positions. The belief is that distributing instructional leadership is a practical way of reducing the workload of principals (Leithwood and Mascall, 2008).

The purpose of schools is to offer instruction to learners. Therefore, the Ministry must craft the roles of principals with instructional leadership being central to all the other roles they play. The fact that the elements of the leadership models lead to the desired results in high performing primary schools is a convincing aspect to enact distributed instructional leadership practices in other schools in Zimbabwe. This would give the principals time to engage in instructional leadership practices for improved school performance. A crucial step that the Ministry can take is to ensure principals have the knowledge and skills needed for them to work with teachers on instructional improvement.

For improved performance in schools, it is critical that the Ministry conducts workshops for TICs, vice principals and the principals on instructional and distributed leadership. It is crucial to involve vice principals as they are the second in command and they stand in place of principals when they are not at their stations. TICs are part of the administration and supervisory team; therefore, they need to be involved as well. Such grounding on the importance of instructional and distributed leadership will enhance their understanding of distributed instructional leadership. Such grounding can be cascaded to teachers for them to understand the reasons behind the principal enacting distributed instructional leadership practices.

6.6.3 Recommendations for further study

This study used the multiple case approach and examined how distributed instructional leadership practices were enacted in three high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe. The study established that varied activities that characterised instructional leadership practice were carried out in the three selected schools. The varied instructional leadership activities exhibited features of distributed leadership practice. The principals made use of the skills and expertise in teachers through involving them in varied instructional leadership activities, thus depicting distributed leadership. They supervised curriculum implementation together with the vice principal and the TIC, hence signifying distributed leadership. There was a wide use of committees in running instructional activities with the committee leaders being the link persons between the administration team and teachers.

To effectively implement their instructional leadership activities, the principals distributed leadership to varied members in the schools. This suggests that through distributed leadership, instructional leadership was made possible. Thus, distributed instructional leadership practices were enacted in the three high performing schools through distributing instructional authority to varied teachers in the schools. The study focused on one district in Zimbabwe and since districts differ in their approaches to instruction, I recommend that further research be done on a wider scale in other districts to find out how distributed instructional leadership practices are enacted by schools in other districts. My study involved three principals and nine teachers. This limited the generalisability of the findings to schools in other districts. A further study may be carried out involving a bigger number of teachers and principals across primary schools in different districts of Zimbabwe. This might be an eye opener on how distributed instructional leadership practices are enacted in schools in different districts in the country.

REFERENCES

Aliakbari, M. and Sadeghi, A. 2014. Iranian teachers' perceptions of teacher leadership practices in schools. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 42*(4), 576-592.

Ahmad, C. N. C., Shaharim, S. A., and Abdullah, M. F. N. L. 2017. Teacher-student interactions, learning commitment, learning environment and their relationship with student learning comfort. *Journal of Turkish Science Education, 14*(1), 57-72.

Alam, S. 2012. Crafting leaders for educational change: Head teacher's perspectives. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Education, 2*(1), 193-210.

Alam, A. and Ahmad, M. 2017. The impact of instructional leadership, professional communities and extra responsibilities for teachers on student achievement. *International Journal of Educational Management, 31*(3), 383-395.

Alhouti, I. and Male, T. 2017. Kuwait Principals: Preparation, Induction and Continuing Development. *International Studies in Educational Administration, 45*(1), 88-104.

Allen, K., Kern, P., Vella-Brodrick, D., and Waters, L. 2017. School values: A comparison of academic motivation, mental health promotion, and school belonging with student achievement. *Educational and Developmental Psychologist, 34*(1), 31-47.

Allen, K., Kern, M. L., Vella-Brodrick, D., and Waters, L. 2018. Understanding the priorities of Australian secondary schools through an analysis of their mission and vision statements. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 54*(2), 249–274.

Amakyi, M. and Ampah-Mensah, A. 2013. Preparation of school heads in Ghana: Making a case for theoretical knowledge. *Journal of Education and Practice, 4*(23), 154-158.

Ampofo. S. Y. 2019. Influence of school heads' direct supervision on teacher role performance in public senior high schools, central region, Ghana. *IAFOR Journal of Education, 7*(2), 9-26.

Anderson, C. 2010. Presenting and evaluating qualitative research. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education, 74*(8), 1-7.

Angelle, P. S. 2010. An organizational perspective of distributed leadership: A portrait of a middle school. *Research in Middle Level Education* 33, 1-16.

Angrist, J. and Lavy, V. 2009. The effects of high stakes high school achievement awards: Evidence from randomised trial. *The American Economic Review, 99*(4), 1384-1414.

Ärlestig, H. and Törnsen, M. 2014. Classroom observations and supervision: Essential dimensions of pedagogical leadership. *International Journal of Educational Management, 28*(7), 856-868.

Aunga, D. A. O. and Masare, O. 2017. Effect of leadership styles on teacher's performance in primary schools of Arusha District Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Policy Research and Review, 4*(4), 42-45.

Aziz, N., Muda, M. S. B., Mansor, N. R., and Ibrahim, M. Y. 2017. Literature review on instructional leadership practice among principals in managing changes. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 7*(12), 18-24.

Badenhorst, Jo W. and Radile, R. S. 2018. Poor performance at TVET colleges: Conceptualising a distributed instructional leadership approach as a solution. *Africa Education Review, 15*(3), 91-112.

Bates, S. and Watt, L. 2015. Staff development for raising attainment: A practitioner's view of what works. *International Journal of Primary, Elementary and Early Years Education, 3*(13), 1-9.

Bellibas, M. S. 2015. Principals' and teachers' perceptions of efforts by principals to improve teaching and learning in Turkish middle schools. *Educational Sciences: Theory and Practice, 15*(6), 141-148.

Bellibas, M. S. and Liu, Y. 2016. The effects of principals perceived instructional and distributed leadership practices on their perceptions of school climate. *International Journal of Leadership in Education,* 1-19.

Bellibas, M. S. and Liu, Y. 2017. Multilevel analysis of the relationship between principals' perceived practices of instructional leadership and teachers' self-efficacy perceptions. *Journal of Educational Administration, 55*(1), 49-69.

Bennett, N., Wise, C., Woods, P., and Harvey, J. A. 2003. *Distributed leadership: A review of literature*. England. National College for School Leadership.

Best, J. W. and Kahn, J. V. 2006. *Research in education* (10th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Beverborg, A. O. G., Sleegers, P. J. C., and Klaas, V. V. 2015. Fostering teacher learning in VET colleges: Do leadership and teamwork matter? *Teaching and Teacher Education. 48*, 22-33.

Bhengu, T. T. and Mkhize, B. N. 2013. Principals' instructional leadership practices in improving learner achievement: Case studies of five secondary schools in the Umbumbulu area. *Education as change, 17*(S1), 33-47.

Bhengu, T. T., Naicker, I., and Mthiyane, S. E. 2014. Chronicling the barriers to translating instructional leadership learning into practice. *Journal of Social Sciences, 40*(2), 203-212.

Bland, P., Church. E., and Luo, M. 2014. Strategies for attracting and retaining teachers. *Administrative Issues Journal: Education Practice and Research, 4*(1), 1-10.

Bolden, R. 2011. Distributed leadership in organizations: A review of theory and research. *International Journal of Management Reviews, 13*, 251-269.

Bogdan, R. and Biklen, S. 1992. *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Boyce, J. and Bowers, A. J. 2018. Toward an evolving conceptualization of instructional leadership as leadership for learning Meta-narrative review of 109 quantitative studies cross 25 years. *Journal of Educational Administration, 56*(2), 161-182.

Brandon, J., Hollweckb, T., Donlevya, J. K., and Whalen, C. 2018. Teacher supervision and evaluation challenges: Canadian perspectives on overall instructional leadership. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice.* DOI: 10.1080/13540602.2018.1425678

Bush, T. 2013. Instructional leadership and leadership for learning: Global and South African perspectives. *Education as change, 17*(sup1). S5-S20.

Bush, T. 2014b. Instructional leadership in centralized contexts: Rhetoric or reality? *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 42*(1), 3- 5.

Bush, T. 2018. Professional learning communities and school leadership: Empowering teachers. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 46*(5), 711–71.

Bush, T. and Ng, A. Y. M. 2019. Distributed leadership and the Malaysia education blueprint: From prescription to partial school-based enactment in a highly centralised context. *Journal of Educational Administration, 57*(3), 279-295.

Bryk, A. S., Sebring, P. B., Allensworth, E., Luppescu, S., and Easton, J. Q. 2010. *Organizing schools for improvement: Lessons from Chicago.* Chicago: Chicago Press.

Camburn, E., Rowan, B., and Taylor, J. 2003. *Distributed leadership in schools: The case of elementary schools adopting comprehensive school reform models.* University of Missouri. 1-44.

Cansoy, R., Parlar, H., and Polatcan, M. 2020. Collective teacher efficacy as a mediator in the relationship between instructional leadership and teacher commitment, *International Journal of Leadership in Education.* DOI: 10.1080/13603124.2019.1708470

Chan, T. C., Jiang, B., Chandler, M., Morris, R., Rebisz, S., Turan, S., Shu, Z., and Kpeglo, S. 2019. School principals' self-perceptions of their roles and responsibilities in six countries *New Waves Educational Research & Development, 22*(2), 37–61.

Cherkowski, S. and Brown, W. 2013. Towards Distributed Leadership as Standards-Based Practice in British Columbia. *Canadian Journal of Education, 36*(3), 23-46.

Chidakwa, C. 2016. *Enhancing the school's internal efficiency through participatory management: Voices from three rural primary schools in the Mashonaland provinces of Zimbabwe.* Proceedings of INCEDI 2016 Conference held in Accra, Ghana on 29th-31st August 2016.

Chilisa, B. and Preece, J. 2005. *Research methods for adult educators in Africa*. Cape Town: Pearson Education.

Chitamba, J. 2015. *140 000 teachers, preparing today's teachers for tomorrow: Staff development for the new curriculum.* Harare: Zimbabwe Publishing House (ZPH).

Chukwueze, A. C. 2021. Influence of staff development on teachers' job performance in Abia state public secondary schools. *Journal of Educational Research and Development, 4*(1), 215-222.

Clark, V. and Ivankova, N. 2016. *Mixed methods research: A guide to the field*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., and Morrison, K. 2007. *Research methods in education*. New York: Routledge.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., and Morrison, K. 2018. *Research methods in education*. (8th ed.). New York: Routledge.

Cole, G. A. 2004. *Organisational behaviour, theory and practice.* Canada: Thomson. Learning.

Connelly, L. M. 2016. Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *MEDSURG Nursing, 25*(6), 435-436.

Creswell, J. W. 2007. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five Approaches,* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. 2009. *Research design qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods Approaches,* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. 2012. *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research.* Boston: Pearson Education.

Cresswell, J.W. 2013. *Research design qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. 2014. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods Approaches,* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: CA: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W. and Creswell, J. D. 2018. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches,* (5th ed.). London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Davis, F. and Boudreaux, M. K. 2019. Teacher leaders' perceptions of Charter School Principals' *Instructional Leadership Practices. Journal of Educational Research and Practice, 9*(1), 89-103.

Day, C., Gu, Q., and Sammons, P. 2016. The impact of leadership on student outcomes: How successful school leaders use transformational and instructional strategies to make a difference. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 52*(2), 221-258.

Day, C. and Sammons, P. 2013. *Successful leadership: A review of the international literature.* United Kingdom. CFBT Education Trust.

DeMatthews, D. 2014. Principal and teacher collaboration: An exploration of distributed leadership in professional learning communities. *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management, 2*(2), 176-206.

Denscombe, M. 2003. *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects*. (2nd ed.). England: Open University Press.

Desravines, J. and Fenton, B. 2015. *The school leadership playbook: A field guide for dramatic improvement.* San Francisco: John Wiley and Sons, Incorporated.

Desravines, J., Aquino, J., and Fenton, B. 2016. *Breakthrough principals: A step- by- step guide to building stronger schools*. USA: John Wiley and Sons, Incorporated.

Dimmock, C. 2012. *Leadership, capacity building and school improvement concepts, themes and impact.* London, UK: Routledge.

Dishena, R. and Mokoena, S. 2016. Novice teachers' experiences of induction in selected primary schools in Namibia. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, (66), 335-354.

Dong, N. T. and Seong, D. N. F. 2014. Applying the Rasch Model to investigate Singapore principals' instructional leadership practices. *Leading and Managing, 20*(2), 1-26.

Donkor, A. K. and Asante, J. 2016. Instructional leadership of basic schools in Ghana: the case study of schools in Kwaebibirem District. *American International Journal of Contemporary Research*, *6*(4), 65-75.

El Nokali, N. E., Bachman, H. J., and Votruba-Drzal, E. 2010. Parent involvement and children's academic and social development in elementary school. *Child Development, 81*(3), 988-1005.

Erdamar, G. and Demirel, H. 2016. Job and life satisfaction of teachers and the conflicts they experience at work and at home. *Journal of Education and Training Studies, 4*(6), 164-175.

Erol, Y. C. and Turhan, M. 2018. The relationship between distributed leadership and family involvement from parents' perspective. *Educational Science: Theory and Practice, 18*(3), 525-540.

Fessehatsion, P. W. 2017. School principal's role in facilitating change in teaching-learning process: Teachers' attitude. A case study on five junior schools in Asmara, Eritrea. *Journal of Education and Practice*, *8*(6), 134-142.

Filmer, D., Habyarimana, J., and Sabarwal, S. 2020. Teacher performance-based incentives and learning inequality. *Policy research Working Paper 9382*. World Bank Group.

Fulbeck, S. E. 2013. Teacher mobility and financial incentives: A descriptive analysis of Denver's ProComp. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, xx*(x), 1-15.

Gall, M. D., Gall, J. P., and Borg, W. R. 2007. *Educational research: an introduction,* (8th ed.). Boston: Pearson.

Geleta, M. W. 2015. The role of school principal as instructional leader: The case of Shambu primary school. *Open Access Library Journal, 2*(e1709), 1-14.

Getahun. T., Tefera, B. F., and Burichew, A. H. 2016. Teacher's job satisfaction and its relationship with organizational commitment in Ethiopian primary schools: Focus on primary schools of Bonga town. *European Scientific Journal, 12*(13), 380-401.

Ghavifekr, S. and Ibrahim, M. S. 2014. Head of departments' instructional supervisory role and teachers' job performance: Teachers' perceptions. *Asian Journal of Social Sciences and Management Studies, 1*(2), 45-56.

Ghavifekr, S. S., Ibrahim, M. S., Chellapan, K., Sukumaran, K., and Subramaniam, A. 2015. *Instructional leadership practices of principal in vocational and technical college: Teachers' perception*, *3*(1), 48-67.

Glanz, J., Shaked, H., Rabinowitz, C., Shenhav. S., and Zaretsky, R. 2017. Instructional leadership practices among principals in Israeli and US Jewish schools. *International Journal of Educational Reform, 26*(2), 132-153.

Göksoy, S. 2015. Distributed leadership in educational institutions. *Journal of Education and Training Studies, 3*(4), 110-118.

Grenda, J. P. and Hackmann, D. G. 2014. Advantages and challenges of distributing leadership in middle-level schools. *SAGE Publications, 98*(1), 53-74.

Gumus, E. and Bellibas, M. S. 2016. The effects of professional development activities on principals perceived instructional leadership practices: Multi-country data analysis using TALIS 2013. *Educational Studies, 42*(3), 287-301.

Gunawan. J. 2015. Ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Belitung Nursing Journal, 1*(1), 10-11.

Gunawan, I. 2017. Instructional leadership profile of junior high school's principal: A case study of junior high school in Malang. *International Research-Based Education Journal, 1*(1), 64-68.

Gungor, S. K. and Aydin, G. 2018. The evaluation of instructional leadership researchers between 2002 and 2017 in Turkey. *European Journal of Educational research, 8*(1), 49-62.

Gunter, H., Hall, D., and Bragg, J. 2013. Distributed leadership: A study in knowledge production. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 41*(5) 555-580.

Gurley, D. K. Anast-May, L., O'Neal, M., and Dozier, R. 2016). Principal instructional leadership behaviours: Teachers vs self- perceptions. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation, 11*(1), 1-16.

Gurr, D. 2015. Models of successful leadership from the international successful school principalship project. *Societies* 5, 136-150.

Gutuza, R. F. and Gazimbe, P. 2015. Attitudes of teachers towards school-based supervision of instruction in Mutare Rural District secondary schools in Zimbabwe. *Scholars Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, 3*(9A),1396-1401.

Hairon, S. 2017. Teacher leadership in Singapore: The next wave of effective leadership. *Research in Educational Administration and Leadership, 2*(2), 170-194.

Hairon, S. and Goh, J. W. P. 2015. Pursuing the elusive construct of distributed leadership: Is the search over? *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 43*(5), 693-718.

Hallinger, P. 1990. *Principal instructional management rating scale.* Sarasota, FL: Leading Development Associates.

Hallinger, P. 2011. Leadership for learning: Lessons from 40 years of empirical research. *Journal of Educational Administration, 49*(2), 124-142.

Hallinger, P. and Heckn R. H. 1996. Reassessing the principal's role in school effectiveness 1980-1985. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 32*(1), 5-44.

Hallinger, P., Walker, A., Nguyen, D. T. H., Truong, T., and Nguyen, T. T. 2017. Perspectives on principal instructional leadership in Vietnam: a preliminary model. *Journal of Educational Administration, 55*(2), 222-239.

Hallinger, P. and Hosseingholizade, R. 2019. Exploring instructional leadership in Iran: A mixed methods study of high- and low-performing principals. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 20*(10), 1-22.

Hallinger, P. and Lee, M. 2013. Exploring principal capacity to lead reform of teaching and learning quality in Thailand. *International Journal of Educational Development, 33*(4), 305- 315.

Hallinger, P. and Murphy, J. 1985. Assessing the instructional management behaviour of principals. *The Elementary School Journal.* 86, 217-247.

Hallinger, P. 2003. Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education, 33*(3), 329-351.

Hallinger, P. and Murphy, J. F. 2012. Running on empty? Finding the time and capacity to lead learning. *NASSP Bulletin.* 97, 5-21.

Hallinger, P., Wang, W., and Chen, C. 2013. Assessing the measurement properties of the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale: A meta-analysis of reliability studies. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 49*(2), 272-309.

Hallinger, P. and Wang, W. C. 2015.*Assessing instructional leadership with the principal instructional management rating scale.* Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer.

Halverson, R. and Clifford, M. 2013. Distributed instructional leadership in high schools. *Journal of School Leadership, 23*(2), 389-419.

Harris, A. 2004. Distributed leadership and school improvement: Leading or misleading? *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 32*(1) 11-24.

Harris, A. 2005. Leading or misleading? Distributed leadership and school improvement. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 37*(3), 255-265.

Harris, A. 2007. Distributed leadership: Conceptual confusion and empirical reticence. *International Journal of leadership in Education, 10*(3), 315-325.

Harris, A. and Spillane, J. 2008. Distributed leadership through the looking glass. *British Educational Leadership, Management and Administration Society (BELMAS) 22*(1), 31–34.

Harris, A., Jones, M., Cheah, K.S.L., Devadason, E., and Adams, D. 2017. Exploring principals' instructional leadership practices in Malaysia: Insights and implications. *Journal of Educational Administration, 55*(2), 207- 221.

Harrison, S., and Allen, J. 2015. Leadership in private Christian schools: Perceptions of administrators. *A Journal of the International Christian Community for Teacher Education, 10*(1). Retrieved from http://icctejournal.org/issues/v8i1/v8i1-harrison-allen

Hazzi, A. O. and Maldaon, I. S. 2015. A pilot study: Methodologies and issues. *Business Theory and Practice, 16*(1), 53-62.

Heaton, T. L. 2016. *Handbook of instructional leadership.* Retrieved from http://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/education_presentations/280 on 15/5/19.

Heck, R. H. and Hallinger, P. 2010. Testing a longitudinal model of distributed leadership effects on school improvement. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 21. 867-885.

Hejres, S., Braganza, A., and Aldabi, T. 2017. Investigating the effectiveness of leadership styles on instructional leadership and teachers job expectancy in Kingdom of Bahrain. *American Journal of Educational Research, 5*(7), 694-709.

Horng, E. and Loeb, S. 2010. New thinking about instructional leadership. *Phi Delta Kappan, 92*(3), 66-69.

Hua, H. 2016. *Research Methods in Intercultural Communication: A Practical Guide*. USA. John Wiley and Sons Incorporated.

Huggins, K. S., Klar, H. W., Hammonds, H. L., and Buskey, F. C. 2017. Developing leadership capacity in others: An examination of high school principals' personal capacities for fostering Leadership. *International Journal of Education Policy and Leadership, 12*(1), 1-5.

Hughes, W. H. and Pickeral, T. 2013. *School climate and shared leadership*. New York: National School Climate Centre.

Ibrahim, A. S. and Al-Taneiji, S. 2013. Principal leadership style, school performance, and principal effectiveness in Dubai schools. *International Journal of Research Studies in Education, 2*(1), 41-54.

Ihekoronye, E. O. 2020. Conducive school environment: A necessary factor for effective teaching and learning in public secondary schools in Gwagwalada area council of Abuja. *Benue State University Journal of Educational Management, 2*(1), 203-213.

Ikegbusi, N. G. and Eziamaka, C. N. 2016. The Impact of Supervision of Instruction on Teacher Effectiveness in Secondary Schools in Nigeria. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Education & Technology (IJARET), 3*(3). 12-16.

Ingersoll, R. M. and Strong, M. 2011. The impact of induction and mentoring programmes for beginning teachers: A critical review of the research. *Review of Educational Research, 81*(2), 201-233.

IrmanSyarif, E. 2017. Leadership management and education planning: Developing the entrepreneurship training of Islamic education. *South Sulawesi.* (17), 1-7.

Ismail, S. N., Don, Y., Husin, F., and Khalid R. 2018. Instructional leadership and teachers' functional competency across the 21st century learning. *International Journal of Instruction, 11*(3), 135-152.

Jamail, M. and Don, Y. 2016. *Distributed leadership and commitment of teachers based on cohort of generations.* Proceedings of the International Conference on Education towards Global Peace. 30 November –01 December 2016. Kulliyyah of Education, International Islamic Education Malaysia.

Jita, L. C. 2010. Instructional leadership for the improvement of science and mathematics in South Africa. *Procodia–Social and Behavioral Sciences, 9*(2), 851-854.

Jita. L. C. and Mokhele, M. L. 2013. The role of lead teachers in instructional leadership: A case study of environmental learning in South Africa, *Education as Change, 17*(sup1), S123-S135.

Johnson, R. B. and Christensen, L. 2014. *Educational research: Quantitative, qualitative and mixed approaches.* (5th ed.). California: Sage Publications, Inc.

Johnson, B. 2004. Local school micropolitical agency: An antidote to new managerialism. *School Leadership and Management.* 24, 267-286.

Jones, R. D. 2010. *Instructional leadership: Quadrant D leadership practices.* New York: International Center for Leadership in Education, Inc.

Kaparou, M. and Bush, T. 2016. Instructional leadership in Greek and English outstanding schools. *International Journal of Educational Management, 30*(6), 894-912.

Khan, A. A., Asimiran, S. B., Kdir, S. A., and Alias, S. N. 2020. Instructional leadership and students' academic performance: Mediating effects of teacher's organisational commitment. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 19*(10), 233-247.

Klar, H. W. 2012. Fostering department chair instructional leadership capacity: laying the groundwork for distributed instructional leadership. *Instructional Journal of Leadership in Education: Theory and Practice, 15*(2), 175-197.

Klenke, K. 2016. *Qualitative research in the study of leadership.* (2nd ed.). New York: Emerald Publishing Limited.

Kosgei, K. K. 2015. Challenges facing staff development and training: A survey of secondary schools in Kericho County. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, 4*(2), 34-47.

Kothari, C. R. 2004. *Research methodology: Methods and techniques.* New Delhi: New Age International (P) Limited, Publishers.

Kuada, J. 2012. *Research Methodology: A Project Guide for University Students*. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur Press.

Kumar, R. 2011. *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*, (3rd ed.). London. SAGE Publications Ltd.

Kurebwa, M. and Lumbe, A. 2015. Teachers' voices: Challenges of double shift sessioning in Gweru urban primary schools. *International Journal of Innovative Research & Development, 4*(3), 38-41.

Lambersky, J. 2016. Understanding the human side of school leadership: Principals' impact on teachers' morale, self-efficacy, stress, and commitment, leadership and policy in schools, *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 15*(4), 379- 405.

Leavy, P. 2017. *Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts based and community based participatory research approaches.* London: The Guilford Press.

Lee, M., Hallinger, P., and Walker, A. 2012. A distributed perspective on instructional leadership in International Baccalaureate (IB) schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 48*(4), 664-698.

Lee, M., Walker, A., and Chui, Y. L. 2012. Contrasting effects of instructional leadership practices on student learning in a high accountability context. *Journal of Educational Administration, 50*(5), 586-611.

Leedy, P. and Ormod, J. 2013. *Practical research: Planning and design*. New Jersey: Pearson.

Leithwood, K. L. and Riehl, C. 2003. *What we know about successful school leadership*. Philadelphia: Temple University.

Leithwood, K., Seashore, L. K., Anderson, S., and Wahlstrom, K. 2004. *Learning from leadership project: How leadership influences student learning*. St Paul: Centre for Applied Research and Educational Improvement.

Leithwood, K., Day, C., Sammons, P., Hopkins, D., and Harris, A. 2006. *Successful school leadership: What it is and how it influences pupil learning*, London: Department for Education and Skills.

Leithwood, K., Mascall, B., Strauss T., Sacks, R., Memon, N., and Yashkina, N. 2007. Distributing leadership to make schools smarter: Taking the ego out of the system. *Leadership and Policy Studies, 6*(1), 37-67.

Leithwood, K. 2008. *Characteristics of High Performing School Districts: A Review of Empirical Evidence.* Ontario Institute for Studies in Education. Toronto.

Leithwood, K. and Mascall, B. 2008. Collective Leadership Effects on Student Achievement *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(4), 529-561.

Leithwood, K. and Louis, K. S. 2012. *Linking leadership to student learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Leiva, M. V., Montecinos, C., Ahumada, L., Campos, F., and Guerra, S. 2017. Novice principals' instructional management practices in high poverty, low performing schools in Chile. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences.* 237, 3-9.

Louis, K. S., Leithwood, K., Wahlstrom, K., and Anderson, S. 2010. *Investigating the links to improved student learning: Final report of research findings*. New York: The Wallace Foundation.

Lynch, M. 2012. *A guide to effective school leadership theories*. New York: Routledge.

Majoni. C. 2015. Analysis of leadership styles of school heads and their impact on school administration in Zimbabwean primary schools. *Greener Journal of Educational Research, 5*(5), 194-201.

Manaseh, A. M. 2016. Instructional leadership: The role of heads of schools in managing the instructional programme. *International Journal of Educational Leadership and Management, 4*(1), 30-47.

Mapolisa, T. and Tshabalala, T. 2013. Instructional supervisory practices of Zimbabwean school heads. *Greener Journal of Educational Research, 3*(7), 354-362.

Maposa, A. and Chisango, F. F. T. 2016. Why educational practitioners resist staff development programmes: Evidence from Binga and Hwange Districts, Zimbabwe. *Greener Journal of Educational Research, 6*(2), 44-51.

Marishane. R. N. 2015. Data-informed instructional leadership: Improving the instructional program in South African primary schools. *International Journal of Educational Science, 10*(2), 192-200.

Marshall, K. 2013. *Rethinking teacher supervision and evaluation: How to work smart, build collaboration, and close the achievement gap* (2nd ed.). San Francisco. CA: John Wiley and Sons.

Martin, M. E. 2018. Qualities of Instructional Leadership Among Principals in High-Performing Christian Schools. *Journal of Research on Christian Education, 27*(2), 157-182.

Mayrowetz, D. 2008. Making sense of distributed leadership: Exploring the multiple usage of the concept in the field. *Education Administration Quarterly, 44*(3), 424-435.

Mbera, P. G. A. 2015. Relationship between leadership styles used by head teachers of public secondary schools and students' academic performance. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 5*(7), 226-239.

McBrayer, J. S., Akins, C., Gutierrez de Blume, A., Cleveland, R., and Pannell, S. 2020. Instructional leadership practices and school leaders' self-efficacy. *School Leadership Review, 15*(1), 1-33.

Mendel, P. 2012. The effective principal. *Journal of Staff Development, 33*(1), 54-58.

Merriam, S. 2009. *Qualitative research and case study applications in education*. San Fransisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Mestry, R. 2013. The innovative role of the principal as instructional leader: A prerequisite for high student achievement. *International Proceedings of Economics Development and Research.* 60, 119-123.

Mestry, R. 2017. Principals' perspectives and experiences of their instructional leadership functions to enhance learner achievement in public schools. *Journal of Education.* (69), 257-280.

Mestry, R. and Pillay, J. 2013. Editorial. *Education as Change, 17*(S1), S1-S3.

Meyers, C. V. and Hitt, D. H. 2018. Planning for school turnaround in the United States: An analysis of the quality of principal-developed quick wins. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 29*(3), 362-382.

Miles, B. M., Huberman. A. M., and Saldana, J. 2014. *Qualitative data analysis. A methods sourcebook.* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Minichiello, V. and Kottler, J. 2010. An overview of the qualitative journey: Reviewing basic concepts. In V. Minichiello, and J. Kottler, J. (Eds.) *Qualitative journey: Students and mentor experiences with research*. New Delhi: Sage.

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. *Director's circular minute number 15 of 2006.* Harare: Government Printers.

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. 2015. *Performance lag address programme. Teacher's manual. 2015.* Harare: Government Printers.

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. 2015. *Training manual on teacher professional standards*. Harare: Government Printers.

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. 2019. *Secretary's vacancy circular number 18 of 2019*. Harare: Government Printers.

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. 2015. *Infant school early reading initiative. teacher's module. Grade 1*. Harare: Government Printers.

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. 2015. *Curriculum framework for primary and secondary education 2015-2022*. Harare: Government Printers.

Mitgang, L. 2012. *The making of the principal: Five lessons in leadership training*. New York: The Wallace Foundation.

Mligo, E. S. 2016. *Introduction to research methods and report writing: A practical guide for students and researchers in Social Sciences and the Humanities.* Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Mombourquette, C. 2017. The Role of Vision in Effective School Leadership. *International Studies in Educational Administration, 45*(1), 16-36.

Moswela, B. and Kgosidialwa, K. 2019. Leadership and school success: Barriers to leadership in Botswana primary and secondary schools. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 47*(3), 443–456.

Moyo, W. and Maseko, T. 2016. Influencing poor performance of learners in the grade seven examinations: A case of Umguza District. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 6*(1), 236 -243.

Mphale, L. M. Shared leadership practices: Do secondary school heads in Botswana matter? *Journal of studies in education, 5*(2), 212-223.

Muranda, A. M. 2015. An examination of the influence of leadership in the achievement of goals and objectives in secondary schools in Chikomba district. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education, 5*(5), 15-20.

Murphy, J. 1990. *The reform of American public education in the 1980s: Perspectives and cases*. Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Murphy, J. and Torre, D. 2015. Vision: Essential scaffolding. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 43*(2), 177-197.

Naicker, S. R. and Mestry, R. 2013. Teachers' reflections on distributive leadership in public primary schools in Soweto. *South African Journal of Education, 3*(2), 1-15.

Naidoo, P. and Petersen, N. 2016. Towards a leadership programme for primary school principals as instructional leaders. *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 5*(3), 1-8.

Nawab, A. 2011. Exploring leadership practices in rural context of a developing country. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 1*(3), 181-189.

Ndebele. C. 2013. Prevalent supervisory styles in primary schools in a remote rural district in Zimbabwe: Strategies for reconciling them with teacher preferred supervisory styles. *Stud Tribes Tribals, 11*(1), 55-66.

Neumerski, C. M. 2012. Rethinking instructional leadership, a review: What do we know about principal, teacher, and coach instructional leadership, and where should we go from here? *Educational Administration Quarterly* 49, 310-345.

Neuman, W. L. 2014. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (7th ed.). England: Pearson Education Limited.

Nguyen, D.T., Ng, D., and Yap, P.S. 2017. Instructional leadership structure in Singapore: A co-existence of hierarchy and heterarchy. *Journal of Educational Administration, 55*(2), 147-167.

Ni, Y. 2017. Teacher Working Conditions, Teacher Commitment, and Charter Schools. *Teachers College Record.* 119, 1-38.

Niqab, M., Sharma, S., Wei, L. M., and Maulod, S. B. A. 2014. Instructional leadership potential among school principals in Pakistan. *International Education Studies, 7*(6), 74–85.

Nkoma, E., Samson, Z., and Zirima, H. 2017. Primary school teachers' views on grade 7 examination preparations: A comparative analysis of urban and peri-urban primary schools in Masvingo, Zimbabwe. *American Journal of Educational Research, 5*(8), 927-932.

Noman, M., Hashim, R. A., and Abdullar, S. S. 2018. Contextual leadership practices: The case of a successful school principal in Malaysia. *Educational management Administration and Leadership, 46*(3), 474-490.

Northouse, P.G. 2013. *Leadership*: *Theory and practice.* (6th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Nyangarika, A. and Ngasa, Z. J. 2020. Effect of leadership styles on classroom instruction for secondary schools in Tanzania. *International Journal of Advance Research and Innovative Ideas in Education. 6*(3), 210-222.

O'Donovan, M. 2015. The challenges of distributing leadership in Irish post-primary schools. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education, 8*(2), 243-266.

O'Gorman, K. and MacIntosh, R. 2015. *Research methods for business and management. A guide to writing your dissertation.* Oxford: Godfellow Publishers Ltd.

O'Hara, M., Carter, C., Dewis, P., Kay, J., and Wainwright, J. 2011. *Successful dissertations. The complete childhood guide for education, childhood, and early studies students*. New York: International Publishing Group.

Okey, S. A. 2020. Instructional leadership practices of school principal and management of quality academic performance of students in public secondary schools, Cross River State, Nigeria. *Journal of Research and Method in Education, 10*(2), 15-19.

Olorunfemi, D.O. 2008. Challenges of instructional supervision in the new millennium: Implication for effective planning. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies, 3*(2), 68- 80.

Oralu, T. and Oladele, B. K. 2015. The management of funding of education in Nigeria. *International Journal of Social, Behavioural, Educational, Business and Industrial Engineering, 9*(7), 2584-2589.

Osamwinyi, E. F. 2016. In-Service Education of Teachers: Overview, Problems and the Way Forward. *Journal of Education and Practice, 7*(26), 83-87.

Pandey, P. and Pandey, M. M. 2015. *Research methodology: Tools and techniques.* Romania. Bridge Centre.

Phillips, J. A. 2009. *Manager - administrator to instructional leader: Shift in the role of the school principal*. Kuala Lumpur: Faculty of Education, University of Malaysia.

Printy, S. M. 2008. Leadership for teacher learning: A community of practice perspective. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 44*(2), 187-226.

Quinn, D. M. 2002. The impact of principal leadership behaviors on instructional practice and student engagement. *Journal of Educational Administration, 40*(5), 447-467.

Ricard, N. C. and Pelletier, L. G. 2016. Dropping out of high school: The role of parent and teacher self-determination support, reciprocal friendships, and academic motivation. *Contemporary Educational Psychology, 44*(45), 32-40.

Robinson, V. M. J. 2010. From instructional leadership to leadership capabilities: Empirical findings and methodological challenges. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 9*(1), 1-26.

Rosha, A. 2008. *Perception of the principal's role in the state of Israel.* Report by the professional committee to formulate policy recommendations for the Ministry of Education. Jerusalem, Israel: The Israel Institute for School Leadership.

Saiyad, S. 2020. Educational environment and its application in medical colleges. *Journal of Research in Medical Education and Ethics, 10*(1), 3-9.

Salfi, N. A. 2010. Successful leadership practices of head teachers for school improvement, some evidence from Pakistan. *Journal of Educational Administration, 49*(4), 414-432.

Salo, P., Nylund, J., and Stjernstrøm, E. 2015. On the practice architectures of instructional leadership. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 43*(4), 490-506.

Samkange, W. 2013. Management and administration in education: What do school heads do? A focus on primary school heads in one district in Zimbabwe. *International Journal of Social Science and Education, 3*(3), 635-643.

Sandada, M. and Makamani, M. 2016. An evaluation of the role of instructional leadership on the performance of schools in Zimbabwe. *Studia UBB Psychol.-PAED, LX1*(1), 83- 94.

Sebastian, J., and E. Allensworth. 2012. The influence of principal leadership on classroom instruction and student learning: A study of mediated pathways to learning. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, *48*(4), 626-663.

Seobi, B. A. and Wood, L. 2016. Improving the instructional leadership of heads of department in under-resourced schools: A collaborative action-learning approach. *South African Journal of Education, 36*(4), 1-14.

Seong, D. N. F., Nguyen, D. T., Wong, B. K. S., and Choy, W. K. W. 2015. A review of Singapore principals' leadership qualities, styles, and roles. *Journal of Educational Administration, 53*(4), 512-533.

Shaked. H., Gross, Z., and Glanz, J. 2017. Between Venus and Mars: Sources of gender differences in instructional leadership. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 20*(10), 1-19.

Shannon, G. S. and Bylsma, P. 2007. *The nine characteristics of high-performing schools: A research-based resource for schools and districts to assist with improving student learning.* Olympia, WA: OSPI.

Shava. G. N. 2015. Educational leadership and learner achievement: Contemporary issues. *Zimbabwe Journal of Science and Technology* 10, 26-38.

Shumba, T. and Zireva, D. 2013. Action research: a reflective practice. In Mukabeta, M. T., Hamandishe, S. and Nzombe, C. (Eds). *Action research: some practical ideas for educational practice.* Harare: Save the Children.

Sieberer-Nagler, K. 2016. Effective Classroom-Management and Positive Teaching. English Language Teaching. *Canadian Center of Science and Education, 9*(1), 163-172.

Si-Rajab, S. B., Madya, P., and Musa, K. B. 2019. The level of instructional leadership practices among principals of national religious secondary school in Malaysia. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management (IJSRM), 7*(3), 927-939.

Şişman, M. 2016. Factors related to instructional leadership perception and effect of instructional leadership on organizational variables: A meta-analysis. *Educational Sciences Theory and Practice, 16*(5), 1761–1787.

Sleegers, P. J. C., Thoonen E. E. J., Oort F.J., and Peetsma, T. T. D. 2014. Changing classroom practices: the role of school-wide capacity for sustainable improvement. *Journal of Educational Administration, 52*(5), 617- 652.

Smylie, M. A., Mayrowetz, D., Murphy, J., and Seashore L. K. 2007. Trust and the development of distributed leadership. *Journal of School Leadership, 17*(4), 469-503.

Spillane, J. P. 2000. Cognition and policy implementation: District policymakers and the reform of mathematics education. *Cognition and Instruction, 18*(2), 141-179.

Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., and Diamond, J. B. 2001. Investigating school leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Educational Researcher, 30*(3), 23-28.

Spillane, J. P., Halverson, R., and Diamond, J. B. 2004. Towards a theory of leadership practice: A distributed perspective. *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 35, 533-543.

Spillane, J. P. 2005. Distributed leadership. *The Educational Forum,* 69, 143-150.

Spillane, J. P. 2006. *Distributed leadership.* San Francisco, CA: John Wiley and Sons.

Spillane, J. P. and Diamond, J. B. 2007. *Distributed leadership in practice.* USA: Hawker Brownlow Education.

Spillane, J. P. and Diamond, J. B. 2007b. Taking a distributed perspective. In J. P. Spillane, and J. B. Diamond (Eds.), *Distributed Leadership in Practice*. New York: Teachers College Press. 1-15.

Spillane, J. P. 2009. Managing to lead: Reframing school leadership and management. *The Phi Delta Kappan, 91*(3), 70-73.

Spillane, J. P. and Zuberi, A. 2009. Designing and piloting a leadership daily practice log: Using logs to study the practice of leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 45*(3), 375-423.

Spillane, J. P. and Healey, K. 2010. Conceptualizing school leadership and management from a distributed perspective: An exploration of some study operations and measures. *The Elementary School Journal, 3*(2), 253-281.

Spillane, J. P. and Kim, C. M. 2012. An exploratory analysis of formal school leaders' positioning in instructional advice and information networks in elementary schools. *American Journal of Education, 119*(1), 73-102.

Sukirno, D. S. and Siengthai, S. 2011. Does participative decision-making affect lecturer performance in higher education? *International Journal of Educational Management, 25*(5), 494-508.

Tahir, L. M., Lee, S. L., Musah, M. B., Jaffri. H., Said, M. N. H. M., and Yasin, M. H. M. 2016. Challenges in distributed leadership: Evidence from the perspective of head teachers. *International Journal of Educational Management, 30*(6), 848- 863.

Taole, M. 2013. Exploring principals' role in providing instructional leadership in rural high schools in South Africa. *Studies of Tribes and Tribals*, 11, 75-82.

Taylor S. J., Bogdan, R., and DeVault, M. L. 2016. *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A guidebook and resource,* (4th ed.). New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Tian, M., Risku, M., and Collin, J. 2016. A meta-analysis of distributed leadership from 2002 to 2013: Theory development, empirical evidence and future research focus. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 44*(1), 146–164.

Tian, M. and Risku, M. 2019. A distributed leadership perspective on the Finnish curriculum reform 2014. *Journal of Curriculum Studies, 51*(2), 229-244.

Timperley, H. S. 2005. Distributed leadership: Developing theory from practice. *Journal of Curriculum Studies,* 37, 395-420.

Torrance, D. 2012. *Distributed leadership in Scottish primary schools: Myth or actualities.* Unpublished Doctor of Philosophy thesis, The Moray House School of Education, The University of Edinburgh.

Townsend, T. and MacBeath, J. (Eds.). 2011. *International handbook of leadership for learning. Part 1.* London: Springer.

Turkoglu, M. E. and Cansoy, R. 2018. Instructional leadership behaviors according to perceptions of school principals in Turkey. *International Online Journal of Educational Sciences, 10*(5), 36-53.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2005. *School management: A training manual for educational management.* UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa.

Velarde, J. 2017. Instructional leadership practices in international schools in Malaysia: A case study. *International Online Journal of Educational Leadership, 1*(1), 90-117.

Vikaraman, S. S., Mansor, A. N., and Hamzah, M. I. M. 2017. Mentoring and coaching practices for beginner teachers - A need for mentor coaching skills training and principal's support. *Creative Education,* 8, 156-169.

Wairimu, M. J. 2016. Teachers' perception on classroom observation and checking of pupils' exercise books by head teachers on performance of duty in primary schools in Nakuru North District. Kenya. *Journal of Education and Social Policy, 3*(3), 80-88.

Waite, D. and Bogotch, I. (Eds.). 2017. *The Wiley international handbook of educational leadership.* USA: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Walliman, N. 2011. *Research methods, the basics*. London: Routledge.

Weber, J. 1996. *Leading the instructional program.* In S. Smith and P. Piele. 1996. (Eds.), School leadership (pp. 253-278). Euge-ne, Oregon: Clearinghouse of Educational Management.

Williams, C. G. 2011. Distributed leadership in South African schools: Possibilities and constraints. *South African Journal of Education,* 31, 190-200.

Yangaiya, S. A. and Ali, H. M. 2013. Influence of distributed leadership on school effectiveness. *International Journal of Management, IT and Engineering, 3*(3), 129-140.

Yasser, F., Al-Mahdy, H., and Al-kiyumi, A. R. 2015. Teachers' perceptions of principals' instructional leadership in Omani schools. *American Journal of Educational Research, 3*(12), 1504-1510.

Yin. R. K. 2011. *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York. The Guilford Press.

Yin, R. K. 2014. *Case study research: Design and methods.* Los Angeles: Sage.

Yin, R. K. 2018. *Case study research and applications: Design and methods.* Los Angeles: Sage.

Yousaf, S. U., Usman, B., and Islam, T. 2018. Effects of supervision practices of principals on work performance and growth of primary school teachers**.** *Bulletin of Education and Research, 40*(1), 285-298.

Yunas, M. and Iqbal, M. 2013. Dimensions of instructional leadership role of principal. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business, 4*(10), 629-637.

Zuze, T. L. and Juan, A. 2018. School leadership and local learning contexts in South Africa. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership, 20*(10), 1-19.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethical Clearance Letter

UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATE

UFS UV

GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

08-Jul-2020

Dear Mr John Tenha

Application Approved

Research Project Title:
Exploring distributed instructional leadership practices in high performing Zimbabwean primary schools

Ethical Clearance number:
UFS-HSD2020/0286/0807

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis
Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

AdPlessis

Adri du Plessis
2020.07.08
18:10:08
+02'00'

205 Nelson Mandela Drive
Park West
Bloemfontein 9301
South Africa

P.O. Box 339
Bloemfontein 9300
Tel: +27 (0)51 401 9557
duplessisA@ufs.ac.za
www.ufs.ac.za

Appendix 2: Editorial Certificate

CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSIONAL EDITING

This is to certify that this thesis/manuscript was edited by a trained editor of Zimbabwe Open University for English language, grammar, punctuation, readability, flow of ideas, coherence and structure

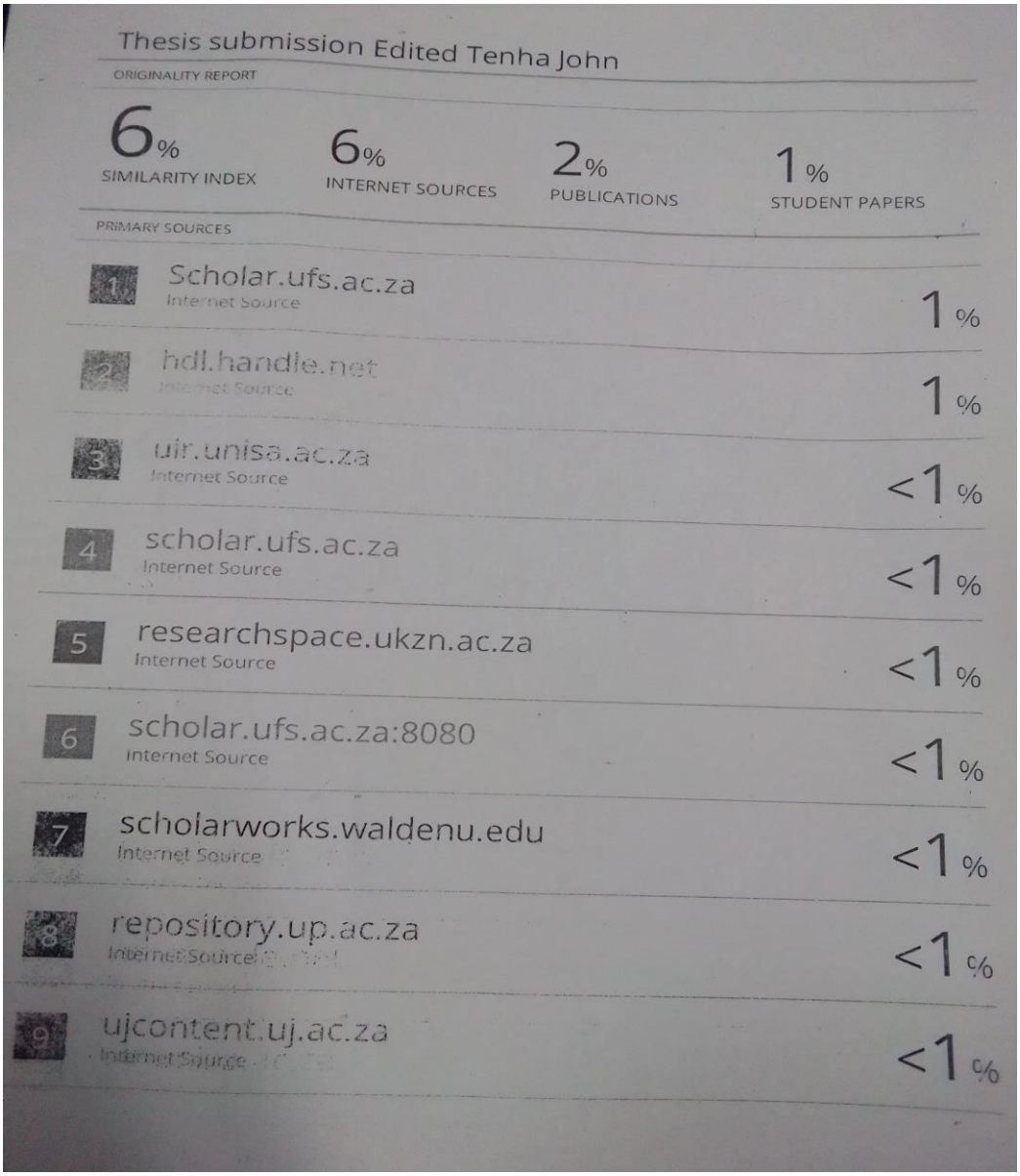
Thesis Title:	Exploring Distributed Instructional Leadership Practices in High Performing Zimbabwean Primary Schools
Author:	John Tenha
Supervisor:	Professor Loyiso C. Jita
Co-supervisor:	Doctor Thuthukile Jita
Date:	27 August 2022

Edited by: Mutambanengwe Betty Kutukwa
Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Planning (Zimbabwe Open University)
Master of Education in Educational Administration, Planning and Policy Studies (Zimbabwe Open University)
Bachelor of Education in Home Economics (University of Zimbabwe)
Certificate in Editing (University of Zimbabwe)
Secondary Teacher's Certificate (Gweru Teachers' College)

bmutambanengwe@gmail.com
+263-772 248 836/+263-716 670 482

15 Elgin Road, Hatfield, Harare

Appendix 3: Turnitin Report



Thesis submission Edited Tenha John

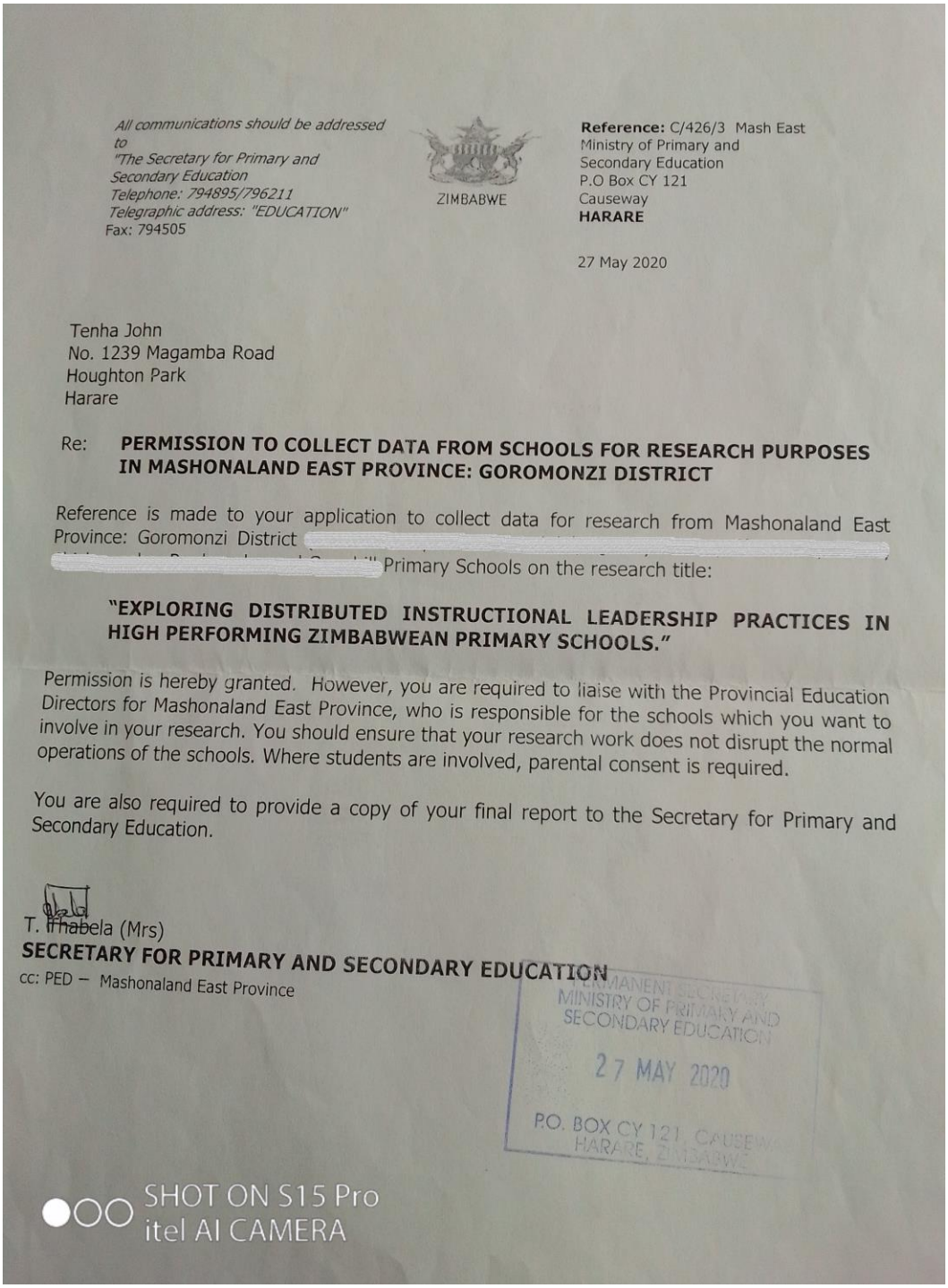
ORIGINALITY REPORT

6%	6%	2%	1%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Scholar.ufs.ac.za Internet Source	1%
2	hdl.handle.net Internet Source	1%
3	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
4	scholar.ufs.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
5	researchspace.ukzn.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
6	scholar.ufs.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	<1%
7	scholarworks.waldenu.edu Internet Source	<1%
8	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source	<1%
9	ujcontent.uj.ac.za Internet Source	<1%

Appendix 4: Approval Letter from Ministry



All communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education
Telephone: 794895/796211
Telegraphic address: "EDUCATION"
Fax: 794505

ZIMBABWE

Reference: C/426/3 Mash East
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
HARARE

27 May 2020

Tenha John
No. 1239 Magamba Road
Houghton Park
Harare

Re: **PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FROM SCHOOLS FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES IN MASHONALAND EAST PROVINCE: GOROMONZI DISTRICT**

Reference is made to your application to collect data for research from Mashonaland East Province: Goromonzi District [redacted] Primary Schools on the research title:

"EXPLORING DISTRIBUTED INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN HIGH PERFORMING ZIMBABWEAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS."

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Directors for Mashonaland East Province, who is responsible for the schools which you want to involve in your research. You should ensure that your research work does not disrupt the normal operations of the schools. Where students are involved, parental consent is required.

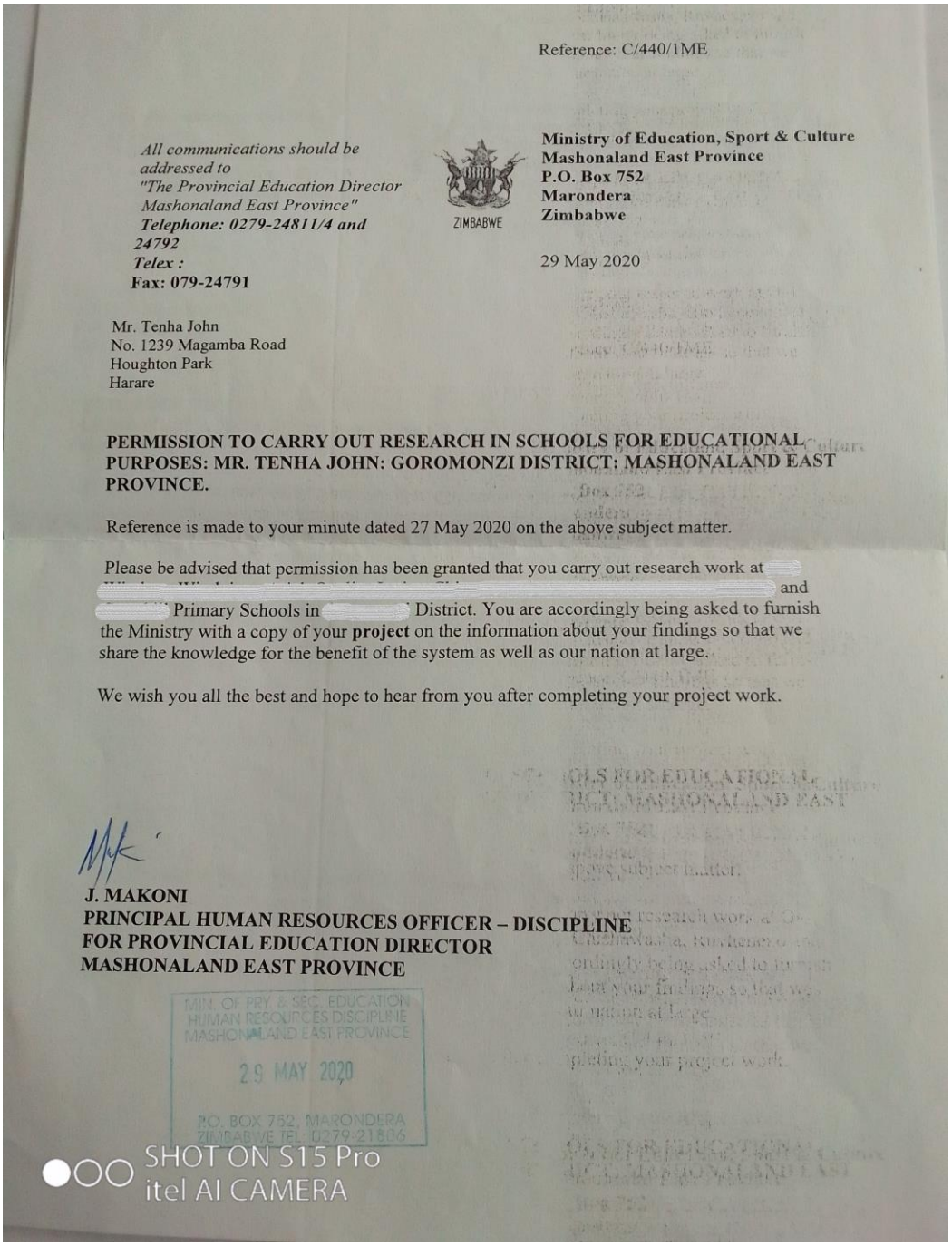
You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education.

T. Mabela (Mrs)
SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
cc: PED – Mashonaland East Province

PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
27 MAY 2020
P.O. BOX CY 121, CAUSEWAY
HARARE, ZIMBABWE

SHOT ON S15 Pro
itel AI CAMERA

Appendix 5: Approval Letter from the Provincial Office



Reference: C/440/1ME

All communications should be addressed to
"The Provincial Education Director
Mashonaland East Province"
Telephone: 0279-24811/4 and 24792
Telex :
Fax: 079-24791

ZIMBABWE

Ministry of Education, Sport & Culture
Mashonaland East Province
P.O. Box 752
Marondera
Zimbabwe

29 May 2020

Mr. Tenha John
No. 1239 Magamba Road
Houghton Park
Harare

PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES: MR. TENHA JOHN: GOROMONZI DISTRICT: MASHONALAND EAST PROVINCE.

Reference is made to your minute dated 27 May 2020 on the above subject matter.

Please be advised that permission has been granted that you carry out research work at [redacted] and [redacted] Primary Schools in [redacted] District. You are accordingly being asked to furnish the Ministry with a copy of your **project** on the information about your findings so that we share the knowledge for the benefit of the system as well as our nation at large.

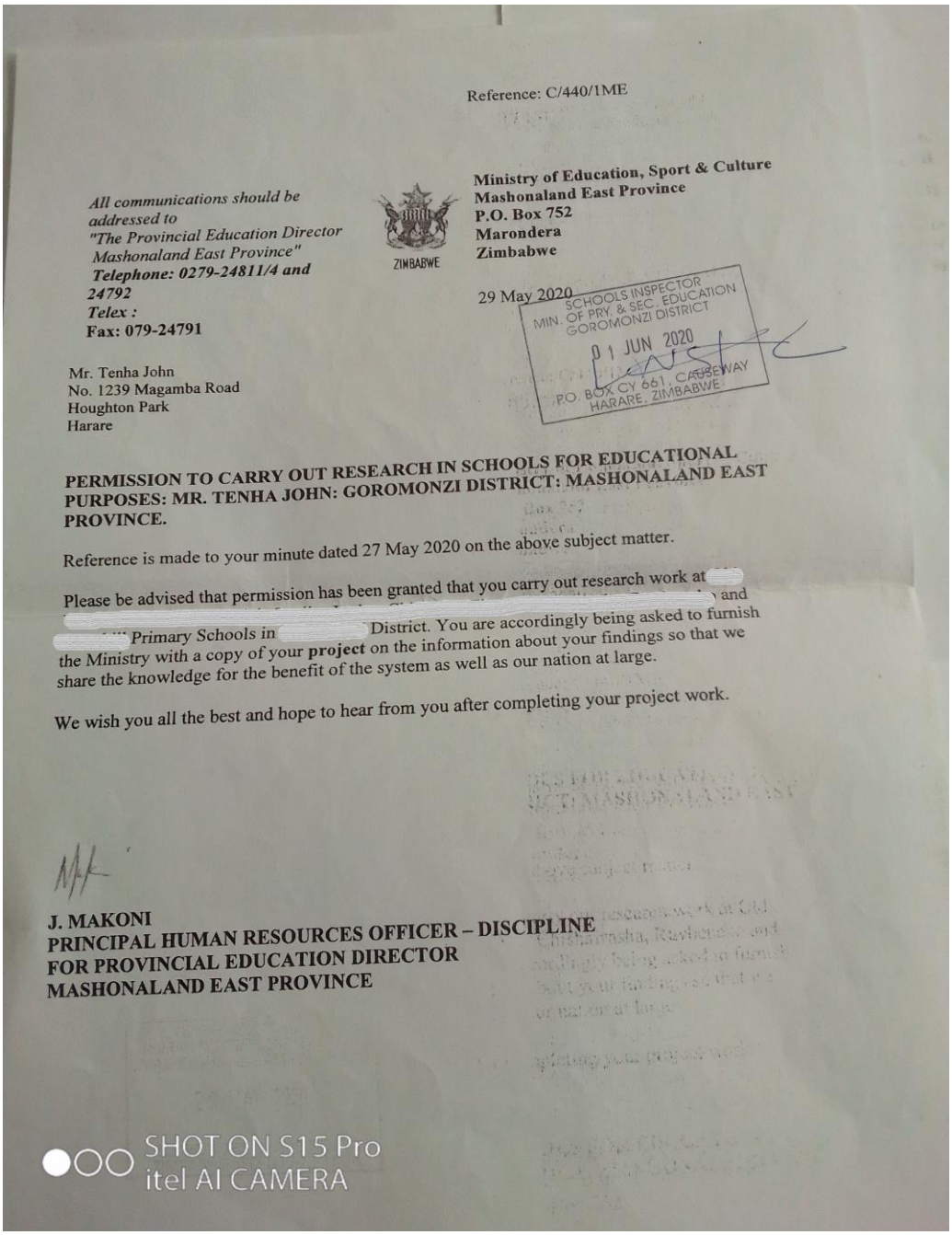
We wish you all the best and hope to hear from you after completing your project work.

J. MAKONI
PRINCIPAL HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER – DISCIPLINE
FOR PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR
MASHONALAND EAST PROVINCE

MIN. OF PRY. & SEC. EDUCATION
HUMAN RESOURCES DISCIPLINE
MASHONALAND EAST PROVINCE
29 MAY 2020
P.O. BOX 752, MARONDERA
ZIMBABWE TEL: 0279-21806

SHOT ON S15 Pro
itel AI CAMERA

Appendix 6: Approval Letter from the District Office (District Schools Inspector approved by date stamping and signing the approval letter from Provincial Office**)**



Reference: C/440/1ME

All communications should be addressed to
"The Provincial Education Director
Mashonaland East Province"
Telephone: 0279-24811/4 and 24792
Telex :
Fax: 079-24791

ZIMBABWE

Ministry of Education, Sport & Culture
Mashonaland East Province
P.O. Box 752
Marondera
Zimbabwe

29 May 2020

SCHOOLS INSPECTOR
MIN. OF PRY. & SEC. EDUCATION
GOROMONZI DISTRICT
01 JUN 2020
P.O. BOX CY 661, CAUSEWAY
HARARE, ZIMBABWE

Mr. Tenha John
No. 1239 Magamba Road
Houghton Park
Harare

PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN SCHOOLS FOR EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES: MR. TENHA JOHN: GOROMONZI DISTRICT: MASHONALAND EAST PROVINCE.

Reference is made to your minute dated 27 May 2020 on the above subject matter.

Please be advised that permission has been granted that you carry out research work at [redacted] and [redacted] Primary Schools in [redacted] District. You are accordingly being asked to furnish the Ministry with a copy of your **project** on the information about your findings so that we share the knowledge for the benefit of the system as well as our nation at large.

We wish you all the best and hope to hear from you after completing your project work.

J. MAKONI
PRINCIPAL HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER – DISCIPLINE
FOR PROVINCIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR
MASHONALAND EAST PROVINCE

SHOT ON S15 Pro
itel AI CAMERA

Appendix 7: First Interview Protocol for Principals

PRE-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Face-to-face interviews
(I will record information about the interviewees before interviews start such as the name of the interviewee, gender, school, date, and place).

TOPIC: Exploring distributed instructional leadership practices in high performing Zimbabwean primary schools

THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION
How is distributed instructional leadership practice enacted in some high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe for instructional improvement?

BIODATA
Age group in years:

30- 35	36 - 40	41-45	46 – 50	Above 50

Gender M/F
Professional Qualifications: ----------
Years of experience as a principal: ----------
Positions held before becoming a principal of this school and number of years spent in each position**:** ----------

Sub-questions	**Interview questions**
What are the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice of selected high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe?	1. What is the vision of the school? ○ How was it formulated? ○ What procedures did you follow in formulating the school vision? ○ How do you get members of staff to share the same understanding of the vision of the school with you? ○ How do teachers accept this vision? 2. What is your role when it comes to classroom practice? ○ How are lesson observations conducted at your school? ○ Who makes the observations? ○ How often are they conducted? 3. How do you rank instructional activities among the various activities that you perform at school? ○ Why? 4. What leadership practices exist in your school that focus on teaching and learning? ○ Which ones did you introduce since becoming a principal at this school? ○ How do they improve teaching and learning in the school? ○ How do teachers regard these practices?
How do the major activities of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe align with and/or exhibit features of a distributed leadership practice, if at all?	1. How often do you hold meetings with teachers to discuss: i. teaching and learning? ○ How do you notify teachers of such meetings? ○ How do you come up with agenda items? ○ At what time of the day do you normally have your meetings? - May you explain why? ii. Staff development? ○ How is the calendar for staff development programmes developed? ○ Who are the participants in crafting this calendar? ○ Are all staff members consulted when crafting this calendar? ○ If so, how? If not, why not? ○ What is the level of teacher participation in these meetings?

	2. How do you assign classes to teachers? ◷ Is it on experience, qualifications, interest, performance, or the teacher's choice? ◷ How effective has this method been in improving teaching and learning? 3. Do you involve teachers in school leadership activities? ◷ If yes, how do you involve them? If not, why not? ◷ Which leadership activities are led by teachers? ◷ How do you assign teachers to positions of special responsibility? ◷ Is it on experience, qualifications, interest, performance or the teacher's choice? 4. Which documents/policies from the Ministry do you refer to in your leadership activities? ◷ How does the use of these documents/policies influence your leadership practices? 5. Who formulates school-based policies such as the admission policy? ◷ How often do you relate to the leadership policies in your school? ◷ How do these policies influence your leadership? 6. What do you regard as the main factors that have contributed to high pass rates at your school? 7. In what ways does your personal background influence your leadership? (Such as educational background, level of training and personal attitude).

Closing

- Is there anything else that you would like to bring to my attention?
- Thank you very much for your time and for this informative discussion.

Appendix 8: First Interview Protocol for Teachers

FIRST INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR TEACHERS

Face-to-face interviews
(I will record information about the interviewees before interviews start such as the name of the interviewee, gender, school, date, place, and time)

TOPIC: Exploring distributed instructional leadership practices in high performing Zimbabwean primary schools

THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION
How is distributed instructional leadership practice enacted in some high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe for instructional improvement?

BIODATA
Age group in years:

30- 35	36 - 40	41-45	46 – 50	Above 50

Gender M/F
Professional Qualifications: ----------

Years of experience as a teacher: ----------
Grade levels taught: ----------
Positions held: ----------

Sub-questions	Interview questions
What are the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice of selected high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe?	1. What do you regard as the principal's major role in the school? • How does the principal contribute to teaching and learning at your school? 2. What does the school vision mean to you? • Do you subscribe to the vision and mission of the school? If yes, why? If no, why not? • How do you contribute to the success of school goals? 3. How are lesson observations conducted at your school? • Who does the observation? • How often? 4. How does the school principal disseminate information to teachers? • Is it by written notice, verbal communication to all teachers at assembly/ to individual teachers? 5. How is the teaching and learning environment at your school? • Is it conducive or not? • Explain your answer. • How are teacher relations at your school in terms of teaching and learning?

How do the major activities of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe align with and/or exhibit features of a distributed leadership practice, if at all?	1. How does the principal provide opportunities for staff development? • Is this necessary to you? • Have you ever been staff developed? • If yes in what area and how was that conducted? • If no, why not? 2. How were you assigned a class to teach? • Is it on experience, qualifications, interest, performance or your choice? 3. Do you hold any leadership position in the school besides being a classroom teacher? • If yes, what is it and how did you get to that position? • If no, why not? • What is your view on stretching leadership to many members in the school (Such as having a subject team leader)? • What opportunities exist in the school to discuss new classroom and leadership practices? 4. Does the principal, support you as you implement the curriculum? • In what ways have you been assisted if any? 5. What factors have contributed to high pass rates in the school? • How does the principal contribute to pass rates in the school? • What was your contribution to the high pass rate in the school? 6. How often are meetings that involve all teachers conducted at this school? • What is the level of teachers' participation in meetings? • How does this contribute to school performance?

Closing

Is there anything else that you would like to bring to my attention?

Thank you very much for your time and for sharing this important discussion.

Appendix 9: Second Interview Protocol for Principals

POST-OBSERVATION INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS
Face-to-face interviews
(I will record information about the interviewees before interviews start such as the name of the interviewee, gender, school, date, and place).

TOPIC: Exploring distributed instructional leadership practices in high performing Zimbabwean primary schools

THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION: How is distributed instructional leadership practice enacted in some high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe for instructional improvement?

Additional questions may be asked to get a clarification on some observed aspects.

Sub-questions	Interview questions
What are the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice of selected high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe?	1. How effective is the feedback given to teachers after lesson observations? • When do you give feedback after lesson observation? • How do you ensure that teachers implement suggestions on reports from lesson observations? • How do you support teachers' instructional activities? 2. How do you ensure teacher commitment towards improved school performance? 3. What have you found to be the most effective communication strategy to members of staff when focusing on teaching and learning activities? • Is it through memos, written notices or talking to teachers? • Explain why? 4. How are teaching and learning materials such as textbooks and exercise books procured in the school. • Who is involved in procuring the materials?
How do the major activities of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe align with and/or exhibit features of a distributed leadership practice, if at all?	1. How effective are staff development programmes at this school? • Give examples staff development programmes held and say why they were effective? • If none, why? 2. What leadership practices contribute to high performance in your school? • How are these conducted? • How were they started? 3. Looking at your grade seven pass rates for the past four years, how has been the performance of teachers and learners? • How would you evaluate your contribution towards this level of performance? 4. What policy changes have you made in the school since becoming the principal of the school? • How effective have been the policies in improving teaching and learning? • How did you introduce them to staff members? 5. How conducive is the instructional environment in the school? • How has this contributed to the instructional performance of your school?

Closing

- Thank you very much for participating in this study.

Appendix 10: Second Interview Protocol for Teachers

POST OBSERVATION INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR TEACHERS
Face-to-face interviews
(I will record information about the interviewees before interviews start such as the name of the interviewee, gender, school, date, and place).

TOPIC: Exploring distributed instructional leadership practices in high performing Zimbabwean primary schools

THE MAIN RESEARCH QUESTION: How is distributed instructional leadership practice enacted in some high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe for instructional improvement?

Additional questions may be asked to get a clarification on some observed aspects.

Sub-questions	**Interview questions**
What are the main activities that characterise instructional leadership practice of selected high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe?	1. How are you given feedback from lesson observations that would have been made: a) by the principal? b) by another supervisor • When is the feedback given? • In what form is it given, verbal or written? • In case there is an aspect you don't understand, are you able to seek clarification from the supervisor? Explain your answer. 2. How often do you communicate with the following on instructional matters: i) principal ii) vice principal iii) teacher in charge iv) teacher leaders v) other teachers • How do you communicate with these members?
How do the major activities of instructional leadership in high performing primary schools in Zimbabwe align with and/or exhibit features of a distributed leadership practice, if at all?	1. How effective is the staff development programme in the school? • Are teachers involved in drawing up a staff development programme? • If yes, how are they involved? • At what stage are they involved? • If no, why not and who does the planning? 2. Which Ministry policies have more influence on your work? • How did you come to know these policy/policies? • Which other school or ministry policies do you refer to when carrying out instructional activities? 3. What new leadership practices were introduced by the principal since taking up the leadership position. • How effective are they in improving teachers' performance? 4. How does the principal introduce new leadership practices in the school? • How are these accepted by members of staff? 5. How conducive is the working environment in the school in relation to teaching and learning?

Closing
Thank you for participating in this study.

Appendix 11: Document Analysis Protocol

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE
Focus is on analysing documents that guide instructional leadership in schools.

The researcher will:
- Identify different types of public and school documents used in the schools that are related to instructional leadership.
- Seek permission to use the documents from responsible individuals.
- Examine the following documents for their usefulness in answering the research questions of this study:

DOCUMENT ANALYSED	ASPECTS ANALYSED	COMMENTS/ SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS
1.Ministry handbooks Handbook for Administrators	How they are used in schools for instructional improvement purposes. - How accessibility are they to other staff members. - The use of the handbook for instructional leadership activities - The use of these in distributed leadership practices	
2. Education Secretary's Circulars used in schools related to leadership 1. Director's Circular No. 7 of 2003 Guidelines on supervision of teachers. 2. Secretary's Circular No. 2 of 2017, Implementation of curriculum framework.	Their contribution to instructional leadership	
3. School Curriculum Handbooks Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education (2015-2022)	How supervision reports reflect information from this ministry book.	
4. School documents **i. Minute books** **ii. Notice book** **iii. Staff development programmes** **iv. Schemes of Work.** **Supervision reports** **Teacher supervision reports**	**i. Minute books** (Focusing on the frequency of meetings, topics discussed, presenters, attendances and resolutions passed) **ii. The notice book** (Types of notices, frequency, teacher responses) **iii. Staff development programmes** (Focusing on the frequency of staff development activities, topics presented, presenters, attendances) **iv. Schemes of work:** How are they developed? **v. Supervision reports:** -What can be said about the supervision of teachers? a) By school-based supervisors b) By DSIs	

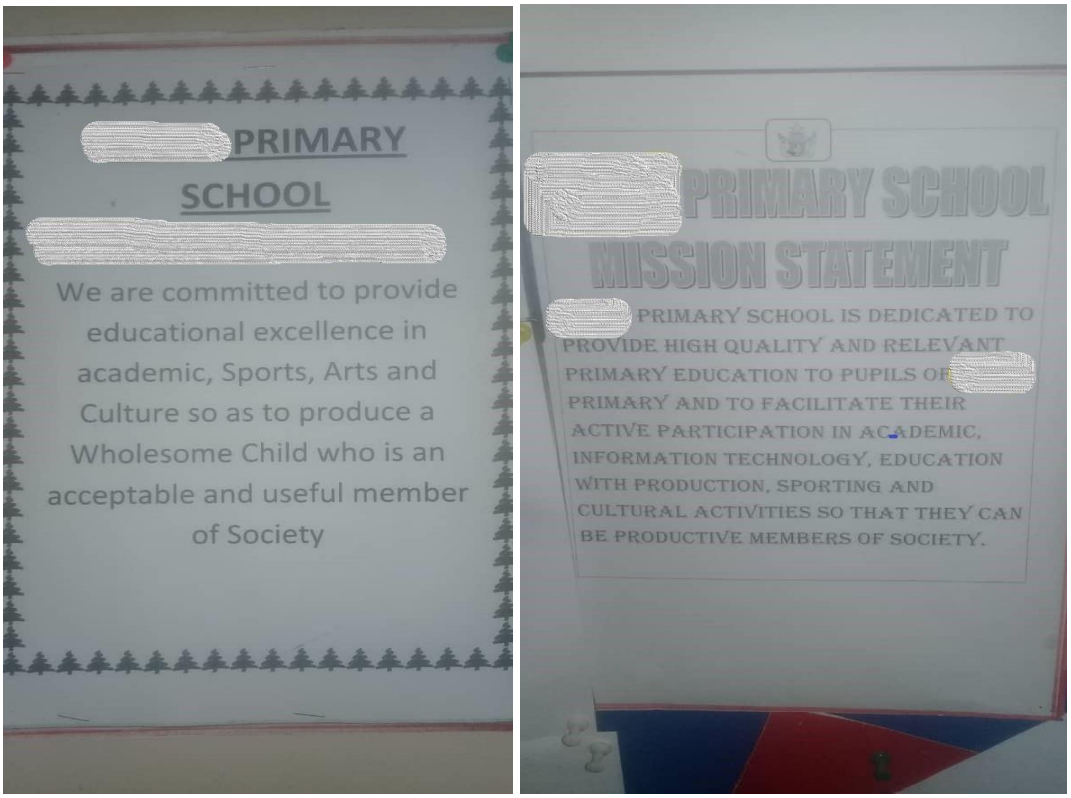
Appendix 12: Observation Protocol

OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS
Non-participant observation.
This protocol is used to observe leadership in practice, to see what leadership is like and what people do.

Before observations, the preliminary details are recorded:
Date…… Time……Duration……
Setting……

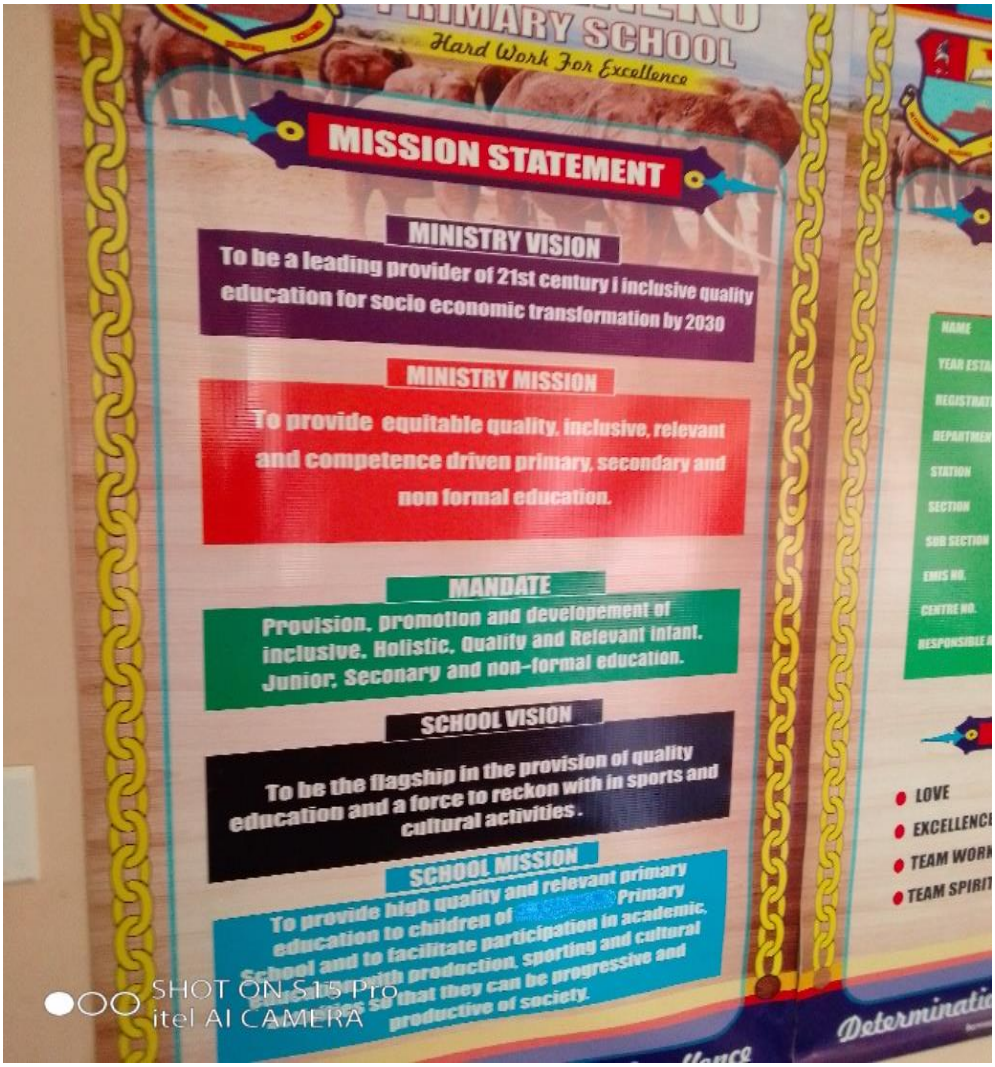
ASPECTS TO BE OBSERVED	OBSERVATIONS MADE
1. How the principal improves teaching-learning **i. Supervision of teachers:** - The frequency of supervision visits to classes - Feedback sessions after class visits **ii. Encouraging teachers on the use of policies**: 🕐 How teachers are encouraged to use school and Ministry policies 🕐 What policies are found in schools? 🕐 How are they used? 🕐 How effective are they? **iii. Staff development:** The principal's role in relation to staff development.	
2. Leadership practices **i. Instructional leadership practices:** 🕐 Practices portrayed by the principal (their influence on teachers) 🕐 Practices portrayed by teachers in the school while in their leadership positions (What activities are done, how are they done). **ii. Distributed Instructional leadership** **Leadership activities by teachers.** 🕐 Interactions with the principal 🕐 Interactions with the vice principal 🕐 Interactions among teachers 🕐 How does the principal encourage others to work towards high performance? **Stationery procurement and management** 🕐 How is it procured 🕐 Who is involved 🕐 How is it distributed **Influence of different leadership activities on teaching and learning**	
3. Leadership contexts **i. Meetings conducted** 🕐 How does the principal conduct formal meetings? 🕐 The frequency of meetings (Number of meetings attended by teachers) 🕐 Freedom of expression by members in meetings 🕐 How resolutions are made 🕐 How instructions are given out **ii. Principal interactions with teachers** 🕐 At assembly 🕐 During walkthroughs. 🕐 Outside meetings. **iii. Observations of interactions outside formal meetings between:** 🕐 Vice principals and teachers, 🕐 Teachers in charge and teachers, 🕐 Among teachers.	

Appendix 13: School specific vision and mission statements for Matanga Primary School

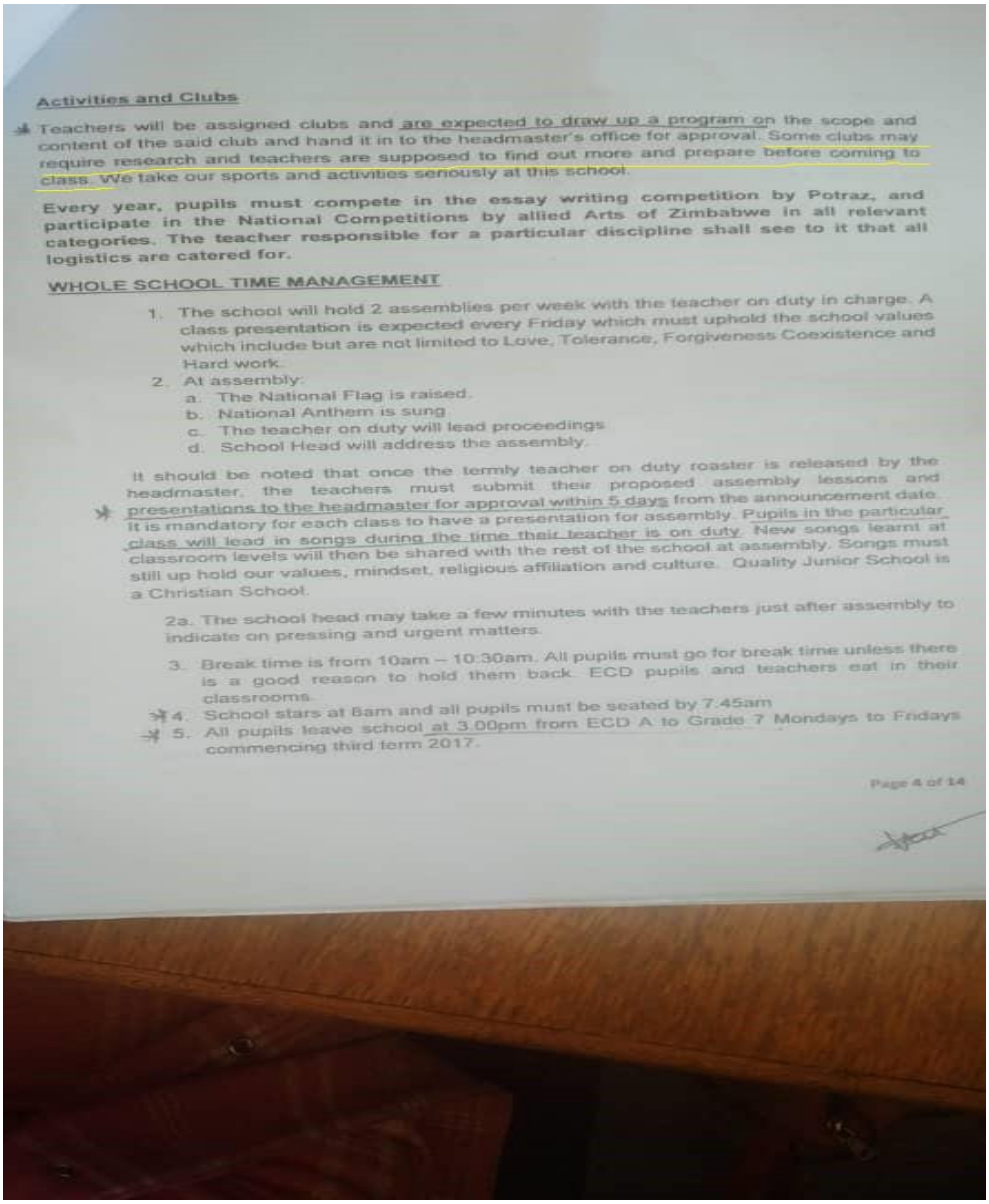


Appendix 14: Ministry vision and mission statements for Matanga Primary School

Appendix 15: Ministry and school vision and mission statements at Bepura Primary School



Appendix 16: Chrim Primary School Policy document 1



Activities and Clubs

Teachers will be assigned clubs and are expected to draw up a program on the scope and content of the said club and hand it in to the headmaster's office for approval. Some clubs may require research and teachers are supposed to find out more and prepare before coming to class. We take our sports and activities seriously at this school.

Every year, pupils must compete in the essay writing competition by Potraz, and participate in the National Competitions by allied Arts of Zimbabwe in all relevant categories. The teacher responsible for a particular discipline shall see to it that all logistics are catered for.

WHOLE SCHOOL TIME MANAGEMENT

1. The school will hold 2 assemblies per week with the teacher on duty in charge. A class presentation is expected every Friday which must uphold the school values which include but are not limited to Love, Tolerance, Forgiveness Coexistence and Hard work.
2. At assembly:
   a. The National Flag is raised.
   b. National Anthem is sung.
   c. The teacher on duty will lead proceedings.
   d. School Head will address the assembly.

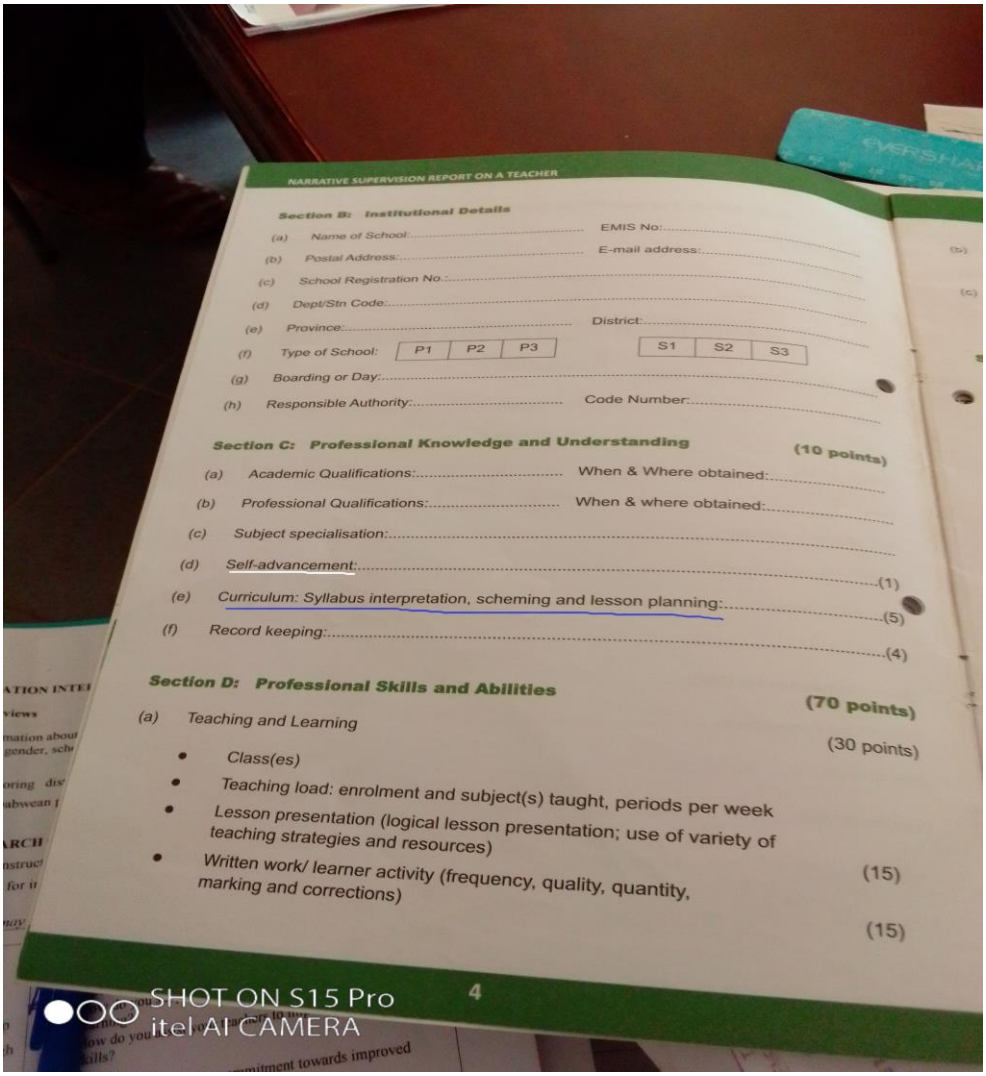
It should be noted that once the termly teacher on duty roaster is released by the headmaster, the teachers must submit their proposed assembly lessons and presentations to the headmaster for approval within 5 days from the announcement date. It is mandatory for each class to have a presentation for assembly. Pupils in the particular class will lead in songs during the time their teacher is on duty. New songs learnt at classroom levels will then be shared with the rest of the school at assembly. Songs must still up hold our values, mindset, religious affiliation and culture. Quality Junior School is a Christian School.

2a. The school head may take a few minutes with the teachers just after assembly to indicate on pressing and urgent matters.

3. Break time is from 10am – 10:30am. All pupils must go for break time unless there is a good reason to hold them back. ECD pupils and teachers eat in their classrooms.
4. School stars at 8am and all pupils must be seated by 7.45am
5. All pupils leave school at 3.00pm from ECD A to Grade 7 Mondays to Fridays commencing third term 2017.

Page 4 of 14

Appendix 17: Section C of a narrative form



NARRATIVE SUPERVISION REPORT ON A TEACHER

Section B: Institutional Details

(a) Name of School:..... EMIS No:.....
(b) Postal Address:..... E-mail address:.....
(c) School Registration No.:.....
(d) Dept/Stn Code:.....
(e) Province:..... District:.....
(f) Type of School: P1 P2 P3 S1 S2 S3
(g) Boarding or Day:.....
(h) Responsible Authority:..... Code Number:.....

Section C: Professional Knowledge and Understanding **(10 points)**

(a) Academic Qualifications:..... When & Where obtained:.....
(b) Professional Qualifications:..... When & where obtained:.....
(c) Subject specialisation:.....
(d) Self-advancement:.....(1)
(e) Curriculum: Syllabus interpretation, scheming and lesson planning:.....(5)
(f) Record keeping:.....(4)

Section D: Professional Skills and Abilities **(70 points)**

(a) Teaching and Learning (30 points)

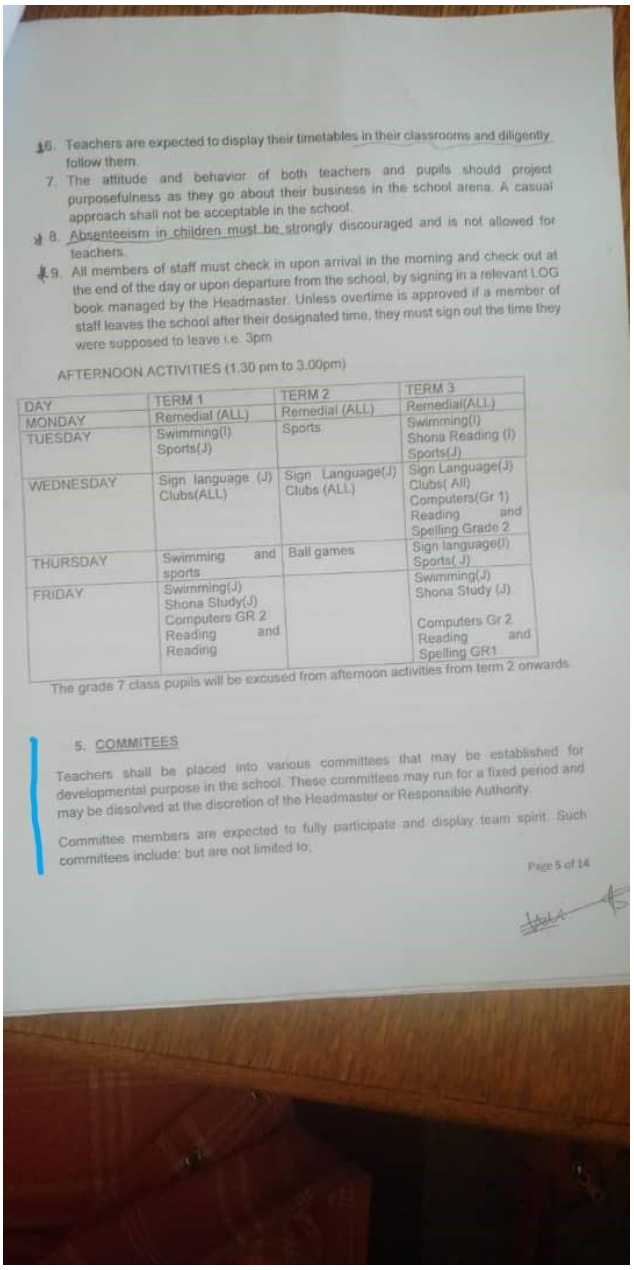
- Class(es)
- Teaching load: enrolment and subject(s) taught, periods per week
- Lesson presentation (logical lesson presentation; use of variety of teaching strategies and resources)
- Written work/ learner activity (frequency, quality, quantity, marking and corrections) (15)

(15)

4

SHOT ON S15 Pro
itel AI CAMERA

Appendix 18: Chrim Primary School policy document 2



6. Teachers are expected to display their timetables in their classrooms and diligently follow them.
7. The attitude and behavior of both teachers and pupils should project purposefulness as they go about their business in the school arena. A casual approach shall not be acceptable in the school.
8. Absenteeism in children must be strongly discouraged and is not allowed for teachers.
9. All members of staff must check in upon arrival in the morning and check out at the end of the day or upon departure from the school, by signing in a relevant LOG book managed by the Headmaster. Unless overtime is approved if a member of staff leaves the school after their designated time, they must sign out the time they were supposed to leave i.e. 3pm

AFTERNOON ACTIVITIES (1.30 pm to 3.00pm)

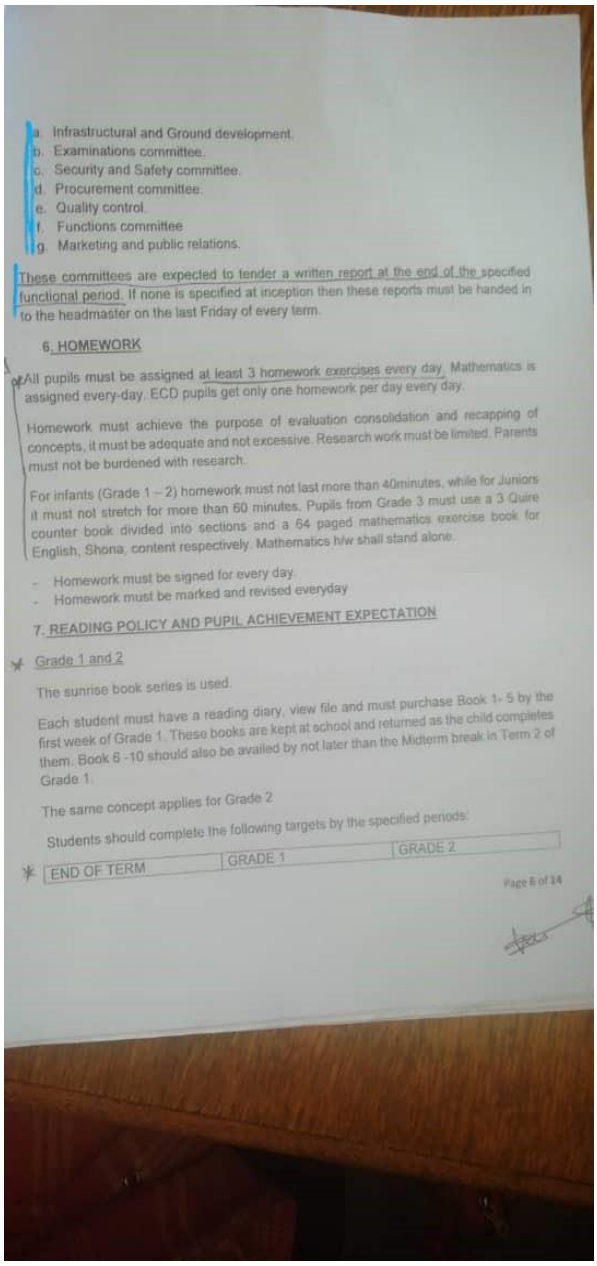
DAY	TERM 1	TERM 2	TERM 3
MONDAY	Remedial (ALL)	Remedial (ALL)	Remedial(ALL)
TUESDAY	Swimming(I) Sports(J)	Sports	Swimming(I) Shona Reading (I) Sports(J)
WEDNESDAY	Sign language (J) Clubs(ALL)	Sign Language(J) Clubs (ALL)	Sign Language(J) Clubs(All) Computers(Gr 1) Reading and Spelling Grade 2
THURSDAY	Swimming and sports	Ball games	Sign language(I) Sports(J)
FRIDAY	Swimming(J) Shona Study(J) Computers GR 2 Reading and Reading		Swimming(J) Shona Study (J) Computers Gr 2 Reading and Spelling GR1

The grade 7 class pupils will be excused from afternoon activities from term 2 onwards.

5. COMMITEES

Teachers shall be placed into various committees that may be established for developmental purpose in the school. These committees may run for a fixed period and may be dissolved at the discretion of the Headmaster or Responsible Authority.

Committee members are expected to fully participate and display team spirit. Such committees include: but are not limited to;



a. Infrastructural and Ground development.
b. Examinations committee.
c. Security and Safety committee.
d. Procurement committee.
e. Quality control.
f. Functions committee
g. Marketing and public relations.

These committees are expected to tender a written report at the end of the specified functional period. If none is specified at inception then these reports must be handed in to the headmaster on the last Friday of every term.

6. HOMEWORK

All pupils must be assigned at least 3 homework exercises every day. Mathematics is assigned every-day. ECD pupils get only one homework per day every day.

Homework must achieve the purpose of evaluation consolidation and recapping of concepts, it must be adequate and not excessive. Research work must be limited. Parents must not be burdened with research.

For infants (Grade 1 – 2) homework must not last more than 40minutes, while for Juniors it must not stretch for more than 60 minutes. Pupils from Grade 3 must use a 3 Quire counter book divided into sections and a 64 paged mathematics exercise book for English, Shona, content respectively. Mathematics h/w shall stand alone.

- Homework must be signed for every day.
- Homework must be marked and revised everyday

7. READING POLICY AND PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT EXPECTATION

Grade 1 and 2

The sunrise book series is used.

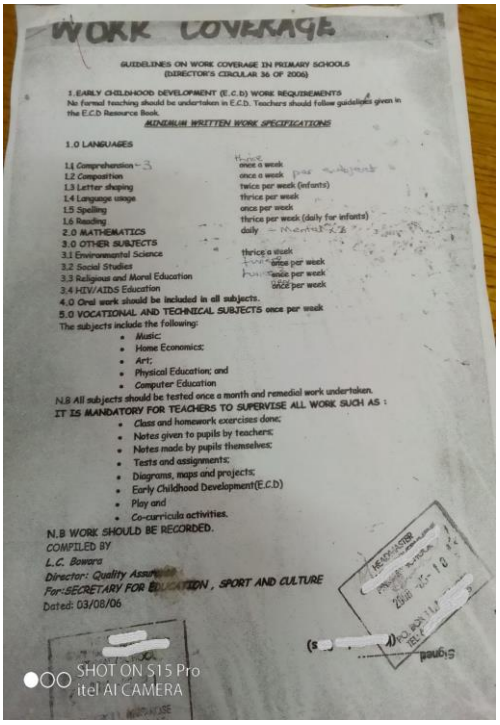
Each student must have a reading diary, view file and must purchase Book 1- 5 by the first week of Grade 1. These books are kept at school and returned as the child completes them. Book 6 -10 should also be availed by not later than the Midterm break in Term 2 of Grade 1.

The same concept applies for Grade 2

Students should complete the following targets by the specified periods:

END OF TERM	GRADE 1	GRADE 2

Appendix 19: Some Ministry documents used in schools


WORK COVERAGE

GUIDELINES ON WORK COVERAGE IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS
(DIRECTOR'S CIRCULAR 36 OF 2006)

1. EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (E.C.D) WORK REQUIREMENTS
No formal teaching should be undertaken in E.C.D. Teachers should follow guidelines given in the E.C.D Resource Book.

MINIMUM WRITTEN WORK SPECIFICATIONS

1.0 LANGUAGES
1.1 Comprehension – once a week
1.2 Composition – once a week
1.3 Letter shaping – twice per week (infants)
1.4 Language usage – thrice per week
1.5 Spelling – once per week
1.6 Reading – thrice per week (daily for infants)
2.0 MATHEMATICS – daily
3.0 OTHER SUBJECTS
3.1 Environmental Science – thrice a week
3.2 Social Studies – once per week
3.3 Religious and Moral Education – once per week
3.4 HIV/AIDS Education – once per week
4.0 Oral work should be included in all subjects.
5.0 VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS once per week
The subjects include the following:

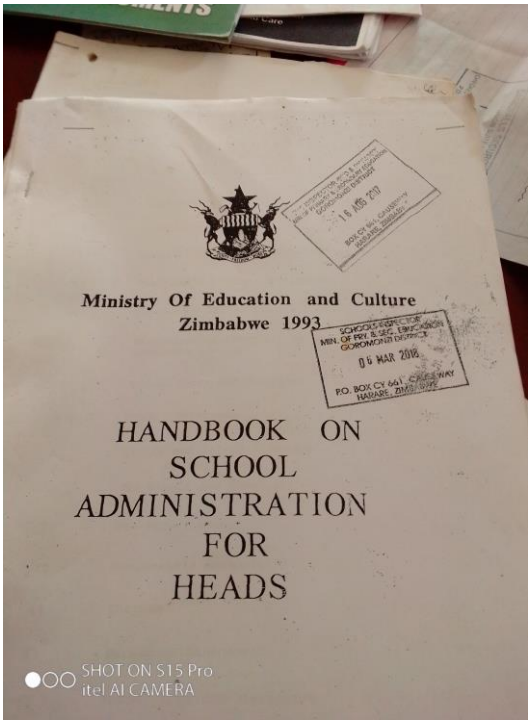
- Music;
- Home Economics;
- Art;
- Physical Education; and
- Computer Education

N.B All subjects should be tested once a month and remedial work undertaken.
IT IS MANDATORY FOR TEACHERS TO SUPERVISE ALL WORK SUCH AS :

- Class and homework exercises done;
- Notes given to pupils by teachers;
- Notes made by pupils themselves;
- Tests and assignments;
- Diagrams, maps and projects;
- Early Childhood Development(E.C.D)
- Play and
- Co-curricula activities.

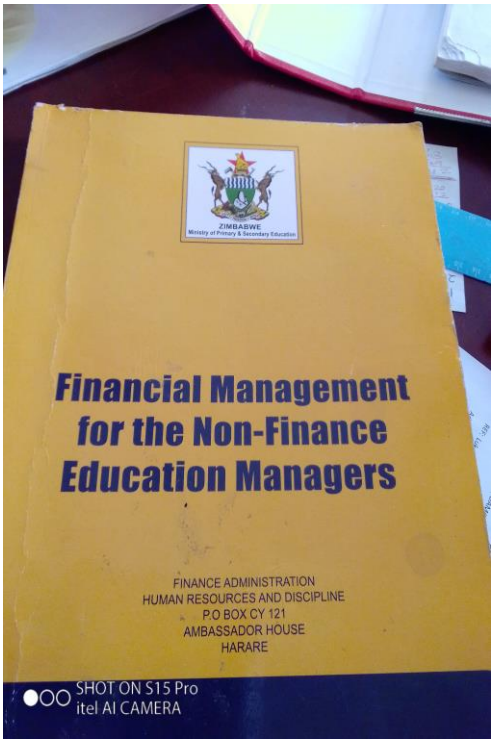
N.B WORK SHOULD BE RECORDED.
COMPILED BY
L.C. Bowora
Director: Quality Assurance
For:SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION , SPORT AND CULTURE
Dated: 03/08/06

SHOT ON S15 Pro
itel AI CAMERA


Ministry Of Education and Culture
Zimbabwe 1993

HANDBOOK ON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION FOR HEADS

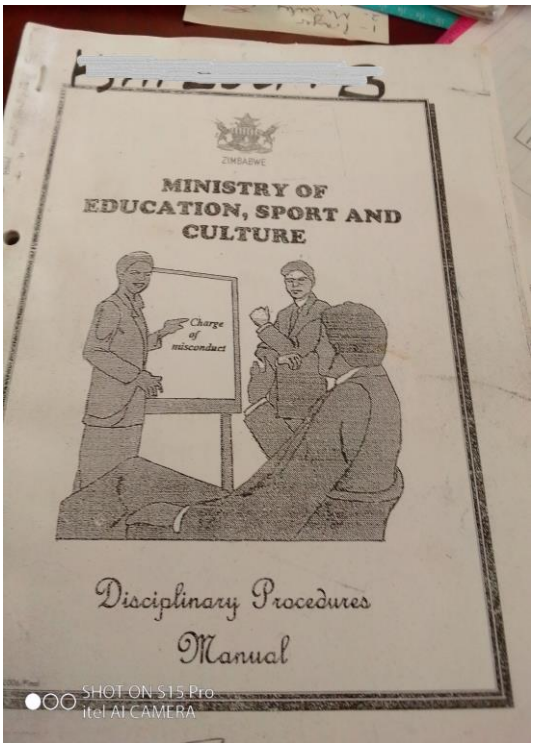
SHOT ON S15 Pro
itel AI CAMERA


ZIMBABWE
Ministry of Primary & Secondary Education

Financial Management for the Non-Finance Education Managers

FINANCE ADMINISTRATION
HUMAN RESOURCES AND DISCIPLINE
P.O BOX CY 121
AMBASSADOR HOUSE
HARARE

SHOT ON S15 Pro
itel AI CAMERA


ZIMBABWE

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT AND CULTURE

Charge of misconduct

Disciplinary Procedures Manual

SHOT ON S15 Pro
itel AI CAMERA