Instructional guidance for marginalised subjects in Zimbabwe: A case study of the vocational and technical subjects in the Masvingo district

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis **INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDANCE FOR MARGINALISED SUBJECTS IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF THE VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS IN THE MASVINGO DISTRICT** hereby handed in for the qualification of Philosophiae Doctor in Education at the University of the Free State, is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted the same work for a qualification at/in another university

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L. Mandiudza

Date

DEDICATIONS

This thesis is dedicated to my late parents

NYENGETERAI and FANI A. HAMANDISHE

For their immense contribution to my education

I cherish their values and ethos!

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SUMMARY

At a time when many countries are searching for school curricula that adequately prepare learners for the world of work, there is a need to ensure that the implementers at the classroom level (viz. the teachers) are also supported in doing a good job with curriculum and instruction. The aim of this study was to investigate the instructional guidance practices (and policies) that are provided to support the teaching and learning of the vocational and technical subjects in Zimbabwe. Using a qualitative approach and particularly a case study design, the study sought to uncover the primary behaviours and practices of a group of instructional leaders with the aim of understanding the nature of the guidance and support that is provided to teachers of vocational and technical subjects in selected Zimbabwean schools.

The thesis consists of five chapters which are structured as follows. Chapter One introduces the reader to the study by articulating its importance. Chapter Two explores a range of literature that placed the study within the existing debates on instructional leadership in general and subject leadership in particular. The literature review also helped to explain the conceptual lenses used in this study, viz. the theory of distributed leadership and that of vocational pedagogy which provided the frameworks through which the investigation was pursued. Chapter Three presented the methodology of the study and the measures taken to ensure validity and reliability. The data collected were presented, analysed and discussed in Chapter Four. Chapter Five summarised the findings, gave the recommendations for policy and practice and also suggested areas for further research.

In its major findings, the study established that the vocational and technical education curriculum currently being implemented in Zimbabwe has its roots and genesis in the recommendations of the various commissions that were set up to investigate the relevance of the pre-independence Zimbabwean curricula to the challenges of modern day Zimbabwe. The result is a hybrid curriculum wherein vocational education is optional and is offered in parallel to the academic curriculum. Consequently, the vocational and technical curriculum continues to be marginalised in schools, both in terms of provisioning and implementation.

Furthermore, the study established that there is indeed a leadership structure that is designed to provide for the required instructional guidance at every level of the school hierarchy, as provided for in the organisational chart at head office. However, the data suggests that there was discord between structure and function in terms of instructional guidance provided for vocational and technical education. That is, while the instructional leaders had been

appointed to populate the leadership structure, only the Education Officers, the District Education Officers and the Heads of Department seemed to have the requisite vocational background and knowledge to lead and provide guidance to the teachers of these subjects, with the rest of the instructional leaders being unable to provide specific leadership in specifically the Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) subjects.

The study also identified a variety of useful artefacts that are used by school leaders to provide guidance and support to teachers. Some of the key artefacts of leadership include the programmes of activities, which some heads called the 'diaries of activities', lesson observation sheets and the exercise book inspection guidelines.

Interestingly, the data suggest that instructional guidance in the Masvingo district is mainly provided through a series of regularly scheduled practices and a number of predictable behaviours are almost expected from all the instructional leaders within the schools. The practices include the provision of material resources and scheduled supervision of instruction through lesson observations and inspection of students' exercise books, after which feedback is provided as a way of addressing the teachers' shortcomings. The identified shortcomings are then used as the basis of further staff development programmes that are organised by the provincial and/or district offices for groups of teachers. The routinized nature of instructional guidance practices and behaviours create a consistent pattern of instructional guidance across schools (and subjects). The unintended consequence of the routines, however, is that they also seem to hide the inefficiencies and incompetence with respect to subject-based instructional leadership, especially in the specialised vocational and technical subjects. Instructional leaders who do not have the necessary subject competence are still able to go through the routines and complete the required forms, under the pretence of providing instructional guidance, irrespective of the quality and subject specificity. The study thus concludes with a call for a distributed instructional guidance approach to compensate and take advantage of differing skill sets among the instructional leaders who are responsible for the various vocational and technical subjects in the school curriculum. The key argument in the thesis is for a reconceptualised instructional guidance regime and practice that accords the same equitable treatment to all school subjects, academic and/or vocational, and where each technical and vocational subject is treated differently in its own terms with the required subject matter competence and appropriate leadership tools and practices.

Onderrigbegeleiding vir gemarginaliseerde vakke in Zimbabwe: 'n gevallestudie oor die beroeps- en tegniese vakke in die Masvingo-distrik.

OPSOMMING

In 'n tydperk waarin talle lande op soek is na skoolkurrikula wat leerders voldoende vir die werkplek voorberei, is daar 'n behoefte om te verseker dat die implementeerders op die klaskamervlak (d.w.s. die onderwysers) ook daarin ondersteun word om goeie werk te lewer wat kurrikulum en onderrig betref. Die doel van hierdie tesis was om ondersoek in te stel na die onderrigbegeleidingspraktyke (en -beleide) wat verskaf word om die onderrig en leer van die beroeps- en tegniese vakke in Zimbabwe te ondersteun.

Deur die gebruik van 'n kwalitatiewe benadering, in besonder 'n gevallestudieontwerp, het die studie onderneem om die primêre gedrag en praktyke van 'n groep onderrigleiers te ontbloot, met die doel om die aard van die begeleiding en ondersteuning wat aan onderwysers van beroeps- en tegniese vakke in geselekteerde Zimbabwiese skole verskaf word, te begryp.

Die tesis bestaan uit vyf hoofstukke wat as volg gestruktureer word. Hoofstuk Een bied 'n inleiding tot die studie aan die leser deur die belangrikheid daarvan te verwoord. Hoofstuk Twee verken 'n reeks literatuur wat die studie binne die huidige debat oor onderrigleierskap in die algemeen en vakleierskap in besonder plaas. Die literatuuroorsig het ook gehelp om die konseptuele lense wat in hierdie studie gebruik is, te verduidelik, d.w.s. die teorie van verspreide leierskap en dié van beroepspedagogie, wat die raamwerke waardeur die ondersoek uitgevoer is, verskaf het. Hoofstuk Drie het die metodologie van die studie en die stappe wat geneem is om geldigheid en betroubaarheid te verseker, aangebied. Die data wat versamel is, was vir Hoofstuk Vier aangebied, geanaliseer en bespreek. Hoofstuk Vyf het die bevindings opgesom, aanbevelings vir beleid en praktyk gegee en ook areas vir verdere navorsing voorgestel.

In sy hoofbevindings het die studie vasgestel dat die beroeps- en tegniese opvoedingskurrikulum wat tans in Zimbabwe in werking gestel word, se wortels en oorsprong lê in die aanbevelings deur die verskeie kommissies wat op die been gebring is om die relevansie van Zimbabwe se kurrikula voor onafhanklikwording op die uitdagings van hedendaagse Zimbabwe te ondersoek. Die resultaat is 'n hibriede kurrikulum waarin beroepsopvoeding opsioneel is en aangebied word parallel met die akademiese kurrikulum.

Gevolglik word die beroeps- en tegniese kurrikulum voortdurend in skole gemarginaliseer, in terme van beide bevoorrading en implementasie.

Die studie het verder vasgestel dat daar inderdaad 'n leierskapstruktuur is wat ontwerp is om voorsiening te maak vir die nodige onderrigbegeleiding op elke vlak van die skoolhiërargie, soos vervat in die organisatoriese diagram by hoofkantoor. Data suggereer egter dat daar onmin was tussen struktuur en funksie in terme van die onderrigbegeleiding wat vir beroeps- en tegniese onderrig verskaf is. Dit wil sê, terwyl die onderrigleiers aangestel is om die leierskapstruktuur vol te maak, slegs die onderwysbeamptes, die distriksonderwysbeamptes en die departementshoofde skynbaar oor die nodige beroepsagtergrond en -kennis beskik het om te begelei en leiding aan die onderwysers van hierdie vakke te bied, terwyl die res van die onderrigleiers nie in staat was om spesifieke leierskap te verskaf nie, in besonder in die BTO-vakke.

Die studie het ook 'n verskeidenheid nuttige artefakte wat deur skoolleiers gebruik word om leiding en ondersteuning aan onderwysers te bied, geïdentifiseer. Sommige van die sleutelartefakte vir leierskap sluit in die beplanning van aktiwiteite, wat sommige hoofde as "aktiwiteitdagboeke" beskryf het, leswaarnemingsvorms en die riglyne vir werkboekinspeksie.

Dit is interessant dat die data suggereer dat onderrigleierskap in die Masvingo-distrik grootliks verskaf word deur 'n reeks gereelde geskeduleerde praktyke en 'n hoeveelheid voorspelbare gedrag word feitlik verwag van al die onderrigleiers binne die skool. Dié praktyke sluit in die verskaffing van materiële hulpbronne en geskeduleerde toesig van onderrig deur leswaarneming en inspeksie van studente se werkboeke, waarna terugvoer verskaf word as 'n manier om onderwysers se tekortkominge aan te spreek. Die geïdentifiseerde tekortkominge word dan gebruik as die basis vir verdere personeelontwikkeling wat vir groepe onderwysers georganiseer word deur die provinsiale en/of distrikskantore. Die gereelde aard van onderrigleierskapspraktyke en -gebruike skep 'n konsekwente patroon van onderrigleierskap regoor skole (en vakke). Die onbedoelde gevolg van hierdie roetine is egter dat hulle skynbaar ondoeltreffendheid en onbevoegdheid ten opsigte van vakgebaseerde onderrigleierskap verbloem, veral in die gespesialiseerde beroeps- en tegniese vakke. Onderrigleiers wat nie oor die nodige bekwaamheid beskik nie, is steeds in staat om die roetine te volg en die nodige vorms te voltooi, onder die dekmantel van onderrigbegeleiding, ongeag gehalte en vakspesifisiteit. Die studie sluit dus af met 'n beroep

viii

op 'n benadering van verspreide onderrigleierskap om te kompenseer en om voordeel te trek uit verskillende vaardighede onder die onderrigleiers wat verantwoordelik is vir die verskillende beroeps- en tegniese vakke in die skoolkurrikulum. Die sleutelargument in die tesis is vir 'n geherkonsepsualiseerde begeleidingsregime en -praktyk wat dieselfde billike behandeling op alle skoolvakke toewys, vir akademie en/of beroep, en waar elke tegniese en beroepsvak verskillend op sy eie terme hanteer word, met die nodige vakinhoudbevoegdheid en toepaslike leierskapsinstrumente en -praktyke.

Table of Contents

TABLES

FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE: The problem and its setting

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate the instructional leadership activities and practices for vocational and technical subjects in Zimbabwe's Masvingo district. This introductory chapter is intended to provide the reader with the context of the problem and forms the foundation of all the other chapters. The chapter commences with the background to the study explaining why vocational and technical subjects are unique and not treated in the same way as the academic subjects. The statement of the problem and the questions that guide the study are also presented here. The rationale for the research being undertaken, that is, the aims and objectives, together with the significance of the study are highlighted. The limitations, delimitations, theoretical framework, methodology and definition of key terms are also furnished. The chapter concludes with a summary of the five chapters of the research study.

1.2 Background

Vocational and technical education has dominated the policy debates of most developed and developing countries' governments (Simsek & Yildrim 2000). The debates to date have led to the various governments concerned concluding that vocational education is important to the development of individuals and societies in general. Diverse countries have also advocated for the inclusion of these subjects in the schools' curricula, but ironically, general academic education continues to be more valued than the said vocational and technical education. Minimal emphasis is placed on the effective implementation of vocational and technical education programmes in most countries, including Zimbabwe and other African countries (Nziramasanga, 1999; Puyate, 2008; Umunadi, 2012). Researchers also lament the low level of student participation in vocational education courses, which is of great concern to all progressive individuals, institutions and industries, (Umunadi, 2012). A UNESCO report entitled "*Revised Recommendations Concerning Technical and Vocational Education of 2001*" advised all UNESCO member states to seriously regard the implementation of these subject as part of the total educational process; they are encouraged to see these subjects as an integral part of the general education of their countries (UNESCO 2001). The UNESCO document categorically states that "technical and vocational programs, being part of the total

education process and this education being a right to all citizens, as described in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is included in the term education and as such, should be included in the general education curricula of member countries'' (UNESCO, 2001:1).It further emphasises that countries should not allow the undervaluing or the marginalisation of these subjects. Lewis (1998) supported the UNESCO resolutions by arguing that all education must be vocational as it must prepare learners for the adult world and therefore vocational and technical subjects should be taken as part of their general education.

In Africa, vocational education remains on the periphery of education and its significance has not been noted or embraced (Mureith, 2009). For example, at the attainment of independence in Nigeria, efforts made to initiate new ideas and reforms were not successful as the education system remained largely literary in nature and vocational and technical aspects were not popular (Umunadi, 2012).

In India and even in other developing countries, problems faced in implementing vocational and technical education have been used to build a case against these subjects, thereby resulting in them being undervalued (Jain, 1992). Serious doubts have been expressed regarding the utility of this type of education, but all the same, these subjects have continued to be the themes of many countries. Education planners have regarded vocational education as necessary for modernisation (Government of India, 1986). Unfortunately, in this country, vocational courses continued to hold a low priority position. The subjects are offered in mainstream secondary schools, together with academic subjects, but many students opt for these courses only when they have failed to gain admission into the academic courses (Jain 1992). This situation continues despite there being an agreement by the governments concerned that appropriate sets of vocational policies are required in their educational curricula (Jain 1992). The researcher further noted that the notion of vocational education is not defective; any case against it has been found to be too weak to advocate for its rejection. The problem seems to be around the implementation of the programmes and more specifically the guidance and leadership that is provided for these programmes in schools hence, there is a need to investigate the instructional guidance practices that support these types of education's implementation.

Agrawal (2013) posits that in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan the vocational education programmes were not very successful due to a number of factors, which included the absence

or scarcity of a well-educated and skilled labour force, lack of linkage between the schools and the job market and poor school outcomes. Schools were also accused of not being able to produce the required skills to fulfil the labour market demands. These problems did not, as alluded to earlier, succeed in obscuring the importance of the programmes in the lives of individuals and the development of their countries. The successful implementation of these vocational and technical subjects, which hinge on effective leadership, is therefore imperative. Thus, there is a need to investigate these leaders' practices, which is this study's objective.

In the United States of America (USA) and in India, vocational and technical education is undervalued, as may be deduced from the reasons for its introduction. In this country, they were meant to reduce the demand for higher education and those who opted for this education were drawn from the lower social groups, (Government of India, 1986). In the USA, it was regarded as a social education designed for society's marginalised population such as orphans, young people with criminal records or an education for slow learners, (Castellano, Stringfield, & Stone, 2003). The researchers further allude to the fact that even in Canada; vocational education was introduced to place pupils in social classes. In other words, it was meant to produce 'second class' citizens.

According to Maravanyika (1988), the public also tend to exclude vocational education from their definition of valid knowledge, due to its emergence from a background of informal education thereby, rating it as inferior knowledge. Mavhunga (2002) who asserts that a good education should not serve any instrumental purpose, but should be an education that promotes learning, also echoes this point. This comes with the realisation that most people will change occupations in their lifetime; there is thus no need to be subjected to a particular vocational training at basic education level. Instead, lifelong education should be embarked upon (Pepper, 1995). The critics go even further, asserting that a good curriculum must not be built around the development of some key competences but should be a broad liberal education. Bishop (1990) likewise argues that there is no connection between education and worker productivity. These perceptions weaken the utility of vocational education and thereby undervalue it.

On a different note, the curriculum planners in Zimbabwe, upon realising the importance of vocational and technical education, embarked on measures to include the subjects in the country's curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2001). This policy shift emanated from the

Nziramasanga Commission of 1999, which emphasised the need to impart suitable and appropriate skills to students strongly recommending the introduction of a vocational and technical education system. The commission further argued strongly for the need for all secondary schools in Zimbabwe to offer vocational education, at least to equip the school leavers with survival skills, to enable them to fit into the adult working world.

The Nziramasanga Commission were not advocating alone for the inclusion of vocational education in the curriculum other researchers were also involved. Munowenyu (1999), for instance, based his study on the low pass rate in academic subjects, which stood at 21% at that stage. He concluded that there was a need for "basic vocational education to be deliberately introduced in secondary schools to prepare and equip the majority of students with survival skills," (Munowenyu 1999:42). Similarly, Mavhunga (2002), having considered the overwhelming evidence and support for the introduction of vocational education, asked critical questions concerning vocational education. He raised the issue that if such education constitutes worthwhile knowledge, which schools are supposed to implement, why have efforts made by Zimbabwe to vocationalise the secondary school curriculum failed to gather momentum and what can be done to ameliorate the situation? This researcher has assumed that the efforts might be thwarted at the classroom doors, the implementation stage; hence, there is a need to investigate the instructional guidance/leadership practices for these subjects and to establish who the key players in these activities are.

Vocational education has a long history in Zimbabwe. Commissions of inquiry into educational matters have over the years, made many recommendations for its improvement. Unfortunately, very little seems to have improved because of these commissions' suggestions. The Frank Tate Commission of 1929, called for a compulsory manual and practical curriculum. Six years later in 1935, the Fox Commission opposed a mere academic secondary curriculum and recommended a curriculum with more than one track of learning. Similarly, the Kerr Commission of 1952 also recognised the need to give skills to African children. The Judges Commission of 1963 recommended a vocational and technical education for African schools, a recommendation that was diluted into the F2 secondary school system in 1966; a reform that introduced a practical subject's curriculum, which ran parallel to the academic and more prestigious F1 system. Likewise, the Lewis Taylor Committee recommended in 1974 that the imparting of skills be part of the general education for all. The strong recommendations by the pre-independence commissions and committees

were never fully implemented for the majority of schools in the country, mostly on political grounds. However, most of the recommendations were implemented in schools for European children only (Nziramasanga, 1999).

At independence in 1980, reforms that necessitated the democratisation of education ushered in an expansive and extensive provision of Education for All (EFA). A comprehensive review of the system, to check on its continued relevance post-independence, led to the setting up of the Nziramasanga Presidential Commission of Inquiry into education and training in January 1998. The commission proposed a genuine shift from an education that was too academic and examination-driven, to one that emphasised experiential learning and the development of desirable traits and competences in students. In other words, the commission recommended the vocationalisation of the curriculum to cater for the various talents and interests of children (Nziramasanga, 1999).

In realising the importance of vocational education and in line with its chosen ideology (scientific socialism), Zimbabwe adopted the concept of Education with Production (EWP). EWP describes a type of education that combines technical skills and academic skills (Ministry of Education, 1982). This meant that the skills needed for the development of the country were to become an essential part of the school curriculum. EWP was then introduced in eight secondary schools as a pilot project known as the Zimbabwe Foundation for Education with Production (ZIMFEP). The concern of the present study is partly to explore the question of why the implementation of EWP, as a vocational programme, might have failed in schools; this will be achieved by studying the instructional guidance systems and practices involved in these vocational programmes.

Zimbabwe's search for a relevant curriculum concluded that vocationalising the curriculum was the best way forward. The high failure rate, high unemployment rate and production of unemployable graduates from the school system supported the introduction of these subjects in the curriculum. The move was seen as one way of preparing learners for post-school economic survival. Students leaving school would be prepared to create their own jobs especially in view of the rising unemployment of graduates and reduced opportunities for their work placement. The reality definers of the day, (curriculum planners) seem to have heeded the warning on the need to incorporate vocational skills into the education system (Munowenyu, 1999).

The historical antecedents discussed above appear to have affected the acceptance of vocational and technical subjects into the school curricula. In 1980, at independence, vocational and technical education failed to capture public favour because of the previous racist philosophy behind its introduction. The discouraging situation did not however hinder the planners from generating policies to facilitate the implementation of vocational education. Tremendous efforts to vocationalise the school curriculum were made but the curriculum has largely remained lopsided in favour of academic subjects, as evidenced by the numbers that register to write vocational and technical subjects at the end of a four-year secondary course (Munowenyu, 1999). A notably worrying disparity exists in the number of candidates who register to write academic subjects and those who register for vocational and technical subjects. Of the 1469 candidates in the district who registered to write the Ordinary Level ('O' Level) examinations in November 2012, only 22 registered for building, 51 for food and nutrition, 29 for woodwork and 5 for music (Ministry of Education Results Analysis Schedule, 2012), an indication that these subjects are grossly marginalised. It is against this backdrop that the present study intends to explore the instructional guidance systems and practices that are in place for vocational and technical subjects. These academic activities are performed to design instructional strategies intended to produce schools in which students' learning improves (Quinn, 2002).

While there is a considerable body of research on vocational and technical subjects, researchers have mainly concentrated on the rationale and justification for their inclusion in the curriculum (Maravanyika, 1982; Munowenyu, 1999; Nziramasanga, 1999). Whilst researchers agree that introducing vocational and technical education into Zimbabwe's secondary school system is a major challenge they warn, however, that shelving the same may perpetuate an undesirable system (Munowenyu, 1999; Nherera, 1996).

The researcher wishes to further the discourse of these other scholars by investigating the instructional guidance systems and practices that are in place to support the implementation of vocational and technical subjects, which as previously stated are increasingly marginalised and undervalued. Having established their importance in the future lives of students, how are they continuously marginalised with very few candidates registering to sit for their examinations? Researchers who have studied the implementation of vocational and technical subjects have tended to concentrate on single subjects of their choice, rather than all of the vocational and technical subjects in the curriculum in general. They have also concentrated

on school level instruction and not its leadership. Circulars generated also concentrated on narrating which subjects to include in the curriculum but the question of how to accomplish this is not addressed (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2010).

The motivation to conduct the study is derived from the researcher's experience as a school principal (head). She was aware of the gaps in the instruction of vocational and technical subjects. The researcher's involvement in the curriculum implementation process made her aware that, due to a lack of resources, the vocational and technical subjects are taught like academic subjects, an instructional strategy that does not promote skills acquisition. Learners are sometimes made to pay extra fees for practical subjects, making them more expensive than academic subjects and thereby leading to their further marginalisation within the school curriculum.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Educationists, the world over have developed an interest in vocational and technical subjects due to their importance in equipping students with the necessary life skills, a value that cannot be over emphasised. In the Zimbabwean context, the high unemployment rate, especially amongst the youths cannot be ignored. There is need to equip students with the necessary skills to them ready for the world of work by including these subjects in the schools' curricula. All the same, these subjects are not taken seriously in comparison to academic subjects and they continue to be marginalised (Puyate 2008) in spite of the formulation of policies which are periodically revisited, advocating for their inclusion in the schools' curricula. The proper instruction of these subjects in schools is therefore mandatory, if they are to be successful within the curriculum. Hence, the importance of setting up effective instructional guidance systems and practices for the success of these vocationalisation programmes is essential.

1.4. Main question

In order to understand the instructional guidance practices for vocational and technical subjects, the study answered the question, how are instructional leadership practices for vocational and technical subjects in Zimbabwe's Masvingo district constructed? The study was further guided by the following research questions:

1. Who are the key players in the leadership of vocational and technical subjects in Zimbabwe?

2. What policies guide the provision of instruction for vocational and technical subjects in the district?

3. How are the instructional leadership practices for the vocational and technical subjects in the district enacted?

4. How can the relationship between leadership and instruction, with special reference to vocational and technical subjects' pedagogy be described and understood?

1.5 Research aim and objectives

The aim of the study was to enhance the teaching and learning of vocational and technical subjects through an investigation of how leadership and support are provided to the teachers of these subjects in schools. The study, which was informed by the research questions, intended to achieve the following objectives:

- To identify the key players in the instructional leadership practices of vocational and technical subjects in Zimbabwe.

- To establish the dominant instructional leaders' behaviours and practices for the vocationalisation reform programmes.

- To examine the policies that guides the provision of instruction of the vocational and technical subjects in the district.

- To explore the relationship between leadership and instruction with special reference to the pedagogy of vocational and technical subjects.

1.6 Research methodology

The study adopted a qualitative research approach, which enabled the gathering of data on the behaviours and activities of instructional leaders for vocational and technical subjects. The qualitative approach was most suitable as it probes deeply into the research settings in order to obtain an in-depth understanding of the way things are (Ballantyne, 2013:13).

The major characteristics of the qualitative approach that made it suitable for this study are

- Needing research to be conducted in its natural setting

- Being context sensitive

- Understanding participants from their own point of view
- Being an emergent design
  (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010)

The applicability of these characteristics to the research study is discussed in detail in chapter three.

The nature of the qualitative study warranted the use of a case study; an empirical inquiry used to investigate contemporary phenomena within their real life context (Yin, 2003). The design is suitable as it can be used to answer the research questions by enabling the collection of strong and natural data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Purposive and convenience sampling strategies were used to select the portion of the population for the study. Owing to a large population, purposive sampling was found suitable to select information rich cases for an in-depth study while the convenience sampling was appropriate for selecting schools that could be readily accessed by the researcher (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

The qualitative approach accommodated the demands of the collection of qualitative data, i.e. data that is subjective and rich (Shastri, 2008). Qualitative data is also flexible and the use of a variety of data collection methods contributed to the production of the thick descriptions (Gray, 2009). The interviews, observations and document analysis are the instruments that were used in their different forms and are fully described in chapter three.

To bring order, structure and meaning to the mass of the collected data, an analysis was conducted. Firstly, the raw data were summarised by means of noting down the most frequently occurring responses of the participants on important issues. The analysis included descriptions of the issues at stake that are relevant to answering the research questions. The analysis proceeded in tandem with data collection and not upon its completion (Dey, 1993).

1.7 Importance of the study

It was hoped that the results would reveal the instructional guidance practices for vocational and technical education, practices that may account for these subjects being undervalued, thereby causing the production, by the school system, of unemployable graduates and graduates without survival skills; a situation the education planners wish to redress.

It is anticipated that the information obtained will help curriculum planners at all levels of the school systems. Associating and relating these instructional guidance practices and behaviours with student achievement would help to provide a framework for principals to use as they work to make the subjects viable and valued in schools. It was hoped that the study would also shed light on the instructional practices for vocational and technical subjects in the district; practices that may help improve their implementation.

1.8 Limitations

Doing research and professional work simultaneously was a major challenge. Time became a scarce resource; hence, the small sample group. The study concentrated on those secondary schools that offered the largest number of vocational and technical subjects in the district. The schools were further selected basing on the number of candidates they had registered for vocational and technical subjects in the November 2013 Ordinary Level examinations. Details of the sample are provided in chapter three of the study. Some documents, especially minutes of meetings were not easy to find in some schools.

1.9 Delimitations

The study concentrated on instructional leadership practices of the people in the sampled schools. Those leaders responsible for the formulation of policies, which they would disseminate to schools, were not considered as the study was mainly concerned with instructional leadership, that is, the support given to the teachers in order make the teaching and learning of the vocational and technical subjects in a secondary school effective. The district's role as the responsible authority of most schools in the district, the office linking the provincial and head offices and the schools as the implementing institutions was also discussed.

1.10 Theoretical framework

To investigate instructional leadership practices for the vocational and technical subjects, the study adopted a DL perspective, as developed by Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004). The DL framework assisted in understanding the internal dynamics of instructional leadership practices in schools while, at the same time, being able to yield some insight into the relationship between leadership and instruction and/or innovations in schools.

The DL concept is premised on the notion that formal leaders, such as principals and their deputies, are often too busy and therefore have little time left during the day for instructional leadership (Enueme & Egwunyenga, 2008). Spillane (2006) identified the need to explore the participation of other educators (teachers and the like) in the instructional leadership roles; roles which this study sought to investigate.

The theory or framework extends beyond looking only at the characteristics of the leaders but also considers the activities of the leadership (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2001). Therefore, the DL theory was developed around the idea of leadership tasks and functions. Spillane *et al.* (2001) elaborate on the roles as those of task enactment and the situational distribution of the task enactment. The activities of instructional leaders (i.e. the principals or heads of schools, deputy heads, teacher leaders or heads of departments) as agents of change were studied. There was a need to look at the actual performance of the routines of these specific people (Spillane *et al.,* 2001). The framework is non-hierarchical and inclusive in its approach, thereby making it suitable for studying the leadership activities of all personnel and encouraging their participation in the leadership pursuits of the schools (Spillane *et al.*, 2001). The study then investigated how instructional leadership tasks/practices are socially distributed and enacted in the instruction of the vocational and technical subjects. The instructional context surrounding the work of teaching and learning could be captured with the assistance of this distributed leadership framework (Wright 2008; Spillane & Diamond 2007). Leaders were observed and studied as they interacted with one another and with their followers in specific situations. Spillane's (2006) analysis of the framework gave insight into how leadership unfolds within the school setting as a shared and constructed phenomenon, which also criticises the focus on positional leaders only (Wright 2008). This leadership theory encourages the participants or researchers to move away from the view of heroes in leadership, which has dominated the field of educational leadership. It challenges the notion of power as being positional, but sees power as something invested in other sources and not as just being synonymous with the principal. In other words, it does not ignore other sources of leadership in the school (Spillane *et al.*, 2001). Elmore (2000) sees distributed leadership as the use of multiple sources of guidance and direction following the contours of expertise in an organisation where the leadership sources are made coherent through a common school culture. It is therefore based on the notion that no one leader is able to control everything or, know everything, without other people's help: "sustainable leadership is distributed

leadership" (Elmore, 2000:15). The framework challenges the status quo in the institutions of learning, a situation where the head is the sole decision maker in the school. The distributed leadership framework was quite beneficial in the study as it enhanced the study of individuals' performance and organisational learning. Being non-hierarchical made it possible to observe all parties concerned as leaders in their own right: thus, it fostered collaborated practice (Wright, 2008) as advanced in chapter two. Because the school is a complex open system, it is impossible for the principal to be an expert in all subjects. The framework may, however, be misused when the leaders in formal position delegate tasks, not to solve complex problems, but in order to shift responsibilities to make their work more manageable (Wright, 2008).

The implementation of vocational education is centred on some important activities designed to prepare learners for particular jobs. This preparation cannot be done haphazardly; hence the additional use of the vocational pedagogic framework. The framework was useful in assessing the implementation process of vocational subjects, demonstrating how learners are to be engaged in order to understand the particular kinds of learning they will be embarking on. Therefore, the distributed leadership framework and the vocational pedagogy informed this study as a perspective on the leadership activities of the vocational and technical subjects' implementation. The table below shows the link between these two frameworks that informed the study.

Table 1.1.Theoretical Framework for Instructional Guidance for Vocational and Technical school subjects

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┌─────────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Distributed Leadership │ ───────► │   Vocational Pedagogy   │
│                         │ ◄─────── │                         │
└─────────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────────┘
            │                                    │
            ▼                                    ▼
┌─────────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────────┐
│  Use of Subjects        │ ───────► │  Use of suitable        │
│  Experts                │ ◄─────── │  Methodology            │
└─────────────────────────┘          └─────────────────────────┘
            │                                    │
            ▼                                    ▼
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  Effective Instructional Guidance for Effective Teaching and  │
│  Learning                                                     │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
```
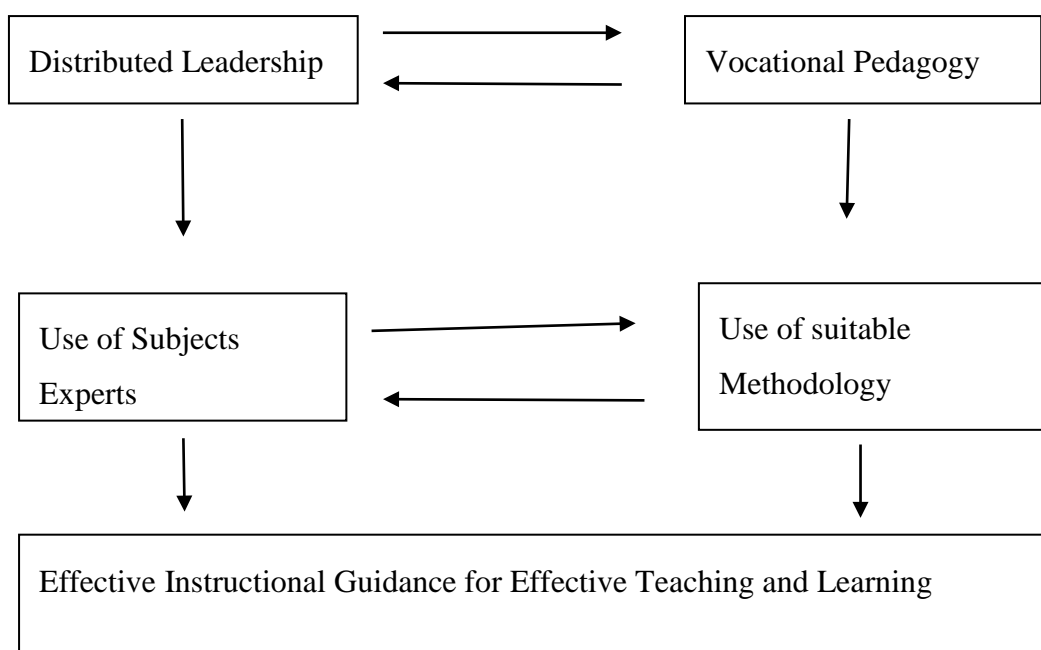
1.11 Definition of key terms

1.11.1Instructional leadership

Experts conceive of concepts differently, causing variations in definitions. Generally, instructional leadership is perceived as behavioural actions and activities performed by leaders in order to enable the development of a productive work environment for teachers and a conducive learning environment for students (Quinn, 2002)

The researcher adopted this definition in part because the study seeks to explore the behavioural actions and activities of leaders that are instrumental in the guidance and production of effective instruction of the vocational and technical subjects. The actions are those undertaken by leaders or delegated to others with the aim of facilitating students learning (Lezotte, 1999 in Roger, 2009). At school level, the researcher investigated the principal's role of influencing others (teacher leaders and other stakeholders) in order for them to act appropriately in the execution of instructional practices, which suggests that leadership should be a process of social influence where one person influences others to

accomplish a common task (Lambropoulos & Vivitsou, 2012). Although the authors cited here concentrated on instruction in other subjects, the present research focused on vocational education. The concept 'principal' also includes that of deputy principals.

1.11.2 Teacher leaders

The position of teacher leadership developed during the 1980s as a means of addressing the isolated nature of teaching (Neumerski, 2013) and was seen as a means of improving teaching but there is no agreement as to what it constitutes (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008). Mangin and Stoelinga (2008) define a teacher leader as anyone who performs some non-supervisory, school based instructional leadership role. In this study, teacher leaders will be defined as the heads of departments, who assist the teachers with their instructional work and who are mostly concerned with the curriculum and its pedagogy. The term also includes the teachers who are instructors and coaches.

1.11.3 Instructional coaches

The position of instructional coaches was developed, as noted above, in the early 1980s. It was a response to new ideas about teacher learning or training (Neumerski, 2013). This form of professional development allows teachers to learn within the context of everyday instructional practices with their expert peers (Neuman & Cunningham, 2009). They support whole school reforms and build the school capacity (Neumerski, 2013). Coaches will include technical coaches (those who help with new practices), collegial coaches (who increase teachers' dialogue and reflections) and subject area coaches.

1.11.4 Teachers/Instructors

Teachers/instructors are the personnel who deliver instruction and even include those still in training (student teachers). As roles change, principals, coaches and teacher leaders may become teachers since they will be responsible for the delivery of instruction.

1.11.5 Instructional guidance systems

According to Quinn (2002), instructional guidance systems refer to collective academic activities of leadership performed by all concerned regarding the education system at school level. These persons must be able to develop schools in which students' learning improves. The research will specifically be looking at all stakeholders' activities, which are connected

to instructional improvement at school level, activities that should work together coherently to improve students' learning of vocational and technical subjects.

1.11.6 Vocational education and Technical education

The inclusion of vocational and technical subjects in the school curriculum is referred to as vocationalisation of the school curriculum or vocational education (Bacchus, 1986). In the school context, it is offered through subjects such as metalwork, woodwork, fashion and fabrics, to name a few (Mandiudza, 2011). Vocational education is primarily aimed at the development of skills, so that the beneficiaries are competent in their areas of work (Lucas, Spencer & Claxton 2012). According to Mandiudza, (2011) technical education emphasises the understanding and practical application of basic science and mathematics with the major objective of preparing graduates for occupations. In the present study, vocational and technical subjects, vocational education and vocationalisation are terms that are used interchangeably as they are terms that refer to the preparation of graduates for work.

1.12 Organisation of the thesis

The research study contains five chapters, which are organised as follows:

1.12.1 Chapter one: The problem and its setting

This chapter is a description of the background to the study. It also provides the problem statement, main question and the research questions that guided the study. The importance, aims, objectives, the research methodology and theoretical frames are also presented. The chapter further provides the limitations and delimitations of the study as well as the definitions of the key terms. It concludes with an analysis of how the thesis is organised.

1.12.2 Chapter two: Review of related literature

This chapter reviews the related literature centred on the following themes in instructional guidance practices for vocational and technical subjects.

- Instructional leadership in schools and the activities of instructional leaders
- The link between leadership and instruction
- Implementation policies for the instruction of vocational and technical subjects
- The nature of vocational programmes
- Vocational and technical subject issues in different countries.

The chapter also describes the distributed leadership framework and the vocational pedagogy on which the study is based.

1.12.3 Chapter three: Research methodology

This chapter describes and justifies the research methodology, comprising the research approach and the design used. In addition, it describes the sampling procedures, the data collection instruments, the data collection and analysis procedures used.

1.12.4 Chapter four: Data presentation, analysis and discussion

This chapter presents the findings in relation to the research questions. It also analyses and discusses the data collected in relation to the specific research questions. The focus is on the qualitative data collected through the techniques stipulated in chapter three.

1.12.5 Chapter five: Summary, conclusions and recommendations

Chapter five offers a summary of the study and furnishes the conclusions from the analysis of the data collected to answer the research questions. It also makes recommendations on the research problem and further research based on the findings of this study.

1.13. Chapter Summary

This first chapter presented the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose and significance of the study. Delimitations and limitations were also described together with the aims and objectives of the study. The reasons why the vocational and technical subjects are unique and efforts made to make them a valued part of the schools' curricula were brought out in the background leading to the issue of why the subjects remain marginalised. There is a need therefore to investigate how they are guided in schools. Chapter two reviews the literature related to the topic being investigated.

CHAPTER TWO: Review of Related Literature

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine literature related to the instructional guidance practices for vocational and technical subjects. The aim of this literature review is to reflect on the ways in which instructional leaders guide teachers' instructional processes in schools in order to enhance the status of these subjects and improve the quality of instruction. The review was guided by the following subheadings: the meaning of vocational education, the nature of vocational and technical education, the provision of said education, policies that govern instructional guidance practices in schools and the link between leadership and instruction. A distributed leadership framework and the vocational pedagogy structure are discussed as frameworks for understanding the instructional leadership guidance practices in vocational and technical education. In the review of the literature, a deliberate effort was made to define the key concepts and draw attention to the artefacts used in the leadership activities and practices. However, the literature on how teachers are guided and supported in the teaching or instruction of vocational and technical subjects and the leadership practices surrounding their instruction, is relatively scarce (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004). Literature from other countries and even the instructional leadership of other subjects informed the discussion.

Most countries, including Zimbabwe, having established the value of vocational and technical subjects as an instrument of development, with some researchers warning against the dangers of excluding these subjects from their curricula, have advocated for the subjects' inclusion in their education systems (Munowenyu, 1999; Nziramasanga 1999; Mureith, 2009). UNESCO also encouraged all its member states to include the subjects as part of their basic education, which should be compulsory and be a right for all. Nonetheless, in the majority of countries the vocational and technical subjects have not been taken seriously enough, with some countries citing a number of constraints associated with their implementation (Umunadi, 2012). Mureith (2009) also lamented this position and argued that the subjects have been left on the periphery and the nations concerned have not embraced their significance. This is especially evident at secondary school level where low rates of student participation in vocational and technical courses cause a great deal of concern to all who know and acknowledge their importance in the development of individuals and of society as a whole (Umunadi 2012). Since it is assumed that most countries do have policies

that should guide the implementation of these subjects, their continued marginalisation is an indication that minimal emphasis is placed on their effective implementation (Puyate 2008). Therefore, it is the object of this study to investigate the instructional guidance and leadership practices for these subjects in order to establish their effectiveness or lack thereof. The literature review reflects on this objective under the subheadings cited in the previous paragraph.

2.2. The review

2.2.1. The meaning of vocational education

Depending on what various countries consider to constitute vocational education in their cultures, such education is known by various terms (Lauterbach, 2008). However, it is noted that all the terms used, in essence refer to the view of vocational education being 'a preparation for work' (Little & Threatt, 1994). Vocational education, in this respect is therefore, taken as a vehicle for preparing people (learners) for the world of work, (Mupinga, Burnett &Redmann, 2005). The various expressions of this education have the common element of being practical, with its instruction aimed at matching learners with work positions in industry and commerce (Benavot, 1983; Castellano, Springfield& Stone 2003; Lewis, 1994)

In order to understand the concept better, I first review Castellano *et al.*'s (2003) work on vocational education in the USA. In that education system, vocational education is known as career and technical education and is further described as comprising school subjects with work, education through occupations or work based learning. The work or occupations referred to are the activities that people engage in, in order to make a living. This study investigated the vocational and technical education as it is offered in secondary schools. The question of in what way it is guided in order to effectively prepare learners for work was investigated. The idea of vocational education, being education through occupations, was also echoed by Lewis (1994:201) who regards vocational education as "functional education, scientifically delivered after an analysis of human activities.'' Vocational education, in this sense, is an education that imparts skills for direct production in industry. Therefore, the learning experiences offered by the schools to the learners are conducted to acquire gainful occupations leading them to occupational competence in different human activities (Prosser & Allen, 1925, in Lewis 1994). The present study investigated how this task is guided and

supported, taking the available human and material resources in the schools into consideration.

Lauterbach (2008), cited in the *Handbook of Technical and Vocational Education and Training Research,* furnished the different contexts where various definitions of vocational education and what they constitute are discussed. Firstly, Lauterbach asserts that in the English language, vocational education is distinguished from vocational training although the terms are often used synonymously. Vocational training refers to on-the-job training at a company or industry while vocational education means an education in the industrial/technical sectors, which focuses on in-school education. Vocational training also refers to manual and simple vocational activities but is also referred to as vocational education in some countries. The author goes further, explaining that vocational education is sometimes called "technical education", a term that places a strong emphasis on theory of vocations, such as laboratory technicians and other technical specialists, accountants and business managers.

Lauterbach further asserts that there is no catchall term to cover the entire concept of vocational and technical education and training (TVET). Once the English version is used, the subtle cultural differences of the different contexts are lost. However, since it is the dominant language in the international community, Lauterbach uses it to describe the terms used for vocational education in different countries and communities. In German speaking countries, the term used is '*berufliche Bildung'*, which is translated as 'technical and vocational education and training' (TVET) and yet, in the German language, it means 'professional education' and the institutions that offer such education are called 'professional colleges'. UNESCO uses the same term, whilst the EU refers to it as vocational education and training (VET). While different terms are used, as mentioned earlier on, they all refer to an education offered in preparation for work. In Zimbabwe, educational authorities decided to implement this type of education in secondary schools due to the large number of students who leave school for work after four years of secondary education. These students are a cause for concern as they leave school without any work skills and consequently end up on the streets. Since this type of education is being accommodated in the schools, there is need to investigate the instructional guidance and support offered, especially to teachers, for its proper implementation.

2.2.2. The nature of vocational education

In the same vein as its definition, so the nature of vocational education differs from country to country. Cobb and Preskill (1983) suggest that an overall attribute of vocational education is that it is uniquely distinctive from all other disciplines in the education system. These researchers assert that physically, vocational education is different because it needs to be delivered in separate, secluded buildings from the general education setting that requires its own budget, laboratories and large equipment, making it very expensive by nature. What this implies is that vocational education curricula are to be implemented outside the confines of the school, as either cooperative educational programmes or on-site instruction. These programmes take place on construction sites such as experimental plots, in the case of agriculture. The inclusion of this education in schools warrants an investigation into the tools and artefacts used in order to ascertain how this unique aspect of these subjects is accommodated.

Lewis (1998) also contends that vocational education, by nature, should be treated as "general education" to be given to all. Lewis describes vocational education as either "education for jobs" or as "education about work"; each suggestive of what the programmes' curricula contain. Education for jobs means that the content imparted to the learners is derived from jobs and tasks the learners would want to engage in after school. There is a direct link between the curriculum and actual jobs available in the labour market. Lewis (1998), however, postulates that this type of vocational education is suitable for the post-secondary level. Since this type of education has been incorporated in the schools, there is a need to investigate how its instruction is guided. Education about work is general and does not address specific job requirements. The curriculum addresses important aspects of work life, but does not engage learners in the jobs they will actually do in life. The best way to learn about work is to perform actual work on the various jobs. Lewis (1998) suggests that there could be some kind of partnership between industries and schools just for illustrative purposes, but not actually determining the future careers of the pupils. This type of vocational education, according to Lewis, is suitable for secondary schools, as the learners at this stage need a rounded/broad education before they can make career choices.

Having criticised education for jobs as being narrow and based on preparation for a single job, Lewis suggests what he considers a curriculum premised on the idea of what education about work should entail. He conceptualises this in terms of content and process, founded

upon the epistemological and situated cognition given as the rationale for the provision of vocational education in schools. The curriculum, then, has to provide for work experience. This is when learners are allowed to have actual work experience in real jobs arranged by the school. This can be facilitated through spending time working on actual jobs, job shadowing, observing and interviewing exemplary adult workers and even talking to management or leaders of workers' unions. Sources in Lewis (1998) confirm that the work experience gained at school leads to positive attitudes towards work, thereby fulfilling the conception of vocational education as education that leads to one becoming a producer (Lewis, 1994).

Another important aspect of the curriculum suggested by Lewis is the contrived experiences aspect. Schools are required to simulate workplace situations in the schools' facilities for the benefit of students. Students are placed in some units where they learn different aspects of work and real skills, so that they become productive members of the teams. The curriculum can also include a study of the employment trends. This labour force information would help them make informed decisions about the jobs they would want to engage in after school.

The fourth element of the vocational curriculum is engagement in community projects. This is, mainly, community work undertaken voluntarily to help students understand work more broadly than merely in the traditional sense of vocationalism. The last element that has to be included in the curriculum, according to Lewis, is the component of entrepreneurship. Information on how to start small businesses is provided by the school and learners are required to start companies as a class, thereby giving them the experience they may use at graduation if they should consider starting their own businesses. The components explained above and furnished by Lewis, offer some possibilities of what a vocational programme may comprise. The present study was interested in investigating whether these elements of the curriculum are present in the schools' curricula and if so, how they are guided, who guided them and using what resources. The study examines the issue of whether the schools possess the necessary expertise to be able to guide and support the teachers in their efforts to work with the learners through these activities that are essential for making the vocational programmes viable and avoiding their marginalisation.

In another research article, Lewis (1995) views the nature of vocational education in terms of the content to be included. Traditionally, the content was based on an analysis of the tasks to be done. The classrooms had to mirror what actually happens in the job market. Lewis argued that the new jobs require problem solving techniques; hence, the concept of adopting the

vocational education for work and not about work. His work supports that of Little and Threatt (1994) who based their argument on the fact that there are no aspects of work that endure forever. Students therefore, have to be exposed to an academic curriculum that will prepare them for the acquisition of skills later in life. Noting that the chances for further training may never come to fruition, vocational education has been accommodated in schools and there is a need to make sure its implementation is effective; hence, this study's investigation.

2.2.3 Modes of provision

The vital role of vocational and technical education in the production of skilled and competent labour for economic, industrial and social development cannot be achieved without the maintenance of an effective and efficient teaching and examination process (Behnaz & Fatemeh, 2008). High quality provision of instruction and evaluation are needed to ensure the programmes function properly. The modes of training suitable to make students acquire skills and gain knowledge to enter into some gainful employment are to be rigorous and intensive. The relevant authorities in the different countries generally agree that there is need to provide young people with opportunities to equip themselves with vocational skills but vary in terms of the institutional structures that should supply the training opportunities. There is a need for the provision of suitable environments to be able to provide effective vocational education (Simsek & Yildrim, 2000). The conditions, especially in schools under which vocational education is offered, are often poor. Most school environments lack equipment, workshops and workshop facilities and have ill-equipped laboratories and libraries. Students need to be exposed to work environments that will prepare them for the world of work, thereby enabling them to fit into work environments outside the school. This study explored these school environments, in relation to who works in them and what exactly they do to offer instructional guidance and support to the teachers for these vocational and technical education programmes.

Prosser and Allen (1925) in Lewis 1994), having defined vocational education as experiences of learners that enable them to gain knowledge of occupations, offered theories that can be used as a blueprint for the provision and practice of vocational education. The best ways the learning experiences can be provided for the students to effectively gain occupational competence are discussed.

Firstly, Prosser and Allen (1925) in Lewis (1994) assert that to be effective vocational training has to be conducted in the same operations, using the same tools and machines as in the occupation itself. These researchers emphasise the need for a hands-on approach to instruction, meaning that the training has to be provided in the workplace environment itself, a setting that is a replica of the situation in which the learner will subsequently work. This then raises the question of whether schools are the appropriate locations for vocational training. These researchers also claim that the training must develop thinking habits and manipulative habits required in the occupation itself; that specific training must be repeated until it becomes a habit fixed in the mind, to the point that it is useful for some gainful employment. Prosser and Allen believe that vocational education needs to be undertaken in an environment physically and administratively separate from the existing public schools system because it needs to be administered by authorities who are sympathetic to its aims and who attach adequate importance to its social and economic value. This raises another question of whether we have such personnel in our schools and if so who they are. There is also the need to establish guidance and ensure that the instructional leaders support the personnel (teachers).

According to Afeti (2013), semi-autonomous bodies or an agent within the government ministry may implement vocational education. These can be technical and vocational schools, which can be private or public polytechnics or enterprises or apprenticeship training centres. While vocational education has been adequately justified, the debate on the mode of provision is yet to be finalised. Oxtoby (1993) in Mavhunga (2002) posed certain relevant questions regarding how vocational education should be provided as is stated below.

- Is vocational education best located in mainstream secondary schools or specialist centres such as polytechnic colleges or in some form of employment based provision?
- How can it be organised in terms of provision and assessment strategies?
- How can the subjects be linked to the world of work?

The above questions are crucial and in most cases, the answers will determine the success or failure of vocational education and determine instructional leaders' guidance of the subjects' implementation.

Ministries of Education in different countries have adopted various implementation approaches for vocational education. In Boateng (2012), four main approaches in this respect

are identified. Firstly, there could be a complete reorientation of the school curriculum to provide occupational skills. Secondly, a parallel systems approach might occur when vocational and technical institutions exist alongside a general school system with an academic orientation. Thirdly, the authors describe a core curriculum option, an approach where vocational and technical programmes are offered within the general structure of the school curriculum. The vocational subjects are incorporated into the system as compulsory core subjects or as optional subjects. Fourthly, there is the non-formal system approach, which is mainly for out-of-school youths. The purpose of this approach is often to enable these youths to acquire vocational skills. For this study, the "core curriculum approach", where vocational and technical programmes/subjects are provided within the structure of the general school curriculum was studied. In the core curriculum approach, the vocational subjects are incorporated into the school system, either as compulsory core subjects or as options (Boateng, 2012).

Researchers noted that there are certain problems/challenges that vocational and technical education faces, regardless of which approach a country adopts (Boateng 2012; Puyate 2008; Umunadi 2012). These, as reported by Boateng (2012) about Ghana's educational system, may be the cause of the subjects' marginalisation even in other countries. The challenges he mentions areas follows,

1. The subjects require workshops, tools, equipment and materials that most institutions cannot afford.

2. They require more instruction and practical time than the arts and science subjects, sufficient time to satisfy their practical goals.

3. The form of assessment needs trained assessors to assess student's competence in the classrooms.

The vocational programme also requires skilled and proficient teachers, which makes teacher preparation important. Swanzy's (2010) study revealed that the implementation of vocational subjects in Ghana was largely hampered by the inadequacy and unavailability of educational materials and human resources. Umunadi (2012) echoed this when he revealed that the teachers' initial training had no philosophy to provide unity and direction for their practice. This also became a significant challenge to the education system in Nigeria in the 1960s. Because teachers were not properly trained in the first place, most programmes in the

country, initiated after its national independence, concentrated on arts and the humanities. Structures and aims remained largely literary and static, as no education system is able to rise above the quality of its instructors (Umunadi 2012). There is, as a result, a need to train teachers properly who can subsequently, instruct the students in vocational and technical education or whichever subject they study.

Besides a lack of properly trained human resources, the vocational programmes face other challenges as well. According to Mureith (2009), constraints range from inadequate funding to,

- the lack of responsiveness of the curriculum to the changing labour market

- the decline in teaching standards

- the lack of maintenance of facilities and equipment

- the lack of research and development for particular subjects

- the lack of dialogue with the employers often draws back the programmes.

Mureith went further, stressing that there is a need for more attention to be given to vocational and technical subjects or at least attention, equal to that paid to general academic education. The constraints cited, in most cases, can be noticed or are experienced at the implementation level, that is, at school level; hence the need to investigate the instructional leadership practices in the schools. As has been pointed out, leadership is a critical factor for the success of any programme.

In the same vein as Boateng and Mureith, Umunadi (2012) also enumerated certain problems that are normally experienced at school level in an effort to implement vocational education. These are as follows,

- An acute shortage of qualified teachers

- A noticeable lack of teacher preparation and in-service training programmes

- Inadequate policy framework

- A lack of quality educational standards

- Alack of active teaching strategies

- A lack of teacher participation in decision making

- A lack of learner interest in vocational and technical education and;

- No clear indications of proper implementation of technical and vocational education.

Emanating from all the problems cited, there is a need to critically examine the instructional leadership practices that are enacted for vocational and technical subjects, in order to establish the authenticity of the claims made in the literature and because leadership, as mentioned, is considered an important factor for the improvement of schools.

Owing to the problems cited by the researchers examined above, some critics think that vocational and technical subjects/education cannot be delivered concurrently with the general education at junior secondary school level (Afeti 2013). Afeti (2013) argues that despite the large range of training programmes, the place of vocational and technical education in the overall school system in many countries is marginal, both in terms of enrolment and the number of institutions offering the programmes. The researcher also laments the general quality of education, which is said to be low with undue emphasis on the theory and certification rather than the acquisition of skills. The role of the teacher must therefore change from that of didactic imparting of skills and knowledge to that of facilitating learning (Swanzy 2010). This is only possible when these teachers are given the necessary instructional guidance and support to perform their duties effectively. It is the object of this study to investigate the guidance and support rendered to the teachers by their leaders in the schools.

Puyate (2008) suggested twenty notions of what he thought could solve the problem of the non-implementation of vocational subjects. These solutions can be summarised as follows,

- Provide adequate infrastructure and instructional materials for proper teaching of the subjects.
- The teachers, students and the society as a whole must be enlightened on the importance of vocational and technical subjects through workshops andbe well remunerated for them to develop positive attitudes towards the subjects.
- The government must also make sure funds are made available to the implementing institutions even in the form of soft loans and ensure these schools are accessible and that the curriculum is relevant and attractive to all students.

As referred to in the above discussion, non-implementation of vocational and technical education is mainly centred on leadership activities (Boateng, 2012). The leadership may be

either the policy makers (the government) or the implementers, who are the teachers or other leaders at school or district levels. What they do and how they do it affects the success of the programmes. It is therefore important to investigate the leadership instructional guidance practices in order to establish what the situation in the schools is like, thereby establishing the apparent causes for the poor implementation of these subjects.

2.2.4. Rationale for offering vocational and technical education

Vocational and technical education is useful as it is used to prepare people for employment in an occupation (Ojimba, 2012). Schools are being encouraged to adopt the concept of new vocationalism, a method of organising their curricula to include both vocational and academic subjects. This will give their students an advantage when competing for jobs. They are subjects that should generate interest for people to become skilled workers.

Most countries have noted the value of vocational and technical subjects and have tried to include them in their educational programmes (Swanzy 2010; Umunadi 2012; Puyate 2008). This has not been easy since, as noted earlier, the subjects tend to be perceived negatively by most parents, teachers and pupils due to their oppressive use during the colonial eras in countries, especially in Africa (Swanzy 2010). Justification of vocational education has emanated from the realisation that academic education was unrealistically exaggerating the educational and occupational aspirations of school graduates, thereby causing high unemployment rates, particularly among youths (Psacharopolous& Loxley, 1985). However, due to the said unemployment rates, the different countries' educational institutions became duty bound to make their products useful in society; hence their inclusion of vocational education (Swanzy 2010). Boateng (2012) offers five reasons why governments worldwide invest in vocational and technical education. These are as follows,

1.   To increase the relevance of schooling by imparting the necessary skills and knowledge to make individuals productive members of society.

2.   To reduce unemployment by providing employable skills especially to the youth and those who cannot succeed academically.

3.   To increase economic development due to the fact that vocational education can improve the quality and skills level of the working population.

4.   To reduce poverty by giving the individuals who participate in it access to higher income occupations.

5.   To transform the attitude of people to favour occupations where there are occupational prospects for the future. (Boateng 2012:109)

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2001) also echoed these justifications by stressing that the present era, which is characterised by immense scientific, technical and socio-economic development and the concept of globalisation, makes vocational and technical education a vital aspect of the education systems in all countries. The UNESCO position paper on the recommendations concerning such education, stressed that this type of education should be part of education systems because,

- it contributes to the achievement of societal goals by equipping individuals with relevant skills to be used in the world of work and;
- it leads to an understanding of the environment of the persons concerned and empowers them to contribute to its development through their occupations.

Mureith (2009) who confirmed that vocational education has been used by different countries to develop their economies also reiterates the developmental aspect of vocational and technical education. Mureith posits that, if people lack entrepreneurial skills and knowledge, the natural resources of their countries remain unutilised, underutilised or even misused, therefore making the inclusion of vocational and technical subjects in the general education structures imperative (Mureithi 2009: 3).

The reasons given by Boateng for including vocational education in the schools' curricula, the rationale and encouragement by UNESCO and the confirmation of the importance of the vocational subjects by Mureithi cannot be realised without their proper implementation; hence, the need to investigate the instructional leadership practices for these subjects. The object of this study is to establish the effectiveness or lack thereof of these leadership practices.

Maravanyika (1982) presented two epistemologically centred views on which to base any selection of a curriculum. This study is interested in the relativist view, which propounds the notion that society has to agree on what counts as worthwhile knowledge. Maravanyika espoused the view that worthwhile knowledge is based on the needs of society. In Zimbabwe,

society, by accepting the recommendations of the Nziramasanga Commission, agreed that vocational education is definitely a necessary element of the general education system and therefore concurred that it should be included in the country's education system. The calls to include the subjects in the general school curriculum are therefore justified and so there is a necessity to investigate the instructional practices that guide their implementation.

Some scholars also argue for the vocationalisation of school curricula founded on practical considerations (Bray, Clark & Stephens, 1986; Maravanyika, 1988). This means that vocational education is justified as far as it responds to the needs of society, especially unemployment. There is a need to develop more people with the right abilities and to utilise their full potential (Pepper, 1995).

Educators have to improve education because just doing 'well' at school or college has never been important for young people but high levels of educational attainments which translate into improved life and career opportunities consequently remind one of the importance of the vocational education which is the pillar of manpower development (Afeti 2013). Afeti further confirmed this by asserting that the primary objective of vocational education is the acquisition of relevant knowledge, practical skills and attitudes for gainful employment in particular trades or occupational areas. Vocational education then becomes a vehicle for rapid industrialisation, economic empowerment and social mobility. The importance of vocational education cannot be overemphasised as established from the foregoing discussion. It is however, sad to note that its implementation has not been very successful, as lamented by many researchers, resulting in the necessity of the present study. It is important that, as educationists, we establish the constraints that may be causing the poor implementation of these subjects.

2.2.5. Vocational education in Zimbabwe

According to the Nziramasanga Presidential Commission into Education and Training (1999), vocational and technical education in Zimbabwe is provided within the framework of Acts of Parliament. These are the National Manpower Planning and Development Act of 1994 and the Zimbabwe Manpower Development Fund Act of 1991. Currently, vocational and technical education is offered in secondary schools, polytechnics and vocational and technical colleges. This study is primarily interested in the vocational education in secondary schools. The commission also noted that the government schools, which continued to offer

vocational education were scaling down, especially after independence, due to different constraints (Nziramasanga 1999).

On reviewing literature on education in developing countries, it became clear that, although vocational education may be a controversial issue, it has refused to be 'buried' (Bacchus, 1986). The countries' policy makers have never abandoned the issue although, again, very few are making efforts to diversify their curricula by adding vocational subjects at secondary school level (Bacchus, 1986)

In Zimbabwe, vocational and technical education has been viewed as one way of making the curriculum relevant. In 1980, when the country attained political independence, efforts to vocationalise the curriculum were embarked upon. This has nevertheless faced a number of challenges.

At independence, a new philosophy of education, Education with Production (EWP), was introduced. This was an attempt to link education with the world of work. Its drive was to link theory and practice through what was known as prevocational education, which emphasised attitudinal and technical orientation to employment and for self-employment (Nziramasanga 1999).

In 1986, an education plan was devised as an attempt to match schooling with vocational qualifications recognised by industry. It was also put in place to make sure that the academically weak students, at least, leave school with a vocational qualification (Zimbabwe National Craft Certificate) (ZNCC). This was introduced in the school system but was not successful for the following reasons,

- Insufficient time for the practical coursework watering it down and ultimately resulting in a very high failure rate.
- Poorly equipped schools for the practical component of the subjects.
- A lack of properly qualified teachers.

The ZNCC was then abandoned in favour of the National Foundation Certificate (NFC) which was seen as a cheaper alternative as it only equipped pupils with skills that formed the basis of their future training and employment.

Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) were developed in rural and urban centres to make sure young people were equipped with skills relevant for either formal or informal sector employment. This programme targeted school dropouts, retrenched workers and school

leavers; it did not insist on the pre-requisite of five 'O' level subjects. A further initiative by the government was the Informal Sector Training and Resource Network (ISTARN), which aimed at providing skills training and networking among the beneficiaries and other operators in the formal and informal sectors.

In an effort to ensure the supply of qualified teachers for the abovementioned vocational programmes, the government established Belvedere and Chinhoyi Technical Teacher's Colleges. The programmes at these institutions were criticised for not affording enough time for the practical training, therefore producing graduates insufficiently qualified to teach vocational subjects.

From the above discussion, it is clear that the government's greatest challenge was to make people understand what vocationalisation was all about so that it could introduce 'fool proof programmes'. There was also the need for an unambiguous policy on vocationalisation so that all programmes could be rationalised and not offered at different institutions to the same students, for instance at secondary school and at tertiary level (polytechnic). This is the current situation in Zimbabwe today, secondary schools through policy circulars offer vocational subjects, yet the graduates from these institutions are not thought to be qualified enough for employment but are supposed to proceed to some tertiary institution for further training. This may be the cause for the subjects' poor implementation in schools when the students know that their qualifications will never be recognised. Thus, the object of this study is to investigate the support the teachers are provided in order to make the subjects viable.

2.3. Instructional leadership

Before reviewing the literature on instructional leaders and the practices in which they engage as they do their work, I first define what instructional leadership entails. Blasé and Blasé (2000) take it to mean the teacher leaders' ability to involve their colleagues collaboratively in the processes of improving teaching and learning. Neumerski (2013) echoes this view, concurring that instructional leadership comprises the actions and behaviours of leadership, involving how the latter engage in different activities of guiding and directing instructional innovations in schools. In this study, I examined the guidance and direction that is provided in the instruction of vocational and technical subjects in the schools. These practices serve to create instructional experiences that make the acquisition of knowledge and skills more efficient, effective and appealing, thereby ensuring the effective

implementation and management of curriculum changes. The present study investigated these leadership practices undertaken by different leaders from the district, right down to school level.

2.3.1. Instructional leaders

The status of educational leaders cannot be taken for granted as they shoulder the greatest task of "framing of meaning and making a difference" (Groon2000:7). Leadership, in general, is a process of influencing the activities of an organisation or group of people so that they are able to accomplish their goals (Rukanda *et al.*, 1997). The source of influence may be expertise, capacity to give rewards or benefits or the capacity to apply sanctions or personal qualities, which gains one liking or respect (Rukanda *et al.,* 1997). Accordingly, even people without formal authority can exercise leadership as it is seen as influence. As long as one can influence others, then s/he can exercise leadership. It is also seen as "the exercise of authority and making decisions" (Rukanda *et al.*, 1997:25). Individuals in the group therefore, given the authority, have the task of directing and coordinating tasks relevant to group activities. Leaders whose roles I investigated are those with formal authority, by virtue of their appointments and those without formal authority as both types exercise leadership by influencing others towards the accomplishment of the organisation's goals.

The leadership discussed in this study is that which influences the instruction of the vocational and technical subjects, that is, instructional leadership. According to Rukanda *et al.* (1997), instructional leadership consists of the actions or activities undertaken by either formal or informal (non-positional) leaders aimed at developing a working environment that is productive, satisfying and desirable for the teachers and for students' learning. The actions can, therefore, be undertaken by the head (principal) or be delegated to others in order to promote advancement in students' learning.

Keefe (1987) supports Rukanda *et al.*'s assertion by defining instructional leadership as the leadership behaviours of school administrators in their role of providing direction, resources and support to teachers and students for the improvement of instruction in the school.

According to Spillane *et al.* (2001), leadership is guiding and directing instructional innovations in schools. These authors also support the findings of Rukanda *et al.* when they agree that leadership is an organisational quality, which goes beyond the work of individual positional leaders. It involves mobilising the school personnel and all clients so that they are

able to change the old ways of instruction as well as being able to identify and source the resources necessary for the success of reforms.

Elmore (2006) similarly argues that leadership is managing the conditions under which people learn new practices. Additionally, it is linked to the creation of organisations that are supportive and coherent environments for successful practice. Leaders must also be able to develop leadership skills in others so that performance can improve (Elmore 2006).

Leadership, therefore, may be described as not only an organisational property or the function of the school personnel, but as involving the activities of leaders as they interact with others in the execution of their specific tasks (Spillane *et al.,* 2004). The review furthermore investigated various leaders and the activities in which they engage in order to promote the development of a common vision of sound instruction, building relationships and of empowering staff to be innovative.

According to Jones (2010), instructional leadership involves the development of a common vision of good instruction. It is centred on building relationships and giving all staff the authority to innovate instruction and give each other feedback, thereby sharing the best instructional practices. An examination of researchers' views concerning the instructional leaders who influence the instructional process of the vocational and technical education in schools follows.

2.3.1.1. The principal/head

Researchers generally agree that for any educational reform, good leadership particularly that of the principal or head is the most important factor that contributes to its successful implementation (Ballantyne, 2012; Menon, 2009). These findings echo those by Barth (1990) who stressed that the principal is the key to the creation of a good school. S/he is the dominant force behind successful schools (Bell, 2001; Edmonds, 1979). In order to understand the instructional guidance practices for vocational and technical subjects, the roles of principals in schools have to be investigated, to establish if these practices encourage the subjects' successful implementation or lack thereof.

Enueme and Egwunyengu (2008) contend that principals are sometimes too busy with their day-to-day responsibilities of running schools and forget that they should be instructional leaders. The instructional leadership role is conceived of as a blend of supervision, staff development, curriculum development and facilitating school improvement (Smith

&Andrews, 1989). Supervision refers to the principals having to monitor and ensure the quality of their subordinates' work. This applies not only in terms of infrastructural development but also in terms of curriculum implementation. The principal's most important role, which should be performed to make school reforms a success is the enhancement of the teachers' performance, which in itself, is a product of many factors linked to the principal's actions or inaction (Obi, 2002). Enueme and Egwenyenga (2008) then stress the point that the principal's attributes should include the provision of staff development as the promotion of the teacher's professional qualities. This was perceived as the most influential instructional leadership behaviour at all levels of education (Obi 2002). The authors go further pointing out that the principal should encourage commitment, facilitate professional growth, create a conducive school environment and culture and encourage teachers to be innovative. The programme of staff improvement, which comprises leadership techniques and procedures designed to change the teacher's role performance, must be prioritised (Obi 2002). This is regarded as crucial since all educational systems depend on the quality of teaching in any environment, whether it is the classroom, workshops, laboratories or any other places in which instruction takes place (Lucas *et al.,* 2012). Robinson (2008) is of the same mind when he asserted that the principal's leadership must promote environmental conditions conducive to effective instruction, an environment which Sachs (1995) also saw as important for the enhancement of the teacher's work performance. The principal must provide the appropriate leadership, which will assist each staff member to make the maximum contribution to the schools' efforts in providing quality and up to date education (Enueme & Egwunyenga 2008). In Zimbabwe, vocational and technical education has been perceived as one aspect of quality education. The subjects have been regarded as appropriate for the development of human resources and necessary for the country's development; hence, the necessity to examine their instructional guidance practices in order to establish the state of these leadership activities for vocational education.

The limitation of the literature on instruction is that there is minimal discussion regarding how the principal should enact the given roles. The importance of this study is underscored by its investigation and subsequent findings concerning the principals' roles in schools where vocational and technical subjects are a success, as well as these leaders' activities and how they enact these roles.

Another attribute of the principal that should be considered when they are being selected is their possession of knowledge about teaching and learning and the ability to share these insights with teachers (Sergiovanni, 1996). Sergiovanni additionally drew attention to a positive and strong relationship between effective, knowledgeable instructional leadership behaviours exhibited by principals and teacher commitment. Ogbodo and Ekpo (2005) who noted a significant relationship between instructional leaders' knowledge and the teacher's work performance in their study of the state of Akwa-Ibom also supported this. These researchers concluded that the principal's primary role is to facilitate teaching and learning in schools by sharing his/her knowledge of the subjects with the teachers, a condition that will make the teachers effective and ultimately improve students' learning. Menon's (2009) suggestion that leadership should be a group quality was in line with the view of the above authors. Leadership should be a shared practice by the individuals seeking to address their organisation's issues and problems (Spillane *et al.*, 2004). This, in my opinion, is the kind of leadership needed for the effective instruction of vocational and technical subjects.

Some scholars, however, argue that principals cannot be expected to share knowledge, especially specific subject knowledge with their subordinates, as they may not be experts in all subjects (Spillane & Diamond, 2007; Quinn, 2002). The principal's leadership was perceived as important in promoting conditions that improve student learning but not as being an expert in any particular subject (Spillane *et al.,* 2004). Principals, as leaders, should be guiding and directing instructional innovations in schools, identifying, acquiring, allocating, coordinating and using the human and material resources necessary for establishing conditions that make instructional innovations possible (Spillane *et al.,* 2001). The principal's leadership must involve mobilising the school personnel and clients so that they notice, face and take on the task of changing instruction as well as identify and activate the resources needed to support the change process (Spillane *et al.,* 2001). In doing this, their leadership has to be less directive and more collaborative so that the leadership attributes (values, knowledge and skills) can be found and employed by the diversity of the leaders or all group members for the effective implementation of reforms (Lambropoulos & Vivitsou, 2012)

Smith and Andrews (1989) make the point that an effective leader communicates the vision of the school to the staff, parents and students as a way of exerting effective leadership. They argue that the stakeholders need to share a common vision as it leads to participatory and shared leadership, which is a strong factor in the implementation of change. Quinn (2002)

asserts that for leaders, to be effective, they must communicate well-defined expectations. Furthermore, they must move away from individual and role based views of leadership to those that focus on the organisation and leadership tasks (Simsek & Yildrim, 2000).

The foregoing discussion of the literature on instructional leadership in schools focuses more on the role and behaviours of the principals but less on the "how to" or the processes of leadership. Thus, there is a necessity for the present study to investigate how these leaders enact their roles in a bid to guide the instruction of vocational subjects and improve learning.

Six dimensions that are critical in the practice of leadership are listed in Quinn (2002), which includes identifying and articulating vision. However, Quinn does not expand on how to enact those tasks. Andrews and Soder (1987), confirm that principals who are effective and strong are instructional resource providers, communicators and are visibly present in schools. This study will endeavour to investigate these leadership practices in order to determine the impact they have and how they are enacted for the benefit of vocational and technical education.

2.3.1.2 Teacher leaders

Instructional leadership, according to Elmore (2000), originated during the 1970s' effective schools movements when studies had revealed that there was no evidence of schools being effective where there was weak leadership. Therefore, teacher leaders are people who should focus on the core business of schools, teaching and learning. The position of teacher leadership was developed as a way of decentralising decision making in schools. During the 1980s and 1990s, teachers were first considered as a legitimate force in school improvements (Mangin, 2007). It was a force used to address the isolated nature of the teaching profession and of enhancing the status of teachers. The definitions of teacher leaders vary due to the nature of the work in which they engage, in their various schools. For this study, only those whose focus is on the work of improving vocational and technical subjects' instruction were considered. The leader-plus aspect, as presented by Spillane and Diamond (2007) was the reason for this choice. This aspect advocates for the consideration of the work of all individuals who have a hand in leadership activities, be they teachers or instructors, heads of department/resource teachers or mentors, specialist coaches or demonstration teachers. These may be formal or non-formal leaders.

Having noted that work in schools may be overwhelming not only for the principal, work distribution among all stakeholders was found necessary; hence the development of the teacher leader position. Teacher instructional leadership literature is limited; that which is available illustrates that teachers are placed in leadership positions because of the belief that "most of the knowledge required for the improvement of instruction resides in the people who deliver instruction and not managers" (Elmore 2000:14).

Researchers agree that leadership is not the sole purview of the school principal; teacher leaders and other professionals also play an important role in leading instructional innovations (Smylie & Denny, 1990; Firestone, 1989). This is supported by Spillane (2004) who views the interactions of leaders and the distribution of tasks as being important, given that principals are often too busy with their day-to-day responsibilities of running schools.

As already mentioned, teacher leaders were considered a legitimate force in school improvement and their involvement in leadership was taken as a means of addressing the isolated nature of teaching and the desire to increase teacher status (Mangin, 2007).Their duties encompass, among other things,

- Promoting changes in instruction (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2008)

- Taking on administrative duties and holding a combination of positions. Besides being told that they can be leaders, there was no consistent definition of what they do.

Their role consequently differs within different schools. They may be consultants, managers, departmental chairs, mentors, resource teachers, specialist coaches or demonstration teachers. Mangin and Stoelinga (2008) define them as anyone who takes on non-supervisory, school-based instructional leadership roles. They are, as a result, capable of altering school instruction through their influence (Neumerski, 2013).

According to Neumerski (2013) most of the literature on teacher leadership is largely qualitative and descriptive in nature and looks at their characteristics and behaviours such as building trust, collaborating, communicating and modelling but leaves out the 'how' dimension. This present study therefore seeks to explore how these teacher leaders enact their roles, especially how they seek to improve instruction, in relation to vocational and technical subjects.

2.3.1.3Teachers/instructors

Firstly, teacher leadership has to be viewed as a process undertaken by teachers, whether individually or collectively, to influence each other (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). They may even influence the principals/heads of schools and any other stakeholders in the school community. Their influence is based on the need to improve instructional practices with the aim of improving students' learning and achievements. The teachers are facilitators within the school and can be important elements in spreading and strengthening school reforms and improvements (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

According to York-Barr and Duke (2004), the ways in which teachers can lead, can vary as much as the teachers themselves can. Some roles are assigned formally while others are informally shared but they are all centred on building the entire school's capacity to improve. Many teachers can serve as leaders among their peers in any of the following roles:

1. Resource provider
2. Instructional specialist
3. Curriculum specialist
4. Classroom supporter
5. Learning facilitator
6. Mentor
7. School leader
8. Data coach
9. Catalyst for change
10. Learner

Teachers' roles sometimes overlap, with some leadership roles being formal, regarding performing designated responsibilities while others are more informal, simply emerging as teachers interact with their peers (York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Researchers, however feel that the school system is organised in a way that does not treat teachers as leaders. One must strive to become an administrator, in which one has to be competent to be selected for the few posts available. Teachers largely exercise their roles in the classroom. The present study investigated the activities of these teachers in order to establish how they guide their students in the process of acquiring vocational skills. Their instructional practices were thus of great interest to this study.

2.3.1.4 Instructional coaches

Instructional coaching is rooted in new ideas about learning and has been widely adopted in schools (Neumerski, 2012). It came about as a response to innovative concepts of teacher learning, which should occur within the context of everyday instructional practices in order to improve instruction (Neuman& Cunningham, 2009). This is done through teacher interactions with their more expert peers, thereby leading teachers to adopt new teaching strategies (Showers & Joyce, 1996). Coaches are described as those who mentor and support entire school reforms and build school capacity. Coaching is any type of school based professional development designed in the light of specific instructional needs (Neumerski, 2013). It is sustained class based support from a qualified individual who models research based strategies and explores how to increase these practices using the teachers' own students. Those instructional coaches rarely engage in observation and modelling of teaching but teachers view them as useful when they demonstrate lessons, interpret data or focus on the teachers' needs.

In Zimbabwe, the position of the instructional coach in the Masvingo district was made permanent in 2006 when their posts were advertised in the District Circular Number 1 of November 2006. To be eligible, one was supposed to be an expert in a subject of interest and possess the relevant qualifications for the subject, which one was applying for as a coach. The National Director of Schools responsible for the non-formal education division, at an induction workshop for these resource teachers, stressed that their major responsibility was to implement gender sensitive capacity building. This was done in an effort to motivate teachers, eliminate isolation of teachers and to improve teacher competencies so that they could be able to compete internationally in the global village (Masvingo District Circular Number 1 of 2006). The director at the time also stipulated that they had been appointed to assist with the in-service training of staff, training that would lead to the quality development of staff and quality student experiences.

According to this director, they are therefore, to be viewed as coordinators of staff development workshops in the district. As resource teachers, they are to possess highly developed interpersonal skills to help them identify experts who are able to facilitate their workshops and seminars when necessary. They are also required to produce training material for the teachers' use.

The instructional coaches should furthermore act as change agents and catalysts. They must help teachers be involved in new educational initiatives and even venture into what may be threatening endeavours. In addition, they are motivators and learning specialists. It is their duty to create an environment fit for optimum learning to occur. The instructional coaches are the systems' analysts. They should assess and be aware of the district's needs. Lastly, they are consultants that should provide professional advice to the teachers. However, in Zimbabwe, this post was abolished in secondary schools and these duties now belong to the subject inspectors based at the provincial office.

This study endeavoured to investigate how these subject inspectors or education officers (EOs) enact their roles for the benefit of vocational and technical subjects. It attempted to observe and analyse how they interact with the subject teachers in a bid to offer them the guidance and support they may need to implement the subjects well.

2.3.1.5 Heads of departments (HODs)/departmental chairs

Heads of department, as teacher leaders, stand between teachers and administrators (Feeney, 2009). This is therefore a middle management level position. On the one hand, they mentor colleagues while at the same time teaching alongside those colleagues. On the other hand, they are expected to manage a variety of administrative tasks in addition to their own classroom teaching responsibilities. Feeney (2009), reports that departmental leaders saw their role as a distinct position with much responsibility to serve the needs of many people.

The department heads are said to possess some authority but lack formal power. They are expected to affect positive change through influence without any clear path to follow (Feeney 2009). In most cases, their work is clouded by managerial responsibilities, which they are able to describe as activities they do for teachers and the administration. Feeney (2009) agreed that the descriptors used for their work emphasise what they do for others. These are liaison officers, managers, enforcers of policies, communicators and mediators, performing activities on behalf of teachers and administrators.

Researchers concur that these managerial priorities currently dominate the daily work of department leaders and the focus on curriculum and student learning is critically missing. Priority is given to the completion of non-instructional tasks at the expense of continual learning and innovation to improve student learning (Feeney, 2009; Al-Mhelby, Al-Muqate & Al-Dhafiri, 2004). The department leaders, in a study by Feeney (2009), were found to be

participating in administrative duties at a high level by talking to teachers and following up on requests made by the administration. The study revealed an absence of the real teacher leadership necessary to promote improved student achievement. These teacher leaders tended to look to the principal as having all the solutions to the problems facing schools (Elmore 2000)

The HODs are accorded no administrative authority but are required to be tolerant, flexible, supportive and diplomatic, According to Weller (2001) they are chosen because they have experience and the reputation of being good teachers. However, they need authority to make certain decisions and not merely look to the principal to make decisions on their behalf. Their lack of authority thwarts their effectiveness since subordinates may see them as toothless dogs (Weller, 2001). That author went further asserting that in most cases, no formal training is given to these HODs for the job they are supposed to do. Their choice is based on their possession of certain essential knowledge and skills such as,

- Command of subject matter
- Good communication skills
- Knowledge of leadership
- Ability to work with teams
- Flexibility
- Diplomacy (Weller 2001).

In short, HODs must be able to skilfully participate in the work of teachers as their leaders. They have to identify group norms and undertake activities that enable the attainment of those norms, which also guides departmental meetings (Feeney 2009).

The principals, to whom the HODs look for guidance, have to develop the latter's leadership capacity by assisting them in the following activities:

- Define their roles related to practice but not position. Leadership has to be taken as a chance to learn with others.
- Focus on teacher learning.
- Define improvement
  (Printy, 2008).

HODs are expected to have a clear picture of what school improvement entails, be able to detect evidence of student learning and put measures in place to be able to detect day-to-day

improvements that are made in the classroom. They also structure collaboration, which entails moving away from solely managerial work towards establishing a culture of learning in schools (Feeney, 2009).

Turner (1996) also concurs, stating that heads of departments' duties are as follows

- Mentoring new teachers
- Supervising and professionally developing, assessing or evaluating subject group teachers
- Organising and coordinating subject meetings
- Collaborating instructional innovations by influencing resource provision, allocating and motivating subject teachers

It is evident that the roles of the HODs whether they are administrative or teaching roles are merely stipulated. However, how they should be enacted is not described. Consequently, the object of this study is to investigate how the stipulated roles are enacted.

2.4 Link between leadership and instruction

The importance of the principal's role as an instructional leader and the impact that role has on changing instruction has been extensively researched (Quinn, 2002).It was recognised in the literature that a relationship between leadership and school improvement exists (Williams, 2010). Edmonds (1979) also believed that the atmosphere of the school, which the principal creates, was responsible for the quality of education received and that the behaviour of administrators had a large impact on student success. The diverse learning atmospheres created by principals make schools unique, impacting differently on student learning, which includes the acceptance of vocational education in schools. Edmonds (1979) discussed the most tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective schools, which he said were realised because of the leadership behind their creation, thereby theorising that student success requires strong leadership. The behaviours and practices of the school principal influence all aspects of the learning community, which leads to school success (Ncube, 2004; Williams, 2010). It is therefore important to note that the behaviours and the leadership practices of principals and other leaders determine how they help or hinder the implementation of vocational and technical subjects thereby establishing why they continue to be undervalued in most schools.

Williams (2010), in his study of *Teacher Collaboration as Professional Development*, established that there was an indirect relationship between principals' work and students' academic success. He developed the notion that principals cannot directly affect student achievements because they do not deliver instruction to students in the same way that the teachers do. In fact, principals must assist teachers by creating a conducive environment, telling them about new strategies that affect instruction and assisting those teachers to assess how they apply the strategies to the different situations. This nonetheless has an indirect effect on learning, as seen in the principals' management roles, which include classroom visitations, lesson observations, organisation of conferences, seminars, workshops, professional associations and in-service educational programmes (Enueme & Egwunyenga, 2008). These researchers also assert that principals have a further indirect effect on learning, which they exercise through formulating school goals, setting and communicating their expectations for high achievement, organising classrooms for instruction, supervising teachers' performance, monitoring students' progress and promoting a positive, orderly environment for learning. Although principals have an indirect impact on students' achievement, there is a significant relationship between the former's leadership and the school climate (Hallinger& Heck, 1996). Leithwood and Jantzi (2008) suggest that leadership is linked to instruction through teacher motivation. Teachers will work well when motivated, thereby enhancing effective instruction. It is the role of the principals to motivate the teachers so that the teachers, in turn can also motivate their students to learn (Hallinger& Heck1996).

Quinn (2002) makes the point that distributed leadership occurs when leadership sources are distributed throughout the members of the school community and is more likely to influence student outcomes than the traditional top-down forms of leadership. Teachers will feel empowered on issues they consider important and student outcomes are likely to improve (Silins & Mulford, 2002). The effect of collective leadership is linked to achievement through teacher motivation (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2008). Menon (2009) who asserts that teachers are more committed to the school when the school leaders are highly accessible and encourage their participation in decision-making, thereby positively influencing instruction, also supports this.

Quinn (2002) categorically states, "The principal's role as an instructional leader lies in the ability to motivate and inspire teachers with the end goal of impacting instructional practice and ultimately, student achievement" (Quinn, 2002:451). From this, it is evident that the

principal's roles affect instruction indirectly. The latter is facilitated by the creation of a suitable environment, provision of resources and teacher motivation as discussed above.

2.5 Leadership for vocational education

Inferred from the challenges above, effective leadership is a critical success factor in revitalising vocational education (Boateng, 2012). Leadership for vocational education may not have a pattern distinguishable from that of other subjects but it comprises people who can identify the correct things to do and have the courage to do it so that the problems described can be minimised or eradicated. According to Waters and Cameron (2007), these are leaders who have visions and aspirations, which they can turn into actions. The rationale for offering vocational education is clear, at least to those who love development. In some countries, Zimbabwe included, policies that should govern their implementation exist but the programme may be lacking the right leadership; hence the need for visionary leaders who can translate visions into action, leaders whose dreams about the success of vocational programmes become a reality. Leaders therefore, have to formulate the right policies that can communicate the spirit and direction of the vocational programmes. They must also set relevant aims, make plans, develop and implement strategic programmes that facilitate attainment of the set aims and then put in place effective measures to monitor and evaluate those programmes to ensure the expected goals are achieved (Boateng, 2012). It is argued by Moss and Jensrud (1994) in Boateng (2012) that the context in which the vocational and technical education is practiced has changed and that consequently, there is a need for leaders who can chart new directions and influence others to believe them and follow. Moss and Jensrud advocated for restructuring the leadership development programmes so that these can produce creative leaders who adapt to changes and who understand the broad scope of vocational education (Boateng, 2012).

Boateng (2012) went further arguing that, as changes occur in the educational and economic environment where vocational education is implemented, there is a need to develop leaders who

- are creative
- are skilful communicators
- can exert influence
- have a broad understanding of the vocational education content

- are shareholders in the school vision

- are able to link the school with the labour market, with industry and the commerce, and

- can easily move among all stakeholders in order to establish some partnership with them.

To have the calibre of the leader described above, it is necessary to develop them professionally with programmes that will equip them with the necessary attributes and behaviours that will enhance the success of vocational education (Boateng, 2012).

The role of leaders cannot be taken for granted, as they are the ones who determine the success of organisations and reforms (Moss & Liang, 1990). According to Moss and Liang (1990), the past four decades have seen the production of quantities of literature on leaders and leadership. Although leadership has been given much attention, there is no agreed upon definition of the concept, but most, if not all researchers agree that it is an important and viable construct recognised in practice (Moss & Liang, 1990).

Moss and Liang (1990) provided one of the exemplary studies that explain the concept of leadership related to vocational education. Firstly, these researchers point out that unstable organisation, in changing environments, need leaders who can chart the way forward to new directions and be able to make subordinates follow them. Vocational education, as noted by these researchers, is facing numerous changes as far as the nature of the work involved is concerned, as well as the clientele of the programmes and justifying their place in the education systems. In the face of these challenges, vocational education programmes require creative leaders able to deliver vocational education to all people (Moss & Liang, 1990).

Moss and Liang (1990) define leadership as firstly, a process and secondly, as a property. Leadership is understood here as a process of influencing others in the organisation while using non-coercive influence to direct and coordinate the organisation's activities in order to accomplish set goals. As a property, Moss and Liang regard leadership as possession of certain attributes, characteristics, knowledge and skills that accord the individual power of influence conferred voluntarily by the group members. These leaders such as the heads of schools and other administrators possess power and authority because of the positions they hold. Moss and Liang are, however, of the opinion that the position one holds does not automatically confer leadership on the position holder. The leader has to demonstrate

behaviours that suit leadership so that group members may consider him/her as a leader and then be willing follow.

To understand the process of leadership, the above authors elaborated on the concept by describing the tasks that leaders are expected to fulfil. These are given as follows

- Envisioning and instilling goals to help organisations develop
- Collaborating and recognising individual and team contributions
- Exercising power effectively and enabling others to act
- Setting the right environmental context for the growth of the organisation (Moss & Liang, 1990)

To fulfil these tasks, leaders should be transformational, that is, they put themselves and their followers in an interdependent relationship. They must adjust to change as vocational education is in a struggle to adapt to change, it is struggling to survive and is therefore in need of creative leaders at all levels. They must be leaders who can effectively carry out the work of delivering vocational education to youths and even adults and they should be leaders of professional associations (Moss & Liang, 1990).

Lewis (1994) also asserts that leaders and authorities who sympathise with its aims and who attach adequate importance to its social and economic value must administer vocational education. They should clarify the aims so that the leaders understand and appreciate them, as they must then conscientise people concerning their importance. Cohen and Ball (1999) lament the unfortunate condition of vocational education. They argue that most leaders are products of the organisations and systems they are being asked to change and this type of education is requiring them to carry out practices they never had a chance to learn about in their career, which consequently affects the implementation of vocational education. As noted from the historical antecedents of vocational education, it was, and still is in most institutions, something despised, something introduced and given to despised students and used to create social classes (Maravanyika, 1986). The present study is interested in establishing who the leaders for vocational education are, how they enact their roles, what policies they use and what their results are. The issue is that vocational education needs leaders who can defend its existence in the curriculum. These leaders are highly motivated and are on a mission to improve the field and skills to accomplish its goals (Moss & Liang, 1990).

2.6 Policies that guide instruction

A policy is a course of action, which may be adopted and pursued by a government or any organisation (Zvobgo, 1997). Coburn (2005) emphasises this notion by stating that policies are statements of intent that guide the workers in implementing their roles. Maravanyika (1990) also points out that policies imply major guidelines for action and create frameworks that allow discretion while at the same time providing direction. Therefore, for any reform to be successful, it must be supported by clearly formulated policies that guide its implementation.

When new policies are formulated at school level or in the education system in general, there would have been changes in teaching and learning that would have been envisioned by the policy makers. The impetus of the policy should be clearly spelt out. According to Cohen and Ball (1999), reformers within their new policy, will be arguing for changes in the goals, content or pedagogy of the curriculum. New goals for instruction will demand that there be a dramatic change in what children learn. Teachers must also make significant changes in what they teach (content). There should be new conceptions of the content (Cohen & Ball, 1999). New pedagogy can also be envisioned. In other words, teachers should use innovative methods. For example, teachers may need to move away from the idea of monopolising the instructional process to accepting a learner-centred approach. Ornstein and Hunkins (2009) who assert that policy makers have to ensure that the curriculum is relevant all the time, echo this. This means that change in knowledge necessitates change in policy in order to facilitate the achievement of new goals. Policy formulation has to be guided by the new philosophy of the country. In Zimbabwe, policies must be guided by the need to reduce poverty and promote rapid social and economic development through the development of labour, hence, the focus on vocational and technical education (Zvobgo, 1997).

The policy framework also needs to be implemented early. Cohen and Ball (1999) noted that new policy frameworks, in most cases, would just be a repeat of older frameworks that were not implemented. To avoid this, these authors suggest that for each policy, textbooks that conform to the framework's vision should be made available. Revised textbooks are to be part of each new policy while tests should be redesigned in order to facilitate the successful implementation of the fundamental changes in instruction. Curriculum guides, textbooks and assessment procedures should similarly be redesigned so that they all communicate the same message regarding policy implementation to teachers and students (Cohen & Ball, 1999).

Policies play a crucial role in the implementation of reforms. Thepolicies stipulate principles, plans or courses of action that dictate how members of an organisation should act (Coburn, 2005). Through policy statements or frameworks, values are translated into operations (Maravanyika, 1990). Compliance with legal and statutory responsibilities is ensured and the implementation of strategic plans is guided. Risk management in the organisation improves when policies are set to the achieved standards. The success of reforms, then, will largely depend on the administrators and managers who generate ideas and formulate policies and those responsible for transforming the formulated policies into practice.

Furthermore, policies are not devised in a vacuum. Cohen and Spillane (1992) noted that the governments are responsible for making policies and as such, policy change is politically influenced. They are derived from and shaped by laws and regulations that govern institutions' operations (Cohen & Ball, 1999). They result from the values and missions that institutions articulate in their strategic plans. The policies formulated will subsequently direct the implementation of the strategic plans. Zimbabwe's policies, for example, are derived from the country's desire to eradicate poverty and make the curriculum relevant, in particular by vocationalising it. Afeti (2013) also confirms this by stressing that a national policy framework must be linked to other policies on educational issues, which are valuable to the particular nation. For instance teaching vocational and technical subjects since the policy framework is essential to achieving the country's objectives.

2.7 Policy and practice

Policy statements communicate the spirit and direction of a reform but vary, thus differing in their effectiveness and impact on instruction (Cohen & Ball, 1999). Research, however, suggests that formulated policies affect instructional practice and vice versa, as practice strongly influences new policies (Cohen & Ball, 1999). It is the policy formulators or reality definers of the day who would develop a vision and who would want that vision communicated to implementers through policy. According to Coburn (2005), some visions (reforms) become ambitions and may end up with policies whose language is open to multiple interpretations. What different people mean by the words they use differs and so the manner in which implementers enact the reform's policy will vary according to how they have interpreted the particular concept. Cohen and Ball (1999), nevertheless, see this

variation as the strength of a policy, since its various interpretations will broaden its appeal, making it more effective.

On the other hand, policies are sometimes vague and thus become vulnerable to numerous constructions (Cohen & Ball, 1999). In Zimbabwe, the government policy on Education with Production (EWP) is an example of this. Implementers responded to it in diverse forms. Many failed to see it as a philosophy aimed at changing teachers and pupils' attitudes towards labour. Implementers, as pointed out by Cohen and Ball (1999), interpret concepts in their own way. Some thought EWP meant gardening, carpentry or building referred to where they produced some articles and vegetables for sale. Teachers implement instructional policies in terms of their inherited beliefs, knowledge and practice. Their responses to policies will determine how they change and researchers have noted that the teachers will respond to policy in terms of their pre-existing practices, knowledge and beliefs (Cohen & Ball, 1999). The implementers reframe the policies in terms of what they know and what they are already doing in their classrooms (Ball, 1990). In Ball's words, the new policy and the old melange emerge.

Policies are normally developed in response to carefully identified problems (Swann & Pratt, 1999). The formulated policy guidelines then become the anticipated solutions to the problems. The policies, in most cases, announce new instructional orders. What ought to be remembered, however, is that the classrooms in which these policies will be implemented are not "clean slates" (Cohen & Ball, 1999).Activities are already occurring in these classrooms. The teachers consequently work with the residues of the past, no matter how good the new policies are (Lambert, 1985) which, as a result, affects implementation. According to Maravanyika (1990), policies are, to a greater or lesser extent, influenced by their historical antecedents; hence their failure at times to change people's attitudes.

At times, yesterday's didactic policies and programmes may be in sharp contrast to the policy introduced. When such cases arise, the new policies are not easily adopted, as the teachers will hold on to the familiar policies. New policy approaches should be congruent with the traditional values and experiences of teachers, administrators and even parents for them to be effectively implemented (Cohen & Ball, 1999). Lambert (1985) contends that teachers have to make the old and new cohere in order to implement the policies effectively. The teachers have to notice and be aware of the nature of the demands of the policy to which they are being asked to respond. If teachers are not clear about the demands of the new policy, then it

is bound to be inadequately implemented or be a failure. It is the object of this study to investigate the policies that govern the implementation of vocational education, in order to assess their suitability for the programmes and establish how the instructional leaders and the teachers who are supposed to be guided by them perceive these policies.

On a different note, some teachers may adjust in line with the new policy's demands but within the same frames as the older policies' pedagogy; Cohen and Ball argue that this will simply be like "putting new wine in old bottles" (Cohen &Ball 1999:334). Teachers alter instruction in terms of their pre-existing practices. These authors went on to assert that teachers must come to terms with their students' practices of learning and what they themselves are expected to do. If teachers were to modify their practices, they would have to reconstruct over decades to suit the new policy. Nevertheless, as researchers confirm, at times teachers are not affected by the many signals for change sent by the government through policies, thereby being responsible for their non-implementation (Cohen & Ball, 1999). Policy initiatives must therefore embrace the practitioners' conceptions of their subjects to avoid contradictions and raising questions about the intentions of the policy framework (Cohen & Ball, 1990). Policies should work as messengers of the vision of the policy makers. Therefore, they must be clearly understood by all concerned, especially the implementers who, of course, include the instructional leaders whose activities the study investigated.

According to Cohen and Ball (1990), textbooks are policy agents, which are often used to implement policy changes. As with most of these books, they offer prescriptive guidance on topics of the course that require changes, instructional content to be covered and at times, they even strongly recommend the methods of teaching. The researchers, however, argue that even in the case where teachers use the same textbooks, the content covered may vary considerably. Teachers will tackle the provided activities as per their own interpretation of the text. At times, they will differ from the demands of the text, thereby frustrating the policy makers' intentions (Cohen & Ball, 1990). Texts and curriculum materials may be important agents of policy, which may facilitate change but only when the teachers are able or willing to utilise them (Cohen & Ball, 1990).

When policy makers design policies, they believe they can change school outcomes but they must remember that the effects of their policies will depend on what the teachers, the implementers, make of them (Elmore, 2000; Firestone, 1989). It is also important to note that policies that seek to change instructional practices will only be successful when the

practitioners they seek to change are willing to do so. Teachers are, in most cases, the problem that policies seek to correct but at the same time, they are the most important agents for improving matters. Consequently, nothing will change unless these teachers change first and are willing to implement the new policies (Cohen, 1990). New policies can only reach the practices that they seek to correct through the teachers, who at the same time are the owners of those practices that require correction. Hence, teachers become the targets and agents of change. Therefore, there is a link between policy and instruction in that the teachers are the personnel who would have caused the instructional problems that the state, district or the school policies seek to correct while at the same time, they are the agents for the correction of the practices that they fashioned and that they want corrected. Teachers, for example, who may be teaching badly today, are expected to do a different job tomorrow (Cohen, 1990). This cannot be done overnight but only gradually, because teachers cannot abandon their old knowledge and practices in one moment and produce different approaches to instruction in the next. In order to be able to change, teachers have plenty to learn and unlearn (Cohen & Ball, 1999).

On another note, some policies are ambitious and noble in purpose but too demanding and imposing (Cohen & Ball, 1990). At times, no resources are offered to implementers to support the policy and no examples or demonstrations are given of what the policy formulators want. This affects the instruction or implementation of the reform. For example, the interaction that may be needed to support the teachers' efforts to teach vocational and technical subjects and new pedagogy will be lacking. Teachers cannot be expected to teach in ways they have never experienced (Cohen, 1990). It is, therefore, necessary to investigate or explore the instructional practices of all stakeholders in the teaching and learning of vocational subjects.

States can suggest encouraging changes, show political courage and intellectual ambition to change but plenty has to be done. Cohen (1990) asserts that pedagogical changes thrive on the creation of conversation in and around classrooms. Creating such a conversation is nevertheless costly, time consuming and difficult for many teachers and policy makers, which may affect their success. Because of these factors, Cohen and Ball (1999) concluded that policies might not have much effect on instruction. It can be argued that teachers respond to policy in somewhat varied ways. Firstly, some implement what they think of and see as major changes. Secondly, others change very little of what they are expected to change while, lastly,

some do not change at all. What happens in the classroom, in response to policy, consequently varies according to how implementers have perceived the policy and its agents, the textbooks (Cohen & Ball, 1999). It is crucial, therefore, to investigate how instructional leaders in Zimbabwe formulate the policies on vocational education and how these policies are capable of guiding and supporting the teachers in their work.

For any reform, be it educational, scientific, social etc., to be successful, it must be supported by clearly formulated policies which will guide implementation. Boateng (2012) believes that the success of reforms largely depends on the administrators and managers who are responsible for generating ideas, formulating policies and those who are responsible for transforming the policies into practice. Uyanya (1989) also confirmed this by stating that in Nigeria, the 1981 National Policy on Education contributed immensely to the acceptance of subjects that emphasised the acquisition of skills and stressed self-reliance. Afeti (2013) also argued that a national policy framework is essential in achieving the objectives of a country. This framework must also be linked to other policies on education; for example, the issue of teaching vocational and technical subjects in Zimbabwe. Improvement efforts are sometimes abandoned because they conflict with a policy or practice. Policies are bound to succeed and be accepted by implementers if those implementers feel they are in line with their ideologies (Cooper *et al.*, 2009). Principals also tend to make sense of external policies in a positive way when they internalise them as aligned to their own values and preferences (Lee, Walker & Chui, 2012). Young, Orr and Springer (2011), however, warn of policies that may be intended to obscure faults and support specific ideologies formulated by people who may wish to use them in support of their various political or socio-economic stances. Instructional leaders must develop positive attitudes towards the said policies, as this is the only way they can subsequently develop effective instructional guidance systems that may positively influence instructional practices. As noted by Spillane (2004), policies merely handed down to implementers may not help in changing the instructional practices. The top-down reforms are solely geared towards making public education more accountable but may not be suitable for all school environments, hence their non-implementation (Jacobson & Cypress, 2012). Policies that promote the teaching of marginalised or undervalued subjects are those that establish systems which promote high accountability and which demonstrate effectiveness in closing the identified gaps (Spillane *et al.*, 2001). To sum up, inferring from the cited literature, effective vocational and technical programmes begin with the formulation of a

national policy and the establishment of an effective national implementation body comprising strong and effective instructional leaders. This study wishes to investigate the policies that guide instruction and how the teachers are supported by these policies.

2.8. Zimbabwean policies

Zvobgo (1998) asserts that most African countries, on attaining political independence, found themselves in education systems that "needed extensive surgery" in order to be able to serve the aspirations of the majority of the people (Zvobgo 1998:111). (Maravanyika 1990) also stated that policies should be coordinated with the socio-cultural process in order for change to take place. If the socio-cultural elements are missing in the policy frameworks, new policies will end up merely being vocalised but not implemented or institutionalised. This is supported by what occurred after independence in Zimbabwe. Maravanyika posits that the African nationalists found it easy to promise educational policies intended to mobilise support from the rural masses but these became difficult to implement when those nationalists came to power and were the new government. To be successful therefore, policies must be in line with the social, political and economic infrastructure that sustains them.

In 1980, Zimbabwe embarked on massive education reforms (Kanyongo, 2005).However, the new government did not have the economic muscle to effect the changes as economic control remained in the hands of the colonial masters. Upon independence, most people saw this as an opportunity to access the institutions they felt had been denied to them and did not see it as an opportunity to transform society (Maravanyika, 1990).

The evolution of educational policies in post-independent Zimbabwe can be understood best within this general African background. To understand these policies, the vocational education policies in particular, the pre-independence policies and the old vocationalisation have to be understood (Maravanyika 1990; Mavhunga 2002). Maravanyika (1990) argued that pre-independence educational policies have a strong influence on the envisaged post-independence policy changes. To comprehend and appreciate the current problems of educational policies, their evolution must be known. This, according to Maravanyika, can be summarised as follows:

- The social policies evolved an education system that avoided social fusion of blacks and whites; hence, the introduction of the F2 system for blacks which was later rejected at independence.

- Economically, educational policies were meant not to equip Africans with survival skills but to create workers for the whites.

- Politically, the policies worked towards consolidating a racist separatist ideology.

- Through the school system, educational policies were geared to reproduce and reflect the society in which they operated, hence the non-implementation of vocational education despite the setting up of commissions and committees whose recommendations advocated for the provision of vocational subjects in African schools.

At independence, the Zimbabwean government adopted a socialist principle, perceived through Karl Marx's concept of polytechnic education (Kanyongo, 2005). The main aim was to link mental and manual work in order to produce the "totally developed individual" (Chung &Ngara, 1985:89). This was seen as suitable for Zimbabwe as the inherited colonial education's emphasis on paid employment and white-collar jobs was failing to instil good working habits, while not preparing school leavers for the world of work in an era of high unemployment rates (Nherera, 2000). The ministry was surely supposed to formulate policies that would address the major issues pertaining to the social, political and economic situation in the country. Therefore, it was necessary to review the education system.

Eighteen years after independence, the expansive and extensive provision of education necessitated setting up the Nziramasanga Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET) in January 1998. The commission, among other terms of reference (TOR) was to inquire into and report on "the inherited education system as to relevance, quality and orientation in a rapidly changing socio-economic environment'' (Nziramasanga, 1999).

The commission made extensive enquiries among the general populace of Zimbabwe and came up with numerous findings. However, only those findings linked to vocational education are presented here. The commission's findings regarding vocational education are presented below.

- The current secondary education was academically good but did not cater for the majority of the students neither did it prepare them for the world of work.
- People wondered what the use was of the education the students were receiving, as it did not link to the employment sector.
- In general, schools were under resourced.

The commission then went on to offer recommendations it thought would address the shortcomings. This study was particularly interested in the proposal to make a genuine shift from an education that was too academic and examination driven to one that emphasised experiential learning and was able to develop desirable traits and competencies in students. In short, the commission was recommending the vocationalisation of the secondary school curriculum, thereby catering for the various talents and interests of students and making the curriculum relevant to the needs and aspirations of the students and the nation at large (Nziramasanga 1999).

The commission also recommended how the programme should be implemented:

- Students who would follow the vocational and technical route would be required to undergo a designated period of attachment in order to have hands-on experience.
- Stakeholders who would include commerce, industry and the relevant professional boards would design the curriculum.

The Nziramasanga Commission's findings compelled the Zimbabwean Ministry of Education, Sports, Arts and Culture to take action, thereby generating a series of policy circulars directing schools to implement the recommendations of the commission on the implementation of vocational education.

Firstly, there was the Secretary's Circular Number 2 of 2001. The circular directed all secondary schools to offer at least one vocational or technical subject to all pupils doing "Ordinary Level". Before the said circular had been fully implemented, it was, unfortunately, cancelled and replaced by the Secretary's Circular Number 3 of 2002, which had to do with curriculum policy for primary and secondary schools. This circular advantaged academic subject by presenting them as core subjects while vocational and technical subjects were made optional. This came because of the change in the Permanent Secretaries of Education. Thus, 2002 saw schools forging ahead without any properly articulated policy to guide the implementation of vocational subjects. Schools were at liberty to do what they saw fit for

their schools, a situation that might have caused the undervaluing of the vocational and technical subjects in the country (Mandiudza, Chindedza & Makaye, 2013). Most schools, having been given this option, opted to have only a few of their students do the vocational subjects due to various reasons, especially a lack of resources (Mandiudza *et al.,* 2013).

Psacharopolous and Loxley (1985) posited that an academic education unrealistically exaggerates the educational and occupational aspirations of school graduates. They went further asserting that it creates an excessive demand for university education and highly valued jobs. This warning was heeded by the Zimbabwean government, which generated another policy circular in January 2006. This circular contained policy guidelines on the implementation of a two-pathway system of education. The programme would give learners a broad curriculum at form one and two levels after which they would be channelled to different pathways according to ability and interests at form three and four. This, from the director's point of view, was going to improve the education system and make the curriculum relevant. The director's policy circular was supported by the permanent secretary's policy circular number 77 of 2006, which ordered all schools to implement the two-pathway education structure in Zimbabwe, in line with the recommendations of the 1999 Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training.

From the discussion above, it is clear that the Nziramasanga Commission, through its recommendations, had managed to conscientise the government, through the Ministry of Education, concerning the need to offer vocational subjects but the implementation was problematic thereby letting everyone down. The recurrent calls to implement vocational and technical subjects bear testimony to this as these following circulars indicate; Principal Director's circular number 33 of 2010 entitled *"Policy Guidelines for offering Technical and Vocational Education"* and the director's policy circular number 45 of 2006 *"Assistance to Government and Mission Boarding Schools for Production and Skills Development purposes".* The latter contained guidelines on how schools could assess resources for vocational education, a development, which did not materialise (Mandiudza *et al.,* 2013).

The Herald of Thursday 29 July 2010, contained an article entitled '*School curriculum overhaul on cards,*' in which the then Minister of Education lamented the state of the curriculum saying it was not comprehensive and it was not in line with the recommendations of the Nziramasanga Commission. This non-implementation of policies prompts the current research into investigating the instructional practices that are in place and who the

instructional leaders are, in order to establish why, despite their value in the future lives of students and the developmental needs of the country, the vocational and technical subjects are not being effectively implemented thereby marginalising them. It is assumed that the implementers may be experiencing challenges; hence the need to investigate the instructional guidance they may be receiving.

The problem of unsuccessful implementation of vocational and technical subjects has become persistent. While all educators agree that it is the solution to a number of problems the country is facing, I am of the opinion that there has been no concerted effort to find out why this is the case, hence the importance of this study. The research set out to investigate the instructional guidance practices at school level, including those leaders in the contemporary life institutions outside the school, who influenced the subjects' instruction.

2.9. District policy

According to Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia, a district is a type of administrative division in some countries and is usually managed by a local government. These districts are further subdivided into clusters. According to Bantwini and Diko (2011), districts are geographical areas representing a designated area and a set of schools contained within its boundaries. In Zimbabwe, ten (10) provinces are geographically divided into districts. One of the provinces is Masvingo, which contains seven (7) districts, of which Masvingo district is one. In the Masvingo district, there are fifty-nine (59) secondary schools. Forty-six (46) are registered while thirteen (13) are satellite schools.

Districts, as noted by researchers and observers, do not normally formulate policies but instead implement those handed down to them from the national or head offices through the provincial offices. This is strongly echoed by Bantwini & Diko (2011) who says districts should be viewed as implementers of state policies, hence seeing them as useless in educational issues of the schools. These are normally policies aimed at bringing about changes in practices (Firestone & Martinez, 2007). Since policies are formulated at the top, at national offices, this ensures uniformity in all the districts of the country.

Of all the schools in the Masvingo district, very few do not fall under the district's local education authority (LEA). Some schools are privately owned, some are run by different

church organisations whereas others are governmentally owned. The selected sample included schools from all of these different local authorities.

The districts are composed of a management committee chaired by a district education officer (DEO). The education officers (EOs), district resource teachers (DRTs), cluster chairpersons and stakeholders' representatives are the members of the committee. As a district committee, there are roles that they play, specifically to assist schools to improve instruction but they do not formulate their own policies. Rather, they implement those handed down from above and make sure that schools administer them and follow the stipulated regulations. As alluded to earlier on, districts are therefore just administrative arms of the country's Ministry of Education.

However, the districts can influence instruction. Some of the roles they play and the tasks that they engage in have a bearing on instruction. According to Firestone and Martinez (2007), districts do monitor instruction through the EOs who visit schools and monitor the teachers' activities. They check on the different aspects of the school, for example, use of resources and even observe lessons. The districts do not set tests but they are responsible for monitoring their implementation and also for undertaking the analysis of these tests for onward transmission to the provincial office.

Literature from other countries does suggest that district personnel, as the education system's leaders, determines the principal's effectiveness in leading school improvements by creating conditions conducive to working well or not (Bottoms &Schmidt-Davis, 2010). The central government does include district leaders in their programmes of improving school reforms. Districts have to create conditions that enable the principals to be effective in leading reforms. If districts and states fail to do so, reform programmes are bound to fail. Districts have to be supportive of school systems and create the right vision for their schools with the help of the state (Bottoms & Schmidt-Davis, 2010).

2.10 Theoretical framework

2.10.1 The distributed leadership framework

To investigate leadership for school success, the study adopted the Distributed Leadership (DL) perspective as developed by Spillane *et al.* (2004). The framework was useful in operationalising the aim and objectives of the study and in highlighting the theme of

leadership, focusing on who the leaders are and how they guide the instruction of the vocational and technical subjects. The framework, as mentioned, is based on the realisation that the principals' days are filled with activities of management so that they are, therefore, often too busy with the day-to-day responsibilities of running schools and sometimes have little time left for instructional leadership (Enueme & Egwunyenga, 2008). Because the days of lonely instructional leaders are over, substantial participation of other educators is required thus; Spillane (2006) presents a leadership view that is a shared, socially influenced process.

Schools are complex open systems (Owen, 2004). Consequently, it is unrealistic for anyone to expect the principal to be an expert in all subjects or school matters, hence the need to delegate leadership to others. Elmore (2000) advocated for this leadership perspective as he argued that people must lead where and when they are experts. The literature on leadership has mainly focused on those in formal leadership positions, forgetting that leadership practice is not just an organisational property (Spillane *et al.,* 2004). Leadership, through the lens of a distributed perspective is not what the school principal or any other individual or group leaders know and do but is "the activities engaged in by leaders, in interaction with others in particular contexts around specific tasks" (Spillane *et al.,* 2004:3). Leadership is not to be seen as a purview of the school principal because teacher leaders and other professionals also play important roles in leading and guiding instruction; consequently the need for the DL perspective (Smylie& Denny, 1990; Firestone, 1989). The perspective is a theory conceived of as a blend of supervision, staff development and curriculum development, which facilitates school improvement (Smith & Andrews, 1989). It is leadership that goes beyond the work of some individual positional leaders extend beyond the characteristics of a leader to, in addition, consider or assess the activities of leaderships (Spillane *et al.,* 2001). It is a non-hierarchical leadership system, which is inclusive in its approach, empowers all personnel and encourages their participation (Spillane *et al.,* 2001). It criticises the focus on positional leaders but encourages knowing the how of leadership and capturing instructional leaders interacting with one another, their followers and the context surrounding the work of teaching and learning (Wright, 2008; Spillane & Diamond, 2007). The DL concept replaces the model of a single leader who directs the entire school community to his/her purposes (Timberley, 2005) but is leadership in terms of activities and interactions that are distributed across multiple people and situations (Spillane *et al.,* 2004). In this approach, attention shifts from people's actions to their social interactions. Instructional guidance practices for vocational

and technical subjects call for the different school stakeholders to take up leadership functions as dictated by the situation and their own interests and expertise only then can change be facilitated (Wright, 2008).

DL is a non-hierarchical approach that fosters collaborative practice (Wright, 2008). This collaboration positively affects reforms because in most cases, people feel alienated and powerless if they are not included in the leadership and this negatively influences reforms. The DL lens illuminates what scholars know about instructional leaders in interaction with one another, their followers and particular contexts as they work towards the improvement of teaching and learning (Neumerski, 2013).

The said lens illuminated this study as the researcher wanted to explore the 'how' of instructional leadership practices. It was, therefore, necessary to observe instructional leaders in interactions with one another, their followers, who the teachers were in the context of the school and the work of teaching and learning (Spillane & Diamond, 2007), thereby establishing how they guide the instruction of vocational and technical subjects.

2.10.2. Vocational pedagogy

Vocational and technical education is mainly centred on the provision of materials, activities and teaching that is designed to prepare people for specific jobs (Lucas *et al.,* 2012; Pullen, 2012). That preparation is not haphazardly done but according to Lucas *et al.* (2012) is informed by a theory on how these subjects are to be taught, in other words, the vocational pedagogy. These authors agree that vocational education is quite difficult to implement but nonetheless, it is valuable and should be respected in its own right. Vocational pedagogy/instruction involves real time, real world activities with an opportunity to have a coach or guide who acts as a guiding hand throughout the process of instruction (Lucas *et al.,* 2012).

Vocational pedagogy refers to how one engages learners to understand the particular kinds of learning on which they are embarking, in order to achieve the desired vocational outcomes (Lucas *et al.,* 2012) and is based on the theory of constructivism, a career and technical education perspective developed by Doolittle and Camp (1999). The major factors of this pedagogy, if taken into consideration when planning the vocational and technical subjects' reforms, will assist in their effective instruction.

To develop an effective pedagogy, one first looks back to see what vocational education entails, especially why it is offered (Boateng, 2012), after which the pedagogy used has to ensure the satisfaction of that rationale. Vocational education should be viewed as a programme of high-status that must be valued. It also requires excellent teaching and a highly skilled workforce hence, the importance of this study, which sought to investigate the instructional guidance practices of the workforce in the instruction of vocational and technical subjects (Lucas *et al.,* 2012). When one, as a planner, knows what vocational and technical education is for and what the outcomes should be, it should be possible to develop a suitable pedagogy together with the teachers of those subjects. As an example, in the United Kingdom there was the need for a highly skilled workforce. The development of that workforce was dependent on how vocational and technical subjects were taught (Boateng, 2012; Pullen, 2012).

The necessity of training a highly skilled workforce was urgent, as the country's economy needed to grow. Therefore, they required people with expertise to cope with the everyday scenarios, people who

- are resourceful and able to solve tricky life problems
- have functional literacy to explain solutions to clients/customers,
- have the craftsman's desire to do a job well and
- have wider skills to be able to innovate solutions for future problems (Pullen, 2012)

The above outcomes of vocational education are therefore the basis for a theory of vocational pedagogy, a pedagogy that will enable the development of a suitable workforce to facilitate the attainment of vocational and technical education's goals.

The vocational pedagogy is based on the philosophy of realism; a school of thought that stresses that the knowledge students gain must be based on the realities of life, which govern their teaching. Realism brings the child into contact with real things, which alters verbal knowledge into practical knowledge (Doolittle & Camp, 1999). Montaigne and Comenius are some of the proponents of this philosophy. They advocate that teaching, which refers to imparting of knowledge, should not be a form of spoon-feeding by the teacher but should be a direct method that brings students into contact with reality on their own. The teacher should act as a tutor who explores the many and varied aspects of a particular subject with the students in order to develop a practical and successful individual, able to make sound

judgements in life. These judgements should be based on what the child will have experienced, since experience is the best teacher. It should be a multifaceted pedagogy directing students to the attainment of universal knowledge, which enables the child to improve his/her life (Doolittle & Camp, 1999). The investigation of vocational and technical education instruction (the external occurrences designed to support the learning of vocational and technical subjects) is guided by the philosophy of realism in terms of judging to what extent teachers endeavour and are able to bring the child into contact with the real world.

The vocational pedagogy is based on the constructivist theory, which propounds that learners should construct their own knowledge from what they experience (Doolittle & Camp, 1999). Philosophically, this theory stresses that knowledge is not gained in a passive way but by actively interacting with it (knowledge). The theory acknowledges the learner's active role in creating personal knowledge. Vocational education, as already stated, is there to produce skilled personnel who are able to cope with everyday challenges.

With regard to the constructivist theory, which informs the vocational pedagogy, instructional leaders have to make sure that

1. Learning takes place in an authentic and real world environment. According to Doolittle and Camp (1999), authentic experiences are essential for the construction of the accurate representation of the world for which the educators are preparing the student. The trainers or teachers must therefore, create situations in their teaching that present the real world to the students.

2. Learners should be involved in social negotiation and mediation. This provides for the development of socially relevant skills that enable the student to function effectively in the workplace environment.

3. The content and skills must be relevant to the learner and be based upon the learners' prior knowledge. Relevancy of the content and skills is likely to lead to motivation. Teachers have to provide classroom instruction which meets the student-trainee's job needs, making whatever teaching is given, relevant to life (Doolittle & Camp, 1999)

4. Students must be formatively assessed, which will serve to inform future learning experiences. Formative assessment is crucial for the development of other future experiences for students. For vocational education, which is competency based, on-going evaluation is necessary for modifications to be carried out on the part of the student in order to master the relevant skills, progressively.

5. Teachers are to serve as guides and facilitators of learning, not instructors. The constructivist theory, which informs the pedagogical approach to vocational education, views teachers as guides who transmit knowledge thus, the teacher is called upon to create situations in the classroom for the students to interact with. The teachers should also provide for and encourage multiple perspectives and representations of the content to be taught.

For vocational education to be successful, in order to be able to meet its obligation to society and its students, its pedagogy must include identification of skills to be transmitted to students, skills that will enable them to fit into the world of work; skills and attitudes specific to vocational fields where they will work as employees or as self-employed. Sources in Boateng (2012) advocated for this as a universal justification for providing vocational education (provision of occupational skills for employment). It goes further by asserting that for the instruction to be successful the following conditions had to be met,

- Workshops, tools, equipment and materials have to be made available to the implementing institutions
- More time for instruction, especially for practical work must be provided
  Trained assessors are required to assess student's competences formatively in the work place or the classroom
- Competent, skilled and proficient teachers are required

Vocational education, in most cases, must respond to the economic, technological, demographic, societal and educational contexts in which it is practised (Boateng, 2012). Therefore, it requires a pedagogy that will enable imparting the necessary skills to individuals for employability and maintenance of that employment. This study consequently sought to investigate how teachers are supported in order to be able to offer that kind of education. Furthermore, to assess how they implement that education this study specifically looked at the instructional practices of all leaders involved, especially at the schools level, which are the implementation sites.

The distributed leadership framework and the vocational pedagogy perspectives jointly informed this study. The distributed leadership frame informed me on the instructional leadership qualities that may enhance students' success. The vocational pedagogy informed me on how the leadership activities, centred on instruction, are appropriate for the vocational

and technical subjects. The researcher, therefore, established a framework that is a combination of the two to undergird the study. The tenets of the vocational pedagogy assisted in checking the effectiveness of the instructional practices that leaders engage in. It assessed the suitability of the instructional guidance practices offered, answering the major question regarding what the dominant instructional leaders' behaviours and practices are for vocational and technical subjects in schools. The vocational pedagogy theory assisted in checking if the instructional practices are suitable for the attainment of the goals of vocational education.

The distributed leadership framework, together with the vocational pedagogic framework produces a framework in which instructional leaders work together for the success of school reforms as leaders who have visions and aspirations they can develop into actions (Waters& Cameron, 2007). Therefore, the actions of the leaders are governed by the way the vocational programmes are implemented by the vocational pedagogy. Ultimately, we have leaders who interact with each other within the correct pedagogy to implement the vocational education reforms.

2.11. Chapter summary

The review has examined the literature related to certain aspects of vocational education. The literature brought out the meaning of vocational education from different perspectives. Although this study investigates vocational education as it is offered in secondary schools, with the main aim of bridging the gap between theory and practical work, other aspects reviewed the meaning of the term, its nature, modes of provision, justification of its inclusion in the schools' curricula and its instructional leadership. Policies that govern instruction were also discussed. Besides describing the various forms of provision for vocational education, there is a void in the literature as to who the leaders are and how exactly these leaders enact the leadership functions. The intention in undertaking this study has been to fill in this gap. The next chapter discusses the research methodology that was adopted in conducting the investigation.

CHAPTER THREE: Research   Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Chapter two presented a review of literature on instructional leadership and guidance practices. The review also brought to light the nature of vocational education and the policies that guide instruction. From the literature, it emerged that effective leadership is an essential factor for any educational reform or programme to be successful. It also emerged that a link exists between policy and practice. The findings from the literature guided this study in investigating the said practices for vocational and technical subjects.

Chapter three describes and justifies the research methodology chosen for this study. It elucidates the research approach and the design as well as stating the location of the research and the population of the study. The sample and how it was selected from the population (sampling procedure), the data collection instruments and the data analysis procedure are explained. An overview of the research methodology employed appears in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Research methodology overview

Title	Instructional guidance for marginalised subjects in Zimbabwe: a case study of the vocational and technical subjects in Masvingo District.
Research Approach	Qualitative; interpretative paradigm
Research Design	Multiple (collective) case study
Selection of Participants	**Purposive sampling** Ten schools offering the highest number of vocational and technical subjects were selected. **Convenience sampling** Selection of schools accessible to the researcher whose leaders became the research participants.
Data Collection Methods	Semi-structured interviews Focus group discussions Document analysis Observations
Data Analysis	Narrative and content analysis. First describe the data then analyse bringing out themes.
Ethical Considerations	Researcher was a non-participant observer. Sought informed consent from the participants. Voluntary participation. Confidentiality was assured. Participants protected from harm.
Criteria for checking quality	Research study results are to be confirmable, credible, dependable and transferable.

3.2. Research approach

The study adopted the qualitative research approach methods which enable the gathering of data on naturally occurring phenomena and the study of behaviour in natural settings (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Shastri (2008) calls this qualitative approach descriptive research, which emphasises "What is", thereby making use of non-quantitative methods to describe the state of phenomena. Qualitative approaches probe deeply into the research setting to obtain an in-depth understanding of the way things are, why they are that way and how the participants in the context perceive them (Gay, Mills &Airasium 2009 in Ballantyne 2012:13). This made the approach suitable for this study. It was framed within an interpretive paradigm in order to understand the meanings of the people's actions (Creswell, 2007).Based on the research question and the purpose of this study, which requires an in-depth examination of the instructional leaders' guidance practices, a qualitative approach was found to be suitable for the study of the support given to teachers while they were acting in the school settings (Kombo & Tromp 2006). Characteristics of qualitative research, as specified by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), warrant the use of this approach and are discussed in the thesis.

As mentioned earlier on, the qualitative approach needs to be conducted **in natural settings**. This means that there is no need for controlling behaviour or imposing external constraints on the variables. Instructional leadership guidance practices are a phenomenon that is planned and enacted in schools by leaders who have to monitor its implementation. It must therefore, be left to occur naturally; hence, the need for an approach that encourages investigations in natural settings. There was no need for the researcher to manipulate or control the prevailing school or classroom settings or the behaviours of the instructional leaders whose practices were to be investigated. I also wished to gain a thorough and holistic overview of the instructional leadership guidance systems and practices for vocational and technical subjects; hence, the use of the qualitative approach which involves interacting with the everyday life activities of people (Gray, 2009; McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). How the HODs, the heads of schools the Education Officers and the District Education Officer, as instructional leaders, enact their roles in support of the teachers for vocational education, undisturbed, is what I wished to understand.

The qualitative approach is also **context sensitive** (McMillan & Schumacher 2010:322).Human actions are strongly influenced by the settings in which they occur. Thus,

using this approach, the instructional guidance practices were studied in the school environments where the instruction actually occurred. Furthermore, the qualitative approach was deemed suitable due to the use of the interpretative approach (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).It is necessary to interpret behaviour contextually as it is influenced by its environment. The place where the vocational and technical education is provided was thus of great importance to this study with regard to the guidance practices of the leaders. Therefore, there was a need for me, as the researcher, to be in contact with the instructional guidance leaders within their field of operation or real life settings (Miles & Huberman 1994). The diverse school environments, in which the instructional leadership practices were enacted, for example, were also taken into consideration. For these reasons, these diverse types of schools were explored as the contexts affecting the leadership practices. There were schools in the urban centres, in mining areas and some in rural areas in the Masvingo district, which were studied. The leadership practices enacted during meetings, in their various forms, were also observed in their natural states; hence, as explained, the selection of this approach as appropriate. I needed to be sensitive to the context as meaning is bound by social, political, gender, racial and technological factors in each environment (McMillan & Schumacher 2010). How and where the routines take place in their natural states within those diverse school environments was important to take note of.

Since qualitative data had to be collected directly from the source, the method demanded that I, as the researcher, have direct interaction with the instructional leaders; the principals, the department chairpersons and other teacher leaders. Their activities were observed, available documents and artefacts were analysed and the relevant people were interviewed. This data triangulation ensured that the data were authentic.

The qualitative approach requires that in order to gain a true picture of the instructional leadership practices, rich descriptions of all that which was observed must be captured in the form in which they occurred. Nothing should escape the researcher's scrutiny (McMillan & Schumacher 2010).

The researcher must understand participants from their own point of view and the meaning of the events and actions must be taken as expressed by the latter; hence the suitability of the qualitative approach which stresses the **participant's perspectives** (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010).

Bogdan and Biklen also stress the idea that the qualitative approach is an **"Emergent design''**, meaning that as a researcher, one has to start the research study with a "mentally clean" mind (Bogdan & Biklen 1992:54). No preconceptions should be allowed to influence the study but as one studies the settings, the people and all other sources of data one would then gain fuller knowledge of the methods used. The situation on the ground dictates the most appropriate methods and those that were originally planned may need to be changed to suit the situation. To study behaviour, there is need to use a sufficiently complex approach, such as the qualitative approach. The latter assisted in yielding appropriate and useful data from natural settings, data that answered my main concern (i.e. how instructional guidance systems and practices are constructed for the vocational and technical subjects?)

3.3. Research design

The qualitative research approach may be conducted in a variety of ways. This study, being naturalistic, warranted the use of a case study design. A case study is an empirical inquiry that can be used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context (Yin 2003). It is quite suitable for the 'how' and 'why' questions being asked about some contemporary events over which the researcher has no control (Gray 2009). A case study enables the researcher to understand how things are done in a particular situation and represents a situation where the researcher investigates real people in real life situations (Cohen *et al* 2007). As discussed, the instructional leadership practices for vocational and technical subjects constitute the phenomenon to be investigated in the schools where they are enacted. As they did not need to be controlled but simply observed in their natural environments, adopting the case study design was thus deemed appropriate.

McMillan and Schumacher (2010) describe a case study as an in-depth analysis of a single entity. This means a researcher has to select a single case that he/she wishes to study. In this regard, Creswell (2007), in McMillan and Schumacher (2010) points out that a case study is an in-depth exploration of a bounded system, which is an activity, an event, process or individuals that are to be studied, and also that the study has to be based on extensive data collection. McMillan and Schumacher (2010) also note that there are several types of case studies. This is echoed by Creswell (2007) who also identifies different types of case studies distinguished from each other by sizes. The case may involve one individual (single entity), several individuals, a group, an entire programme or an activity. They may also be distinguished in terms of intent, such as the single instrumental case study, the collective or

multiple case studies and the intrinsic case study. The present study used the collective case study, sometimes known as a multiple or multisite case study (McMillan & Schumacher 2010). In this case, ten schools were selected and these are where the instructional guidance practices were studied. A number of different cases are combined in a single study. The researcher thus studied more than one school setting where instructional guidance activities were enacted by different leaders. The researcher purposefully selected ten schools to provide different perspectives on the issue of instructional guidance of the vocational and technical subjects.

Masvingo district, where the investigation was undertaken, has ten schools which were selected and each considered to be a case. These schools were then combined in this study to form a bounded system for studying instructional leadership practices. Yin (2003) supports the idea of a multisite case study by arguing that it strengthens the data and can be used to investigate a research issue using more than one example. The schools are separate units but, because they all offer vocational and technical subjects, they were considered as a single case. The characteristics of the qualitative approach described in Section 3.2 also supported the use of a case study design. Cohen *et al* (2007) assert that this is able to yield data that is grounded in reality as no manipulation of variables is carried out and data are sourced from different sites thereby making behaviour and other social issues understood.

Alderman *et al,* (1980) in Cohen *et al*, (2007:253) described a case study as "the study of an instance in action." The single instance is of a bounded system which provides unique examples of real people in real situations, which enable readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply presenting them with abstract theories or principles. The selected schools where instructional guidance practices were studied provided an example of real situations that assisted the researcher in understanding the practices better, thereby helping in the understanding of the situation in other similar schools.

Case studies are analytical and researchers are therefore able to develop theories that may assist to understand other similar cases, phenomena or situations. There is ultimately a need to understand instructional leadership practices in all the Masvingo district secondary schools which are similar to the ones studied, hence the use of this multiple case study design. The evidence produced from the single case can only be generalized to a multiplicity of cases with the same features. In this case, evidence may be generalizable only to other secondary schools in Masvingo district of Zimbabwe which offer vocational and technical subjects.

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) in Cohen *et al* (2007:253) presented the following features of the case study method that make it suitable for this qualitative study:

- Use of rich and vivid description of events relevant to the case
- Chronological narration of events as demanded by the case
- A blend of descriptions and an analysis of events
- Focus is on actors in order to understand their perceptions of events
- The researcher is deeply involved in the case
- A rich portrayal of the case in the report.

The above mentioned characteristics made the case study design suitable for the present study. Rich and vivid descriptions of the instructional leadership practices for vocational education were needed. The descriptions were also analysed in order to facilitate their comprehensibility. The focus of the study was placed on the actors of the instructional leadership practices and, as intimated, the investigations sought to understand the leaders' perceptions of the instructional practices of vocational education. Yin (2003) concurred with the work done by Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) in stressing that for case studies, the researcher has to write a compelling report-back thereby clearly portraying the richness of the case that would have been studied. It was my intention, by carrying out this investigation, to produce an authentic report on the instructional leadership practices for vocational education in the Masvingo district of Zimbabwe for the benefit of not only the readers but the education fraternity.

Case study data collection is extensive and varied, depending on the question and situation. The researcher had to gather all the information required in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the instructional guidance practices. This, consequently, demanded the use of multiple methods of collecting data. According to Groenewald (1986), a single source of data is insufficient; as a result, case studies, for example, use direct observations and interviews as well as analysis of official and even unofficial documents. The instruments used in this study are explained in Section 3. A summary of the multiple case study steps adopted for this study is recorded in Table 3.2 below.

Table3.2. Conducting a multiple case study

STAGE	WHAT WAS DONE IN THE STUDY
1. Identifying cases to provide in-depth information of the issue at hand.	Schools that offer vocational and technical subjects extensively were identified so as to adequately address the issue of the instructional guidance of diverse subjects.
2. Consideration of the most useful type of a case study for the issue (single or collective etc.).	Multiple case study method was chosen in order to be able to compare results: ten schools were selected and the Instructional Leaders for the said subjects in those schools were the participants.
3. Selection of cases that present different perspectives on the problem.	Variety of schools chosen together with the district and provincial personnel in charge of the vocational and technical subjects.
4. Collection of data drawing extensively on multiple sources of information and using different strategies.	Semi-structured interviews Focus group discussions Observations as well as document analysis were used on different participants on different sites.

The case study, according to Yin (2003), has some disadvantages, but the researcher attempted to mitigate these in various ways. Firstly, considering that there could be several possible cases to choose from, the researcher may find it difficult to choose the best case. This was mitigated by considering the schools that contained all the variables needed to answer the main research question. Secondly, a case study may lack the necessary rigour and become disordered and not follow systematic procedures. As illustrated in the table above, the researcher tried to be as systematic as possible. It may also allow biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions and provides little basis for

generalization: the argument, as stated earlier on, being that one cannot generalise from a single case. The data can however be generalized to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universal sets (Cohen *et al,* 2007). My aim in carrying out this research study was not necessarily to generalise results but to understand how the teachers of these marginalised subjects are guided and supported in schools. Are the instructional leaders supporting these subjects enough to make them viable in schools?

3.4 Research site

The site that is to be chosen is one in which all the variables are present and can be studied (McMillan & Schumacher 2010). The chosen district has 46 registered and 13 satellite secondary schools. Only ten registered schools were studied. These were selected because they offer a considerable number of vocational subjects and comprised a mixture of schools under different responsible authorities (Local Education Authorities): government, privately owned, district councils and church organisations, as long as they were geographically situated in the said district. The researcher selected the schools conveniently on the basis of accessibility- as being not very far away from the district's central town, Masvingo, in which the researcher resides (Kombo & Tromp, 2009; Best & Kahn 1993).

3.5 Study population

Defining the population is important to enable the reader to know exactly to which population the conclusions apply. The population is the group of people from which a sample for study is chosen or selected (Borg & Gall, 1995; Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Groenewald (2004) also asserts that it is a specific group of people to which the characteristics of subjects are being referred, compared and generalised, while Tuckman (2011) defines it as the target group from which the researcher wants to get information about the problem or phenomenon of interest and then draw conclusions. These definitions helped in establishing the criteria for specifying who to include or exclude from the population. They facilitated the selection of a suitable sample. As previously discussed, the population for this study included all Heads of secondary schools, all Heads of Departments for vocational and technical subjects and vocational education teachers, the Masvingo District Education Officer (DEO) and the practical subjects inspectors for all the 46 registered secondary schools in Masvingo District of Zimbabwe. In short therefore, the population group for this study included all the people who are in leadership positions, who have the role of influencing others to improve

vocational education instructional practices. As alluded to earlier on, they are the people who are concerned with the instructional leadership of vocational subjects in all the 46 registered secondary schools in Masvingo District, in Zimbabwe.

3.6 Sample

According to Leedy (1997), a sample is the subset of the population chosen for study. Normally, a sample has to be chosen to reduce costs for travelling and save the researcher the strenuous and impossible labour of carrying out research on the whole population. For the present study, the sample was made up of the ten selected secondary schools that offer vocational education of a relatively higher standard than others, based on the 2012 'O' level ZIMSEC examination results. The heads or principals, the deputy heads and all the teacher leaders in these selected schools comprised the study sample. The Masvingo district personnel, in charge of leading the vocational and technical subjects, and the subjects' inspectors formed part of the sample as well.

3.7 Sampling procedure

The process of selecting the portion of the population for study (sample) is referred to as sampling, which has to be carried out in a manner that will enable one to answer the research question (Maree 2007). For this study, purposive and convenience sampling strategies were used. Convenience sampling is sometimes called accidental or opportunity sampling (McMillan & Schumacher 2010). It involves choosing the nearest individuals to serve as respondents to the research study (Cohen *et al* (2007). The researcher continues selecting these elements until the desired sample size has been obtained. It amounts to choosing people or sites to which one has access. In the present study, convenience sampling was used to select all the schools which were easy to reach (Moore, 2009). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) also observe that convenience sampling is economical and saves time. This was very apposite as the researcher had limited time and scarce resources to use for carrying out the research, which was not funded.

From the schools that were easy to reach, I purposively sampled the schools that offer the highest numbers of vocational and technical subjects. Purposive sampling is used mostly to build a sample which satisfies the needs of the researcher. It is the researcher who handpicks the cases he or she wants included in the sample, by judging their type and their possession of the particular characteristics being sought in the research study. The respondents are chosen

for being able to satisfy a specific purpose; this makes the strategy suitable for qualitative research and also convenient (Cohen *et al* 2007). In this study I needed participants who are responsible for leading the implementation of vocational and technical subjects. Participants who possessed knowledge of the support provided to teachers as they implement the vocational education programmes.

Purposive sampling satisfies the needs of the researcher but may not represent the wider population as it is deliberately selective and may be biased. It is, however, quite suitable for this study as it is used to access knowledgeable people, those who possess in-depth knowledge about the instructional guidance of vocational and technical subjects (McMillan & Schumacher 2010). The people chosen for this study were knowledgeable in this regard. In making the selection, the researcher could not allow bias as that would be disadvantaging her research by skewing the results. This was quite unnecessary as there was no payment for participating in the study. A choice simply needed to be made from the population of people who are instructional leaders in the area of vocational education. For example, the principals had to be selected on the basis of their professional role of instructional leadership in their schools. I purposefully targeted a group of schools believed to be reliable and which would provide information rich cases on the instructional guidance practices for vocational and technical subjects, as mentioned, the central issue being investigated (Kombo & Tromp 2006)

From the population of this study that was defined earlier on, the researcher sampled schools/sites that offered a variety of vocational and technical subjects. A further selection criterion used was those with 75% or more of their Ordinary Level ('O' Level) candidates registered to write a vocational or technical subject for the November, 2013 Zimbabwe Schools Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) examinations and who additionally had fairly good examination results for 2012. It was from these selected schools that I then identified participants for the study (Kombo & Tromp 2006). Information about the selected schools is summarised in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3 THE SELECTED SCHOOLS/RESEARCH SITES

Schools	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
Enrolment	386	675	1207	1450	337	1380	1426	166	429	995
Teacher Establishment	19	29	51	60	25	64	59	10	29	55
SUBJECTS ON OFFER										
1.Agriculture	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Art	✓						✓			
3. Building Studies	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓			
4. Computer Studies		✓	✓			✓	✓			
5. Fashion and Fabrics	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6. Food and Nutrition			✓			✓	✓		✓	✓
7. Music		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓
8. Technical Graphics			✓			✓	✓			✓
9. Metalwork						✓	✓		✓	✓
10. Woodwork		✓				✓	✓		✓	✓
11. Physical Education						✓	✓			✓
12. Textile Clothing Design						✓	✓			✓
13. Bakery						✓			✓	
14. Garment Construction									✓	
15. Food and Beverage Preparation						✓				
16. Machineshop engineering						✓			✓	
17. Horticulture		✓								

The selected schools offer a total of sixteen (16) vocational and technical subjects. These were found to be quite sufficient to provide information on how their instruction is guided and supported in the district schools. Subjects offered in schools range from three (3) to sixteen (16).

3.8 Research Participants

Table 3.4 below provides an overview/summary of the biographical data of the heads of the selected schools.

Table 3.4 THE SCHOOL HEADS

School	Gender	Qualification	Subject specialisation	Total Work Experience	Experience as Head
A	M	CE, BEd, MEd (Admin)	History Geography	31	23
B	M	CE, BA MEd	Primary English	26	5
C	M	BEd, CE	Sciences	33	13
D	M	BEd CE BCom MEd, MBA	Geography Agriculture Management Administration	23	15
E	M	BSC (Honours) Grad DE	Economics Commerce	21	15
F	F	BA Grad CE	English History	27	12
G	F	BA , Grad CE	Shona Divinity	34	17
H	F	CE BEd (Admin)	Home Economics	25	10
I	M	CE (Primary) BA	History Education	29	12
J	M	CE (Primary) BA	Education Biblical Studies Shona English	34	25

KEY: **A-J** School Codes; **CE**- Certificate in Education; **BEd**- Bachelor of Education degree; **MEd**- Masters in Education degree; **BA**- Bachelor of Education degree; **BCom**- Bachelor of Commerce; **MBA**- Masters in Business Administration; **BSc**- Bachelor of Science degree. **Grad CE**- Graduate Certificate in Education; **Grad DE**- Graduate Diploma in Education

The heads of the selected ten schools were automatically included in the research sample due to their role of instructional leadership. Having selected the schools for study, the heads were visited at their schools where individual interviews were conducted in their offices after they had filled in informed consent forms confirming their understanding and willingness to participate (**Appendix B7).**

The HODs for vocational and technical subjects in the schools who participated in the study are provided in the table below.

Table 3.5 THE HEADS of DEPARTMENTS

Name/Code	Gender	Qualifications	Subject specialisation	Subject being taught	Experience as Teacher/ HOD		Members in the department	Subjects being led
AH1	F	CE, BEd	Home Economics	F/F	21	16	3	Art Agriculture Building studies F/F
BH1	F	CE, BEd	Home Economics	F/F	19	12	4	Music Computers Woodwork Agriculture F/Fabrics
CH1	F	Dip Ed, BEd Grade 5Music Certificate	History French Music	History Music	23	18	4	Music TG Building Studies
DH1	F	Dip Ed BEd NFC	Home Economics Clothing & Textiles Garment Construction	Fashion and Fabrics	12	2	4	Home Economics
DH2	M	Dip Ed	Building Studies and Maths	Building Studies	23	18	2	Building Studies
DH3	F	CE BEd BSC(Agric)	Agriculture		25	6	1	Agriculture

EH1	M	BSC(Agric) Dip Ed CE FETC	Agriculture	Agriculture	19	10	6	Business English Bookkeeping FF Agriculture Horticulture
FH1	M	Dip Ed	Computer Science Maths	Computers	13	10	1	Computer Science
FH2	M	C.E	Agriculture	Agriculture	36	32	2	Agriculture
FH3	M	Dip Ed CE	Wood Technology		34	5	6	TG Woodwork Metalwork
FH4	F	Dip Ed Bed MEd	Home Economics	F/N	14	2	6	Home Economics subjects Textile & Clothing design
GH1	F	Dip Ed BEd	Home Economics, FF	FF TCD	20	4	7	FN FF TCD Bakery
GH2	M	CE	TG & Science	TG	23	6	7	Metalwork Woodwork Building TG
GH3	F	CE Dip Ed	Agriculture	Agriculture	18	6	5	Agriculture Music Art PE
HH1	M	CE BA MEd (Admin) FETC	Agriculture English	English Science Agriculture	22	10	1	Agriculture Fashion and Fabrics
IH1	F	CE	Home Economics	FF	31	24	2	FN FF
IH2	M	CE	MM	MM	23	9	2	MW WW
JH1	F	CE BEd (Admin)	Home Economics	FF Bakery Studies	26	16	4	Home Economics Bakery Studies TCD
JH2	M	STC	MM	MM	28	6	6	Art Music Woodwork T.G P.E

KEY

CODES USED

A - J-: Denote Schools   **H**:   Denotes Heads of Departments

Numbers 1-4: Denote number of HODs in a school. **AH1** means School A HoD 1

QUALIFICATIONS KEY

CE – Certificate in Education; **STC** – Secondary Teacher Certificate; **NFC** – National Foundation Certificate; **Dip Ed** – Diploma in Education; **BEd** – Bachelor of Education degree; **BSc(Agric)** – Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture; **BEd (Admin)** – Bachelor of education in Administration; **Med(Admin)** – Masters in Education majoring in Administration; **FETC** – Further Education Teacher's Certificate.

SUBJECTS KEY

FF – Fashion and fabrics; **FN** – Food and Nutrition; **TG** – Technical Graphics; **MW** – Metalwork; **WW** – Woodwork; **PE** – Physical Education; **TCD** – Textiles and Clothing Design

The researcher was directed to the HODs by the heads of the selected schools. These were then requested to fill in the consent forms after the study had been explained to them. Subsequently, they were visited individually for the interviews at the appointed times.

The data presented in Table 3 reveal that the nineteen (19) HODs, nine (9) males and ten (10) females, are all qualified to teach the subjects they are teaching. Their teaching experience is quite significant and ranges from twelve (12) to thirty-six (36) years as teachers and two (2) to thirty-two (32) years as HODs. The HODs lead two to six department members with some leading more than one subject area. An example is HoD BH1 who leads four members teaching Music, Computer Studies, Woodwork and Agriculture. The same applies to HODs AH1, CH1, EH1, JH2 and GH3. The manner in which they lead and provide instructional guidance is discussed in the next chapter. All the HODs were visited at their schools where informed consent was sought from them. The interviews were conducted in their offices or workshops.

3.9 Vocational and Technical Subjects Teachers

The HODs in the schools assisted the researcher by calling the teachers together so that I could introduce myself; explain the purpose of my visit and that of my research study. Those willing to participate then filled in the consent forms after which dates and times for the focus group discussions were set. Sixty teachers agreed to take part and the table below, Table 3.6, summarises the number of participants in each focus groups. Further details about the groups are presented in Section 3.8.2, where the focus group interview technique is discussed.

Table 3.6 Composition of focus groups

SCHOOLS	FEMALE PARTICIPANTS	MALE PARTICIPANTS	TOTALS
A	0	2	2
B	1	2	3
C	2	1	3
D	6	0	6
E	3	0	3
F	10	6	16
G	4	8	12
I	4	1	5
J	6	4	10
TOTALS	36	24	60

3.10 The Education Inspectors

Two Education Inspectors were interviewed. Both are stationed at the Provincial Office as they must monitor the teaching of vocational and technical subjects in all the seven districts of the province. Their profiles are as follows;

Rose[1] is a holder of a Diploma in Education (Home Economics), a Bachelor of Education degree (Food and Consumer Sciences) and a Masters of Technical Education degree (Human Nutrition). Rose was a teacher from 1996 until 2012 when she was appointed acting Education Officer (EO). She is in charge of all the Home Economics subjects offered by the schools in the province. Knowing that there were EOs for these vocational subjects, I personally visited the provincial offices where I sought Rose's consent to participate in the study.

Robert is also a holder of a Secondary School Teacher Certificate (STC) in Metal Work and Woodwork, a Bachelor of Education degree in Metal Technology and a Masters' degree in Metal Technology and Design. Robert worked in the Ministry of Education for thirty-four years as a teacher, school head and as an Education Inspector. He is in charge of all the vocational and technical subjects in the province excluding Agriculture and Home economics which are manned by other inspectors. Similar to my meeting Rose, I met Robert at the Provincial Office where he also consented to participating in the study. The interviews were held in their offices at the Provincial Offices.

Cosmas is Masvingo district's Education Officer (DEO). He is 58 years old and is an experienced educationist whose work experience is quite extensive. Cosmas was visited at his office at the District Offices to request his permission to enter the district schools and also for him to participate in the study.

Table 3.7 COSMAS' PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

LEVEL	PERIOD
Teacher for Metalwork and Technical Drawing	1979-1980
HOD for Technical Subjects	1981-1982
Teacher Grade Material writer for teaching and learning materials for metalwork at the Curriculum Development Unit (CDU)	1983-1988
Education Officer for Technical subjects at Provincial Education Office	1988-2010
Promoted to DEO Masvingo District	2011 to Date

The DEO was interviewed in his office. He even agreed to put some of the information in writing after which I collected it the following day.

3.11 The research site

The map below shows the seven districts of the Masvingo province, one of which is Masvingo where the selected schools are located.
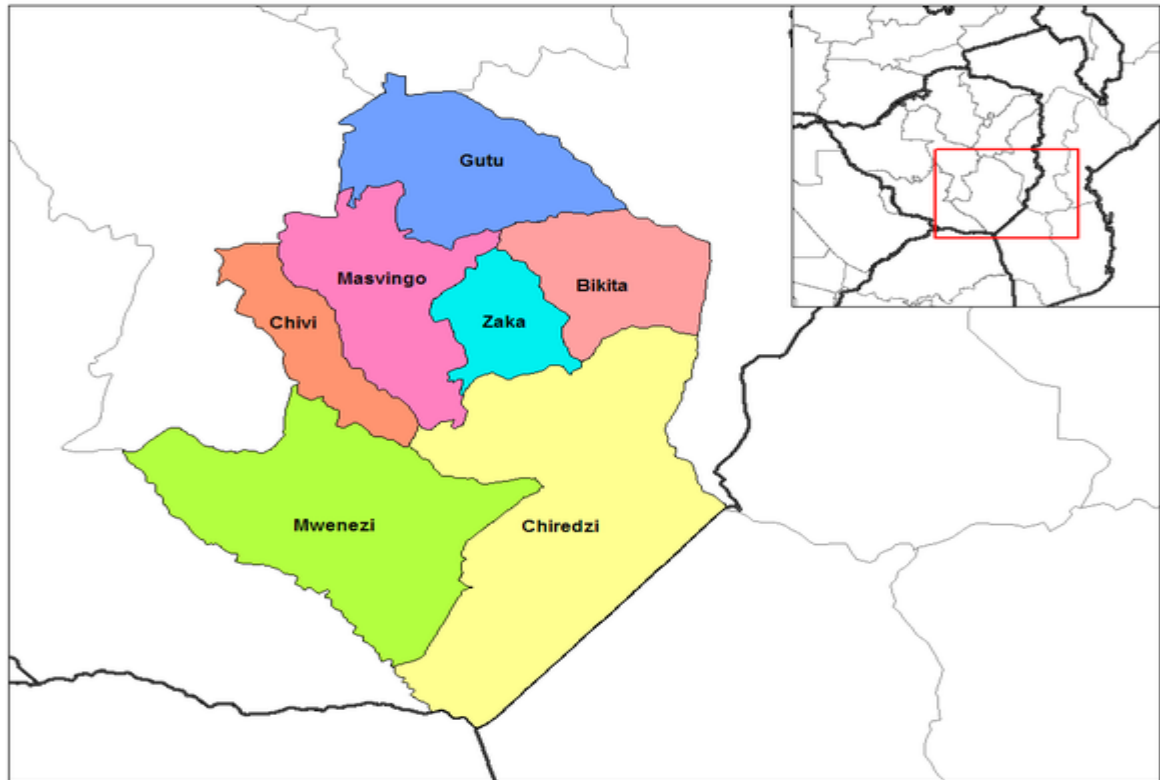
Figure 3.1: Map showing the Districts of Masvingo Province. Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia file:///G:/districts of Zimbabwe.htm

Masvingo district is one of the seven districts of the Province of the same name in Zimbabwe**.** The district was chosen because it encompasses the metropolitan area of Masvingo. In addition, the researcher selected it because it contains various schools in diverse socio-demographic and geographical locations (mining, farming, urban, semi-urban and rural).

3.12 Data collection and instruments

The qualitative approach that was adopted demands the gathering of qualitative data: data that is subjective and rich with in-depth information (Shastri, 2008). The data that were collected can be categorised into interviews, observations and documents: collected directly from primary sources as well as from a wide spectrum of secondary sources (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Gray 2009). Qualitative data is quite flexible so that the use of an array of data collection methods contributed to the production of the thick descriptions (Gray, 2009). The data gathering techniques are discussed below.

3.12.1 Interviews

Interviews are the most favoured method of data collection as they have the potential to explore any situation, ranging from people's perspectives, meanings and experiences to definitions of situations and constructions of reality (Marshall & Rossman, 2009). They are purposeful conversations between two or more people, directed by one in order to obtain information from the other (Bogdan & Biklen 2007). Being a case study, the interviews were found suitable in order to acquire information from the different instructional leaders in their own words, thereby accessing their interpretation of the vocational education leadership practices (Bogdan & Biklen 2007). According to Merriam (1998), the type of interview determines the type of questions to be used. Highly structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews may be used with the respondents, as the researcher sees fit. For this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the DEO of Masvingo district, two practical subjects' EOs, ten heads of schools (principals) and nineteen departmental heads. Interview guides (a list of questions to be asked) were also prepared in advance; different guides were used for the various categories of participants, depending upon the information required from them. (**Appendices A 1-4**) During the interviews, all information was tape recorded using devices/gadgets which had been pilot tested before the actual interviews. After each interview, verbatim transcriptions were made shortly afterwards, as these responses were the foundation for the data analysis (Merriam 1998).The transcriptions were also taken back to the respondents to check on the accuracy of the captured data (member checks). These member checks helped in having the researcher work together with the participants, thereby ensuring the production of an authentic report.

Interview questions were based on the research questions which enabled the sourcing of relevant data on the instructional leadership guidance practices, on policies that guide these practices and what the respondents think of the policies. Their vocational pedagogy practices were also sought through these interviews.

The interviews held were conducted according to Creswell's (2007) recommended steps which are as follows:

1. Identification of interviewees using a purposeful sampling technique
2. Determining the most appropriate interview type
3. Use of adequate recording procedures
4. Determination of the place for conducting the interview

5. Obtaining consent from the participants at the interview site and carrying out the interview.

The interview protocols (a form of about four to five pages in length with questions and ample space in between the questions to write the responses of the interviewees were prepared for use with the heads of schools and HODs during the interviews. These ensured that the participants at the different sites answered the same questions, thereby keeping the interviews focused and consistent in nature (Gray, 2009; Maree, 2007). To ensure the comprehensiveness of the questions, the researcher outlined the topics and issues to be covered in advance.

3.12.2 Focus group discussions

The focus group technique is one example of qualitative research methodology used to explore the opinions, knowledge, perceptions and concerns of individuals who have some knowledge of or experience with the topic being studied (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Creswell (2007) posits that these focus group interviews facilitate sharing of ideas and getting views from different individuals. The researcher acts as a moderator who guides the participants through a series of questions. These are normally open-ended questions. It is a form of group interview comprising of about ten to twelve participants although these varied according to the size of the schools and the number of the vocational and technical subjects offered there.

In this study the focus group interviews were held with the vocational and technical subjects' teachers in the selected schools (sites).These people work together and knew each other well. This was useful as it enabled the generation of a wide range of responses compared to the individual interviews held with the HoDs, heads of schools, EOs and the DEO. The focus group discussions facilitated the collection of large amounts of data from many respondents simultaneously.

The focus group discussions were used to collect the teachers' views about the support they receive from the instructional leaders who work with them in the implementation of vocational and technical subjects. The discussions were held in nine of the selected ten schools. School H had two teachers managing the department: the school head and the HoD, so no focus group discussion was conducted there.

The focus group at school A, being a small school, had just two male members. There are only three teachers teaching the practical subjects offered at the school: Agriculture, Art Building Studies and Fashion and Fabrics; the third member is the HoD. Focus group B comprised three participants, two males and one female. The school offers Agriculture, Music, Woodwork, Building Studies and Computer Studies. Focus group C was made up of three members teaching Food and Nutrition, Fashion and Fabrics and Building Studies. Their HoD, who was interviewed separately, is the fourth teacher. The school offers seven practical subjects but other members did not take part in the study. Focus group D was composed of six participants, all females. Fashion and Fabrics, Building Studies and Agriculture are on offer to the whole school, so that two teachers teach the same subject. At school E, three teachers formed the focus group. The school offers Agriculture, Fashion and Fabrics, Food and nutrition and Horticulture. School F's focus group comprised sixteen members, ten females and six males, teaching Fashion and Fabrics, Food and Nutrition, Agriculture and Horticulture. Focus group G had twelve participants: eight males and four females. This was a big school which offers twelve practical subjects: Agriculture, Art, Building studies, Computer studies, Fashion and Fabrics, Food and Nutrition, Music, Technical Graphics, Metalwork, Woodwork, Physical Education and Textile studies. There was no focus group at school H. Focus group I had five participants teaching five subjects: Agriculture, Fashion and Fabrics, Food and Nutrition, Metalwork and Woodwork. The last focus group, J, had ten participants. The school offers nine practical subjects: Agriculture, Fashion and Fabrics, Food and Nutrition, Music, Technical Graphics, Metalwork, Woodwork, Physical education and Textile studies.

Each focus group discussion was held in a selected workshop at the site, which would be free of students. Being their work place, the participants felt welcome and comfortable and participated freely. A secretary was appointed at school **C, F, G, I** and **J** to assist in taking down notes. The notes were given to the researcher after the interview session.

Focus group discussions are not appropriate when one needs to ask sensitive questions, needs statistical information about the participants or when one wants people to come to a consensus. These aspects did not, however, influence this study as it was an in-depth study which just sought the teachers' opinions regarding the instructional guidance rendered by their leaders. The researcher, as the moderator, frequently repeated questions after two or

three participants had responded in order to keep the discussion focused. Probing techniques were also used when more information or an example was needed.

3.12.3 Observations

Creswell (2007) defines observation as a process of gathering first-hand information by observing people at their places of work (research sites). While observing the participants, researchers are able to measure their behaviour in natural settings thereby obtaining first-hand information. Observing people in the field is always the best way to determine and understand their activities. Observation gives the researcher immediate awareness of the impact of events and aspects of people's everyday life activities, thereby gaining an inside view of their reality.

During observations, the researcher acted as a data-gathering instrument, as described by Borland (2001), who points out that qualitative researchers must recognise that they are the primary instruments for data collection. As a non-participant observer, I observed people without interacting with them, thereby obtaining a full picture of the activities they engage in when guiding the instruction of the vocational and technical subjects in the schools. Two lessons and two staff meetings were observed in four schools. The danger of just focusing on specific events or objects, and cutting myself away from the whole was addressed by making sure all aspects of the whole were given the necessary time for observation; the leadership activities of the principals, the HODs and the teacher leaders were observed in their different contexts.

Observation is a systematic process of recording the behavioural patterns of participants, objects and occurrences without questioning or communicating with them (Maree, 2007).One becomes a 'complete observer' in the process (Maree, 2007:79) in order not to obstruct the natural environment being observed. The instructional guidance practices employed for the said subjects in the chosen schools were not interfered with but were closely observed in order to gain a deeper insight into and understanding of how they are being led and supported in the schools (Maree, 2007). Being observed can cause people to behave differently from normal and one would not be sure if they would do the same when not being observed. The most important task for me, as an observer, was the recording of all observed activities with data in the form of field notes. In order to be systematic, the observations were selective, recording information that can be analysed and interpreted. Observation is an essential data

gathering technique which has the possibility of providing inside information about groups of people and their behaviours in different settings (Maree, 2007). It was very helpful to the researcher in obtaining first-hand information directly from the sources, (the teachers, heads of schools and the HODs).

3.12.4 Documents analysis

Appropriate documents, for example, minutes of meetings and letters to parents, can also be used to corroborate the evidence from other sources (Maree 2007); therefore reviewing them was a useful strategy in collecting data for this study. Documents reviewed comprised all written communications and policy documents that shed light on the vocational curriculum on offer. Documentary analysis, according to Leedy (1997), refers to the accessing of relevant documents and extracting information from them. It is an analysis of the texts, images and expressions created to be seen, read, interpreted and acted upon in order to identify their meanings (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Documentary analysis was preferred in order to enhance accuracy and to save time (Judd *et al,* 1991). Permission was sought from the relevant authorities to access the documents personally, instead of having someone providing the information through for instance, a questionnaire. The official documents that could be analysed included the following:

- Memos, especially those from the Head to vocational education HODs and teachers
- Minutes of meetings
- Policy documents
- Students' records
- Mission statements
- Administrative records.

For the present study, minutes of meetings/workshops were analysed. A number of policy documents also brought out the nature of the vocational curriculum, at the same time providing the guidelines the teachers were to follow. The documentary sources, especially written ones, are, in most cases, authentic sources of information as they contain information which people recorded about their activities on their own without any form of coercion (Groenewald, 1986).Documents do corroborate the evidence from other sources; hence, the need to review them (Maree, 2007). They are non-reactive and as required by the nature of the qualitative research approach, have little control over the objects of study (Groenewald,

1986). It is however, to be noted that at times, people do not record information correctly and the researcher therefore has to carefully evaluate the documents provided, especially those written by the people being studied, in order to decide if the information contained therein is reliable.

To conclude, the interviews in their different formats, the observation and the documents' analysis or review, were the data collection techniques used. The use of the different strategies assisted in checking the authenticity of the collected data. This triangulation, a combination of various methods, strengthens the study by leading to a diverse construction of reality.

3.13 Data analysis process

Data analysis is a crucial component of any research study. Analysis brings order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data (Shastri, 2008). Merriam (1998) describes the process of data analysis as one of making sense out of the collected raw data, i.e., making sense of the participants' descriptions of the situation being studied. The analysis is therefore concerned with understanding the meaning of the collected data from the perspectives of the people being studied. It is an interpretation of the participants' perceptions of their realities. The qualitative data analysis transforms data into findings and is characterised by diversity and flexibility, putting it in danger of being undertaken haphazardly. It involves organizing, accounting for and explaining the data (Cohen *et al* 2007). The data on principals, teacher leaders and teachers' practices collected using the various methods described earlier on, inevitably offered one an idea on how vocational and technical subjects' instructional guidance practices are enacted. The way in which the different stakeholders guide the instructional practices of these subjects was made sense of and understood through the systematic analysis of the collected data. Kombo and Tromp (2006) define the analysis as examining what has been collected and making deductions and inferences from there. As this was a qualitative research study, I had collected extensive data on all the variables involved in their natural settings. Participants' views on who the key instructional leaders are and how they enact their roles were solicited. The raw data collected was then subjected to particular analysis.

Firstly, the key findings were summarized. All the frequent responses of the participants on the issues at stake, for example, instructional guidance practices and policies were noted

down. In other words, I first perused the collected data and identified information that was relevant to answer each research question. A thorough and comprehensive description of the instructional guidance practices was made. This process has the potential of producing rich descriptive data, in the participants' own written or spoken words and the observable behaviours which were given exactly as they were manifested in order to speak for themselves. The thorough descriptions are in the context of actions, the intentions of the actors and the processes in which the action is embedded. Data was analysed/ interpreted in order to understand how instructional leadership guidance practices are enacted, why they are enacted and what these practices entail. The descriptions formed the foundation of the analysis, which in turn laid the basis for further descriptions (Dey, 1993).Creswell (2007) views the processes of data collection, recording and analysis as interrelated. The following diagram, Figure 3.2, illustrates the interconnection of these processes.

Describing

Qualitative
analysis

Connecting

Classifying
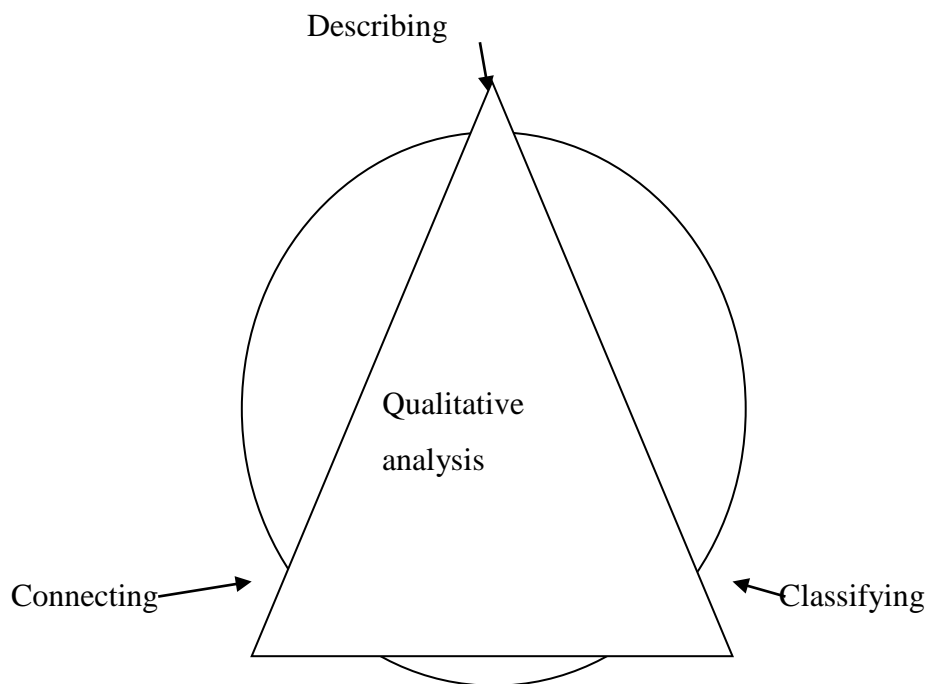
Figure 3.2 Analysis as a circular process: Adapted from Dey (1993:31)

Data analysis can be a holistic analysis of the entire case or an embedded analysis of a specific aspect of the case (Yin 2003). The analysis should, in the end, provide a detailed description of the case. When multiple cases are chosen, the researcher has to provide a detailed report of each case and themes within the case (within case analysis) followed by a thematic analysis across the cases (cross case analysis) as well as making assertions (Creswell, 2007).Issues within each case have to be identified; then common themes that

transcend the cases looked for (Yin 2003). Issues on the instructional guidance practices within the schools were looked at individually and then combined into themes.

As seen from the above description, the process of analysing qualitative data is not straight forward as one is dealing with quite 'messy' and unstructured data arising from interviews, focus group discussions, observations and documents. The analysis is, therefore, not linear nor is it an elegant, simple and neat process. For this study, the analysis proceeded in tandem with data collection rather than on its completion (Dey, 1993). This made the analysis contingent in character, since it both stimulated and was modified by the collection and investigation of further data. The analysis concluded with the writing of an account of the research study. The table below, Table 3.5 summarises the steps taken in the analysis process.

Table 3.8 Steps taken in the analysis process

STEPS	ACTIONS DONE
1. Organising the data	Transcribing the data obtained into texts that are easy to look at thus allowing me to go through each topic and pick out concepts and themes. Listened to the tape recordings before the transcriptions were done.
2. Finding and organising ideas and concepts.	Identification of salient themes, recurring ideas or language, beliefs that were common to all the participants by finding specific words or ideas that keep coming up.
3. Building themes from the data	Responses that had more than one theme associated with themwere collapsed under one prominent theme.
4. Ensuring reliability and validity	The researcher carefully examined the data for the emergence of negative patterns thereby testing the findings. These were discarded as they did not fit into the patterns and themes of the data. Researcher effect was also checked. Triangulation and obtaining feedback from the participants further ensured reliability and validity of the results.
5. Organising the information obtained into a final report.	Summarised how the entire research project was conducted. Why the research problem was important is highlighted also giving the findings and their implications; recommendations and areas of future research are identified. Strengths and limitations are also highlighted.

3.14 Validity and Reliability

Collected data, for any research, must be valid and reliable. This refers to "the degree to which data in a research study are accurate and credible" (Gray, 2009: 362). Firstly, I attempted, as far as possible, to select the schools for study carefully. Gray (2009) stressed that the sites selected must be representative of the population under study. The selection of sites, in this case, schools that offer vocational and technical subjects, was done in a manner that ensured reliability and validity of data. This was carried out carefully in order to allow the generalizability of findings to the whole population, having selected a representative sample.

In order to obtain valid information, 'time sampling' (Gray, 2009) must be observed. This occurs when all activities are recorded during a specific period so that one is able to identify frequent routines, activities and irregular events that may be special or abnormal. All lessons and activities of the leaders and teachers concerned were observed during the second term of the year 2014. No changing of teaching times was allowed since the researcher needed to observe the stipulated times when these activities and lessons were to be done.

Staying in the field long enough is also a requirement if one wishes to observe and experience the full range of routines and behaviours that are typical of the cases one is studying (Gray, 2009). This ensured collection of valid data and confirmed validity of the research study.

Validity and reliability, in a qualitative study, also denote the credibility and trustworthiness of the research. Triangulation, in its different types, is one way of ensuring validity and reliability. Findings are more dependable when they can be confirmed from several sources. Their validity is enhanced when they can be confirmed by more than one instrument measuring the same aspect. The use of interviews, observations and document analysis to answer the same questions was a useful type of triangulation which resulted in the corroboration of the findings, thereby providing evidence of their validity and reliability. In this research study, interviewing different school heads, conducting focus group discussions with the teachers and making some observations afforded me different perspectives on who the instructional leaders are and what they do to support the teachers in their work. I also engaged the assistance of a peer researcher to assist with the interpretation of the data to enhance trustworthiness. The said researcher was a co-worker, also interested in research work.

Reliability, which refers to the degree an instrument will produce similar results at different periods, was aimed at (Gray, 2009). The data collection strategies (the research instruments) were assessed for reliability and validity by pilot testing them on a chosen school before the full field work was embarked upon. The researcher tried everything possible to make sure the context was valid by consulting widely from experts in the field and also making sure participants did not feel they were being misrepresented to those who would be using or even merely see the results. The report has to be reliable and authentic.

3.15 Research ethics

Ethics refers to the correct rules of conduct necessary when carrying out research. When collecting research data, it is important to maintain strict ethical standards. The behaviour of the researcher must be appropriate in relation to the participants or subjects of the research or to all those who are going to be affected by the research (Gray, 2009). This is to ensure that the rights and welfare of the subjects are protected. Researchers have a moral responsibility to protect research participants from harm. There are moral principles guiding research or in different words, the conducting of research needs to be undertaken in a responsible and morally defensible way (Gray, 2009; Leedy, 1997); these were adhered to as outlined below.

First and most importantly, the research was conducted in institutions of learning, so permission was sought from the relevant Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (McMillan & Schumacher 2010). The researcher wrote to the Secretary for Education through the Masvingo Provincial Office asking for permission to undertake the research in the schools (**Appendix B1**) Data collection only commenced after approval was received. (**Appendix B 6**)

According to Tuckman (1994) subjects have the right to choose whether to participate or not. For them to participate, the researcher must obtain their informed consent. I made sure to obtain informed consent from the participants before interviewing them. Research informants participating in individual or group interviews signed an informed consent form (**Appendix B 7**) which was attached to a request letters (**Appendces B2-B5**) that outlined the nature of the study. The participants were provided with all the information that might have influenced their willingness to participate. Sufficient information about the project was provided so that the participants could make informed decisions as to whether they wished to be involved or not (Gray, 2009). No person was forced to participate; and it was made very clear to them

that participation in the research was entirely voluntary. The participants were informed that they had the right to withdraw their participation without consequences at any time, if they so wished.

There should be no legal infringement on human rights; therefore the researcher was guided by beliefs about what is right or wrong from a moral perspective. This is important as we deal with human beings who should be protected from injury and negative psychological impacts such as anxiety, shame and loss of self-esteem (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010; Gray, 2009). Interviews were well scheduled to avoid disruptions to the respondents' work. Interviewees felt respected in this way, especially if they were the ones who had scheduled interview times, which was how the scheduling was done.

The respondents do not feel gratified if poor or meagre results, which are disrespectful, are produced (Moreno, 1999 in Gray, 2009). McMillan and Schumacher (2010) insist that the participants are entitled to the research results; these were promised to them via internet access. Validating results, as explained earlier on, must assist in checking the production of authentic results as acceptable to all concerned.

To further avoid harm, the study aimed to achieve positive benefits stemming from the research by adding to the stock of human knowledge on the instructional guidance practices for vocational subjects. This was attained by designing the study in such a way that it yielded accurate and valid results that have relevance beyond not only this researcher's vested interests as a researcher and student, but also as applied to all stakeholders.

Data that is collected for research must be kept secure and treated in confidence. It must be made public only in the guise of anonymity of the participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). Respecting the privacy and confidentiality of participants is another crucial, ethical principle that was observed. Participants have every right to privacy. This was ensured by the use of pseudonyms and codes for their identification in the report, as well as being open with them that participation was voluntary, so as to protect their reputation in the face of whatever results stemmed from the research.

It is also important that the researcher be honest and accountable when dealing with the respondents, avoiding deception. I did not represent my research as something other than what it is. It is purely an academic study and it was presented as that (Gray, 2009). Every

factor which may have reduced the level of participation and participant co-operation was avoided.

The research proposal was also vetted by the Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Free State which determined that the research was worth undertaking (Gray, 2009). Most importantly, the research report attempted to avoid errors as far as possible and also not to be misleading in anyway. I endeavoured to produce an authentic report that could be useful to the education fraternity.

3.16 Limitations of the study

This was a qualitative case study and as such, the results cannot be generalised to a large population. The results are unique to the schools that offer vocational and technical subjects in the Masvingo district and as such, do not apply to the rest of the country.

3.17 Summary

The study employed a qualitative approach to research which was conducted using the multiple case study design. The case study is on the instructional guidance afforded the vocational and technical subjects in the selected schools. The research participants were teachers for the said subjects, the HODs and the heads of the ten conveniently selected schools. The DEO and the subject inspectors also participated in the study. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis and lesson observations were the data collection instruments employed. The subsequent chapter presents the findings in relation to the research questions. These findings are discussed under the themes that emerged from the responses obtained.

CHAPTER FOUR: Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

The study explored the instructional guidance practices for vocational and technical subjects in Zimbabwe's Masvingo District. This chapter presents the data as well as the analysis and discussion thereof. Data were collected from vocational and technical subject teachers through focus group discussions, from HODs and heads of schools, education inspectors and the DEO using individual, semi-structured interviews. Document analysis was also used to explore the nature of the vocational education programme that is followed in Zimbabwe; how duties are assigned for the key players and the policies that guide implementation. The non-participant observations by the researcher helped to uncover the leaders' instructional practices as they were being enacted. These data collection techniques, which were fully discussed in Chapter Three, provided answers to the research questions with rich detail and comprehensive descriptions included for further clarity and elaboration.

The findings are arranged in themes that highlight the instructional guidance practices for the said subjects. The 92 participants consisted of one DEO; two Ministry of Education inspectors; ten heads of schools; 19 Heads of Departments and 60 vocational and technical subject teachers; the latter were divided into nine focus groups that were interviewed separately. The data were first considered and coded, singling out significant ideas, which were then arranged into themes. The themes are discussed systematically, taking cognisance of the research questions outlined in Chapters One and Three.

4.2 SECTION A: RESULTS FROM DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Results of the document analysis are provided concerning the nature of the vocational and technical curriculum being implemented in Zimbabwe, as well as the artefacts and policies that guide instruction.

4.2.1 Background to the vocational and technical education curriculum

As noted, at Independence in 1980, the new Zimbabwean Government inherited an education system that was colonial and elitist. Rather belatedly, in 1998, a Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET) was set up to make recommendations for change. The commission produced its report in 1999, but very little action was taken to fully implement the recommendations. Amongst its key recommendations, the commission proposed the

vocationalisation of the Zimbabwean curriculum to make it relevant to the majority of learners who had since been accommodated into schools through the policy of Education for All (EFA).The commission attributed the contemporary high unemployment and underemployment rate to the fact that the secondary school system did not equip the learners with the requisite skills for the world of work. A new education structure that would include the following subjects: Design and Technology, Technical Drawing, Physical and Health Education, Information and Communication Technology, Accounting, Home Economics, Music, Art, Crafts and Drama were recommended for all schools (Nziramasanga, 1999; Director Circular Number 9 of 2009). The purpose of the new structure was to put greater emphasis on vocational skills. The CIET recommendations thus became the basis for subsequent policies that govern the provision and implementation of the vocational and technical subjects in post-independence Zimbabwe.

Immediately thereafter, in the year 2000, the Secretary for Education released Circular Number 2 of 2000, directing all schools to offer at least one vocational or technical subject to all Form 3 and 4 students (Grades 10 & 11). The circular was, however, cancelled in 2002 with the appointment of a new secretary and replaced by circular Number 3 of 2002, making the vocational and technical subjects optional. The schools were then at liberty to decide whether to offer the subjects or not. Inevitably, most schools dropped the subjects, citing, among other reasons, the fact that vocational and technical subjects were rather expensive to support. It was not until 2006 that the Director of Education (Secondary) at the National level generated Circular Number 3 of 2006, which proposed a Two-Pathway Education structure for the whole country. This circular stipulated the way in which the education structure was to be implemented. The directive was mandatory for all schools and remains the policy currently in place. The Secretary for Education also supported the Director by issuing Circular Number P 77 of 2006, which, in its preamble stated that:

> *In line with the recommendations of the 1999 Presidential Commission of Inquiry into Education and Training (CIET), the Ministry has adopted and is implementing a Two-Pathway Education structure with effect from 2006.*

These 2006 circulars continue to guide the implementation of the vocational and technical subjects in schools, based on the CIET recommendations of 1999. In the next section, I discuss the structure of the curriculum that is supposed to be implemented in the schools, viz. the Two-Pathway structure.

4.2.2 The Two-Pathway Education structure

The Two-Pathway Education structure is meant for post Form 2 studies, in order to cater for the learners' varying aptitudes, interests and abilities. At Forms 1 and 2 levels, students are to be provided with a broad curriculum where continuous assessment is used for their evaluation. The students are then channelled into the Two-Pathway structure at Form 3 level, depending on the results of their continuous assessment in the previous grades. The Form 3 and 4 levels, also known as 'Ordinary level' ('O' level), constitute the focus area of the present study: this is the level where the Two-Pathway Education structure is supposed to be implemented.

The Two-Pathway structure has two options into which students may be channelled after Form 2, and both options indeed, contain the General Academic subjects selected by the schools. The first option has the Business/Commercial subjects as the major subjects plus one subject selected from technical and vocational subjects. Option number two consists of the compulsory General/Academic subjects, while the technical and vocational subjects become the major subjects with one further subject selected from the Business/Commercial group. All the students are additionally expected to take a course in Computer Studies. Table 4.1 below illustrates the two options.

Table 4.1 An exemplar of the Two-Pathway curriculum options

OPTION 1	OPTION 2
Computer Studies	Computer Studies
English Language	English Language
Mathematics	Mathematics
Science	Science
History	History
Second Language (either Shona or Ndebele)	Shona or Ndebele
Business/Commercial as major subjects.	Vocational and Technical as major subjects.
One vocational /technical subject as a minor.	One Business/ Commercial subject as a minor.
TOTAL 9	TOTAL 9

Adapted from Circular P77 of 2006

The total number of subjects undertaken by a candidate will depend on how many additional academic subjects a learner chooses to do and the number of Business/Commercial subjects

the school offers if it is Option one; or vocational and technical subjects, if it is Option two. As explained earlier, the subjects offered are chosen by the schools depending on the available human and material resources.

Examination of the vocational and technical education at 'O' Level is undertaken by two Examination Boards: the Zimbabwe School Examination Council (ZIMSEC) and the Higher Education Examination Council (HEXCO). The subjects offered by HEXCO are related to those offered by ZIMSEC and could be compared to branches of the ZIMSEC subjects, as indicated in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Schedule of ZIMSEC subjects and HEXCO courses from which schools can choose

TECHNICAL SUBJECTS BY ZIMSEC	RELATED VOCATIONAL COURSES-HEXCO
Building Studies	- Plastering - Brick and Block Laying - Drain Laying and Sanitation - Painting and Decoration - Flooring - Basic Domestic and Appliances Servicing
Food and Nutrition	- Bakery - Food Preparation - Hotel and Catering - Food Science and Technology - Food and Beverage Services - Fast Foods - Institutional Catering - Dietetics
Agriculture	- Ornamental Horticulture - Crop Farming - Animal Husbandry - Forestry - Tractor Maintenance - Car Maintenance
Fashion and Fabrics	- Embroidery and Soft Furnishing - Garment Construction - Textile Studies - Pattern Making
Technical Graphics	- Engineering, Drawing and Design - Building and Woodworking Drawing - Plane and Solid Geometry - Technical Illustrations and Design - Draughting and Design

Metalwork	• Basic Sheet Metal Work • Basic Machine Shop Engineering • Welding Techniques • Basic Forging Techniques
Home Management	• Housekeeping
Woodwork	• Carpentry • Cabinet Making • Joinery • Wood Working Machines
Commerce	• Business English • Office Practice • Type Writing • Store-Keeping
Principles of Accounts	• Bookkeeping • Business Calculations
Music	• Music
Art	• Art and Design (Ceramics) • Art and Design (Graphics) • Art and Design (Sign Writing) • Art and Design (Text Printing and Designing) • Creative Art and Design • Applied Art and Design
Computer Studies	• Computer Science • Electronic Data Processing • Computer Programming • Computer Operations and Packages • Computer Organisation and Design

Adapted from the Director's Circular Number 39 of 2007

Considering the various ways of providing vocational education, the country, thus, seems to have adopted a hybrid system whereby vocational education is incorporated into the education system both as compulsory subjects (Option 1) and also as optional subjects (Option 2). As the aim and vital role of vocational and technical education is to produce skilled and competent manpower for the country's economic, industrial and social development, this cannot be achieved without effective and efficient teaching as well as an organised examination processes (Behnaz & Fatemeh, 2008).

Having analysed the policy documents in order to understand the structure of the vocational and technical curriculum stipulated by policy, I went further to explore deeper the curriculum that is offered in the selected schools within the Masvingo district. This includes answering the research questions on the extent to which the Two-Pathway Education system is being implemented, as well as who the key players are in the implementation and the kinds of resources and support that are available. Table 4.3 provides a summary of the subjects offered in the sample schools:

Table 4.3Summary of the subjects offered in the sample schools (Source: field notes from the school visits)

ZIMSEC BOARD SUBJECTS	SCHOOLS	HEXCO BOARD SUBJECTS	SCHOOLS
Agriculture	10	Textile Studies	3
Art	2	Garment Construction	1
Building Studies	5	Bakery	2
Computer Studies	4	Food & Beverage Preparation	1
Fashion and Fabrics	10	Machine Shop Engineering	2
Food and Nutrition	5	Horticulture	1
Music	5		
Technical Graphics	4		
Metalwork	4		
Woodwork	5		
Physical Education	3		

The data on the subjects offered in the schools were provided by the heads of the schools and also confirmed by the HODs. All in all, the schools seem to offer 11 ZIMSEC board subjects and six HEXCO subjects. Agriculture is a compulsory subject and is therefore included in the curriculum of all the schools visited. The data suggest that the vocational subjects offered by the HEXCO board are fewer than the technical subjects examined by ZIMSEC. Both the ZIMSEC and HEXCO subjects are offered in addition to the core academic subjects that are compulsory, as presented in Table 4.3 above.

Combining vocational and technical subjects with academic subjects at the same institutions of learning is one of the approaches that Lilies and Hogan (1983) identify as suitable for supporting a broad-based and comprehensive curriculum. This view is also supported by Gwembire and Katsaruwara (2013) who stressed that combining vocational and academic education enables learners to have a broad knowledge base. The need to include the vocational and technical subjects was made urgent by the increased high school enrolments in the country. The inclusion of 'many' in the school system seems to have necessitated the offering of vocational education as a general education component in order to deal with the skills gap (Lewis 1998). Lewis however contends that, since it is an education for jobs or education about work, vocational education is more suitable for post-secondary levels where students are to be prepared for work after having received some 'general education' which many consider to be 'academic'. The challenge in Zimbabwe was that many of the young workers, those who do not continue their education after O level, attempted to obtain employment without the necessary advanced vocational skills, thus the need to include these subjects earlier on in the school curriculum. The aim of the present study was partly to establish how vocational subjects are provided for and particularly how teachers are supported and guided in their (subjects') provision. That is, what guidance is provided to them and how; and who the key players are in the instructional guidance and curriculum implementation processes.

The challenge here, however, is that the optional vocational and technical subjects in Masvingo District are offered alongside the compulsory academic subjects. The inclusion of vocational and technical curriculum in the general education system has been seen by many countries as the vehicle to solving the problem of under-development (Mandebvu, 1994). While the intention is good, balancing the requirements of general education and vocational education sometimes presents problems to both planners and implementers. These problems are discussed later. Chinyamunzore, (1995) argues that, while offering vocational and technical education widens the scope of general education, offering these together undermines its aim which is to increase the employment rate. Furthermore, the reality is that very few graduates from the general education obtain employment due to their lack of skills, thus aggravating the prevailing unemployment situation in Zimbabwe. In such a situation, there is a tendency to favour academic subjects at the expense of vocational and technical subjects which has the effect of marginalising the vocational and technical subjects in the

school system. How then do the instructional leaders deal with these potential challenges to the offering of vocational education within the sample schools?

4.2.3 Policies for instructional guidance in the vocational and technical education

A policy, as noted, is a course of action to be adopted and pursued by organisations (Zvobgo 1997). They are statements of intent that guide workers in implementing their programmes and roles (Coburn 2005). Data collected show that policies on vocational programmes originate from the Ministry of Education's Head Office, specifically from the Secretary of Education who is the Head of the Ministry and also from Directors who are the Heads of specific school subjects at the National Office. The policies are then disseminated to the provincial offices, to the district office and down to the schools for implementation. Based on the Ministry policies, schools also develop their own local (school) policies that guide their operations. An exemplar is shown in **Appendix C3**. These policies are developed, in most cases, in response to an identified problem (Swann & Pratt 1999) to guide the implementers of the programmes.

The participants at the provincial offices seemed to be aware of the policies that guide their work on instructional leadership for vocational and technical education. Robert, the EO Technical, for example had, in his possession the Principal Director's circular Number 33 of 2010:*Guidelines for offering Technical and Vocational Education and Training to National Certificate Level and Trade Testing in Secondary schools.* He also made reference to the Director's Circular Number 39 of 2007 entitled *Policy Guidelines on the Implementation and Broadening of Curriculum through Increased Variety of Vocational and Technical Subjects.* This circular explains and lists the subjects that are to be offered at all levels of the secondary school system. Of interest to me were the subjects to be offered at the Ordinary Level. The circular provides a schedule of the ZIMSEC subjects and their related HEXCO vocational courses from which schools were able to choose. However, the policy documents also state that the choice is to be based on the availability of resources in the schools. Table 4.2 in Section 4.2.2 describes the nature of the Vocational and Technical subjects' curriculum to be offered.

Another circular made available by the EO was the Director's Circular Number 3 of 2006 which details guidelines on how to combine courses offered by both ZIMSEC and HEXCO in the schools' curriculum, in line with the implementation of the Two-Pathway Education

structure. The Secretary's Circular Number P77 of 2006, a key guide to the Two-Pathway Education structure which schools are to follow, was not readily available, but was merely mentioned.

Rose, the Home Economics' EO, on the other hand, did not have any of the circulars with her but was aware of them and quoted from them generously during our discussion. Rose saw Circular number P77 of 2006 as being the major guidance document as far as the implementation of the vocational and technical subjects was concerned. In her view, it is the latter circular that led to the Director's Circulars Numbers 33 of 2010 and 3 of 2006, which, although not fully implemented still carried a lot of clout within the vocational and technical community. Rose explained the situation in the following way:

> *Policy documents are sent down to the relevant people but, because people change offices, they take them out. When I assumed duty, there were no policy circulars given to me. One has to look for them from the heads of schools when you visit schools who, in most cases do not have them as well.*

Similarly, Cosmas, the DEO, was aware of the policies that guide the provision and implementation of vocational and technical subjects but also did not have them at hand. He also saw the Secretary's Circular Number P77 of 2006 as the main document to guide his oversight function on the provision and implementation of the vocational and technical subjects. As he argued:

> *All other circulars are just general circulars which explain or expand on this major circular (Number P77 of 2006). This circular works hand in hand with the Ministry's policy on vocationalisation.*

Clearly, the central office leaders of vocational and technical education did appear to have adequate knowledge of the relevant policies that guide their work and were able to quote generously from the documents even when, at times, they did not have the policies on file.

Interestingly, for the heads of schools, the only policy circular they professed knowledge of was the Secretary's Circular Number P77 of 2006, in part due to its popularity within the vocational and technical education community and it being mentioned at every meeting they had with the DEO and the subject EOs. The Head of School G for example described the situation as follows:

We are normally informed about these policy circulars at the meetings that are held every month by the DEO. They (circulars) are given, in most cases, as directives and we just take notes even though we do not see the real policy documents.

The HoDs in schools, on the other hand were not as aware of the policy circulars. Only one HoD (**GH1**), in the sample, had heard and knew about the Secretary's Circular Number P77 of 2006 and used it to question some of the practices at her school that in her view were not in line with the policy:

We have heard about the Circular P77 of 2006. The circular states that there should be continuous assessment from the Junior Secondary level and learners are to be placed in their 'O' Level classes according to the results of that assessment which is not implemented at this school. They give us students they think are mentally challenged instead of learners choosing what they want to do themselves. Our Administrators think the practical subjects are easy and can be done by anyone hence they allocate them to weak students in violation of the Secretary's Circular which they do not show us but we have heard about it and what it contains.

Two important points emerge from the foregoing analysis of the policy environment and guidance for vocational and technical education in Zimbabwe. First, that most of the role players were aware of the key policies that guide their work, even though some had not actually seen the policies themselves. Second, that there was some effort to communicate the policy messages at the meetings even though the messages may often become diffused by the time they reach the schools and classrooms. The potential for incomplete and/or incorrect implementation was therefore a strong possibility under these circumstances. The policy documents that were seen by the researcher were obtained from the information department of the Ministry at the provincial office and not from the key players who needed them for their day-to-day work. Most of the policy documents were more than eight years old and stressed the same issues on the implementation of the vocational and technical subjects. Nothing new seems to have been suggested in recent years. In the present study, I therefore wanted to gain a sense of how powerful the policy documents were on providing the necessary instructional guidance to the teachers and schools who are the key implementers.

At school level, besides being expected to implement Ministry policies, the teachers were also expected to craft their own school policies to guide their operations. This was part of the duties of the school heads and HODs, in consultation with the department members. All the sample schools had their own policies in files that were kept by the HODs. The policies often

stipulated the work output as expected by the Director's Circular Number 6 of 2006: *Guidelines on weekly work coverage in Schools*. (**Appendix C5**) The policies provided guidance on the following aspects of their work:

- Aims to be achieved

- Work output

- Number of periods to be allocated to the subjects

- Organisation of internal examinations

- Textbooks

- Scheming and planning

- Meetings to be held

- Lesson and exercise book inspections.

Each teacher was given a copy of the departmental policy and had to acknowledge receipt by signing for it. As the HoD of School **F** explained, this was done so that when inspections were carried out, no one would be able to say, "I did not know.'' The school policy document outlined almost everything that the teacher was expected to do. The one major challenge arising out of the foregoing discussion seems to be that of the policy messaging and interpretation. In a situation where many of the school based role players had limited access to the original policies, the guidance they receive from the actual policy may be diffuse at best.

Overall, the many policies that have been released periodically, while useful for providing the required guidance on curriculum implementation, may indicate a need for a comprehensive policy document on vocational and technical education in Zimbabwe to avoid conflicting policy documents, such as Policy Circulars 2 of 2001 and 3 of 2002 (Mupinga *et al*(2005).

4.2.4 Supervision instruments

Supervision instruments are tools and resources used by instructional leaders to enrich and support their supervision activities Spillane *et al* (2004). In addition to the policies, I also studied the artefacts that are used to provide instructional guidance for vocational and technical subject. These were mainly used to standardise the supervision exercise and at the same time check on the teachers' competences. The supervision documents were mostly found in the schools, where the bulk of the supervision and instructional guidance practices were carried out. Three key documents were found in most schools:

4.2.4.1 Programme of activities

The Heads of Schools **A** and **I** mentioned what they called 'A Diary of Activities'. The "diary" listed the major activities they were to undertake and when these were to be done. For example, dates on when the following activities were to be carried out were listed:

- Handing in of the schemes of work to the head's office

- Handing in of the exercise books to the head

- Handing in of the mid-year examination papers for typing

- Dates when examinations were to start and end

- Dates when the marks were to be handed in to the class teachers for them to compile reports.

- Date for the last staff meeting of the term [See Table 4.4 below].

The Heads of schools **B**, **E** and **H** had no such documents indicating when they should do which activities. The Head of School **E** provided the following explanation for this observation:

> *What you do at times is determined by what will be there for the day. I plan what I am to do on a daily basis and that is why I come early for work. I say so because there are so many disturbances which may not allow me to do what I would have planned and so I see it fit to plan daily.*

In other cases, such as that of Schools **C** and **J** the Heads explained that they delegated the instructional guidance programme to their Heads of Department:

> *There are so many activities at the school and I cannot compile a calendar for them alone. I therefore task each section and each department to draw up their calendars which they will then hand in to me for filing. My duty will then be to monitor if the indicated events and activities are being done. The heads of sections and the HODs write reports which they hand in as proof of having completed any scheduled assignment.*

In a slightly different twist, the Head of School **J** explained that he appointed a committee comprising of the Deputy Head, the HODs and the senior teachers to draft such a programme of instructional guidance.

At School **D,** the Head revealed that each department drafted its own calendar and then the administration staff would compile one document from those.

Schools **F** and **G** are in the same [BSP (Z)] cluster and were government day schools. They were double session schools and had similar calendars of events. Below is an exemplar of the calendar from School **F**.

TABLE 4.4: An example of a High School Instructional Guidance Calendar

HIGH SCHOOLF: TERM 2 2014 CALENDAR

DATE	TIME	EVENT	REPORT TO
27/04/2014	1000	ADMINISTRATION MEETING	HEAD
28/04/2014	1000	HODS MEETINGS	HEAD
29/04/2014	1000	STAFF MEETING	HEAD
05/05/2014	1000	DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE MEETING	D/HEAD
06/05/2014		SUBMISSION OF SCHEMES OF WORK BY TEACHERS	HEAD
06/05/2014	0645	TERM 2 COMMENCES FORMS 2 AND 4 IN MORNING SESSION	ADMIN
06/05/2014TO 08/05/2014		DEPARTMENTAL MEETINGS COLLECTION OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORTS BY CLASS TAECHERS FROM PUPILS	HODS D/HEAD
09/05/2014		SDA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	SDA
12/05/2014		SUBMISSION OF MINUTE BOOKS BY HODS	HEAD
13/05/2014		SUBMISSION OF SCHEMES AND RECORDS OF WORK BY TEACHERS	HODS
19/05/2014		SUBMISSION OF FIRST BATCH OF NARRATIVE REPORTS BY HODS	HEAD
21/05/2014		LESSON OBSERVATION COMPUTER STUDIES DEPARTMENT	HEAD D/HEAD
22/05/2014		BOOK INSPECTION TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT FORMS 4 AND 6 FORMS 3 AND 5 FORM 2 FORM 1	HEAD D/HEAD S/MASTERS S/WOMEN
22/05/2014		DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF MID YEAR PAPERS TO HODS BY TEACHERS	HODS
27/05/2014		LESSON OBSERVATION TECHNICALS DEPARTMENT	D/HEAD
28/05/2014	0920-0940	EXAMINATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING	D/HEAD
29/05/2014		BOOK INSPECTION SHONA DEPARTMENT FORMS 4 AND 6 FORMS 3 AND 5 FORM 2 FORM 1	HEAD D/HEAD S/MATERS S/WOMEN
02/06/2014		LESSON OBSERVATION ENGLISH DEPARTMENT	HEAD D/HAED
03/06/2014		BOOK INSPECTION SCIENCE DEPARTMENT FORMS 4 AND 6 FORMS 3 AND 5 FORM 2 FORM 1	HEAD D/HEAD S/MASTERS S/WOMEN
04/06/2014		COMMENCEMENT OF ZIMSEC JUNE 2015 EXAMINATIONS (TENTATIVE)	EXAMINATIONS COMMITTTEE
09/06/2014		LESSON OBSERVATION AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT	HEAD D/HAED
11/06/2014		BOOK INSPECTION GEOGRAPHY DEPARTMENT FORMS 4 AND 6 FORMS 3 AND 5	HEAD D/HEAD

		FORM 2	S/MASTERS
		FORM 1	S/WOMEN
11/06/2014		LESSON OBSERVATION MATHEMATICS DEPARTMENT	HEAD
			D/HEAD
18/06/2014		BOOK INSPECTION HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT	
		FORMS 4 AND 6	HEAD
		FORMS 3 AND 5	D/HAED
		FORM 2	S/MASTERS
		FORM 1	S/WOMEN
19/06/2014	0920-0940	DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE MEETING	D/HEAD
23/06/2014	0900	EXAMINATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING	HEAD
25/06/2014	TBA	CONSULTATION DAY	HEAD
		COMMITTEE MEETING	
01/07/2014		CONSULTATION DAY	HEAD
09/07/2014		MID-YEAR EXAMINATIONS COMMENCE (TENTATIVE)	EXAMINATION COMMITTEE
23/07/2014		END OF MID-YEAR EXAMINATIONS	
28/07/2014 TO 04/08/2014		COMPLETION OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORTS BY SUBJECT TEACHERS	
05/08/2014		SUBMISSION OF ACADEMIC PROGRESS REPORTS FOR HEAD'S COMMENT	
		FORM 5 AND 6	HEAD
		FORM 4	D/HEAD
		FORMS 3,2 AND 1	S/MASTER AND S/WOMEN
06/08/2014	1200-1300 TO 1300 -1400	CLEANING OF CLASSROOMS	S/WOMEN
		END OF TERM STAFF MEETING	HEAD
07/08/2014	0800	END OF TERM SCHOOL ASSEMBLY	HEAD

The calendar of events shown above documents the dates on when different activities were to take place. Both the instructional leaders and the teachers used these as a guide in the execution of their roles.

4.2.4.2 Lesson observation instruments

Lesson observation instruments were provided to the researcher by the Heads and HODs in response to a question on what they looked for when observing lessons. The Head of School **F** explained that:

> *Lesson observation reports are compiled using standardised observation instruments from the ministry. I use these instruments to identify the teachers' professional competences and weaknesses in order to give fruitful feedback.*

Upon reviewing the instruments, I noted that, for the instructional leaders to be able to give help on the quality of work and the standard of marking expected, they had to know the

demands of the subjects and policy stipulation. There was a challenge, therefore, to appoint leaders who are experts in their various subjects, and perhaps to also be able to draft protocols that are subject specific.

Appendixes C1 and C6 are exemplars of the lesson observation protocols found in the schools. C1 is the general protocol distributed by the Ministry to all the schools while C6 is the one adapted by a school to suit their situation. It can be noted from the protocols that two key areas of assessment centre on the use of "teaching/learning aids" and that of "subject mastery".

4.2.4.3 Exercise book inspection

Similar to lesson observations, the researcher found that exercise book inspection reports were written on forms that are also provided by the Ministry. These reports assisted the instructional leaders to monitor the effectiveness of teachers. An example of such a report is replicated below:

SCHOOL A EXERCISE BOOKS INSPECTION REPORT

Name of Teacher: ....EC Number:......................................

Class:..Subject:..

Date of Inspection:..Number of Books Inspected:................

a. Amount and frequency of written work.

 ....

....

b. Quality of work: ....

c. Quality of marking: ....

d. Recommendations: ....

Signature of Supervisor: ....Date: ....

Signature of Teacher: ....Date: ....

The report focuses on what is considered the key instructional practices that the teachers are to engage in; viz. how often they are to give the students written work, the quality of work given and the marking of such work. As discussed earlier, these reports align with the policies that stipulate the work that is to be covered in each class per week. The evaluation and the guidance given thereafter are, therefore, governed by the given policies.

In summary therefore, the data obtained from the documents analysis confirmed that the curriculum being implemented in the schools had a history dating back to1999, when a commission was set up to review the curriculum current at the time. To date, its implementation has not been very successful, and hence, the goal of this study was to explore the guidance and support that is provided to the teachers for successful implementation of the vocational and technical education curriculum. The Two-Pathway structure has been problematic in some ways due to funding constraints in many schools. While there seems to be strong policy support and guidance, the policies still need to filter down to the implementers, especially those closest to the classroom.

4.3 SECTION B: DATA FROM THE TEACHERS' FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

To explore further how the vocational and technical education policies function in the real world of the schools and classrooms, I now turn to the data from the discussions held with the 60 teachers, from the ten sample schools. The teachers were organised into nine focus groups, as indicated. It was important to convene these focus group discussions in order to answer the research questions (from their perspective) on who the instructional leaders for the vocational and technical subjects were and how the instructional guidance policies and systems work for them. I begin with a description of the sample:

4.3.1 Teachers' qualifications

Table4.5 below displays the biographical data of the teachers who formed the focus group discussions.

Table 4.5 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION OF THE SUBJECTS' TEACHERS

Teacher number and Code	Gender	Qualification	Area of specialisation	Subject being taught	Work experience in years
1. A 1	M	NDE BTE (Agric)	Agriculture	Agriculture	9
2. A 2	M	Dip Ed	Shona and Art	Shona and Art	4
3. B 1	F	BA	Shona and Music	Music	4
4. B2	M	NCE	Wood Technology	Woodwork	5
5. B 3	M	B.Ed.	English and Computers	Computers	24
6. C1	F	B.Ed.	Food and Nutrition and	Food and	12

			History	Nutrition	
7. C 2	F	NFC, NC B.Ed.	Food and Nutrition and History	Fashion and Fabrics	6
8. C 3	M	Dip Ed	Building Studies	Building Studies	7
9. D 1	F	B.Ed. Dip	Home Economics	Fashion and Fabrics	14
10. D 2	F	Directrice degree (Germany) FETC	Fashion and Fabrics	Fashion and Fabrics	28
11. D 3	F	B.Ed. Dip Ed FETC	Fashion and Fabrics	Fashion and Fabrics	13
12. D 4	F	Dip Ed	Building Studies	Building Studies	11
13. D 5	F	Dip Ed NC, Class 1 trade test	Building Studies and Brick and Block laying	Building Studies	16
14. D 6	F	CE Agric Dip Ed and B.Ed.	Agriculture	Agriculture	26
15. E 1	F	STC	Home Economics	Fashion and Fabrics and Food and Nutrition	16
16. E 2	F	Dip Ed	Agriculture	Agriculture and Horticulture	14
17. E 3	F	Dip Ed and FETC	Fashion and Fabrics	Fashion and Fabrics	8
18. F 1	F	Dip Ed	Agriculture	Agriculture	23
19. F 2	F	CE	Home Economics	Fashion and Fabrics	28
20. F 3	F	Dip Ed	Psychology	Music and Shona	11
21. F 4	M	STC	Metalwork	Metalwork	26
22. F 5	M	Dip. Ed	TG	TG	20
23. F 6	M	STC and B.Ed.	Woodwork and Metalwork	Woodwork and Metalwork	22
24. F7	M	DipEd B.Ed.	Food and Nutrition	Food and Nutrition	12
25. F 8	F	MEd	Human Nutrition	Food and Nutrition	16
26. F 9	F	Dip Ed and	Fashion and	Fashion and	

		B.Ed.	Fabrics	Fabrics	
27. F 10	M	Dip Ed	TG	TG	14
28. F 11	M	STC	STC Metal	Metalwork	12
29. F 12	F	Dip Ed and B.Ed.	Fashion and Fabrics	Fashion and Fabrics	20
30. F 13	F	Dip Ed	Metalwork	Metalwork	10
31. F 14	F	BSc	Home Economics	Fashion and Fabrics	10
32. F 15	F	CE	Fashion and Fabrics	Fashion and Fabrics	18
33. F 16	F	Dip Ed	Agriculture	Agriculture	13
34. G 1	M	Dip Ed B.Ed.	Art and Design English	Art	44
35. G 2	M	Dip Ed Bed	Technical graphics	Technical graphics	28
36. G 3	M	Grad CE BSc	Agriculture	Mathematics	26
37. G 4	M	Dip Ed BCom. Honours	Woodwork	Woodwork	28
38. G 5	F	Dip Ed Bed	Fashion and Fabrics & Food and Nutrition	Fashion and Fabrics	32
39. G 6	F	CE BEd	Fashion and Fabrics & Food and Nutrition	Fashion and Fabrics	36
40. G 7	M	CE, MEd BEd and BSc Counselling	Science Building	Building	16
41. G 8	M	CE BA	English and Agriculture	English	22
42. G 9	F	CE	Fashion and Fabrics & Food and Nutrition	Food and Nutrition	28
43. G 10	M	CE Bed	Metalwork	Metalwork	28
44. G 11	F	Dip Agric Dip Ed	Agriculture	Agriculture	28
45. G 12	M	CE	Woodwork Geography	Woodwork	28
46. I 1	F	CE Home Economics	Fashion and Fabrics & Food and Nutrition	Fashion and Fabrics	31
47. I 2	F	CE	Home Economics	Fashion and Fabrics& Food	27

				and Nutrition	
48. I 3	F	BEd- FF Dip Ed	Home Economics	Fashion and Fabrics	15
49. I 4	F	Dip Ed National Certificate	Woodwork and Agriculture	Agriculture	5
50. I 5	M	CE	Metalwork	Metalwork	23
51. J 1	F	CE, BEd (Admin)	Home Economics	Food and Nutrition	37
52. J 2	F	Dip Ed, BEd (Admin)	Home Economics	Food and Nutrition	20
53. J 3	F	Dip Ed	Home Economics	Fashion and Fabrics	21
54. J 4	F	Dip Ed BEd	Home Economics Textile Studies	English Fashion and Fabrics Textile Studies	14
55. J 5	M	Dip Ed, NC	TG	TG and Shona	
56. J 6	M	Dip Ed	PE	PE	
57. J 7	F	BEd	Art	Art	
58. J 8	F	STC	TG and Science	TG and Science	
59. J 9	M	Diploma (Wood Technology)	Woodwork	Woodwork	
60. J 10	M	Dip Ed CE in Music BEd	Music	Music	

The 60 teachers, 36 females and 24 males, who formed part of the focus group interviews, came from nine of the ten selected schools. School **H** had only two teachers staffing the vocational and technical subjects (the Head and the HoD); therefore, as noted, no focus group discussion was held at that school. The sizes of the focus groups ranged from 2-16 participants and these teachers felt quite comfortable about giving their views, as they worked together and taught similar (practical) subjects.

From the teachers' biographical responses presented in Table 4.5, it is clear that all the teachers were qualified, with at least an initial teacher training course that enabled them to teach their respective practical subjects. Their teaching experience ranged between4-37 years, an indication that many were mature and experienced enough to be able to teach these vocational and technical subjects. The participants' qualifications are summarised below in

Table 4.6 for ease of reference. The 60 teachers represent the range of implementers for the vocational and technical subjects in the district.

Table 4.6 Distribution of teachers by highest professional qualification

Variable	Number
1. Certificate/Diploma in Education	34
2. Bachelor of Education	21
3. Bachelor of Arts	2
4. Bachelor of Technology Education	1
5. Master's in Education	2
Total	60

Source: Data gathered from the teachers' focus groups

Table 4.6 indicates that most of the teachers are Certificate or Diploma in Education holders with specialisation in the various practical subjects. Although qualified to teach these subjects, the teachers continue to require guidance and support for continued development and improvement. It is this issue of guidance and support for teaching the practical subjects which the present study sought to explore and document: how it is done, who is involved and what the outcomes are.

4.3.2 Ability to teach vocational and technical subjects

From the discussions with the teachers in Focus Group, I was able to establish that most of them were comfortable teaching the subjects for which they had been trained at college. The major challenges arose when the teachers were required to move beyond their areas of specialisation, something which was a common occurrence in this district. Here is how Teacher **A1** expressed this challenge and the need for guidance and support, during the focus group interviews:

> *If it is anything to do with Agriculture I am very much comfortable. There was a time when I was asked to introduce and teach Horticulture. That was very difficult for me and I was not comfortable at all. Although it is part of Agriculture, I was not happy and I felt I needed great assistance.*

Similar sentiments were expressed by teachers **F4** and **F6**, who taught Metalwork and Woodwork, respectively. They described how they were asked to take HEXCO courses, viz. Machine-shop Engineering and Cabinet Making. It was clear from their demeanour and gestures, as they were expressing themselves, that they were uncomfortable teaching these subjects. These are subjects that are normally taught at Poly-Technical colleges and not at a Teacher Training College, and thus it was expected that many of the teachers in this group would have no experience of these subjects. Table 4.7 below summarises the information provided by the teachers concerning the guidance that they were given by their instructional leaders. My initial purpose was to gain a sense of who the key leaders were who provided the required support for these teachers in the practical subjects.

4.3.3 Teachers' supervisors (instructional leaders)

Question number two on the interview guide required the teachers to tell me who their supervisors were. School **A's** group reported that they mostly dealt with their HoDson issues to do with their supervision and the running of the department. Teacher A1 who taught Agriculture had this to say:

> *Our boss, the one who supervises us and is always with us is the HoD. The (school) head*
> *is also interested in seeing our work so he visits us to see what we will be doing*
> *especially if it is time for the practical work in the garden.*

School **B's** focus group expressed the same sentiments. The group explained that the HoD was their main supervisor together with the Head whose supervision was not as frequent as that of the HoD. The group also mentioned the senior teachers who also monitored their work. Teacher **B3**stressed that:

> *All the administration staff are our supervisors and they monitor our work but on different*
> *aspects. For example the senior woman inspects our rooms for cleanliness and also to see*
> *if we attend to our lessons as timetabled. The senior master is mainly concerned with the*
> *students' discipline. He helps us by "hunting" for all those students who run away from*
> *our subjects.*

Similarly, Groups C and D also mentioned the HoDs as their main supervisors. They also mentioned the deputy heads who they said usually checked on their punctuality and lesson attendance. Teacher D2 explained that:

> *Our deputy head is always standing at a strategic place in the school yard where she can*
> *see how students change rooms for the different lessons and also check for teachers who*

report for their lessons late and notes their names. People always rush for their lesson as soon as the bell goes for fear of being reprimanded or even appraised negatively at the end of the year.

Groups E, F, G, I and **J**on the other hand added the education officers as their other supervisors, in addition to those mentioned by the other groups (Heads, HoDs and the senior teachers). Teacher **G10** had this to say:

At our school we also have the EOs coming to supervise us but just once in a while. When they come they usually inspect our books and then observe some lessons for a selected few. They then disappear for years only to meet them at some organised seminar or workshop.

Data from the focus groups thus suggests that the HoDs are the teachers' main supervisors and instructional leaders. Teacher A even called them 'bosses'. These were the people who directly dealt with the teachers as they were also the experts in their various practical subjects. The school heads were also mentioned, but not as frequently and not in the same way as the HoDs. The deputy head and the senior teachers did offer guidance as far as disciplining the students was concerned, thereby helping to create environment conducive to learning. They also checked on the students' and teachers' punctuality and behaviour. The above scenario is in general agreement with literature, which equates instructional leadership with curriculum expertise (Weller, 2001). Hence the HoDs who were the vocational and technical subject experts were also found to be the major instructional leaders for teachers.

4.3.4 Challenges encountered

The success of vocational and technical subjects in the schools depends, mostly, on the provision of resources (Gwembire & Katsaruwara, 2013). The responses from the teachers' focus group discussions showed that the shortage of resources was the major challenge that affected their work. While some teachers thought it was a general problem facing all learning institutions in the country, there were others who blamed the leaders for being unsympathetic to their plight as practical subjects' teachers.

Table 4.7 Summary of themes from the teachers' focus group interviews

Focus group	THEME1 Instructional leaders	THEME 2 Guidance/support provided	THEME 3 Challenges encountered
A	Head HOD	Procurement of materials	Lack of resources, textbooks expensive, late purchases of resources Difficult topics
B	HOD Head Senior teachers	Modelling teaching	Shortage of resources and infrastructure.
C	HOD Head and deputy Senior teachers	Lesson observations	Resource shortage Negative attitudes
D	HOD Heads Teachers in charge (TICs)	Workshop subject panels	Resources Time Teacher/pupil ratio Equipment Pupil attitudes T/B shortage
E	HODs Head RO staff EO Technical	Provision of needed resources. supervising Seminars ZHETA Extra lessons	Enrolments Finances Indiscipline Poverty-parents not working Shortage of time Size of classes 1:20
F	HODs Subject inspectors	Workshops Provide resources Organise seminars Workshops	Resources Double sessions Timetable Theory-stressed work Calibre of students Evaluation
G	Head HOD EOs D/Head	Workshops Seminars Team teaching	Resources Attitude of head Attitude of pupils and parents.
I	Head HODs EO	Lesson observations Exercise book inspections	Resource shortages Timetable Attitudes
J	Heads S/Master S/Woman HOD	Organise seminars, workshops Supervise work	Shortage of all resources Inadequate time for practical work

Source: (Data gathered from the teachers' focus groups)

4.4 SECTION C: DATA FROM THE INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

To further explore the findings from the focus group interviews, I held several one-on-one interviews with some of the teachers. The findings in this section are organised as emerging themes, revealing who the key players were in the vocational and technical education leadership and how instructional guidance was provided to the teachers. The themes are discussed in such a way that they answer the research questions posed earlier. These themes

are divided into sub-themes and categories that were generated from the data, as depicted in Table 4.4.

Table4.4 Summary of the analysis of/ and emerging themes

Research questions	Themes	Sub-themes	Categories
1. Who are the key players in the leadership of vocational and technical subjects?	Key players in the vocational and technical subjects' instructional guidance	Instructional leaders' roles	Requisite qualifications for appointment and roles
2. What are the dominant instructional leaders' behaviours and practices?	Leaders' instructional guidance behaviours and activities.	1. Guidance and support for instruction.	1a. Setting goals 1b.Provision of resources. 1c.Supervision of instruction.
		2. Guidance and support for the teachers' professional development.	2a.Workshops and seminars 2b.Staff meetings. 2c.Targetted feedback.
		3.Creating a conducive learning environment	. Vision and mission. 3b.Systems of collaboration. 3c.Motivation to work.
3. What is the relationship between leadership and instruction with special reference to vocational and technical subjects?	Connection between leadership and the instruction of practical subjects.	1. Teachers' perceptions on the guidance and support provided.	1a.Heads' activities. 1b.HoDs' roles. 1c.EOs' roles. 1d.The DEO's role.

4.4.1Theme 1: Key players in the leadership of vocational subjects

In order to know who the key players in the leadership of the vocational and technical subjects are, I explored such attributes as their educational backgrounds and teaching experience since these two factors bear directly on their roles and how they carried them out. The information also contributed to my understanding of the leaders' competency levels, maturity and possible suitability for guiding and supporting the instruction of vocational and technical subjects.

I begin my discussion by exploring the question of who the key players providing the leadership and guidance to the teachers of practical subjects are. The discussion on the key players is followed by an exploration of the key themes identified during the analysis.

Regarding the key players, the teachers, who are the implementers of the curriculum in these subjects, indicated that the heads of schools and the HODs played the role of being the internal supervisors of teachers at the various schools, while the subject EOs who were located at the provincial offices together with the DEO were the external supervisors. Teacher F6 from focus group F clearly stated that,

> *As teachers, we deal with a number of people who lead us. Here, at school, we have the Head, the deputy, the senior teachers and then our HoD who supervise our work. We then have outsiders, from the provincial office and also from the district. These are the inspectors and the District Education Officer, (DEO).*

The Senior Master and Senior Woman were also mentioned as key leaders in Focus Group **J**. The Senior Master and Woman normally supervised the teachers on behalf of the head. In the sections that follow, I discuss the details of the various instructional leaders that were identified during the focus group discussions:

4.4.1.1. Heads of schools

All the heads of schools that were interviewed were in substantive posts and were appointed through a recruitment process that included application and interviews. The Heads' posts were advertised in the Ministry's vacancy announcements by the Provincial Directors. The duties or the responsibilities they were expected to perform were also stipulated. Of interest to this study were the eligibility criteria: to qualify to be a head of a secondary school, an applicant had to have worked as a deputy head for at least two years and be a certified university graduate who is able to work under pressure. A first degree was therefore a pre-requisite in order to be appointed to the position of head of a school.

On further enquiry about what the heads' roles are, the researcher was referred to the Ministry of Education's Handbook, a document that specifies their roles in some greater detail. The key roles are summarised below:

Heads' duties

Administrative duties

- Enrolling, transferring and suspending pupils found guilty at the school
- Formulating and determining the school's major goals and objectives
- Identifying the strategies for attaining these
- Establishing good rapport between all the school's stakeholders
- Being the chief Public Relations Officer
- Looking after all school property, both movable and immovable including funds.
- Acquainting staff with the Public Service and Ministry regulations.

Professional duties

These include

- Supervision
- Teaching
- Carrying out well- planned class visits
- Exercise book inspections
- Giving tests
- Allocating classes
- Staff development.

(Source: Handbook on School Administration for Heads (1993)

All the ten Heads were in substantive posts, but only three had a background in vocational and technical subjects and had taught these subjects previously. The other seven heads were not vocational or technical subject specialists; rather, they were specialists in academic subjects. All the Heads, however, possessed a teaching qualification from one of the recognised teacher training institutions in the country. Their profiles are summarised in table 4.8 below:

Table 4.8 Summaries of biographical data of the heads of schools

School	Gender	Qualification	Subject specialisation	Total work experience	Experience as Head
A	M	CE, BEd, MEd (Admin)	History Geography	31	16
B	M	CE, BA Med	Primary English	27	9
C	M	BEd CE	Sciences	33	13
D	M	BEd CE BCom MED, MBA	Geography Agriculture Management Administration	23	16
E	M	BSc (Honours) Grad DE	Economics Commerce	21	5
F	F	BA Grad CE	English History	27	12
G	F	BA Grad CE	Shona Divinity	34	17
H	F	CE BEd (Admin)	Home Economics	25	5
I	M	CE (Primary) BA	History Education	29	12
J	M	CE (Primary) BA	Education Biblical Studies Shona English	34	25

From my observations during the interviews and based on their years of experience, all the Heads appeared to be mature people who had a lot of experience and could be expected to be effective instructional leaders. With respect to their qualifications, a first degree only was a pre-requisite to be a school Head. The fact that seven of the Heads were not vocational or technical subject specialists was therefore not surprising. As long as a candidate had a recognised first degree and did well in the selection interview, he/she was eligible to be a Head. A possible point of concern in this regard is that the leaders without the necessary expertise in the vocational and technical subjects are more likely to face content knowledge challenges in vocational subjects that may prevent them from effectively supervising those subjects within the school. This situation is highlighted by Moss and Liang (1990) who assert that the vocational and technical subjects require leaders who can deliver vocational

education to learners. Lewis (1998) echoes this view by asserting that vocational education must be administered by leaders who are in sympathy with its aims and attach adequate importance to its social and economic value.

However, as far as the heads are concerned, they are not only there to focus on leading instruction but also need to manage their institutions of learning. As instructional leaders, they have to lead from a combination of expertise and charisma (Hallinger 2012); hence, even those who are not vocational and technical subjects specialists are expected to be able to lead a curriculum that includes these subjects. Buregeya (2011) also confirms this view by pointing out that heads normally just carry out informal classroom visits. They simply perform general instructional supervision, a task they can do even if they are not specialists in the specific subjects. This practice is common in secondary schools where a wide range of subjects has to be supervised by instructional leaders who may not be experts in all the subjects offered.

According to Prosser and Allen (1925) in Lewis (1994), vocational education needs to be undertaken in an environment that is physically and administratively separated from the existing public schools system. With Heads who do not have the vocational and technical background and who were never themselves exposed to these subjects, can the programmes really succeed in schools? This remains an open question in this context. Still, by virtue of their formal position and appointment, the school heads remain the key players in the guidance and support of vocational subjects. How they play this role, in terms of their actual practices, is explored later in the discussion of the various themes.

4.4.1.2 The Heads of Departments (HODs)

The HODs in the schools were appointed by the heads of the institutions. This was confirmed by all the HODs I interviewed. What the HODs were expected to do as instructional leaders was also explained to them during their appointment to these posts of responsibility. All the HODs confirmed that their appointments were made by their Heads and described some of the criteria that were used in their appointment. One HOD, **EH1** had this to say about his appointment:

> *My appointment was done by the Head. I had been doing other duties in the*
> *school and perhaps that is why he chose me. I used to register students for*
> *examinations and I also sit in the disciplinary and school educational*
> *boards. More so, I am also the highest qualified senior teacher among all*

the vocational subject teachers, so I think I was the most suitable candidate
for the post.

Another HoD, **GH1** also confirmed this scenario whereby the school Head was the one who chose and appointed HODs as he or she saw fit. The HOD remarked:

I was appointed HOD at this school four years ago, but I had been HoD in other schools where I taught. I even introduced Fashion and Fabrics at the school where I taught first. (Name of school was supplied).When the HoD who was here got promoted; the Head called me and gave me that responsibility of leading the department. I accepted because I had done the work before. So it is the Head who appoints HODs at this school. I think she also considers your qualifications and perhaps how hard working you are as a teacher.

All the other HODs also confirmed that their appointments were made by their Heads. They also confirmed that the Heads mostly considered the qualifications and work experience. Table 4.9 below summarises the qualifications and experience as well as the sizes of the departments these HODs led.

Table 4.9 Biographical data of the Heads of Departments (HODs) in the sample schools

Name	Gender	Qualifications	Subject specialisation	Subject being taught	Experience as		Number of members in the department	Subjects being led
					Teacher	HoD		
AH1	F	CE, BEd	Home Economics	Fashion and Fabrics	21	16	3	Art Agriculture Building studies F/F
BH1	F	CE, BEd	Home Economics	Fashion &Fabrics	19	12	4	Music Computers Woodwork Agriculture F/Fabrics
CH1	F	Dip Ed, BEd Grade 5Music Certificate	History French Music	History Music			4	Music T.G Building Studies
DH1	F	Dip Ed BEd NFC	Home Economics Clothing & Textiles Garment Construction	Fashion and Fabrics	12	2	4	Home Economics
DH2	M	Dip Ed	Building Studies and Maths	Building Studies	23	18	2	Building Studies
DH3	F	CE	Agriculture		25	6	1	Agriculture

		BEd BSCAM						
EH1	M	BSc(Agric) Dip Ed CE FETC	Agriculture	Agriculture	19		6	Business English Bookkeeping F/Fabrics Agriculture Horticulture
FH1	M	Dip Ed	Computer Science Maths	Computers	13	10	1	Computer Science
FH2	M	CE	Agriculture	Agriculture	36	32	2	Agriculture
FH3	M	Dip Ed (Pr) CE	Wood Technology		34	5	6	T.G Woodwork Metalwork
FH4	F	Dip Ed BEd MEd	Home Economics	F/Nutrition	14	2	6	Home Economics subjects Textile & Clothing design
GH1	F	Dip Ed BEd	Home Economics	Fashion and Fabrics	20	4	7	Fashion and fabrics
GH2	M	CE	T.G & Science	T.G	23	6	7	Metalwork Woodwork Building T.G
GH3	F	CE Dip Ed		Agriculture	18		5	Agriculture Music Art P.E
HH1	M	CE BA MEd (Admin) FETC	Agriculture English	English Science Agriculture	22	10	1	Agriculture Fashion and Fabrics
IH1	F	CE	Home Economics	Fashion and Fabrics	31	24	2	Food and Nutrition Fashion and Fabrics
IH2	M	CE	Metalwork	Metalwork	23	9	2	Metalwork Woodwork
JH1	F	CE BEd (Admin)	Home Economics	Fashion and Fabrics Bakery Studies	26	16	4	Home Economics Bakery Studies Textile Technology
JH2	M	STC	Metalwork	Metalwork	28	6	6	Art Music Woodwork T.G P.E

Source: Data gathered from the HODs

The data presented in Table 4.9reveal that the 19 HODs, nine males and ten females, were all qualified in the subjects they teach. Their teaching experience was considerable and ranged from 12 to 36 years as teachers and two to 32as HODs. The HODs led two to six departmental members, with some leading in more than one subject areas. An example is HOD**BH1** who led four members in teaching Music, Computer Studies, Woodwork and Agriculture. The same applied to HODs**AH1**, **CH1**, **EH1**, **JH2** and **GH3**who were leading multiple subject areas.

The appointment of the HODs, based on their qualifications and other leadership attributes, by the Heads of schools is consistent with Weller (2001) who found that HODs are often chosen because of their experience and reputation for being good teachers. Weller goes further to explain that most of these HODs have no formal authority such as that of the Heads and often look up to the Head to make decisions for them. They are mostly not afforded any formal training upon appointment except for a list of duties they are expected to perform. The school heads often consider their possession of essential knowledge and skills to assist the teachers in the implementation of the subjects. The HODs rely on nothing more than their experience (which is sometimes the best teacher) to lead their subordinates.

However, the findings in this study revealed that the situation where HODs were expected to lead people in more than one subject area almost rendered them (HoDs) incompetent. As noted in the case of the heads of schools, no single person can be an expert in all subjects. The HODs' capacity to assist teachers, in subjects where they themselves were not qualified, was limited. The subordinates would most likely not receive the much needed guidance and support to do their work effectively. Simin and Mohammed (2014) assert that the HOD's position is an extension of the school administration where the incumbent must have teaching and subject expertise. Instead of relying on the heads for authority, the HODs need to be prepared for their leadership responsibilities in order to maximise the effectiveness of their positions. This is also consistent with Phillip (2009) who holds that an HOD must be a teacher who is able to provide good teaching practices for others to be able to perform better. Pitsoe (2005) also mentions that an HOD must be able to transfer his or her knowledge and skills to the teachers in order to make them successful in their work. The situation in Schools **A, B, E** and **H** where HODs led subjects they were not trained in contradicts the recommendations in the literature on the need for subject expertise. A teacher cannot be effective in helping colleagues in a subject for which he or she does not possess the requisite

knowledge and skills. To this effect, efforts have to be made to distribute leadership in order to involve those with the expertise more directly. School leadership cannot rely on formal leaders only, but should also involve informal ones, the non-positional leaders like the teachers (Spillane, 2006).

4.4.1.3 Subject inspectors

Like the school heads, the subject inspectors' posts were advertised for those who qualified to apply. The duties, responsibilities, competencies and skills were given in the Vacancy Announcement notice. Of interest to this study were the competences and skills, that were contained in the advertisement, to qualify to be an inspector; viz.:

- Be a holder of a University degree with a teaching subject.
- Have at least two years' experience as a Head or an equivalent grade to that of a head.
- Have knowledge of Education and Public Service Policies, Procedures, Rules and Regulations.
- Have the ability to work as part of a team.
- Be analytical, self-driven, organised and good at report writing.
- Have knowledge of the Ministry's Vision and Client's Charter.
- Be computer literate.

Possession of a driver's licence and a Master's degree were added advantages.

In Table 4.10 below, the qualifications and experience of the two participants who fall into the category of EOs are presented.

Table 4.10 EOs' Biographical data

Code	Gender	Qualifications	Subject specialisations	Experience as teacher	Experience as inspector
INS 'A' Robert	M	STC T2B BEd Med	Metalwork Technical Design	34 years	9years
INS 'B' Rose	F	Dip Ed BEd Med	Home Economics subjects	19 years	7 years

Robert is a holder of a Secondary School Teacher Certificate (STC) in Metalwork and Woodwork, a Bachelor of Education degree in Metal Technology and a Master's degree in Metal Technology and Design. He has worked in the Ministry of Education for 34 years as a teacher, school Head and currently as an Education inspector. He is in charge of all the vocational and technical subjects in the province, excluding Agriculture and Home Economics, which are the responsibility of other inspectors.

Rose, on the other hand, is a holder of a Diploma in Education (Home Economics), a Bachelor of Education degree (Food and Consumer Sciences) and a Master's in Technical Education (Human Nutrition). Rose has been a teacher from1996to 2012 when she was appointed acting Education Officer. She is in charge of all Home Economics subjects offered by the schools in the province.

The situation in the province is such that there are only four Education inspectors who are in charge of all of the vocational and technical subjects. Considering that the province has seven districts in total, it is not far-fetched to infer that there is probably inadequate leadership for the vocational and technical subjects. The expectation is that these subjects' inspectors, who are subject specialists, would interact with teachers in a manner that provides guidance and support for the adoption of new teaching strategies. The situation on the ground, however, did not seem to allow for more frequent interactions because of the limited number of inspectors involved. The shortage of funds on the part of the government was often cited as the main challenge in the appointment of more inspectors. Robert had this to say,

> The ideal situation is that each subject should have an inspector specifically in charge but
> no new appointments are being made due to shortage of funds. It is very difficult for the
> four of us to visit all schools in the province let alone the district.

According to Neumann and Cunningham (2009), in order to improve instruction, teachers have to interact more with their experts so as to adopt new teaching strategies. My findings suggest that the amount of interaction the teachers have with the EOs may be quite limited, due to their numbers and the other constraints, such as transport, costs and the number of schools to be visited.

4.4.1.4 The DEO

The post of DEO, held by Mr. Cosmas, involved an appointment exercise that was conducted at the Ministry's national office by a panel of interviewers. The post was advertised through a Ministry's Vacancy Announcement which stipulated the duties, responsibilities, competencies and skills that a candidate should have in order to qualify for appointment. The DEO, according to the Vacancy Announcement, should have the following qualities:

- Be an Education Officer or a Head for at least two years.
- Be a holder of a recognised University degree with a teaching subject.
- A Master's degree, possession of a class four driver's licence and experience of both the Primary and Secondary levels of the education system are considered as added advantages for appointment.

Mr Cosmas met the required criteria and was appointed to the DEO post in 2011.The DEO is responsible for co-ordinating all the learning that goes on in both primary and secondary schools in a particular district. In this case, the DEO is a mature 58 years old man who is passionate about his job. He has35years' experience in the Ministry of Education, working in different capacities, as indicated in Table 3.7 (Chapter Three, page 84).

Returning back to the research question on who the key instructional leaders for the vocational and technical subjects were, Figure 4.1 below presents an organisational chart that summarises the various formal instructional leaders and their positions within the Ministry of Education as discussed in the foregoing section.

Figure4.1 Organisational chart of formal instructional leaders

```
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ EDUCATION                              OFFICER        │
│ NATIONAL OFFICE                                       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          │
                          ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│ PROVINCIAL INSPECTORS AT PROVINCIAL OFFICE            │
│                                                       │
│                                                       │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                          │
                          ▼
┌──────────────┬──────────────┬──────────────┬──────────────┐
│ INSPECTOR    │ INSPECTOR    │ INSPECTOR    │ INSPECTOR    │
│ TECHNICALS   │ HOME         │ AGRICULTURE  │ BUILDING     │
│              │ ECONOMICS    │              │ AND T.G      │
└──────────────┴──────────────┴──────────────┴──────────────┘
                          │
                          ▼
              ┌───────────────────────────┐
              │ DISTRICT EDUCATION OFFICER │
              └───────────────────────────┘
                          │
                          ▼
              ┌───────────────────────────┐
              │ SCHOOL HEAD               │
              └───────────────────────────┘
                          │
                          ▼
┌──────────────┬──────────────────┬──────────────────────┐
│ HOD 1        │ HOD 2            │ HOD 3                │
└──────────────┴──────────────────┴──────────────────────┘
                          │
                          ▼
        ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
        │ VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SUBJECTTEACHERS │
        └─────────────────────────────────────┘
                          │
                          ▼
              ┌───────────────────────────┐
              │ PUPILS                    │
              └───────────────────────────┘
```
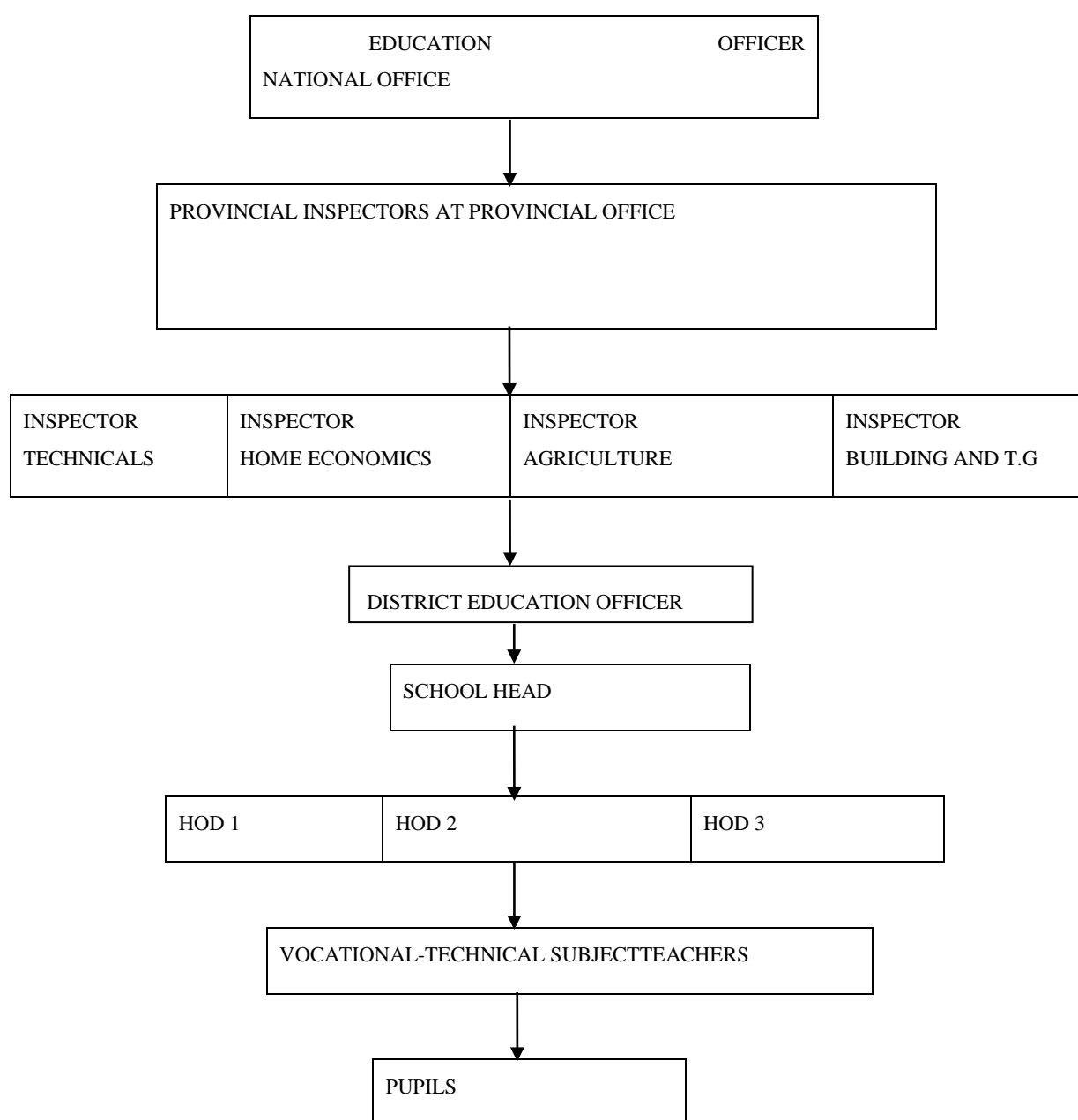
As illustrated by the organogram, the vocational and technical subjects appeared to have someone directly in charge at all the offices, from the Head/National office right down to the school level. The Secretary is however responsible for all that takes place in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. The Director at Head Office is also responsible for the formulation of policies in consultation with the Secretary. This is evidenced by all the circulars that guide the implementation of the vocational and technical subjects, as referred to in the previous sections. All the circulars emanate from either the Director or Secretary. After the Director, the next office which sees to the implementation of vocational subjects is the

Provincial Office where the subjects' Education Officers are based. As mentioned in Chapter Three, two out of the four Education Officers responsible for the vocational and technical subjects, took part in the study. At the district level there is a District Education Officer who is in charge of all schools in the Masvingo District, both Primary and Secondary. The vocational and technical subjects had an advantage in this case, because the District Education Officer happened to be a practical subjects' specialist. He always seemed to be readily available to offer guidance and support to teachers of these subjects, given his expertise in them, especially Metalwork.

Below the DEO in the hierarchical structure were the school heads at the institutions where the subjects were taught. Of the ten Heads who participated in the study, only three had a vocational and technical education background. Even then, the Heads had total responsibility for everything that went on at their schools and thus had limited influence on the implementation of vocational education in particular. A common practice that I observed was that the supervision of these subjects was left to the HODs. The task of monitoring the subjects was directly linked to the HODs' work distribution because they were the subject specialists, even though in some schools the HODs were responsible for subjects with which they were not familiar. Formally, therefore, it appears as if there is a coherent and layered structure for instructional leadership of the practical subjects within the province and district. Several role players have been recruited to carry out the functions of leadership. However, the reality of the situation on the ground is that few are vocational and technical subjects specialists.

As discussed in the background to this study, however, the instructional leaders supervising vocational and technical education may have been limited in the vocational skills required to guide the present curriculum. This was partly because in Zimbabwe the vocational aspects of the present curriculum were provided for in separate institutions (viz. the Vocational Training Centres and Poly-Technical Colleges) and some of the subjects were taught in F2 schools that ceased to exist at Independence in 1980. The present cohort of instructional leaders therefore has not been exposed sufficiently to all the skills that are needed in order to be able to offer adequate guidance and support in all the practical subjects. With the primary objective of vocational education being the acquisition of relevant knowledge, practical skills and attitudes for gainful employment in particular trades and occupational areas, there is a need for in-service-training of the leaders themselves, for them to be able to lead effectively in the

skills areas of the subjects for which they are responsible. There is also a need to practise distributed leadership in order to give the experts a chance to lead in their specialist areas. The heads, who are not vocational and technical subject specialists, should, at some stage be prepared to accept leadership from those teachers who have relevant subject knowledge.

The organogram indicates that the most important decisions were made by administrators as formal leaders but in some cases it was the teachers who actually carried them out, as informal leaders. The organogram also confirms that there is a need for leaders at every level of the system if the subjects are to be successful at all. Leadership should not be monopolised by one person but should be a social process (Baker 2001). Leadership is often linked to formal appointments but it is important to remember that there are other informal leaders who are leaders by virtue of their knowledge and skills. Quinn (2002) believes that informal leaders tend to have a close link with teachers and, therefore, are also linked to instructional improvement.

At School **F** there were two student teachers and, as confirmed by the HoD, their mentors did carry out a variety of leadership activities as informal leaders. The teachers led one another in the departments by sharing ideas, especially with novice and student teachers. School improvements depended also on informal leaders who were teachers. They were not appointed and had no positional authority. Their influence stemmed from the respect they commanded from their colleagues through their expertise and practices. Because of a strong emphasis on decentralisation of responsibilities and shared decision making, teachers become responsible for deciding how best to achieve their intended outcomes, thereby sharing in the instructional leadership circle as informal leaders. There is also a need to explore how such informal leaders guide and support one another in the schools.

Having uncovered the formal structure of instructional leadership for the practical subjects, I now turn to the key themes that describe the leadership practices as they emerged from both the observations and the interviews.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Dominant practices and behaviours of instructional leaders

Under this theme, I examine the data concerning the efforts that the key players in the vocational and technical leadership made to guide and support the teachers in their work. It emerged from the teachers' focus group discussions that the HODs were the primary supervisors for the teachers in the schools, followed by the heads of schools and then the

external supervisors who were the subject EOs and the DEO. The present theme is divided into three subthemes: guidance and support for instruction; guidance and support for the teachers' professional development; and creation of a suitable learning environment. These sub-themes define the key aspects that instructional leaders are expected to address in support of the teachers. The themes overlap and are, therefore, interrelated as they all come together to enhance the guidance and support given to the teachers. What leaders do to influence instruction: the activities, programmes and the strategies they engage in are important in the improvement of schools and also in student achievements (Jones 2010). Leithwood (1999) also posits that the critical focus for attention by leaders should be the behaviour of teachers. The focus should be to assist teachers to engage in activities that affect students' growth; hence the need for them (teachers) to be developed professionally in order for them to deliver instruction effectively. This is echoed by Blase and Blase (1999) who emphasise that the most influential instructional leadership practice at school level is promoting the teacher's professional development. Instructional leadership is not concerned with teaching and learning only, but should also include the professional learning of teachers which results in students' growth. Schools should, therefore, look for opportunities to increase the professional development and job performance of teachers; consequently the need to explore the guidance and support which teachers is given to enable this development. Elmore (2006) also argues that instructional leadership is managing the conditions under which people learn. There is a need to develop organisations that are supportive, coherent and which provide an environment conducive for practices to succeed. Figure 4.2 below is a summary of the theme, its sub-themes and the emerging categories.

Figure 4.2 Summary of Theme 2, its sub-themes and categories

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                              ┌──────────────┐              ┌─────────────────────────┐
                              │ Guidance and │─────────────▶│ *Setting goals for      │
                          ───▶│ support for  │─────────────▶│ instruction *Provision of│
                         /    │ Instruction  │─────────────▶│ resources  *Supervision │
                        /     └──────────────┘              │ of instruction.         │
┌──────────────┐      /                                     └─────────────────────────┘
│ Dominant     │     /        ┌──────────────┐              ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ instructional│────────────▶ │ Guidance and │              │ *Workshops and seminars │
│ leaders'     │     \        │ support for  │─────────────▶│                         │
│ practices    │      \       │ the teachers'│─────────────▶│ *Staff meetings         │
└──────────────┘       \      │ professional │─────────────▶│                         │
                        \     │ development  │              │ *Targeted feedback      │
                         \    └──────────────┘              └─────────────────────────┘
                          \
                           \  ┌──────────────┐              ┌─────────────────────────┐
                            ─▶│ Creating a   │─────────────▶│ * Vision and mission    │
                              │ conducive    │─────────────▶│ *Systems of collaboration│
                              │ learning     │─────────────▶│ *Motivation to work     │
                              │ environment  │              │                         │
                              └──────────────┘              └─────────────────────────┘
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4.4.2.1. Guidance and support for instruction

The Heads of schools, especially the seven who were not vocational and technical subject specialists, admitted that the subjects are specialised and need specialists to genuinely assist and guide the teachers in their work. The three who once taught these subjects concurred with this general sentiment but argued that for them it was not very difficult to assist and guide the teachers since that happened to be their field of study. The training that the latter group of school Heads received had some links to the vocational and technical curriculum being offered in the schools. This sub-theme identifies the activities which the instructional leaders described, which were designed to assist the teachers in improving their work as classroom practitioners. The task is divided into the following categories:

- Setting goals/targets for instruction
- Provision of resources
- Supervision of the teachers' work.

4.4.2.1.1 Setting goals/targets for instruction

Instructional leadership involves setting a clear vision and goals and making instructional quality a top priority by transforming that vision into reality. Whitaker (1997) echoed this when he identified four roles of instructional leaders, of which one is goal communication. Instructional leaders must take a lead in defining a clear direction for the teachers to follow. There should be a vision, mission and goals aligned to the school's strategies and action plans.

It was understood from the heads that having a mission statement displayed at strategic places for all the clients to see was a Ministry regulation. All ten schools in the sample had their mission statements displayed on their notice boards and in the Heads' offices. The Heads also confirmed that they derived their mission statements from the Ministry's statement. To avoid repetition, just one example of the schools' mission statements is cited here. The following is representative of the general mission statements seen in the schools.

SCHOOL F MISSION STATEMENT.

The school is committed to the delivery of quality secondary education which accentuates moral values and empowers pupils with academic and practical skills for use in life. We cherish excellence and innovativeness in order to produce computer literate, morally upright and responsible citizens equipped with a critical and enquiring mind.

CORE VALUES

> *Diligence*
>
> *Punctuality*
>
> *Integrity*
>
> *Openness*
>
> *Cleanliness*
>
> *Commitment*
>
> *Involvement*
>
> *Respectfulness*
>
> *Cooperativeness*

 VISION

To be one of the top government day high schools in Zimbabwe

The schools' mission statements that were provided to the researcher demonstrated that schools were aware of the value of vocational and technical subjects; hence they wanted to produce students equipped with practical skills for use in life, which is the major aim of the practical subjects. The schools value producing citizens who can fit well in their societies. With the school mission and vision in mind, each department was expected to draft their own mission statements. The departments were then required to show what they specifically wanted to do. An example of the departmental mission statements is given in **Appendix A6**.

If strictly followed, the teaching department's mission is to assist the teachers to form the habit of being punctual for lessons, giving work as expected and planning their work knowing it will be inspected. The mission statement was intended to help create a conducive learning environment and good working habits as it constantly reminded the teachers of their roles. It is a sound instructional practice to let people know what is expected of them before inspections are done.

As previously indicated, all the schools visited devised mission statements which helped to determine the schools' culture, and especially the vision of the school authorities. The schools' missions were also aligned to the schools' goals and targets. All the Heads also agreed that the targets set were not specifically for vocational and technical subjects alone, but for the whole school; hence the need for the departments then to draft their specific mission statement to guide their operations. The Head of School **A,** for example, had this to say:

> *The targets I set are not for a particular department or subject but for the smooth running of all the departments and all subjects we offer at the school. I set goals and targets to guide teachers in the proper utilisation of time. I also have a schedule of activities to guide in the allocation of time for the different activities to be done at the school by different people and the activities to be done are given due dates in order to meet the stipulated deadlines. By the way, some of the deadlines will be beyond our control as they are given either by the DEO, EOs or even the Provincial Education Director (PED).*

All the heads agreed with the above sentiments expressed by the Head of School **A** that they all set targets, but because they were the overall supervisors of all that went on in the schools, their targets were not for the vocational and technical subjects only.

The Head of School **J** concurred with the other heads but pointed out that the targets he set were sometimes directly linked to the vocational and technical subjects, especially if they had to do with the production of articles for assessment.

The HODs also agreed that they set goals/targets for teachers to achieve through departmental policies and also departmental mission statements, such as those cited above. HoD **GHI** confirmed this when he stated that:

> *The departmental policies are there to guide the teachers as far as how the scheming and planning has to be done and also the amount of work to be given in a particular subject so as to achieve our mission, for example they have to draw up their schemes of work three weeks in advance, give at least one assignment per week, one exercise per fortnight and at least one test at the end of each topic covered. The targets set will be the basis of our standards used during evaluation or assessment of the teacher and as the HoD; I will be able to offer guidance where I would have noted deficiencies.*

Whilst the Heads set targets based on the schools' mission and vision for the whole school, the HODs were the ones that set targets and goals for their departments. The key finding in this case seems to be that it was those instructional leaders closest to the teachers and the classrooms that played the major role in setting targets that provided more direct support and guidance to the teachers of vocational and technical subjects. That is, while the school heads set targets for everyone in the school to pursue, it was typically the HODs who translated these targets into actionable steps for the vocational and technical education teachers. The ability to translate general school or district targets into actionable plans for the vocational and technical subject teachers was thus the critical ingredient for effective leadership of these subjects.

The findings above concur with some from the literature which argue that the heads of schools have, first and foremost, to determine the schools' central purpose (defining the school's mission) and also communicate this purpose to all the members of the school community (Hallinger, 2012). Hallinger stresses further that the head must work with the whole staff to ensure that the school sets clear goals which focus on students' progress. This view is also expressed by Jones (2010) who states that instructional leadership involves the development of a common vision of good instruction which is centred on building relationships and according all staff the authority to be innovative in instruction and give each other feedback.

While Hallinger's (2012) and Jones's (2010) arguments are valid, the situation on the ground was that the common visions developed by the heads in the schools were not directly linked to any specific area of study or to the vocational and technical subjects. They set broad objectives to improve instruction but these were not aligned to specific subjects' instruction. It was the responsibility of the HODs and the other informal leaders in the departments to subsequently develop the departmental targets and instructional objectives.

The subject EOs, on the other hand, did not set their own targets for the teachers but ensured that the ministry goals were achieved. The ministry's policies that were distributed to schools gave instructions that all instructional leaders, including the subject EOs, had to monitor and support teachers.

The DEO, in his capacity as the district administrator, received and disseminated policies to schools. The heads of schools then set their targets in accordance with the policies. In addition, the DEO, who was also the chairperson of the Better Schools Programme of Zimbabwe [BSP(Z)] at district level, arranged the schools into clusters and monitored the cluster activities, which assisted the teachers to better understand their subjects' curricula as well as provided for more effective guidance and support on the methods of teaching those subjects. Cosmas, on the other hand, had the advantage of being a vocational and technical subject specialist and as such, he sometimes observed lessons to check on the classroom pedagogy. Under normal circumstances, however, he would just inspect the whole institution and/or receive reports from the heads of the schools without engaging directly with the teachers to provide guidance and support. Clearly, where the instructional leaders are subject specialists, as in the case of Cosmas, it seemed they have better capacity to provide better and deeper guidance and support to the teachers. The findings seem to suggest that for the external instructional leaders, it became even more difficult to guide and support the teachers of vocational and technical subjects, unless they possessed subject knowledge and/or experience in these subjects. Cosmas' ability to intervene directly in classroom activities rather than just rely on inspection reports highlights the point.

4.4.2.1.2 Provision of resources

For their effective implementation, vocational and technical subjects demand hands on approaches to teaching and learning. This depends on the availability of relevant and adequate resources. In our discussion, the DEO mentioned the shortage of resources as one of

the primary challenges he experienced, especially with respect to implementation of these subjects. He explained that:

> *Vocational education is expensive and yet it has a poor funding base. The fees are not easily paid and there's no government funding for the implementation of these subjects.*

Realising that the DEO is not directly linked with the teachers in the school, it was important for me to confirm this view with the heads.

The Head of School A confirmed that the resources needed by the teachers were often budgeted for and purchased by the HoD at school level. In most cases, the resources that were purchased early were the materials for Fashion and Fabrics, Art and Building and Agriculture. These were purchased once a term to cater for the whole term's requirements, at the beginning of the term when students would have paid their school fees. The Head also stressed that without the students' fees, resources cannot be bought. The HoD of School **A** corroborated what the Head said. She explained that:

> *As a department we purchase our requirements once a term for Art and Fashion and Fabrics. We avoid allowing students to buy their own materials because the materials will come at different times and in different forms or types making it difficult for the teachers to supervise the children's work. When each and every one is at his/her own different stage of working, especially for the course work articles needed for examinations at the end of term two in August, it is very difficult to assist them. I therefore, always plead with the administration to supply our needs first.*

The Head of School **B** disagreed with the other heads, and argued that his teachers did have the basic materials to enable them to teach their subjects well. This was how he made his case:

> *The school has got the basic materials. When lessons are not done it is because the teachers are disgruntled or have some other reasons and not because they lack something. Eee, as you know, teachers are not motivated at all to do their work. I do not think it's because they lack the materials to do their work. I tried my best to provide the basic resources. Our School Development Committee supplies most of the materials needed from the fees paid by the students.*

For the Head of School **B**, the general problem of teacher motivation rather than the lack of resources affected teaching and learning of the vocational and technical subjects. The argument around the adequacy of the resources for provision of instruction in the practical subjects thus became an important issue to pursue in this study.

The Head of School **C** explained that the parents were responsible for providing the needed resources.

> *The School Development Committee (SDC), which is the association of parents, is the one which provides money to the school's procurement committee after collecting fees of course. The students also pay a practical subject fee in addition to the tuition fees, which is then given to the HoDs to budget and make the needed purchases. It also depends on which subject it is. Metalwork, Woodwork, Music, Fashion and Fabrics and PE materials are sometimes bought once a term or even once a year. Food and Nutrition perishables may need to be bought each time when the teachers have their practical lessons. The groceries have to be fresh so when the buying is done it will depend on the subject.*

In School **G,** which is a government-run school, the purchasing of instructional materials was carried out according to government regulations. The Head explained that:

> *The HODs go out to get quotations of what they need. At least three quotations are required for each purchase. The quotations are scrutinised by the procurement committee which chooses where best to purchase the materials. The Deputy Head, senior master and senior woman and the bursar of the school constitute the procurement committee. The selected and approved quotation will then be given to the HOD concerned to go and do the purchasing. If the order is large, the HOD may seek the assistance of other teachers in the department.*

It is important to note that at School **G**, the Head affirmed that all the departmental requisitions from the vocational and technical subjects were always honoured. The SDA also placed levies on the students, and the money was used to pay for their requirements in practical subjects. This was echoed by the Head of School **I,** another government-run institution that was part of the study. The Head added that there was a fund called the General Purpose Fund (GPF) that was used to buy the requirements for the practical subjects, but the amount in the GPF was usually very small. The Head added that some of the materials, especially perishables, were bought by the students themselves while the SDA assisted, especially if the materials were required for the examinations. The same process was followed by the Heads of Schools **J** and **F** which were also government-run schools. The procedures for buying anything from the school funds were the same.

At School **D**, only three practical subjects were offered despite its being a very large school. The subjects offered were Agriculture, Building Studies and Fashion and Fabrics. Being a church-run school, the Head and the administration staff collected the fees and then carried out the budgeting of all the school requirements including those requested by the HODs for

their subjects. The Head of the school stressed that after the budgeting, the specialists were given the funds to go and make the required purchases. School **E's** Head reported the same procedure, since theirs was also a church-run school.

The HODs agreed with the Heads on the provision of resources but stressed that:

> *These are just the procedures followed when sourcing the materials but in most cases the funds that we are given are not adequate hence the challenge of lack of resources. There is a need to seek other means of raising funds since the fees paid by the students are not enough for all the school requirements. The sad part is that the donor community does not see the subjects as important as they excluded them whenthey gave books to schools for only the academic subjects. They excluded the vocational and technical ones. We receive our resources after a struggle and in most cases we end up just doing the theory lessons. Yes! We can at times just do the theory lessons or request those students who can afford to bring their own materials.*

From the teachers' focus groups, it was clear that the resources provided were inadequate. Focus Group A indicated that resources were a problem. The teachers highlighted the fact that textbooks, especially for Agriculture, were expensive, and that the cheapest textbook cost around $50-00 (fifty US dollars). They expressed the view that they mostly relied on their own knowledge of the subjects to teach. Teacher A expressed the view that:

> *Assistance is offered. The administrators buy materials though they are expensive and as a result you cannot buy much, they will not be enough.*

This teacher however, went further to express a different view concerning the text books:

> ***Pamatextbooks apa kusatongoda*** *(As far as the textbooks are concerned it is just because the Head does not want to buy them). Every year text books are bought but not for the practical subjects. We do not even have the major equipment we need to test soil acidity (Soil pH meter).*

From the same focus group, it emerged that the resources may be purchased late and that in the meantime pupils would just be obliged to do theory lessons but no practical work.

Focus Group B expressed similar sentiments, saying that the resources were insufficient:

> *There are no resources to allow one to do the practical work as required by the syllabus. More so the equipment-pupil ratios are too high that you will need to be with the students for longer times for them to be able to finish the practical work when sharing the available equipment. We even use our break and lunch times to do the practical work.*

The sentiment expressed in the group showed that even the time allocated was not adequate for the lessons to be implemented well. Teachers worked overtime in order to complete the practical work required, especially for examinations. Focus Group C teachers expressed comparable views by stressing that finances were lacking and resources were not provided on time and in most cases not in the right quantities. This focus group also pointed out that parents were not willing to supply materials as they felt that the fees they paid should be enough to cover their children's needs.

At this stage, the data suggests that there were two ways in which resources were provided to the teachers of vocational and technical education in the different schools. Procurement procedures, which differed slightly between government and non-government schools, were used to provide teachers with the required resources for teaching and learning. While most heads thought the resources provided were adequate, there was a minority view that the resources were lacking. From the data, the heads of school confirmed that they sometimes relied on learners to provide additional resources when supplies ran out. If the resourcing depended wholly on the school fees generated, it is quite conceivable that there would be times when resources were lacking because of the challenges involved in school-fee collection. Even while some heads insisted that adequate resources were provided, one cannot discount the strong view by the DEO, who had a bird's-eye-view of several schools under his jurisdiction, that because of the expensive nature of vocational and technical education, the resources provided usually fell short of what was required.

As the literature reviewed in Chapter Two suggests, resources are an important agent of policy (Cohen & Ball 1990). They are used to facilitate change but only when the teachers are able and willing to utilise them. Since, in most cases, teachers are not motivated, as revealed in School A, even when resources are provided, the subjects may not be effectively implemented. What, then, the instructional leaders actually do to assist and support the teachers is the object of this research study. The findings are also in line with literature concerning the availability of resources in schools. In a study by Mupondi and Munyaradzi (2013), it is clear that the vocational and technical approach to teaching Art and Music was almost impossible because of lack of funding and a serious shortage of resources, equipment and technical support from the private sector. For teaching policies to succeed, the necessary resources have to be made available.

4.4.2.1.3 Supervising the teachers

This category addresses those activities that the Heads, HODs, EOs and the DEO undertake to supervise the teachers' work in order to enhance their classroom practices. The improvement of the teachers' instructional competences depends on the instructional leaders and supervisors (Boaduo 2011 in Mapolisa&Tshabalala2013). This instructional leadership and supervision includes various roles and responsibilities as well as strategies and actions undertaken to improve the conditions of the teaching and learning process.

Heads' supervision

All the heads of schools, as reported earlier, agreed that the vocational and technical subjects were specialised and required specialist attention. All of them seem to have found ways to assist the vocational and technical education teachers, even although it was not always about the content knowledge of the subjects. In this theme and category, I sought to explore the variety of activities that were used by the different instructional leaders to support and guide the work of teachers, especially the supervision of the teaching and learning process.

The Head of School **B** mentioned some activities that he engaged in to assist the teachers and reported:

> *I supervise my staff from the Deputy Head to all the teachers but we share the responsibility. Firstly I have to observe lessons as demanded by policy (that is once per term for every staff member). I also check on the management of assets by supervising the asset registers. This is done for the Deputy Head, Senior Master and Senior Woman whom I also expect to do the same for the HODs and the senior experienced teachers in the school. The HODs will then supervise their subordinates and we all are expected to write reports on the supervision done.*

The Head of School **E** confirmed that she carried out the same activities as those done by School B's Head but had this to add:

> *I mainly check on the work of the Deputy Head who in turn will supervise the work of the senior teachers. The Deputy Head's work is mostly to check on the condition of the school environment and students' discipline. I also observe lessons of the Deputy Head, a few sampled teachers and HODs.*

Besides the work mentioned by the Heads of Schools B and E, the Head of School F mentioned the following activities that she does:

I normally want to check on the work given to the students as it is evidence of what the teachers do with their students. I inspect all the classes' exercise books but because of limited time and the size of the classes, I sample the exercise books to inspect. I observe lessons for the HODs only. As for the rest of the staff members I get reports from these HODs and then discuss and give feedback to the teachers based on the written reports from the supervisors. At times I visit teachers in their classrooms informally just to have a chat with the students especially those about to write their final examinations.

On further probing over who supervised the Deputy Head and the senior teachers, the Head responded:

Every staff member belongs to a department and as such, they are supervised by their departmental heads.

School **A's** Head mentioned that he relied on the HoD to give him information on the performance of teachers. He only made sure those teachers attended to their classes as timetabled and that they were provided with the necessary resources.

School **I's** Head stressed that she held meetings with the HODs so that they submitted their departmental requirements for the term. After the meeting the HODs carried out some supervision activities which included lesson observations and inspection of exercise books, schemes and records. She said she made visits to the classes where she delivered several motivational talks to the students.

School **G's** Head pointed out that she was not a vocational or technical specialist but supported the subjects wholeheartedly. She explained that she observed the teachers' lessons and inspected their pupils' exercise books. She was also interested in the practical work so she visited their rooms and took photos. This motivated the students and they always prepared the practical lessons well, knowing that she might come to see them work and take photos of them. She also mentioned that her Deputy Head had a vocational education background and helped with the observation of lessons, together with the HODs:

My visits are normally just informal but when reports are wanted I normally assign the Deputy Head to do that.

School **H** was a small school where the Head also taught Fashion and Fabrics. Her supervision activities for the department were non-existent as she and the HoD were the only two involved with the subjects. She thus held informal discussions with her colleague with whom she shared the vocational subject classes.

At School **I,** the Head said that he supervised the teachers' documents especially, to see the state of the department. He said lessons were also observed by the HODs in order to give meaningful feedback at the end. The inspections were also carried outby the HOD who then forwarded the reports to the Head for scrutinising and discussion with the teachers concerned.

School **J's** Head stressed the need for distributing responsibilities. He said that he mostly relied on the HODs for the smooth running of the departments. He emphasised that:

> *The HODs are specialists in their own areas of work. I hold HODs' meetings to ascertain from them if there are any problems in their departments. I will attend to those problems that need my attention and the rest I leave to the HODs to find solutions and inform me on what they would have done. The same is done for lesson observations and book inspections. This is done by the HODs and then they compile reports which they bring to me.*

This was said whilst taking out a file full of the supervision reports from the departmental leaders.

The Heads of Schools C and D said that they observed lessons as a way of supervising their teachers through the HODs. School C's Head confirmed this by saying;

> *At this school we have almost 1200 students and over 50 teachers. The school is big and it offers five practical subjects and I am a specialist of none of them. I therefore just rely on the HODs whom I expect to supervise their subordinates frequently. We stress the idea of working in our departmental units to make sure everyone is observed teaching and also that exercise books are seen. All that I do is drawing up an itinerary to guide the HODs to know when they are to hand in their supervision reports. I then make sure that these are handed in to my office as required.I do read the reports thoroughly and at times I even help the HODs with report writing.*

School **D's** Head concurred with what School **C's** Head said but added that their schedule which they called an itinerary also showed the different offices to which the supervision reports were to be handed in:

> *Our administration staff comprises the Head, the Deputy Head, the senior master, senior woman and I. After the HODs have observed lessons or inspected exercise books the critiques/supervision reports are handed in as follows: Form 4 and 6 are handed to me. This is because I want to check on the progress of these examination classes. (These are in their final classes as O and A level candidates). Form 1 reports are sent to the senior woman, Form 2 to the senior master and lastly Forms 3 and 5 are given to the Deputy Head. We as administrators are to scrutinise the*

> *reports and if there is anything serious to be addressed we call the teachers*
> *concerned to give the feedback and give suggestions on how best he/she can*
> *address the problem.*

School **J's** Head also expressed the same sentiments but did not really show how he came to know what happened in the departments. He bluntly indicated that supervising teachers was the work of the HODs.

> *I am normally busy with administration work and I cannot observe the teachers'*
> *lessons. It is purely the work of the HODs who are paid for that job. My job is to*
> *see that the HODs do their work well.*

The Head of School **J** also indicated that there was too much work for which he was personally responsible to be able to additionally supervise the teachers' work directly, but he did bring out a file which was full of supervision reports from the department heads, including the two vocational and technical departments in the school.

The data revealed that the heads of schools, although they exerted a strong influence on instruction, were not truly curriculum leaders. They were educators who had their own areas of specialisation, and hence their own areas of instructional expertise. The Heads of Schools **J**, **D, A, F and E** averred that they relied on their HODs and Deputy Heads for the supervision of the teachers. Only two of the Heads (**B and G**) indicated that they directly observed lessons and inspected exercise books on their own. The rest delegated this work to the HODs and were given feedback. Only one Head admitted practising DL. The Head of School **G** worked together with her Deputy Head to supervise the vocational and technical teachers. Being a specialist in the area, he (the Deputy Head) assisted in that area while the Head supervised other areas as well.

The data also revealed a role conflict of the heads as instructional leaders and as administrators. The administrative roles were based on authority while instructional leadership roles were based on collegiality. Instructional leadership had to be based on distributing leadership, trust and operating in a non-threatening way, which their administrative roles might not fully permit. Hence the heads may want to visit teachers while teaching and inspect exercise books even though they might not understand the subject matter which formed the content of the lessons.

As described above, one of the major dilemmas of the heads was that they have to be both managers and leaders of effective teaching and learning (Southworth, 2002). The author

argues that this duality of roles resulted in principals not seeing themselves as instructional leaders because perhaps they felt inadequate to initiate and develop instructional programmes for subjects in which they did not possess adequate knowledge. This might also be because of the assortment of subject areas taught, each with its own pedagogical uniqueness. In such a situation, it would not be fair to expect the head to be knowledgeable about instructional strategies for each of the subject areas offered in the school. They would find it difficult to explain and justify the instructional strategies practised by the teachers, hence the need for distributing leadership (Blase &Blase 2000).

Most of the heads interviewed were no longer practising teachers. Blase and Blase (2000) argue that to have knowledge, leaders must be practising teachers because they need to know what occurs in the classrooms. Marzano (1993) assert that to be able to provide constructive feedback, a formal school leader is expected to understand the tenets of quality instruction as well as having sufficient knowledge of the curriculum so as to know whether appropriate content is being delivered to the students. The heads interviewed were not directly in touch with what went on in the classrooms; hence they were unable to appreciate the problems teachers and students encountered. As Head **J** pointed out, they were often busy organising their schools and had no time to monitor teachers' teaching. Enueme and Egwunyenga (2008) also contend that heads are too busy with other responsibilities and neglected instructional work. Menon (2009) therefore suggests that leadership should be a group responsibility. It must be distributed among the members of the group for it to be effective. This echoes the earlier findings by Spillane *et al* (2004) who regard leadership as a shared practice by individuals who want to address their school's problems. Instructional guidance and leadership at secondary school level should be distributed as no single person can be an expert in all the subjects offered at an institution. This consequently means that, at all institutions, there should be special personnel to lead the vocational and technical subjects as well.

Other authors/scholars also argue that principals cannot be expected to be experts in all subjects but should be guiding and directing innovations in schools by identifying, acquiring and allocating resources necessary for establishing conditions that make instructional innovations possible (Spillane *et al* 2001). This is endorsed by Osman and Mukuna (2013) who believe that school administration and governance encompass both general and instructional leadership. These scholars then confirm that instructional leaders should be able

to display professional knowledge of the job and also be the leader of the leaders so as to improve instruction. This explains the need for heads to give the vocational and technical subjects HODs a chance to be leaders in their own areas of specialisation. They must work with teachers, students and parents to ensure the success of the instructional process of their subjects.

HODs' supervision

The HODs, as the people who have the specialist knowledge and work most closely with the teachers, are the supervisors who offer the greatest guidance and support to the teachers. They (HODs) concurred with what their heads said, as far as the activities they undertook to supervise the teachers were concerned. Schools **A, B** and **E** had one HOD each while School **C** had two, but only one who opted to participate. These HODs led more than one subject area, including some in areas that they did not specialise in. Asked how they supervised their subordinates, the following responses were given. HOD**EH1**remarked:

> *I supervise six teachers who teach Agriculture, Computers, Fashion and Fabrics, Business English and Bookkeeping. I am also a member of the disciplinary committee and Educational Board of the school. As HoD I monitor the teachers in the department by observing them teach and also inspect their students' exercise books. Firstly, we drafted the departmental policy together and that is the policy I use when carrying out my supervision work. We all have to adhere to the stipulated guidelines for giving work and for drawing up our schemes of work. All teachers have to draft school syllabuses based on that of the ministry and it is my duty to assist them in that task. Each of us teaches his/her own subjects so we rarely work together except for the two who teach Fashion and Fabrics.*

Some of the other HODs (**AH1, BH1 and CH1**) expressed the same sentiments as HOD **EHI**. They all led more than one teacher who taught different subjects, even from the one taught by their HOD. They mentioned that they guided these teachers with the drawing up of schemes of work, giving informal suggestions and inspecting exercise books as the activities that they engaged in to supervise the teachers.

The HOD **HH1** reported experiencing a different scenario from all the other HODs. Being the only teacher teaching practical subjects, together with the Head of school, both the HOD and the Head rarely carried out any formal supervision tasks. He reported:

> *I rarely do any formal supervision because we are just two in the department the Head and me. We, in most cases, just have informal meetings to discuss how we can group our*

students or to just write down our departmental requirements. The Head also is often too busy and may even spend the whole year not having seen me teaching or even inspecting my exercise books. This may be because I am her HOD.

The rest of the HODs from Schools **D, F, G, H**, and **J** showed that they had quite demanding responsibilities in the supervision of teachers, because they also had their own classes to teach and at the same time were expected to supervise their colleagues. HOD **DH3** responded:

> *At this school the Head leaves the supervision of vocational and technical subjects to the three of us as HODs. First we draw up our schemes of work using the school syllabuses that we also draft from the Ministry syllabuses. As HODs, we make sure the schemes are up to date all the time. We sample and inspect exercise books and also observe teachers teaching as stipulated by policy (that is at least once a term for each teacher). Because we have very big classes, inspection of exercise books is done once per term per teacher in spite of the classes one teaches.*

The HODs from Schools **D, F, G** and **J** confirmed their Heads' notion that they also assisted or supervised their teachers by having demonstration lessons and team teaching. Teachers were requested to prepare lessons for other teachers to observe and give their comments. This was a way of assisting the teacher in the utilisation of proper methods of teaching as well as a way of staff developing them, especially in the case of new teachers or student teachers, such as at School **J**.

The findings on the HODs' supervision work show that they did almost the same activities as the Heads. The difference, however, was that they were the supervisors closest to these teachers and were in a position to know what they needed. They were also the specialists in their subject areas; hence the Heads also trusted them to supervise and give them feedback. The situation where the HODs led in more than one subject area, even areas they did not specialise in, rendered them incompetent and ineffective. There was a need to give the specialist teachers a chance to lead in their areas. This would be in line with what is advocated by the practice of DL; people leading in areas where they are experts.

The HODs' tasks were in line with what scholars say should be their responsibilities. According to Feeney (2009), HODs are expected to mentor colleagues as well as teach alongside them. The supervision of lessons and the inspection of exercise books are seen as roles associated with their distinct position, which demand that they serve the needs of the teachers as managers, enforcers of the policies, communicators and mediators who carry out

activities on behalf of the teachers and administrators. Elmore (2000), however, is of the opinion that some of the HODs do not possess the leadership qualities necessary to promote students' achievements. They tend to look up to the heads as having all the solutions to the problems that they face. On a different note, we see that to lead others properly, the HOD must be able to transfer his or her knowledge and skills to the teachers in order to make them successful in their operations and improve students' achievement. The capability of the HODs to transfer their knowledge to the teachers would then enhance the teachers' effectiveness.

Education Officers' supervision

The main role of the EOs was to create an enabling environment for teachers to do their work effectively. Robert explained that:

> *I am supposed to visit and supervise all the schools in the province. I supervise all the technical subjects except for Building Studies and Agriculture who are manned by my other two colleagues.*

On further probing, the EO explained what they do to assist and guide the teachers.

> *When we visit schools, we normally go there as a team of inspectors. Each EO will then interact with the teachers that teach his/her subjects. We check to see whether the conditions under which the subjects are being taught are favourable. At times we may even make a very unpopular decision of stopping the teaching of a particular subject if we see that there are no suitable facilities and/or resources for its proper implementation.*

Rose echoed this saying;

> *We must check on the availability of the syllabus documents and facilities. Supervision is indeed necessary as you may even find people teaching wrong syllabuses especially in very remote areas. It is our duty as inspectors to check and assist teachers to select the correct syllabus components for each and every subject under your care. Of cause, we also observe lessons and check on the teachers' scheme books and give feedback accordingly. At times we may have to arrange to see all the teachers or HoDs if we note a recurring error in the schools visited. This is when then we may organise a district or provincial workshop.*

By inspecting schools, they are supposed to support the teachers, and check on whether the school authorities were providing the needed resources as per policy requirements. The EOs also observed lessons in order to assist the teachers with the correct pedagogy. Furthermore, they needed to check on the requirements of the syllabuses to make sure that students were receiving the right information in preparation for examinations. The EO for Home

Economics, for example, emphasised that she inspected the teachers' work in order to check on quality, policy implementation and work output. She had this to say:

> *I just use the Director's circular number 6 of 2006 to check whether the teachers are giving the right amounts of work.*

The literature is in agreement with the work that the EOs do. Their work is rooted in new ideas about learning which take shape when teachers interact with their more expert peers (Showers & Joyce, 1996). The EOs, by identifying the teachers' shortcomings, will engage in some coaching thereby developing the teachers professionally. The EOs are the ones who also co-ordinate the staff development workshops. (**See minutes on Appendix C 7.)**

Supervision by the District Education Officer (DEO)

The DEO was in charge of the whole district. He remarked, concerning the support and guidance for the teachers:

> *I rarely observe teachers' lessons but check on the heads' administrative duties. As far as supervision reports are concerned, I receive these from the heads of schools for filing and also onward transmission to the provincial office and head office. Of cause, I take time to read the reports at times and that is when I may note issues that need attention. Being also the chairperson of the [BSP(Z)], after reading the reports and noting the teachers' weaknesses, I then organise workshops for the subjects concerned in consultation with the subjects EOs.*

In summary, guidance and support for instruction are crucial if schools are to achieve many of the required pedagogical changes. There is need for the leaders to create conversations in and around the classrooms to ensure that instruction is a success. Boateng (2012) stresses that it is important to set goals, as the success of reforms depends on leaders who can generate ideas and then make sure their ideas are translated into action. This is specifically important for new programmes in the schools like the vocational subjects.

Having heads of schools relying on the HODs' supervision of their department members is in line with Elmore's(2000) view that they may be overwhelmed by their workload; hence the need to rely on other teacher leaders' feedback. Elmore also stresses that the teacher leaders' position, for example, that of the HOD, was created because the knowledge required for the improvement of instruction resides in people who can also deliver instruction and not just function as managers.

The data presented in this section indicate that all the instructional leaders carry out almost the same activities when it comes to supervision of and providing assistance to teachers.

From the Heads' reports/accounts it was evident that they all observed lessons, inspected exercise books and other record books kept by the teachers, such as the schemes of work, as well as carrying out informal visits to the classrooms and workshops. The HODs showed that they also performed these same activities. The only difference was that, while the Heads did this for all the departments in the school, the HODs concentrated on just their own departments. However, the HODs had the extra burden of managing these departments on top of teaching their own classes. They also carried out an additional duty of keeping the departmental inventories for the materials supplied including the textbooks. The HODs monitored their departmental activities in the same manner that the Heads did those of the schools.

From the responses of the Education Officers, it was evident that they visited schools as external supervisors to see how the heads and the HODs supervised and directed their teachers. Their role was essentially to provide assistance by checking on policy implementation. This was similar for the DEO who also visited schools for the same purpose.

The instructional leaders, in order to make their work easier, can then practise DL. The heads can still observe lessons, but focusing on discipline, learner participation and the structure of the lessons, while the HOD, being the expert for the subject, then focuses on the content issues. The people will then be leading where and when they are experts.

The above notion is reinforced by Moss and Liang (1990) who are of the opinion that one's position does not confer leadership on a position holder. Heads who do not have vocational and technical background knowledge cannot therefore, be expected to lead these subjects merely by virtue of being heads of schools. The HODs, in this case, might make better leaders and should perhaps be given more opportunities to lead and guide their subordinates.

4.4.2.2 Guidance and support for teachers' professional development

This theme captured the activities performed by the instructional leaders to assist teachers to gain more knowledge in their subjects and to be supported and equipped to do their work professionally. Blase and Blase (1999) emphasises that the most influential instructional leadership practice at school level is "promoting teachers' professional development" (page 125). These scholars further assert that instructional leadership is not solely concerned with teaching and learning but should also include the professional training of teachers, which will result in student development. Sherer (2008) also confirms that teachers need to be

capacitated once a new curriculum is introduced. They need to be equipped with new skills and methodologies for handling the latest curriculum. Lack of guidance by way of staff development and in-service training courses is a serious barrier to curriculum implementation. The sub-theme is considered in the following categories:

- Workshops and seminars
- Staff meetings
- Performance- related feedback.

4.4.2.2.1 Workshops and seminars

Nearly all heads, being in the same district, mentioned similar activities which they enacted to enhance the teachers' professional development, especially those organised at district level. Head of School **J** confirmed that the support given, in most cases, was aimed at enhancing the teachers' instructional skills, thereby improving the students' academic performance. The heads also acknowledged the assistance given by the district through the BSP (Z) structures in developing teachers professionally.

The Head of School J reiterated that:

> *As National Association of Heads (NASH), we have heads in charge of different subjects that we offer in the district. These heads are the ones responsible for organising workshops for the teachers of the different subjects in their charge. They also decide how their workshops are to be handled in terms of who should attend, agenda to be deliberated on and who is to facilitate at each of the workshops. I am the Head in charge of the vocational and technical subjects and I always consult the HODs on issues they want discussed at the workshops. The HODs also give suggestions as to who they want to facilitate at their workshops.*

The other heads mentioned that schools were grouped into clusters of about four to five schools each. The heads in each cluster were responsible for organising activities they thought would assist their teachers in their work to develop them professionally. This was confirmed by the Head of School D as follows:

> *We normally meet once a term as cluster heads to decide on areas our teachers may need help on and this we normally do in consultation with the HODs. We then decide on the venue, dates and the activities to be done and then invite the people for the workshop. These meetings are normally arranged when we have new syllabuses being introduced. Resource persons are requested to come and facilitate and these are normally the subject EOs.*

Attendance of the district panel meetings was mentioned by all heads as these were arranged in the district by the [BSP (Z)] officials for all schools. This study did not include the [BSP (Z)] activities but this is a body that facilitates the teacher's professional growth through workshops and seminars as mentioned by the heads. A concern, however, was registered by the head of School **I** indicated that the teachers at his school were sometimes unable to attend these workshops and seminars due to a shortage of funds.

The National Association of Secondary Heads (NASH) also held meetings to discuss how best they could facilitate and create roadmaps for their schools' performance. A head was assigned a subject to guide and monitor in all the schools in the district. These would be Heads who had specialised in that particular subject she/he was asked to lead. This was an activity/ practice for all subjects; therefore the practical subjects were also included. There was a Head in charge of the vocational and technical subjects in the district; s/he monitored all the vocational and technical subjects' activities. As mentioned by the Head of School **J** (see the earlier quote), this person was responsible for coordinating the subject teachers' activities including the scheduling of staff development meetings for the district teachers.

4.4.2.2.2 Staff meetings

Meeting regularly to discuss the current state of affairs at an institution is an effective way of supporting collaboration among educators (Blase & Blase, 1999). All the heads of schools said that they hold staff meetings at least twice every term. The head of school **A**stated,

> *We work together for a common goal so we have to meet to discuss issues that have a bearing on our work as a school. For example we meet when the external examination results are out in order to analyse them. We also meet to discuss challenges that teachers may meet and together we try to find solutions.*

This scenario was also confirmed by all the heads. All declared that they held staff meetings at least twice a term. School H head commented,

> *As a head you cannot afford not to hold staff meetings as it is the only way of making the staff aware of any new developments in the school or in the ministry.*

The HODs also confirmed that they also held their own meetings as departments. The HOD for the Technical subjects department at school F responded:

> *We hold meetings with the administration as HODs and after that we also meet as a department to inform the other members of the issues we would have discussed. Even if there is no meeting held with the administration, we hold our departmental meetings twice*

a term. This is when we plan for the term's work and also make requests for the resources
we may need for the term.

It is clear from the data provided that staff meetings are an important aspect of the schools. Their importance can never be over emphasised. Leaders cannot guide or support teachers individually all the time; hence the need for meeting and discussing issues as a group. Moore, (2009) also asserts that departmental meetings are one of the key instructional leadership activities in which teachers and their leaders develop sound working relationships in a distributed perspective. The HODs revealed that during staff meetings they discussed issues pertaining to the teachers' work on various aspects of their work. (See Minutes made available. **Appendix C2.)**

4.4.2.2.3 Performance-related feedback

The instructional leaders who observe the teachers teaching (the HODs, the heads and EOs) confirmed that after lesson observations, exercise book inspections, schemes of work and records inspections, they sat down with the teachers to discuss what had taken place and gave the needed professional advice to the teachers concerned. Rose, the EO confirmed this saying;

> *After an inspection, one has to write a report but even before you produce a report, you*
> *must sit down with the supervisee to give feedback. I normally point out the teacher's*
> *strengths and praise him/her for that before I also note the weaknesses and give the*
> *necessary advice on how these can be addressed. I have seen this working well because in*
> *most cases, when you come back for another visit, things will have improved*

The DEO said that he inspected the schools to check on their smooth running and adherence to policy.

> *Policies and regulations are very difficult to interpret and implement. That is why our*
> *secretary will always say that interpretation of his circulars rests in him. I therefore have*
> *to call meetings every month to explain and clarify whatever new issues would have arisen.*
> *I then visit schools to check and make sure the policies are being adhered to. Being a*
> *technical subject teacher, at times I observe lessons in these departments and also give*
> *advice. The most important thing is to observe/inspect and then give feedback otherwise no*
> *improvement will be realised.*

The HODs, the heads and the EOs used supervision instruments supplied by the Ministry to guide their feedback and assessment. The Director's Circular Number 3 of 2008 gave the leaders guidelines on the supervision to be done in schools.

Following is a list of the common items that were mentioned by the leadersas being discussed. For an observed lesson they take note of:

- Use of materials/aids
- Content knowledge
- Classroom management
- Teaching procedures which include lesson development, pupil involvement and the pedagogy used
- Preparation and planning done, e.g. objectives set.

If the supervision was for the exercise book inspections, the following would have been noted and discussed*:*

- Appearance of the books
- Quality of written work
- Frequency and adequacy of the written work
- Marking by the teacher.

It should be noted that the above items were taken from the standardised supervision instruments drafted by the Ministry and used by all the supervisors, not only those for vocational and technical subjects. As discussed in Chapter Two, these subjects are unique and may need specialised treatment, so that as regards the assessment of the personnel who teach them, it would be expected that this would also differ. There was a need to include new strategies of teacher evaluation: strategies that promote the development of deeper vocational and technical knowledge and also the strengthening of instructional practices in specific subjects. This confirms what one teacher in Focus Group **F** said: *"that supervision was done for formality's sake, just to fulfil an obligation".* The tools used were summative in nature and also constrained the supervisor who was obliged to follow a required order of doing things; in the end there were very few opportunities to discuss instructional issues. Nevertheless, the discussions, carried out properly, did aid the teachers' competences and ultimately benefited the students.

Table 4.12 Summary of activities for facilitating teachers' professional development

Variable:	Objectives/ Rationale:
• Facilitating attendance of district level subject panel meetings.	To discuss all the aspects of the subjects as district teachers. Aspects such as drawing up the schemes of work, examination projects, setting common mid-year examination papers and discussing other issues pertaining to their subjects.
• Attending National Association of Secondary Heads (NASH) meetings.	To explain subject expectations, especially policy circulars from the Ministry.
• Conducting demonstration lessons.	To assist novice teachers with the right methodology and how to present some difficult topics.
• Engagement in team teaching.	Making sure subjects' topics are taught by the members of the department who were comfortable with them and could deliver them well.
• Holding discussions after lesson observations.	Offering the much- needed performance-related feedback of the lesson that would have been conducted by the teacher concerned.
• Observing lessons together with the HoDs.	To make the assessment of the officers helpful when the teacher was given feedback by a knowledgeable person in the subject.
• Holding regular staff meetings.	To keep the staff informed on current issues pertaining to their work.
• Use of resource persons (experienced staff) to advise new teachers.	To obtain information on proper handling of the subjects, especially the general pedagogy.
• Holding seminars with other schools to exchange ideas.	Exchanging ideas on the subject's areas.
• Taking trips to institutions that offer similar subjects.	To gain more from learning from others who are doing the same things.

Source: Data gathered from participants

4.4.2.3 Creating a conducive learning environment

This sub-theme captures data on the key players' strategies for creating suitable learning environments for vocational and technical subjects. It will be discussed under the following categories:

a. Creating a vision and mission
b. Setting systems of collaboration
c. Creating motivation to work.

4.4.2.3.1 Creating a vision and mission

All school heads, as required by the Ministry, had the mission statements of their institutions and these guided their operations. They were made available to the researcher. The mission statements present the reasons why these schools exist and what they seek to achieve. All were almost identical as they were formulated by copying the mission of the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. All schools aimed at *"moulding pupils morally, academically, practically and culturally in order for them to be useful citizens of Zimbabwe."* (See an exemplar from school **B**. **Appendix C9**)

All the heads agreed that their mission statements were important as they aimed at creating results-based learning environments. The Head of School **J** explained how the teachers came to know about these missions and visions:

> *The very first thing is to understand the mission statement and to adopt it. Once that has been done by all the stakeholders, the culture of doing things will improve the status of the vocational and technical subjects. We want to produce school graduates who have a practical orientation and who would be useful citizens of Zimbabwe. Our culture of doing things will be governed by our mission and vision hence we will all work towards one goal. This is stressed in the very first staff meeting.*

The Head of School **G** echoed these sentiments and added that:

> *Our mission statement in this school gives us a common belief system which makes us work together harmoniously. All people work together here for a common goal and so we are very happy. People long for each other and they work together because they are guided by the same mission and have a common vision.*

The HODs also supported their heads by acknowledging the presence of mission statements in their schools and asserting their value in encouraging all to work together, thereby creating

a conducive atmosphere for the provision of the subjects. The Head of department **HJ1**stressed that:

> *The mission statement is always reminded people in the very first staff meeting. We all will then be aware of our mission and we work together towards that. When people work together, being guided by the same rules, they become happy. We don't have any misunderstandings and this school is a nice place to work in.*

The issues raised by the heads and the HODs on the mission and vision statements are also discussed by Jones (2010) who stresses that good leadership, especially instructional leadership, involves developing a common mission and vision for sound instruction. Jones further asserts that the mission and vision builds healthy relationships allowing all stakeholders to exercise their authority, to be innovative and to share the best instructional practices with their colleagues. This would appear to be the same purposes for which the mission and vision documents were used in the schools I visited.

4.4.2.3.2 Setting systems of collaboration

Collaboration is a systematic process in which teachers work together to analyse and improve their classroom practices. It plays an important role in helping teachers to focus on instruction. Instructional leaders have to create structures that enable collaboration among teachers because when teachers work in isolation, very little or no professional development takes place (Miller *et al* 2010).A summary is provided of this category concerning what the instructional leaders do to share the burdens of their work and to determine what does or does not work. At School G the Head expressed confidence in her HODs as far as collaboration and support were concerned. She explained it as follows:

> *My teachers work mostly as departments and I have the confidence that no one is at a loss as to what to do. I always encourage them to communicate especially the teachers taking the same subject. They must work together, scheme together so that they teach similar topics at the same time. This will enable them to have the same examination as they would have covered the same syllabus components. There are however, some who want to do things alone and they just want to be given the school syllabus and they plan their work from there.*

Answering the question on how teachers at his school work together, the Head of School **J** responded:

> *We have new teachers in the school who need our support and they have to collaborate with their colleagues to make their work easy. The departmental leaders assist them with*

> *the interpretation of the syllabuses, formatting their schemes of work and other records.*
> *They are also allowed to observe senior teachers teaching or even ask them to teach an*
> *unfamiliar topic for them.*

All the heads agreed that their HODs should hold regular departmental meetings to discuss issues that might be affecting their work or focus on how best they could improve their departmental operations. The departmental minutes of one typical meeting the researcher attended at School **F** provides some evidence of the collaboration within departments. (**Appendix C2.**)

The Heads of Schools **B, D** and **J** concurred that meetings were held in the departments as a way of promoting collaboration and avoiding isolation. The Head of school J explained saying;

> *Coming from different background means we also have different ideas and different ways*
> *of doing things. We therefore encourage the HODs to hold meetings so that they share*
> *ideas and not leave anyone behind. They have to work together for the good of the school.*

The Head of School **D** stressed that the teachers, in their departments, discussed the following items so as to ensure they worked together for a common good.

a. Syllabus documents and their interpretation
b. Course work requirements for the year
c. Setting of common examinations for the whole school
d. Problems they encountered as practical subject teachers
e. Other subject requirements they may have in their departments.

The heads' sentiments were echoed by the HODs themselves as they confirmed that they held departmental meetings at least twice per term. The meetings, as evidenced by the minutes that were provided to the researcher, showed that they discussed issues concerning their plans to improve their operations and also those listed above. (**Appendix C2.**)

4.4.2.3.3 Motivation to work

Having cited challenges met in school as well as challenges related to the implementation of the vocational and technical subjects, the heads were asked how they then encouraged the staff members to work. Most of them expressed the view that it was indeed a mammoth task. Some explained that they let the teachers work with their HODs to find ways to improve their departments in terms of working effectively. The Head of School **J** explained that:

> *The teachers at this school are not de-motivated at all. I as head of school personally try by all means to make them happy. By the way my wife is here and is teaching Agriculture and I wouldn't want her to be unhappy as well. As a school we try by all means to show that they are of value to the school and students.*

On further probing in order to know how and what exactly he did to make them 'happy' at work, he had this to say:

> *You know that these subjects are sometimes productive and they will always be the first beneficiaries of those products. There may be vegetables grown or any other product. We give the students the right to sell or distribute them as they see fit. They become motivated and are always striving to produce more. They will also be raising funds for their practical lessons.*

This was echoed by the Head of School **G** who also explained that it was not only the staff members who benefited, but also the students.

> *The students know very well that they will take home what they produce or prepare so they are really motivated to work hard. That is why they are prepared to bring their own materials from home which makes the teachers' work easy. They will take the produce back home. This is mostly applicable to the Home Economics and the Agriculture departments. The other departments are also striving to have projects that they can do as fund-raising endeavours.*

However, on a different note, the Heads of Schools C, F and **I** indicated that motivating their teachers to work was a massive task. The Head of School **I** explained, saying:

> *We are grateful to the Provincial Education Director who organises prize giving events for the teachers who would have produced the best results for the year. This motivates the teachers as they know they will receive something for working hard. This even helps us as a school because the task of motivating the teachers is made easier.*

The issue of incentives also assisted in motivating the teachers to do their work. The head of School F stressed that,

> *Apart from the Provincial Director's prizes, we as a school, organise our own prises for the teachers. All the parents want to see their children succeeding and as such they are prepared to part with a few dollars to make their teachers happy. The School Development Association (SDA) is the one that provides the funds to give to the teachers.*

It is clear that for the teachers to work well they have to be content. The heads may need to convince the parents that their teachers must be given awards in order to work hard.

Yukl (2010) asserts that an instructional leader must have the competence and ability to encourage and motivate subordinates to work together so that they perform better and will be able to achieve the intended goals. The data provided in this section showed that heads and HODs are the leaders responsible for creating a favourable environment for teachers to work in. The leaders have to guide the teachers so that they are aware of their vision and mission, know how to collaborate amongst themselves and remain motivated. Smith and Andrews (1989) similarly stress that an effective leader communicates the vision of the school to the staff, parents and students as a way of exerting his/her leadership. Quinn (2002) also agrees, asserting that leaders must communicate well-defined expectations. These scholars see this as a way of arranging participatory and shared leadership which is a strong factor in the implementation of change such as the vocationalisation of the Zimbabwean curriculum. The discussed factors did create the right attitudes to work as far as the teachers were concerned but the physical environment must also be favourable. All the participants agreed that the only way to achieve this environment was to provide the required infrastructure and equipment for use.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Connection between leadership and instruction

This theme discusses the link between instructional leadership activities undertaken by the heads, EOs, HODs and the DEO and the instruction of the vocational and technical subjects. It addresses the issue of the impact that the instructional guidance given to the teachers has on their instructional activities. The theme mainly discusses the supervisees' perceptions about the support and guidance which they are provided by their leaders. According to Boateng (2012) the improvement of the teachers' instructional competences depends on the supervisory members of staff, which is an indication that there is a link between leadership and instruction. Lashway (2002) refers to leaders who guide teachers as 'facilitative leaders'. They facilitate the teaching and learning process, which means that without proper leadership, learning cannot be successful. The theme mainly discusses the impact of the supervisory activities as perceived by the teachers.

4.3.4 Teachers' perceptions on the guidance and support provided

The teachers all felt that their supervisors and instructional leaders did their best to provide them with the resources that they needed for their lessons, even though at times these were not adequate. Teacher **I 2** in focus group **I** asserted that,

> *The HoD and the head do a great job of mobilising parents to supply us with the needed resources. Even if I tell the students to bring some ingredients, if it is not stressed by the head, we do not get anything. Instruction will never succeed without these leaders' support.*

This was also echoed by the teacher **G6** who acknowledged the work of the head as being that of providing the needed resources.

> *Without our supportive head, no practical lessons are undertaken. She sees to it that we have what we need to make the lessons a success.*

Moss and Liang (1990) regard leadership as possession of knowledge and skills which then accord the individual power and influence. Teacher **J9** had this to say;

> *The HODs sometimes arranged for demonstration lessons in order to explain some difficult concepts and show us strategies to teach these practical subjects. We also have senior teachers in the department and they assist the HOD with these lessons and demonstrations.*

Some of the teachers, on the other hand, felt that the supervision was sometimes done for formality's sake, as an exercise merely to fulfil some obligation instead of being targeted at helping them to improve their teaching. Teacher **I2** in focus group **I** pointed this out:

> *Our head is not a vocational and technical subjects specialist and he is not very keen to observe us teaching. When he does so, he rarely writes the reports. It is the HoD who inspects our work and writes us reports and gives feedback when he is happy otherwise he also says nothing but just submits report to the head.*

On a different note, teacher **G9** in the focus group **G** expressed the feeling that their work is made easier because their school head is very supportive. She explained saying;

> *I teach Food and Nutrition and each time I have practical lessons the head visits us to see what we will be doing. The resources that we need are also supplied early. Of course the HoD must also submit our orders on time. The presents of the head where we will be working motivate the students.*

As Moss and Liang state, leadership support is essential for the success of instruction in the schools. From the teachers' sentiments, heads and the HODs are there to make their work easier by providing resources and also delivering model lessons. Without this support instruction is bound to suffer hence the link between leadership and instruction. Boateng (2012) also argues that for changes to occur where vocational education is implemented there is a need to develop creative, skilful communicators, influential leaders who have knowledge

of the subjects. The role of leaders cannot therefore be taken for granted as they are the ones who determine the success of organisations and school reforms.

4.5 DATA FROM OBSERVATIONS

Observations were carried out to complement data obtained from the individual interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis and also to establish the conditions under which the teachers worked, thereby establishing the amount/kind of support they obtained from the instructional leaders. Four instructional leadership practices were observed. These involved the head, HODs, teachers and the students and took place at the schools. The practices that were observed were one demonstration lesson taught by the HOD, one practical Fashion and Fabrics lesson by a teacher, a departmental meeting and an end of term staff meeting.

4.5.1 Observation activity 1

The first observation took place on the 6th of February 2014. This was a lesson taught by a Fashion and Fabrics teacher at School F. The lesson lasted for two hours twenty minutes: that is from 7.00 am to 9.20 am. The participants were just the teacher, F9 and 25 O level students who were taking this subject. The lesson went on as follows:

Teacher: Good morning class.
Learners: Good morning mom. (Chorusing the answer)
Teacher: (After introducing the researcher). We are continuing to work on our coursework garments. Which process are we supposed to be doing today?
Learner 1: Waist line finishes.
Teacher: Good. Which are some of the waist line finishes that you can remember from our theory lessons?
Learner 2: Waist band.
Teacher: Any other?
Learner 3: Elastic and elastication.
Learner 4: Casing and facing.
Teacher: Which method are we going to use on our skirts?
Learner 3: Facing.
Class: Aaah!
Teacher: Someone to help.
Learner 5: Waist band.
Teacher: Good. Come round the table so that you can see how we work the waist band.

The learners made a circle with the teacher in the centre demonstrating how to insert the waist band on their skirts.

The purpose of the lesson was for students to prepare and attach waist bands to their skirts which were the articles for the examination coursework. The teacher explained the work to be done. She had already finished the garment that she was using as an example. The students then worked individually on their articles, with the teacher monitoring and providing assistance and also giving permission to proceed to the next process/step.

I observed that the material which pupils used was all the same; this was evidence of the fact that the teachers were supplied by the school with the materials. They were all making similar articles, which the teacher said were their coursework garments to be submitted for examination purposes. Another observation made was that there were very few functional sewing machines in the room; only three machines were being used. The other machines were heaped up in one corner on top of the cupboard, a sign that they were out of order. The room, it was also observed, did not have any charts on the walls. It did contain storage cupboards and six tables to work on. The teacher explained why she had ignored the bell which marked the end of the lesson by saying;

> *The time allocated for the practical work is inadequate; hence we continue lessons into the students' break time.*

The students packed up and hurried out when the bell, which marked the end of break time, sounded at 09:40am. The lesson was not formally concluded. The students were busy on their articles until the bell rang.

4.5.2 Observation activity2

The second observation was of a departmental meeting held on the 8th of May 2015 for the Home Economics department at School G. The agenda items were Fund Raising, Examination Papers, Scheming and Planning and Front Flowerbeds. (**Appendix C2)**

The HoD chaired the meeting which was attended by three other members. The members were asked/invited to suggest ways of fundraising for the department. Their Food and Nutrition teachers were the ones to be fully involved by way of making sandwiches, cakes, and waffles and hot-dogs for sale at the school. The department was also going to request equipment for use in the fundraising project. Being a double session school, the members

agreed that the teachers in session were to help with the preparation of the food with the help of Form 3 and 4 students.

The HOD also reminded the members of the department to submit their mid-year examination papers before the end of the day and also thanked them for having submitted their schemes of work on the agreed date. The department was also going to make a request that the flower beds in front of their workshops be utilised as herbal and flower gardens for the department.

There was not much activity in the meeting. It appeared as if the HOD had prepared the agenda items alone and it seemed as though she was making some announcements from some higher office. The statements were, *we are going to fund raise for our department, remember to hand in your examination papers today. Thank you for submitting your schemes of work on time.*

If leadership had been distributed, some department members could perhaps have suggested better fundraising strategies on top of those already on the agenda. The HoD neglected the role of fostering collaborative practices. As Wright (2008) aptly puts it, collaboration impacts positively on reforms because in most cases people feel alienated and powerless if they are not included in the leadership circle. In this case they will not be free to share their ideas. The teachers were being guided by way of getting information as to how they were to do things.

4.5.3 Observation activity 3

This activity was a demonstration lesson which was taught by the HoD of technical subjects at School **J** on the 16th of June 2014. An arrangement to see this lesson was made when the HoD had indicated that the staff develops each other through these demonstration lessons. This was a practical lesson of one hour and twenty minutes. The lesson ran from 10:20to 11:40. Just five students were present in the workshop along with two student teachers and the other two teachers in the department (**J5 and J9**). The lesson plan was made available to all present. The aim was basically to demonstrate how to teach a practical lesson. The lesson was in Woodwork and was about different methods of joining. What was of interest to this study was the discussion held after the lesson. The two senior teachers in attendance assisted in explaining why certain activities were done. Teacher J9 said that:

> *I liked the way you introduced your lesson and also how you brought the students together*
> *for the demonstrations. It was good that you gave the students a chance to handle the tools*
> *in your presence thereby checking whether they were doing it well.*

In response, the HOD explained that:

> *As a teacher you must make sure students handle the tools well from the beginning before you even give them work to do. Those who take long to master whatever skill you will be teaching will then be given special attention when they engage in the work.*

4.5.4 Observation activity4

The fourth observed activity was an end of Term 2 staff meeting at School **B**. This was held on the 5[th] of August 2014 in the school's staffroom. The meeting started at 11:00.

The Head chaired the meeting and sat in front of the staff, flanked by the Deputy Head and the senior teacher. The Head first stressed that

> *This is going to be a short meeting as people would forget the given views whilst on vacation. I am deliberately leaving out the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting which we will do in the next meeting.*

Briefly, he highlighted the major events that had taken place during the term, acknowledging the hard work that the staff members concerned had done.

The Deputy Head was given the chance to focus on the challenges they had encountered during the mid-year examinations period. Of interest was the comment,

> *I am sorry that as a school, we failed to give the Food and Nutrition sufficient ingredients for their practical lessons. Some students were not able to do the practical examination because of that.*

The Head responded by apologising to the teachers concerned:

> *I am sorry that we did not know that our School Development Association chairperson will be away and so we could not withdraw the money for the required items. It was also poor planning on our part Mr Deputy. We should have requested for the funds much earlier.*

One of the teachers also complained, saying:

> *The examinations were started rather late and we had very little time to thoroughly mark the learners' work and I do not know why you always make us invigilate our own papers. There is a difference between marking and invigilating. Someone has to invigilate and then we will come in to do the marking.*

The Deputy Head promised,

> *I am sorry. Let me promise to revise the examination timetable in future. Let us also communicate and draft the timetable together. I think this will help.*

From the subject teachers' reports it was interesting to note that the vocational and technical subject teachers were required to invigilate their subjects, especially the practical components for the few who undertook them.

The Head reported that they were not going to have holiday lessons as these had been prohibited by the Ministry of Education. The teachers were not very pleased with the decision as they had intended to complete their syllabuses during the vacation and then revise for the November examinations when the school re-opened.

No other business was discussed and the date for the next staff meeting was set for the 8th of September 2014.

The meeting ended at 12:20.

4.4.5 Summary of data from observations

The data from the observations confirmed some of the findings from document analysis, focus group discussions and individual interviews. For example, the fact that teachers lacked the necessary resources to effectively implement the vocational and technical subjects in the schools was confirmed during the observations. In cases where resources were provided, they were the bare minimum required. Most workshops also looked like ordinary classrooms and the equipment was old and in some cases not functional. The situation did not enable the hands-on approach required and encouraged by the vocational pedagogy approach.

On the other hand, it was encouraging to note that the HODs supported the new and practising teachers by way of demonstration lessons. This also is one way to facilitate the professional growth of the teachers and promote learning from their senior colleagues. This is line with the literature asserting that HODs need to be able to share their knowledge with their subordinates.

Policy Circular Number 6 of 2006 stipulates that the practical subjects must be allocated eight periods of 40 minutes each, but this was not the case in the schools, especially those schools that had double sessions. These schools only managed to allocate six periods of 35 minutes at most, so that teachers were unable to complete their work and were forced to work during their break times and even during the holidays.

The end of term staff meeting showed that the head was sensitive to the teachers' plight. The staff members looked relieved to know that this was going to be a short meeting to sum up

the term's work. These activities that the teachers engaged in did help to influence their effectiveness as teachers and in the end it would positively affect students' learning.

4.6 CHALLENGES NEEDING ATTENTION

To conclude, it must be noted that the support and guidance given were not without challenges. The second last question on all the interview guides requested the participants to list the challenges they met in the execution of their work as well as suggesting possible solutions. All the participants shared the view that practical subjects were important but difficult to implement, hence the need for proper guidance and support for teachers to enhance their successful implementation. The challenges recorded from the teachers' responses were enumerated in Table 4.7. The following are the views from the other participants:

4.6.1 Heads of schools' challenges

At school level the head has the responsibility of solving the problems that the teachers face. However, they face some challenges of their own in their endeavour to create conducive environments for instruction.

The Head of School A cited the expensive nature of the vocational and technical subjects as the primary difficulty in the implementation of offering these.

> *These practical subjects are very expensive. We cannot even afford to provide a variety of these for learners to make a choice. There are no workshops and building them is expensive so we only offer four subjects across the school. These are very few considering our enrolment. If all are to do a practical subject, the teacher pupil ratio will be very high in these subjects but having more teachers creates its own problem.*

The above sentiments were also echoed by the HOD of the subjects in the school.

> *The biggest challenge we have here are resources. The four subjects offered: Art, Agriculture, Building and Fashion and Fabrics are even too many for the school to provide resources for them.*

This HOD further mentioned that material resources were in short supply and of concern were the Agriculture textbooks which were said to be very expensive:

> *The Agriculture textbooks are very expensive. The cheapest cost about fifty dollars ($50-00). Our pupils share text books at the ratio of 1 as to 15 and in the end teachers rely on their own knowledge of the subjects when teaching.*

169

The other challenges mentioned by the HOD were to do with the curriculum of most of these practical subjects:

> *The curriculum of most of the vocational and technical subjects is too wide. The curriculum planners say they should be allocated 40 minute periods but these have been cut to six. That is why you see us having extra lessons all the time. Resources are also purchased late and fulfilling coursework requirements is difficult.*

The situation at School B was not very different. The major challenges cited by the Head were shortage of infrastructure and other resources which the teachers need for the successful implementation of their subjects.

> *I do not think we can afford to offer more subjects than those subjects that we are offering. Those we are offering are even heavy for our meagre funds that we get from the fees. For example we only have five computers and we wish to equip these subjects fully before we can introduce more.*

The sentiments expressed and the challenges given by the Head of School **B** were repeated by his HOD. The HOD led all the practical subjects offered in the school although she felt it was a great challenge on her part. On resources, she had this to say:

> *We offer six subjects and resources are a problem, they are not available. We have only two computers working for the 100+ students who must do computers. Only one teacher teaches Agriculture and yet it is compulsory for all learners. Again the equipment is not enough. We have only ten hoes for 170 Form Ones and 142 Form Twos. These share ten hoes available in the school. Because of this we cannot offer the subject up to Á level. The water situation is also bad and the Agriculture teacher, although he has the potential to produce something, it is not possible. The situation is the same for Fashion and Fabrics. We have only two functional sewing machines.*

The HOD, however, blamed all this on the country's economic situation.

> *The situation in the country is that we cannot have durable equipment and at times it is even not available on the market.*

The Head of School E encountered similar challenges to those of Schools A and B but added that they had been obliged to drop computers at Form 3 level due to a shortage of equipment. He explained that they lacked the initial capital to equip the subjects as needed. He also pointed out the problem of the lack of some subject specialists among the teachers.

> *The situation in the school is that where we do not have an expert to handle a particular subject, this is done by someone whose subject is linked to it. For example someone teaching Agriculture may be tasked to take Horticulture as well.*

The HOD at School E echoed his Head's sentiments. He agreed that they faced a shortage of resources which hampered their effective teaching. He also cited negative attitudes by the pupils who, he said, regarded Agriculture as punishment and considered it as menial work and not a subject.

> *The learners are forced to do these subjects and as such, when it is time for these subjects, some even hide in order not to attend the lessons. Teachers have to follow them from their classrooms so that they come to the workshops.*

Schools **A, B, E** and **H** reported similar enrolment statistics and all had one HOD for all the practical subjects offered in the schools. The Head of School **H** elaborated on the existing challenges mentioned by Heads of Schools **A, B** and **E**. She had this to say:

> *The way students pay the fees does not allow us to purchase materials in advance. Some pay mid-term, others even at the end and so it is very difficult to have enough money to buy the requirements at once. Again the few gadgets we have are overused thereby lessening their life span.*

The Head of School **C** cited similar challenges to those cited by Heads of Schools **A, B, E** and **H**. However, being a boarding school and a church-run school, it had its own unique problems. The Head commented:

> *Our biggest challenge is the negative attitudes by students. You know when students are together they influence each other. They all have a negative attitude towards manual work. Again, timetabling these subjects is a problem. The policy demands that we allocate eight periods of 40 minutes each but because of the number of subjects we offer at this school it is not possible. I, however, always talk to the students about the value of these subjects and I am sure it may help to make them see their value.*

The greatest challenge cited by the heads was the lack of resources, both human and material. Heads of Schools **A, B, E** and **H** agreed that a lack of money was a major challenge as there were inadequate funds in the schools to build the infrastructure which was not available in most cases. School **A's** Head explained that:

> *There are no rooms for servicing schools as workshops for the different practical subjects. This frustrates the teachers and they feel their subjects are not valued. Timetabling these subjects is also a problem for most of us as the subjects require a lot of time for practical work. Fitting the required periods into the already overcrowded timetable is a big struggle.*

All the heads again agreed that the parents' and students' negative attitudes hindered the successful implementation of these subjects. School **D's** Head explained that:

> *Parents do not want their children to do practical subjects. This is because of the culture of our education system which emphasises the academic areas at the expense of practical work.*

The Head of school **J** echoed the same sentiments, pointing out that the Ministry's audit section was not user friendly when it came to approving the purchasing of consumables. The Head also pointed out that the subjects were marginalised as you could even hear people in the procurement committee saying: *"How can we buy a hoe and not a Maths textbook? Let the students bring their own hoes from home."* He went on to explain that the subjects were regarded as some form of general work with some teachers even sending their students to work in the garden as a punishment. The HOD in the school also endorsed these sentiments saying;

> *The garden is viewed negatively. Anyone seen working in the garden is seen as someone who has committed some crime which warranted working in the garden as punishment. Instead of supporting us, the vocational and technical subject teachers, we are downgraded and despised. Of late, I am now not giving anyone who is not in our department the keys to our storeroom so that they do not get any of our tools to work with as a punishment. I am glad the Head is on our side on this issue.*

The Head of School **J** cited the problem of resources and also blamed donors who offered assistance in the form of textbooks for all other subjects, but left out the practical ones. He went on to point out that even the Government and all other stakeholders were merely paying lip-service to these subjects. He said, *"They mention how important they are, but nothing is given or provided for their successful implementation."*

School **H's** Head also cited challenges connected to the resistance to these subjects as emanating from the teachers themselves as well as from other parties concerned. Teachers disliked large numbers in their classes and as a result sent students away from their classes, telling them to take other subjects. The Head also cited lack of exposure to specialist teachers and facilities as a considerable challenge which prevented students from acquiring proper technical or vocational knowledge. The Head stressed that lack of proper knowledge caused people to end up thinking that, for example, *"Music is about singing only and not about composing songs"*. He also pointed out that some subjects which were supposed to be taught,

for example Metalwork, were beyond the reach of most schools as the equipment needed for its implementation was very expensive.

On the whole, all heads agreed that these subjects were difficult to implement although they were useful in the preparation of learners for the adult world of work, and that is why the Ministry was enforcing their provision in schools.

4.6.2 Heads of Departments' challenges

Whilst the HODs agreed that the provision of resources for the vocational and technical subjects was expensive, they blamed the school administrators for being insensitive to their requests. The following were some of the challenges cited by the HODs:

- No support from administrators as far as resource provision was concerned.
- Time allocated for the subjects was not sufficient to do the much-needed practical work.
- The HoD of **GH1** stressed that offering both the ZIMSEC and HEXCO boards' subjects was difficult and yet it was enforced by the Ministry policy. The HOD said that: *"This gives the teachers a lot of work and also stretches the limited resources that we have"*.
- Textbooks were in short supply and workshops needed to be built because sharing a workshop reduces working time for the practical lessons.
- The existing so-called 'workshops' have neither furniture nor the required equipment to allow teaching and learning to take place properly.

HoD **FH4** lamented the low enrolments in the subjects when it came to registering for the examinations, causing students to abscond from lessons. HOD **AH1**bemoaned the high cost of textbooks, assuming they were even available. She cited the Agricultural Science books and said:

> *The textbooks are very expensive, the government is not providing them and yet the subject has been made compulsory. One Agriculture textbook can even cost fifty dollars and the school cannot afford them.*

On the whole, all HODs agreed that to be successful in schools, the vocational and technical subjects need a great deal of support, not only from the government but from all stakeholders.

4.6.3 Challenges from Education Officers

In their efforts to guide and support the teachers in the implementation of vocational and technical subjects, EOs cited the following challenges. First and foremost was the lack of transport to visit the schools to go and offer guidance. As a result, the frequency of their visits to schools was very limited. Robert had this to say:

> *Some schools are visited only once in five years and this is too long a time to lapse not having been supervised. There is also a lack of properly qualified teachers to tackle the vocational aspects of the curriculum.*

Rose repeated these views when she said:

> *Most of the teachers, even HODs, were not exposed to some industrial work experience when they did their training. Although they have some background knowledge on the subjects, they lack the necessary skills to effectively impart the right content and skills to the learners.*

Robert reiterated that:

> *No new teachers are being deployed into the schools and institutions of higher learning are not upgrading those in the service. Those being trained in the Technical Teacher Training Colleges are expected to do some form of industrial apprenticeship as a requirement for their training and in most cases they end up being absorbed by those industries although they are the right people to be teaching the subjects in the schools. Another challenge is that the syllabuses are too wide and difficult to cover. More time for doing the practical work is needed but, because timetables are overcrowded, time is scarce.*

According to the EOs, failure to visit all schools frequently was a major challenge since supervision assists in the effective implementation of the subjects.

4.6.4 The DEO's challenges

From Cosmas's point of view, vocational education was very expensive and yet funds for its implementation were limited. He explained that:

> *The biggest challenge in the implementation of vocational education is the poor funding base thereby causing shortage of resources. Again, vocational education lacks suitable and competent teachers. The wrongly qualified personnel tasked to lead vocational and technical education make blunders as they are not well informed of the issues pertaining to these subjects. The fees are also not easily paid by the parents and yet there is no government funding provided for the implementation of these subjects.*

The challenges cited by the instructional leaders are, in most cases, in agreement with the literature discussed in Chapter Two regarding the challenges of providing vocational and technical education. Behnaz and Fatemeh (2008) contend that the subjects need suitable manpower, which the study showed was rather in short supply, as indicated by the Heads, the EOS and the DEO. Boateng (2012) argues that the subjects require skilled and proficient teachers and therefore teacher preparation is important. Boateng stresses the need for constant in-service training for these teachers, so as to upgrade their skills. The teachers need industrial training periodically in order for them to keep abreast of the technological changes in society. As revealed by Robert, the inspector, no new teachers were being employed because most of them changed their profession after training in favour of other more lucrative economic activities, considering the poor remuneration teachers received. There was a need to motivate these teachers so that they remained in the service. Their leaving the profession results in a shortage of highly competent indigenous teaching and support staff with sufficiently wide practical experience of teaching practical subjects.

Simsek and Yildrim (2000) stress the need to provide suitable environments for effective implementation of vocational education. This is echoed by Boateng (2012) who stresses that the nature and characteristics of vocational and technical education present unique challenges to the institutions and their administrators. The subjects require workshops, tools, equipment and consumable training materials which most schools lack (Simsek &Yildrim, 2000).Ojimba (2012) also asserts that the major problems preventing the teaching of vocational and technical subjects are funding, facilities and the brain drain. The challenges cited by the instructional leaders in the study showed that the conditions under which vocational education were offered in the schools were often poor, making their implementation difficult. There was a need on the part of the government and schools to ensure that appropriate environments were provided to ensure the successful implementation of the subjects so that the teachers would cope successfully with their professional responsibilities manageable.

Agrawal (2013) also contends that vocational and technical education faces several challenges in addition to the poor quality of institutions where they are offered. He argues that the programmes have not improved for more than a decade and are, in most cases, irrelevant, of poor quality and often lack industrial linkage. No school in the study showed that their students chose some form of industrial attachment; yet the vocational pedagogy demands that students need to do this if they are to acquire skills.

One of the major obstacles to the implementation of vocational programmes is negative attitudes. Ojimba (2012) points out that societal reaction is an essential ingredient to the successful and effective implementation of innovations. Schools do not operate in a vacuum and their success depends on society's support and attitudes; hence the influence of parents on the implementation of vocational education. Parental attitudes towards vocational education influence the children's willingness to take up the subjects. Alam (2008) echoes this notion by pointing out that most parents think their children should not become labourers even if they know they are not academically inclined. This causes many learners to dislike the subjects.

The study's findings are in general agreement with the literature regarding the time needed for the instruction of these subjects. Hof and Strupler Leiser (2014) concurred that the vocational and technical subjects require more instruction and practical time than arts and science education for example. The time allocated has to be sufficient to satisfy the subjects' practical goals.

To sum up this discussion, Table 4.13 below summarises the participants' challenges and the suggested solutions as offered by the respondents.

Table 4.13Summary of the challenges and suggested solutions

CHALLENGES.	SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS
Lack of funding	-Encourage the communities to pay the needed fees. -Seek funding from well-wishers. -Give advice to the heads on how they can fund-raise for their schools. HODs could also engage in some fundraising projects in their departments
Lack of suitable, properly qualified and competent human resources.	In-service courses to be provided by the government.
Overcrowded timetables permitting inadequate time for practical work.	Proper and teachers to provide more time, including weekends.
Administrators, teachers, parents and students' negative attitudes.	All stakeholders are to be enlightened on the value of these subjects so that they appreciate their importance.

Unfriendly working habits of some administrative sections of the ministry.	Enlighten the ministry officials so that they know how the schools operate.
Segregation of the subjects by the donor community	Polite requests to be made for the donors also to supply the practical subjects with the needed books and equipment.
Lack of content knowledge of the leaders.	Encourage institutions of higher learning to offer in-service courses to teachers in posts and also train new members.
Lack of administrators' support.	Vocational subjects' leaders are to be given in-service training in order to understand their nature and be in a position to fully support them.
Shortage of well-equipped workshops.	Funding to be made available to facilitate the building of and equipment for workshops
Lack of transport for supervisors.	Government has to properly allocate funds for the provision of transport.

4.7 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the findings stemming from the data collected. The findings were presented in themes that attempted to answer the research questions. Firstly, data from the documents' analysis brought out the nature of the vocational and technical subjects' curriculum on offer in the schools. The artefacts that the instructional leaders used, including the policies that guide the provision of the subjects, were also discussed. The key players in the leadership of the vocational and technical subjects were jointly examined to understand their dominant instructional practices and behaviours. I also reviewed the links between instruction and leadership in this context. The chapter ended with a discussion of the challenges experienced by the instructional leaders in the execution of their work and how they tried to mitigate them. The next chapter presents a summary of the findings and the conclusions; culminating in the recommendations concerning the research problem and suggestions for further research

CHAPTER FIVE: Summary, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented, analysed and discussed the data gathered from this qualitative research study titled: **Instructional guidance for the marginalised subjects in Zimbabwe: A case study of the vocational and technical subjects in the Masvingo district.** This chapter presents a summary of the study, the findings, conclusions and the recommendations of the study together with their implications for both policy and practice. The meanings of the findings are also discussed together with the conclusions with reference to the literature on the instructional guidance practices for the vocational and technical subjects. The limitations of the study and possible areas for further research are also noted.

5.2 Major research findings

The summary of the findings in this chapter is presented in line with the way in which data were presented and discussed in chapter four, according to the themes which answered the four research questions posed in the first chapter. Findings from the documentary analysis on the nature of the vocational and technical curriculum and the guiding policies and artefacts in use in the schools are presented first.

5.2.1. The Zimbabwean vocational education curriculum

The vocational and technical education being offered in Zimbabwe's schools came about because of a national commission of inquiry into education and training that the government set up in 1998. This commission recommended the vocationalisation of the curriculum. A series of policy circulars were produced to direct schools on how to offer vocational and technical subjects in their curricula. Some of these policy circulars had very little impact and were cancelled before implementation. To date, the Secretary's circular number P77 of 2006 mainly guides the provision of vocational and technical subjects. The circular gives guidelines on how the two-pathway education structure, which the government adopted, is to be implemented.

The policy documents suggest that vocational and technical subjects be offered concurrently with the academic subjects. There is, however, no hard and fast rule as far as the implementation of these subjects in schools is concerned. The central guiding policy circular cited above simply provides the guidelines concerning the subject combinations but does not

enforce their inclusion in the school curriculum in any way. This state of affairs seems to have given rise to variations in the patterns of provision of vocational and technical education across the various schools in the district and country. While various schools continue to offer vocational and technical subjects, they do so mostly on a voluntary basis based on the schools' environment and funding capacity. The main purpose sometimes appears to be merely to make sure that they offer "something" in compliance with the vocational and technical education policy, hence the differences in the number of the subjects offered, even in schools with similar enrolment levels and patterns. Ultimately, not many students are exposed to this form of education, which the country has chosen for its utilitarian value. If the government is at all serious about the implementation of vocational and technical subjects, it may be necessary to re-examine the terms of provision for these subjects in addition to the instructional support and guidance of teachers in schools.

Lewis (1998) who contends that vocational education, by its nature, should be treated as general education and should be given to all, supports the inclusion of the vocational and technical subjects in the schools' curriculum. Vocational education is an education for jobs or education about work, which should be one of the essential outcomes of any education system, i.e. to be able to find one's place in the working world. This view of vocational education consequently suggests that the vocational curricula should contain certain skills provided in preparation for the adult workplace. Having included the given subjects in the schools' curriculum, in response to the high unemployment rate in the country, the vocational education in Zimbabwe should strive to have a direct link to the actual jobs available on the labour market. Lewis goes further to warn that this type of education (education for jobs or education about work) is not always suitable for secondary schools. She is of the opinion that it is mostly suitable for post-secondary levels, especially due to its expensive nature. The challenge at secondary level is that, for as long as it is offered together with academic subjects, it is bound to be overshadowed by them. Most of the schools I visited, this seems to be the case, as expressed by one of the heads of school, who cited the argument from staff members who argued that it was "senseless to buy hoes for agriculture instead of mathematics textbooks". For the same reasons of non-equivalence between the academic and vocational education, instructional leaders' attention was more likely to be skewed towards the academic subjects. The imbalances of instructional leadership were exacerbated by the fact that some of the key leaders responsible for driving vocational and technical education

do not have the requisite background knowledge in the vocational and technical subjects to guide and support the teachers. How, then, could it be expected that the instructional leaders would be able to balance the support they give to the academic and vocational subjects in the schools?

According to Lewis, the curriculum offered in schools has to provide for actual work experience in real jobs arranged in the schools but as evidenced by the study, resource constraints hinder schools from adopting and achieving these goals. Simulation of workplace situations within the current school's facilities was thus severely constrained. It is observed in Lewis (1998) that, almost a century ago, to be effective, vocational education had to be offered in the workplace environment itself, a setting that is a replica of the situation in which the learners would subsequently work. An effective vocational curriculum should ultimately produce students who are able to deal with the modern world effectively. In the absence of the hands-on activities as a component of the curriculum or without the adoption of the vocational pedagogic approach in schools, the major aims of these subjects are unlikely to be realised. Under these conditions, therefore, the question of how instructional leaders for these subjects go about the task of providing guidance and leadership to the teachers remains. The next set of findings thus addresses the question of instructional leadership policies, artefacts and practices for vocational and technical subjects in the selected schools of Zimbabwe.

5.2.2. Guiding policies

The findings of the study indicate several key policies that should be guiding and supporting the teachers in their provision of vocational and technical education. Swann and Pratt (1999) view such policies as a response to an identified problem and thereby serve the purpose of announcing new instructional orders to address the problem. For any action to succeed, however, it has to be guided by well laid out policies that provide direction on how to tackle the issue.

Most importantly, though, the necessary resources for successful implementation must accompany the formulated policies. Data from all the instructional leaders showed that the workshop facilities, equipment, textbooks and other resources, which are the policy artefacts necessary for the implementation of these policies, were inadequate and almost non-existent in most schools, making policy implementation difficult if not impossible.

Furthermore, the study uncovered the fact that, while policies were formulated in order to make the curriculum relevant, the actual policy documents were not available for the teachers and other practitioners to refer to. The DEO, EOs, heads of schools and the HODs knew about the important circulars that drive vocational and technical education in Zimbabwe but did not have first-hand experience of reading and understanding the policies. Robert was the only person who had two of the circulars in his possession while one other circular was found amongst the HODs. The rest of the circulars that the researcher was able to access were supplied by the office of the Provincial Education Director. Research suggests that implementers often interpret policies in their own ways, influenced by a number of personal and professional circumstances and experiences. The interpretation process sometimes leads to distortions in the meanings and intentions of the policies, which are not always deliberate or even obvious to the implementers themselves (Cohen, 1990).

It became clear from the findings why strict adherence to the formulated policies might be difficult for all the stakeholders. As argued by Cohen and Ball (1990), teachers usually implement policies according to their own understanding hence differences occur in the way these policies are actually implemented.

As alluded to earlier on, policies are normally developed to respond to some identified problem and as such should assist in solving it (Swan & Pratt, 1999).In the absence of deliberate and strategic interventions, the teachers will continue to work with the policies of the past; using the techniques they are familiar with, even if the new policies are sound. The success of new policies will depend on the teachers' understandings and interpretations and more importantly their capacity to implement them. Deliberate guidance and support for policy interpretation and guidance is thus called for in this case.

5.2.3 Supervision instruments

The study revealed that the instructional leaders use supervision instruments to report on the teachers' work. These instruments include lesson observation and exercise book inspection protocols. There are common protocols in the schools that are designed by the ministry for use when reporting on the teachers' work. These are used to standardise the supervision exercise while at the same time checking on the teachers' competences. It was also discovered that some schools, although in possession of ministry protocols, develop their own instruments, which seek to adapt those of the ministry. Although these documents may be in

a different format, they do address similar issues. Examples of these protocols are given in Section 4.2.4.

The fact that the schools are free to adapt the supervision forms and produce their own shows some innovation and helps to moderate the protocols to suit the different situations in schools. It is important, in this respect, that the departments should also make the effort to produce supervision forms that are adapted for vocational and technical subjects. My observations suggest that the protocols being used in the schools were designed mostly for theory lessons, were mainly for the academic curriculum and were less suited for the practical subjects in the vocational and technical stream. Supervision forms have to be tailor-made for particular situations if they are to be useful at all and to assist instructional leaders when giving the necessary feedback to the teachers. Careful attention to the artefacts is needed. All the instructional leaders concurred that the vocational and technical subjects are unique and as such may need unique supervision instruments that bring out their nature, especially the required vocational pedagogy.

As Michelle (2010) emphasises, supervision is informed by function and methods. The supervision instruments should therefore be suitable for the subjects being supervised.

The study also identified other useful supervision artefacts used by the schools, such as the programmes of activities, which some heads called the "diaries of activities". These diaries were useful in providing guidance to the school staff as far as stipulating when certain activities were to be done and by whom. Some of the heads, however, were concerned that planning ahead was not always feasible as their activities were sometimes determined by the day-to-day situation. For that reason, the degree to which the schedules and diaries were useful artefacts for instructional leadership for some of the key leaders such as the school heads remains a question to be investigated further. Thus, the present study has managed to establish that they are important instructional guidance instruments in some cases and seem to work well for some of the leaders. Their utility as instruments of management versus instruments of instructional guidance is an important question for further research.

5.2.4 Key players in the leadership of vocational and technical subjects inZimbabwe

The next set of findings relates to the key question of who the important players are for instructional guidance and leadership of vocational and technical subjects. The two-pathway education structure that has been implemented in the country since 2006 and which includes

vocational and technical subjects has representatives at all levels of the education system as indicated in the organogram on page 129.These include the heads of schools, HODs, EOs and the DEO, whose roles and activities were explored and discussed in the study. They provide the necessary leadership and support, without which the subjects would not be able to survive.

5.2.4.1 The secretary and the director

These instructional leaders are stationed at the country's national offices and as is evident from the policy documents, are responsible for the formulation of policies that guide the provision of the subjects and their subsequent implementation in schools. The study established that besides formulating the policies, the secretary and the director (or their offices) are not directly linked to the teachers who may need their assistance in order to effectively interpret and implement the curriculum. The question remains as to how these leaders and policymakers ascertain that the policies they formulate are interpreted correctly and implemented as intended. There was no evidence that much thought and/or attention had been given to this issue of instructional guidance and support at this level of leadership. However, this study did not go into the details of the operations of these top ministry official to explore the reasons and challenges further, as this was not the main topic.

5.2.4.2 Education officers (EOs)

At the provincial office, there are subject EOs who are specifically responsible for technical and home economics subjects. They work under the leadership of the Deputy Provincial Education Director (Secondary) and are subject specialists in the different practical subjects taught in the district. Rose, for example, specialised in Home Economics and is a substantive deputy head of a school appointed in the post of EO in an acting capacity. She was appointed by the PED, in part because there were no qualified people in the headship post (a post equivalent to that of EO) willing to take up the post.

Robert, on the other hand, rose through the ranks of being a classroom teacher, becoming a head and then EO. He is a substantive EO in charge of technical subjects. The other two officers, who did not participate in the study, are specialists in Agriculture and Building studies. These inspectors assist and guide all the vocational subject teachers in the whole province, which includes Masvingo district. At the structural level, therefore, the instructional

leadership core for the province seems to be in place although challenges continue with regard to the actual implementation issues as discussed in the previous chapter.

5.2.4.3 The District Education Officer (DEO)

At the district level, the DEO is in charge of all the administrative issues in the entire district's primary and secondary schools. As in the case of the heads of schools, the DEO is not expected to lead in just the vocational and technical subjects but on all the educational issues in the district schools. The Masvingo district had an advantage as the DEO has a vocational and technical subject background, which puts him in a better position to support and offer assistance to the teachers of the subjects within the district.

5.2.4.4 The heads of schools

The study uncovered the fact that the heads in the schools are all qualified to lead schools as stipulated by the eligibility criteria stipulated in the vacancy circulars advertising their posts. However, it is important to note that the criteria had nothing to do with the heads' ability to lead the vocational and technical subjects; hence, unlike the HODs who are specialists in the subjects they lead, except in a few cases, the heads of schools were found to be in two camps. Firstly there were those with vocational and technical background knowledge who are in the minority and secondly, those with academic backgrounds who are in the majority. The study found that those who were not vocational and technical subject specialists were not comfortable in assisting and giving the necessary support and guidance required; hence their use of and reliance on HODs to give them the necessary information on the teachers. The expected roles of the heads in leadership activities are not limited to the vocational and technical subjects. They are managers of the affairs of the whole school; therefore, they may be appointed without any background knowledge of the subjects in which they are required to offer guidance to the teachers.

Another interesting finding was that, since the initial requirement for a headship post was to be a holder of a degree, even the people who were initially trained to teach in the primary sector were considered for the secondary sector upon attainment of a relevant degree (e.g. heads of schools A, B and J). The heads are expected to be organisational leaders for their schools and effectively lead the teaching and learning process, even in the subjects they may know nothing about. The uniqueness of vocational and technical subjects did not seem to matter much during the appointment of school heads. Under the circumstances, the use of the

HODs by these heads, therefore, made sense and could be a good basis for a distributed instructional leadership approach in the schools.

5.2.4.5 The HODs

The study identified the HODs as the immediate and perhaps the key instructional leaders at the school level. In most cases, they possess the requisite qualifications as teachers for the practical subjects they are teaching and leading. The HODs appeared comfortable in leading their subjects but found it difficult to lead in subjects in which they did not receive any training or were even unable to teach. In the latter instances, they just provided the administrative leadership but were often unable to guide and support their staff on issues that demand familiarity with the subject matter. This was evidenced by the data from the BHI HOD, who stated that she faced challenges when it comes to supervising teachers in the department who do not teach Fashion and Fabrics, the subject in which she specialised. Other HODs who described the same situation were AHI, CHI, EHI, JH2 and GH3. In such a situation, the HODs, as expressed by one member of focus group F, tended to conduct the supervision exercise just to fulfil an obligation, without giving helpful professional feedback to guide the teachers. It is thus not far-fetched to conclude that in such cases, instructional guidance and leadership were more likely to be weak and unproductive. The study also revealed that heads of schools, who are not guided by any policy but rather guided by their own discretion, appoints HODs. There is a need for heads to be principled in their choices as the wrong choice could compromise the appointed leaders' potential for guiding and supporting the teachers.

The prevailing situation for these key instructional leaders is not dissimilar to that detailed by Moss and Liang (1990) who argue that though there may be a better vocational education on offer, if the personnel who lead it are not there, there will not be improved vocational education to discuss. These authors go further by arguing that vocational education does not have enough leaders and not enough effort has been made to develop them. Lewis (1998) also asserts that leaders must understand the aims of the programme in order to be able to appreciate them. The unfortunate situation, though, is that the leaders are products of the organisations they are expected to change; hence, implementation of these subjects is hindered. Uwaifo & Uwaifo (2009) reinforces this perspective by arguing that no system of education can rise above the level of its teachers. Therefore, there isa need to develop teachers and leaders who have the right skills for the vocational and technical education of

Zimbabwe. As pointed out by Robert, the EO, within the context of Zimbabwe some of the most capable and skilled teachers have either joined the informal sector where they would have done their internship/attachment or have even migrated to greener pastures, leaving a gap in the vocational and technical subject departments. The gap appears very difficult to fill; hence the need to pay particular attention to these subjects and avoid further marginalisation.

Although the teachers were given the right guidance and support, in some cases, this did not make them suitable to teach vocational and technical subjects. To have studied the subject at O level a long time ago is not enough to enable the teachers to teach the subjects, especially using the vocational pedagogic approaches, which is the main aim of these subjects. Use and manipulation of equipment in the workshops requires people with the requisite knowledge of the equipment, which most leaders did not possess, resulting in their failure to provide the necessary support and leadership. The HOD of school J who had to give a demonstrative lesson in woodwork evidenced this. The participants admired the HOD's ability toensure the students handled and used the tools well.

Much of the literature espouses the need for strong leadership, especially from the principal, in support of instruction (Ballantyne, 2012; Menon, 2009). This includes providing resources, being visible in the schools and providing an atmosphere that supports instruction. This is possible for all school subjects and programmes but the vocational and technical subjects are bound to suffer when these leaders are not specialists in the subjects.

While the DEO and the EOs visited schools in the district and province respectively, their visits were designed more around monitoring of lessons and inspecting documents than on offering support and guidance. Their visits to schools, in most cases, were not announced in advance, giving the impression of witch hunting. The activities they perform are also similar to what the heads and HODs do with the distinct exception of the support and guidance portion. There is a need to adopt Wright's (2008) notion that leadership should be distributed and that once it is distributed it must be non-hierarchical and it should be able to foster collaborative practices. It should not only rely on positional leaders but should be based on interactions between the instructional leaders and their followers. It is possible for the DEO and the EOs to take a distributed approach to leadership and spread their activities, practices and interactions across multiple people and situations (Spillane *et al.*, 2004).

5.2.5 The dominant instructional leadership practices

Under this theme, the study established that the instructional leadership activities which the leaders engage in to support the teachers are the ones that guide and support the teachers' instructional activities, that develop the teachers professionally and create an atmosphere in which working becomes easier. The study found aspects of instructional leadership that all leaders tended to focus on in order to facilitate effective instruction. They are also enacted differently at the schools but most of them are conducted in similar ways, as they are part of these leaders' formally stipulated roles.

5.2.5.1 Guidance and support for instruction

The findings identified that the instructional leaders provide some important support and guidance for instruction in the vocational and technical subjects in at least three distinct ways viz. by setting goals for instruction, providing resources and supervising the teacher's work. These will be individually discussed below.

Setting goals for instruction

The interviews with the heads clarified that setting goals to direct instruction was a major task the leaders are compelled to do. This, as revealed by the data, is conducted through the formulation of mission statements that show the vision and mission of the institutions. These statements communicate clear goals to the teachers about why they are there and what they are expected to achieve. The mission documents give a clear sense of collective goals and priorities. The mission statements that were made available to the researcher also contain values the school personnel were expected to cherish, which in most schools had something to do with their schools being ranked above all others in the country.

Implicit ideas about distributed leadership were also evident within the cherished values. For example, values such as openness, involvement, cooperativeness and teamwork, were contained in many of the mission statements. As the different departments also base their departmental targets on those of the school, it is easy to see how they are also guided by these values in their day-to-day operations.

All the heads admitted that the work of supervising vocational and technical subjects requires specialists to genuinely assist and guide the teachers in their work. It emerged that the three heads who received training in the vocational and technical subjects found it relatively easy

to assist and guide the teachers. The other seven heads expressed the view that it was challenging for them and they mostly relied on their HODs to be cognisant of the departments. All heads however agreed that they set targets to direct the implementation process and guide the teachers' proper utilisation of time. Activity schedules were drafted, together with annual work plans stipulating the schools and members' targets in some schools, whilst for others these are drawn up every term.

The HODs also concurred with the heads that they do set goals and targets for teachers. These are normally achieved through departmental policies, which according to HOD **GHI**, are used to guide in the drawing up of schemes of work, giving assignments and tests. The EOs admitted that they do not set their own targets for the teachers but see to it that the schools and ministry goals and targets are met. The ministry's policies that are distributed to schools are designed to give guidelines that must be adhered to and it is the duty of the EOs to monitor that.

The DEOs also do not set targets for schools but similar to the EOs, they monitor the implementation of policies and targets set by the ministry, which must be achieved for the benefit of the learners.

It is, therefore, evident from the study that all the instructional leaders support the teachers' instructional roles in different ways. Heads and HODs do so by setting targets and monitoring their implementation while the EOs and DEO largely monitor adherence to these policies and targets or goals set by the ministry.

The study also identified some of the main weaknesses in the provision of instructional leadership at this level. For example, the lack of vocational and technical knowledge and skills to manage the practical activities in class was a major problem for many. As far as heads of schools are concerned, most were not able to provide direct support for vocational and technical subjects but they participated in drawing up an activity schedule to guide the teachers' work, provide resources and supervise the teachers in general while delegating many of the direct tasks of support and guidance to the HODs. Instructional leaders are viewed as "culture builders" (Feeney, 2009) and as such they set the standards for the teachers and students. The unique nature of vocational education demands that leaders who are sympathetic to its goals and aims lead it. In summary, the findings indicate that the leaders in schools do set goals even though at most levels except within the specific departments, none of the goals are specifically tailored for the vocational programmes. This

non-specific treatment of vocational education, based on the methods of goal setting for academic subjects, may be a disservice to the vocational programmes. Cobb and Preskill (1983) asserted that vocational education is different from all other disciplines in the education system and as such it calls for different treatment. These subjects require their own budgets, laboratories/workshops and large equipment. The inclusion of these subjects at school level makes their support and leadership difficult, as they cannot be treated separately due to time constraints and a lack of adequate resources. There is need to assess whether providing the vocational subjects together with the academic subjects in the schools, where resources are constrained, does not in fact encourage their marginalisation.

Provision of resources

The DEO, citing challenges encountered in the implementation of vocational and technical subjects mentioned the key issue of a shortage of resources. It is evident from all the interviews with instructional leaders that resource constraints comprised the most problematic challenge although some indicated that they are able to provide for all the needs identified by their HODs and teachers. In all the schools, the data revealed that purchasing resources is not a straightforward process as there are procedures that need to be followed. These differ depending on whether the institution is a government school or not. All heads also revealed that the procedures that they follow in purchasing resources cause them at times to acquire the resources late. The data from the teachers also showed that in generally the available funds from the schools are inadequate. Some teachers, however, think the heads are not keen on supplying them with the needed resources. One teacher expressed the following view,

> *As far as purchasing books is concerned the leaders are just not interested as they*
> *buy book every year but not for our department*

This statement by the teacher suggests a need for clear guidelines on the distribution and allocation of resources especially for the vocational and technical education departments in schools.

Supervision of teachers' work

The data from the instructional leaders showed that the key practices of supervision include lesson observations, exercise book inspections and the inspection of the teachers' record books. These activities are mostly guided by the national and provincial policies. The

Director's Circular Number 3 of 2008, for example, stipulates that the HODs or TICs must, on a regular basis:

- Observe teachers teaching and write appropriate reports. At least one comprehensive report per member per term should be sent to the district office
- Inspect the schemes of work of members in the department
- Inspect exercise books of pupils and write reports
- Hold staff development sessions to redress observed shortcomings and to share good practices
- Assess learners' performance in the context of continuous assessment.

In practice, as highlighted in the sentiments expressed by focus group F, the teacher's experience and seniority are considered and even govern the number of times the teacher is observed. The experienced teachers are also called upon to assist the novice teachers rather than just observing them for formality's sake. After the supervision activities, the heads or the HODs write reports on the supervision forms provided. These may be accompanied by some post-observation feedback, also called targeted feedback, which is usually aimed at enhancing the teachers' skills in some identified areas of weakness.

The fact that, at times, no formal post-observation feedback is given was evidence to the fact that some of the leaders only conducted the observations to fulfil a requirement of the stipulated policy circular. This was mostly the case when the supervisor was external, only came in for the observations and was not seen again for the next three to five years given the limited funds and labour resources to make such visits regular within the system. Overall, however, the observation of lessons and the inspection of pupils' exercise books and the teachers' record books were deemed fruitful instructional leadership activities that helped to improve students' achievement. Often the key to the success of the supervision activities lies in the fruitful professional feedback that is given by the assessors. The assessment by those in a position of authority helps to identify strengths and weaknesses for correction, thereby improving the instructional process. The educational officials, who have a mandate to monitor and supervise the learning environments, also need to ensure staff competency and maintain standards.

5.2.5.2 Guidance and support for the teachers' professional development

Teacher development is another important aspect of instructional leadership, particularly in light of the fact that the curriculum keeps changing to suit the prevailing socio-economic environment in the country. Several practices emerged from the data with respect to professional development such as workshops and seminars, staff meetings and performance related feedback after supervision. These sets of practices characterised the dominant patterns of practice for teacher professional development in the sample district.

Workshops and seminars

The workshops and seminars are mostly organised at district and provincial levels. The study established that the EOs organise and facilitate subject-based workshops and panel meetings, where they brief the teachers on the new developments and trends in the subjects concerned. The issues discussed range from syllabus interpretation to guidance on instructional pedagogy. Although, these are very useful and beneficial to teachers, the workshops and seminars have the disadvantage that not all the teachers concerned can attended them only their representatives can. Further meetings, at the school level, were often required to convey the information to all concerned. The major challenge besides the loss of information during these processes (Dichaba, 2013) is that staff members at some of the schools were unable to attend these professional development workshops and seminars due to a lack of funds, thereby hampering the effective implementation of the vocational subjects in the district's schools. A possible solution lies in the organisational structure of clusters that bring together several schools within an area for sharing and support. The [BSP (Z)] has to ensure all schools are well catered for in terms of finances and resources, to be able to attend the organised staff development activities.

Staff meetings

Meeting with staff on a regular basis has been found to be one of the most effective instructional leadership practices in the sample schools. People are able to come together and discuss issues that affect their collaboration. Blasé and Blasé (2004) suggest that staff meetings should be one of the activities which instructional leaders, especially the heads, engage in often.

Most schools have staff meetings at least twice per term, just before the term starts, and in a day before closing. Besides these two crucial meetings, there are other meetings that are

organised and held depending on issues that might have arisen in the school or if there is a leader who has attended a workshop, seminar or a meeting and needs to report back.

Professional feedback

Giving feedback is a powerful skill and an important support system for helping teachers grow their practices for instruction. Lashway (2002) who asserts that monitoring and providing feedback has a significant impact on the teachers and students' performance supports this. The data from the study showed that all the instructional leaders who observe lessons and conduct inspections had a policy obligation to give feedback but that this was not always done (or at least not as timeously in order to be useful). Lashway (2002) again stresses that feedback has to be implemented immediately and independently if it is to benefit the supervisees at all while the observation or inspection is still fresh in everyone's minds. Not all the teachers, however, seemed to benefit much from the exercise less so from the feedback after lesson observations by the HODs. As one of the teachers in focus group F observed,

> *Lesson observations, exercise books inspections and scheme books inspections are done for formality's sake especially to us experienced members. After all, we are at the same level with the HOD and so she does not assist us much. We need people at the top to come and give us advice especially the subject education officers who should assist on the vocational aspects of the curriculum.*

Simin and Mohammed (2014) argue that the way in which teachers perceive the supervisory role is important in determining whether the feedback will help to improve their job performance. Instructional leaders therefore have to be considerate and deliberate in the kind of feedback they give to differently ranked or experienced teachers in their departments.

5.2.5.3 Creating an environment conducive to learning

Besides providing resources, an aspect discussed earlier, other strategies employed by the instructional leaders to create a working environment conducive to effective instruction included devising a clear vision and mission, setting strong systems of collaboration and motivating the teachers. These instructional leadership practices are aimed at mediating the often difficult working conditions in many of the schools and will be discussed individually below.

Creating vision and mission

The availability of mission statements in all schools is a positive move in making all the workers aware of their major roles and responsibilities which they should endeavour to accomplish (i.e. to mould pupils morally, academically, practically and culturally in order to make them useful citizens of Zimbabwe). This mission accords the vocational and technical departments the responsibility of ensuring that the learners acquire practical skills to make them useful citizens. All the stakeholders consequently worked towards a common goal and were eager to see it succeeding. Jones (2010) stresses that good leadership, especially instructional leadership, involves having a mission and a vision for sound instruction.

Setting systems of collaboration

According to Miller (2010), collaboration is important because it enables teachers to work together and facilitates professional growth. The instructional leaders must provide the necessary guidance and support aimed at helping teachers not suffer alone in isolation in their individual classrooms or workshops. Collaboration makes the teachers' work easier.

The data showed that regular departmental meetings allowed for some collaboration within the departments. Activities to facilitate collaboration, though present, were superficial. The instructional leaders did not make deliberate or intentional efforts to encourage collaboration among the teachers instead the activities were performed as routine duties. Powell noted this trend and confirmed that teachers often accepted a certain level of isolation and as such often sought ideas from books, workshops, conferences and even from the Internet rather than from colleagues.

Motivation to work

Yukl (2010) argues that instructional leaders must possess the competency and ability to encourage and motivate their subordinates to work together, perform better and achieve the intended results. As the data showed, heads believe that motivating teachers to work was a mammoth task, with some leaving the task to the HODs to observe them doing it. Some heads took advantage of the productive nature of some subjects and gave what was produced to the teachers after class as a motivational tool. Some heads revealed that showing an interest in the teachers' work motivates them consequently the heads visit them during lessons. They have informal talks with the teachers and the students, praising them for whatever good work is noted.

Performance awards, based on the results of the external examinations were also used in the schools to motivate the teachers to work. The head of school F said that these awards might however de-motivate others who do not teach examination classes and as a result, they first give everyone awards and then provide special awards to those who had contributed more.

These practices are supported by Quinn (2002) who argues that the principal's role, as an instructional leader, lies in the ability to motivate and inspire teachers with the end goal of influencing instructional practice and ultimately influencing student achievement.

5.3 Limitations of the study

The secretary of education and the principal directors in the ministry could not be included in the study although they would have been able to express an overview of the situation in the country concerning the vocational programmes. While the study noted that they do generate policies that guide the implementation of these vocational subjects in the schools, there is a need, in future, to fully understand the guidance and support the head of the ministry offers in support of the teachers. Besides being far away and difficult to see due to their tight schedules, they did not affect the Masvingo district alone but the whole country; hence the study itself was not affected in any way. The time during which the researcher collected data was a very demanding term for the schools; the teachers were always busy when lessons were going to be observed. The intention to observe lessons in different subjects at different schools did not succeed, as there were many timetable changes to accommodate the completion of some important projects for external examinations. It was beyond the scope of this study to analyse the particular leadership activities for all the different subjects offered in the schools. Ideally, it would however, be important to study the guidance and support, unique to each particular subject.

5.4 Link between leadership and the teaching of practical subjects

As revealed by the obtained data, instructional leadership and guidance are activities undertaken in order to develop productive and satisfactory working environments in which the vocational and technical subjects may prosper. Rukanda *et al.* (1997) confirm this by defining instructional leadership and guidance as activities that are undertaken in order to develop productive and satisfactory working environments. In this study the instructional guidance practices, i.e. the actions undertaken by the instructional leaders (heads, HODs, EOs and the DEO) were all aimed at creating an environment conducive for teachers to do their

work effectively and even to improve the teachers professionally. This is consequently a clear indication that there is a link between leadership and instruction. The manner in which the leaders enact whatever activity is bound to affect instruction.

The literature presented earlier in chapter two identified and confirmed that there is a link between leadership and instruction. Boateng (2012) even stated that leadership is a critical success factor in revitalising vocational education. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) also determined that leadership was second only to classroom instruction amongst all school related factors contributing to student learning. In this section, key assumptions from the literature are identified and compared to the findings presented in chapter four.

> *Firstly, policies that are meant to guide and support the teachers, besides being accompanied by the necessary resources, must be available at the schools to avoid their being implemented only as the teachers see fit when they rely on other people's interpretations and explanations (Cohen & Ball, 1990).*

The study found that the policies the teachers were using were not available to them personally to read and interpret before implementation; hence the different ways in which they are implemented. Policies formulated by the leaders are important guides for the teachers therefore, they must be made available to teachers for use rather than for them to depend on other people's explanations which may not be accurate.

> *Policies, which should guide the instructional activities of the leaders and the teachers, are sometimes too ambitious though they may be noble in purpose, so they end up being too demanding and sort of imposing (Cohen & Ball, 1990).*

In the study, it was found that offering the vocational and technical subjects is a noble idea in the face of the high unemployment rate in the country. The subjects are meant to equip the learners with skills for use in the world of work. The policies became too demanding, though, as schools could not afford to provide the required resources. As one teacher indicated, schools lacked the required textbooks, equipment and workshops needed for the proper implementation of the subjects. Good and effective instructional leaders will always ensure the policies they formulate are provided with the necessary resources and it will make the teachers' work feasible

> *Thirdly, the behaviours and practices of the leaders, especially the principal or heads of schools, influence all aspects of the learning community, thereby creating an*

atmosphere, which makes schools effective and impacting differently on student learning (Edmonds, 1979; Williams, 2010).

The findings demonstrated that the instructional leaders are responsible for all the activities that translate the general school targets into realisable plans. The leaders supporting the teachers provide all the resources, professionally develop the teachers and supervise the instructional process. As confirmed in the quote above from Edmond and Williams, all aspects of the learning community are guided and supported by the leaders; hence the link between instructional leadership and instruction.

Fourthly, the heads' instructional leadership roles mostly lie in their ability to motivate and inspire teachers with the end goal of impacting instructional practices (Quinn, 2002).

In a similar way, the study identified that the heads of schools that were able to use what the teachers produced as incentives, found it easy to motivate these teachers to do their work well without any urging from the leaders. Despite the fact that one of the heads thought that simply providing all the resources needed would motivate the teachers to work, this was later proved otherwise; he was simply able to say that there could be other reasons why the teachers might not be working, as they had the resources they required.

The principal's role in shaping the school's direction through the vision, mission and goals came through as a primary avenue of influencing the teachers' instructional work (Hallinger& Heck, 1998).

The heads of schools have to, first and foremost, determine the schools' central purpose and then communicate that purpose to all the members of the school community so that the whole staff has clear goals to follow (Hallinger, 2012).

In the study, it was established that the schools have mission statements that articulate their visions and goals, which then influence how the teachers do their work. From the mission statements drafted by the schools the departments then formulate their own departmental mission statements, which subsequently guide their operations and help the teachers to remain focused on their core business. Without the articulated mission statements, the school staff will not able know if they are making any progress. The direction the school is taking is made known through the accomplishment of the articulated vision, mission and goals.

> *It is also a fact that leadership responsibilities can also be enacted by people without formal leadership positions because leadership means influence which may be based on expertise or personal qualities, which cause one to gain liking or respect (*Rukanda *et al.*, 1997; Hallinger, 2012).

In the same vein, the study showed that the senior teachers in the vocational and technical departments, although they may not possess formal power, are more influential than their HODs whom they may see as having nothing to offer them as far as their subject areas are concerned. This is especially true when the HOD is leading subjects in which s/he is not specialised. The experienced teachers, in most cases, wish they were the HODs.

> *Proper supervision is informed by function and methods of the particular curriculum and as such, careful attention is needed in the construction of suitable supervision artefacts for the vocational and technical subjects (*Michelle, 2010).

As noted in the study, the function of vocational education is to prepare learners for the world of work. The methodology for imparting the skills is unique (the vocational pedagogy). It is therefore mandatory that the teachers be led and guided using the proper supervision instruments that make the subjects a success. The supervision rendered to teachers must allow the fulfilment of the subjects' functions, purpose and the methodology. The study discovered that the supervision instruments created were meant for all subjects and may not be suitable for the vocational and technical subjects, which are practical in nature.

5.5 Recommendations for further research, policy and practice

Based on the above findings, the study makes the following recommendations with a view of improving the instructional leadership practices that are performed in order to guide and support the teachers of vocational and technical subjects. The section also includes recommendations for future research.

5.5.1 Implications for policy and practice

Although the Zimbabwean government is making tremendous efforts to make sure the curriculum in the schools is receiving adequate guidance and support for its implementation, a great deal needs to be done as far as the training and preparation of the teachers for these subjects are concerned. The study makes it clear that there is a need to render the school graduates employable. Thus, the policy makers must ensure that the environments in which

the vocational and technical subjects are offered permit the acquisition of the required workplace skills. The teachers may well be given some support and guidance but this will not be helpful in hostile environments, which do not facilitate the acquisition of skills. From the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made as a possible means of improving the instructional leadership guidance practices.

Firstly, schools have to make an intentional effort to create time and provide resources for practical work rather than leaving the teachers to create their own time for extra lessons. The latter means that teachers end up using their break and lunch times as evidenced by the lesson, which was observed and this may not be possible for all the teachers. The teachers could also be given an opportunity to share their challenges and find solutions at forums such as seminars, workshops and staff meetings.

My data suggests a need to review the curriculum more regularly than is presently the case. The policy makers seem to have forgotten about improving or changing the vocational and technical education curricula since 2006.All the policy documents that guide the provision of vocational and technical education, including its guidance and support, were more than five years old. The newest circulars are those formulated in 2010 by the director. No curriculum can be relevant for all ages thus it is essential to review the curriculum frequently to improve its currency and relevance (Shiundu & Omulando, 1992) and train in-service teachers to make them aware of the demands of the new syllabuses.

Besides reviewing the policy circulars that guide the curriculum implementation there is also a need to devise proper channels of communication to ensure that the policy documents reach those responsible at the lowest or school levels. Curriculum implementation is mostly an interpretive process that requires carefully structured opportunities for teachers and other implementers to engage with as much of the relevant and original material on the policies as possible.

It is also essential, not only for the government but for all the stakeholders as well, to create a sufficient funding base to support the provision of technical and vocational subjects.

The state and other educational agencies must help teachers change and implement the subjects by deploying resources, as the schools cannot cope on their own.

Furthermore, some form of coordination between the two examination boards (HEXCO and ZIMSEC) and the ministry is required for the development of suitable assessment criteria for

these subjects. Such criteria should be useful for structuring and developing supervision opportunities and tools that suit the nature of vocational and technical education. For example, the trade testing exercises normally conducted by tertiary technical institutions provide examples of such a system for the skills-based subjects.

More effort needs to be directed at linking schools that offer vocational and technical education with key industries as part of the normal educational practice in this sector in order to link the vocational and technical curriculum to the labour market needs of the country.

There is a need to improve communication around new policies for vocational and technical education in particular, so that practitioners are made aware of the most recent demands. This is important to avoid uneven patterns of implementation that are often based on varied interpretations and sometimes misinterpretations.

There is also a need to restructure the administration roles and responsibilities of the leaders to allow the formal and the informal leaders to focus more on instructional leadership.

5.5.2 Recommendations for further research

Specifically, further research is required to address the following issues mentioned below that could not be addressed by the present study.

This study was based on data generated from ten schools in one district of the country and thus cannot be considered representative of the situation in the entire country. Further research is needed on other districts to ascertain if the findings are comparable.

The study uncovered another troubling issue on the possible marginalisation of vocational and technical subjects within the regular secondary school (curriculum). There is consequently, a need to undertake further research into the variety of possible alternatives for providing quality vocational and technical education in the country in ways that would mediate and contain the marginalisation of these subjects.

Further research is also recommended to investigate how best the teachers already working in the field can undergo training in order for them to acquire the vocational skills pedagogy, which was not part of their initial training in teachers' colleges. Owing to the introduction of the HEXCO subjects in secondary schools, subjects that were normally offered after four years of secondary education, there is a need to provide the teachers with intensive training on the content and pedagogy of the new subjects for their effective implementation.

5.6. Concluding remarks

The study sought to answer the following major research question: How are instructional leadership practices for vocational and technical subjects in Zimbabwe's Masvingo district constructed? Specifically, the study investigated who the key instructional leaders are, the artefacts that aid their supervision activities and how the instructional leaders enact the guidance and support activities for the teachers, in order to make their work easier. The instructional guidance practices characterise how instructional leaders support the teachers in the implementation of these marginalised subjects.

The findings suggest that the instructional leadership guidance and support given take different forms and vary in terms of the activities and how they are performed. The activities may be in the form of formulating policies to guide instruction, professional development activities and supervising instruction. All these instructional leadership activities are aimed at changing the behaviour of the teachers. By professionally developing the teachers they are able to perform their instructional activities effectively. While we may conclude that the teachers are being guided and supported, the practices are undertaken differently depending on the capacity of the leaders who mann the subjects. Capacity in this case refers to having the right qualifications to lead, give guidance and the ability to develop a favourable working environment by creating the vision, mission and goals that assist in building an acceptable school culture. The complex nature of the school environment cannot, however, be managed by one person but needs a team of dedicated visionary leaders. All personnel resources must be engaged in instructional activities reflecting the school's culture. This gives rise consequently to the use and adoption of the distributed leadership frame, where all stakeholders are involved in the leadership activities, leading where and when they are experts. This ideal, as established from the study, is sometimes hampered by the hierarchical nature of the leadership structure in the ministry and the traditional belief that those with formal leadership positions are the only ones who should be leaders.

The study results also indicated that the leadership activities performed by the DEO, EOs, heads of schools and the HODs are somewhat repetitive and overlapping in nature. They all supervise the teachers' work by observing lessons and inspecting exercise books with a few doing some motivational talks with the students and finally writing reports as expected of them by the policy directives. It is necessary to distribute leadership and responsibilities, thereby saving on time and resources expended by people who go into the schools to perform

the exact same roles. Certainly, the activities promote the effective implementation of the subjects but they can be distributed to different people to avoid duplication of roles. This situation may even de-motivate the teachers by having, for example, three people coming in to perform the same supervision exercise with them.

The policies directing the stakeholders in their operations require revision and should be disseminated to the people concerned for their use. Storing these documents in the offices of senior staff of the ministry renders them useless, as they will not be implemented correctly. They end up being good plans gathering dust on the shelves. Their agents must also support the policies, i.e. the textbooks, equipment and other resources required for their implementation. As pointed out by Cohen and Ball (1990) the policies should not be too ambitious, too demanding or imposing if they are to be successfully implemented. If the policies are similar to those described above, no resources will be available to support them leading to their non-implementation. These policies should also give room for discretion and not just dictate what might be inappropriate actions for all to follow.

The activities that are undertaken by the instructional leaders are for the benefit of the learners. Effective leadership creates an atmosphere conducive to learning, motivates the staff and encourages their active participation in the educational affairs of the school, thereby positively influencing student learning. A link therefore exists between leadership and instruction. All the support and guidance offered is intended for the improvement of instruction. Consequently, there is a need to appoint properly qualified leaders or to provide orientation courses to those already in leadership positions so that they engage in distributed leadership in order to utilise the available expertise and resources.

The study also established that, although the instructional leaders attempt to provide the needed guidance and support, they face a number of challenges ranging from a shortage of resources to negative attitudes towards the subjects. Parents and students need to be educated about the importance and utilitarian value of these vocational and technical subjects in order for them to accept these subjects and support their implementation in schools. All the stakeholders should work together for the successful implementation of these subjects in schools for the benefit of both the country and individuals. Vocational and technical subjects are essential in a country such as Zimbabwe therefore they must be inculcated with care and professionalism. The study has revealed to the researcher that instructional guidance is provided to the teachers of vocational and technical subjects but not in a unique and distinct

manner, as is the nature of these subjects. The study was rewarding and it is hoped that this study has contributed something beneficial to all instructional leaders who wish to see vocational education succeed.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A1

Interview Guide for Personal Interviews with Principals/Heads of schools.

INTRODUCTION

I am interested in establishing how you, as a formal positional leader, give instructional guidance to vocational and technical subject teachers in order to facilitate effective teaching and learning. I will be asking a series of questions to help me understand more about your instructional guidance practices.

I wish to tape-record our conversation in order to have an accurate transcription of the discussion. You will be given a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy.

Questions

1. Briefly tell me about your school. Describe its enrolment, the curriculum and teacher establishment and how the school is organised. [Listen and probe for: who the leaders are for vocational and technical subjects.]

2.Tell me about your own teaching experience. That is, how long you have been in the profession, how many years as a teacher, teaching what subject, how many years as a leader etc.[Listen for; whether one is a vocational subject specialist.]

3. Which vocational and technical subjects do you offer at the school and who are the people responsible for their instructional leadership? [Probe for: How the leaders were chosen to lead these subjects and what the expectations are for them in playing that leadership role]

4. In your view, what can be done to improve the status and teaching of vocational and technical subjects?

5. What policies are in place to guide the provision of these vocational subjects? What do they stipulate and where do these policies come from? [Listen for: role of district, province and national government.]

6. How do you know about these policies and any new ones? How do teachers know about the demands of these policies for them? [Listen for communication strategies, the lines of communication and professional development opportunities for teachers.]

7. As the Head of the school, what exactly do you do to support and supervise the teaching and learning of the vocational and technical subjects? [Listen for and probe: Specific activities that they do, who the people who assist are and how they assist. Who does what and how they collaborate if at all they do]

8. Give two or more specific examples of some of the activities that you have engaged in this year already. [Listen and probe for details: what is done, by whom, how often, with what resources and artefacts and how it is received by the teachers.]

9. How do you work with your teachers to ensure their professional development? [Listen for specific activities, how they are done, by whom and/or with whom]

10. What impact do your professional development strategies have on the teachers and students improvement? [Probe for: how do you know that they have this impact on the teachers? How do you know this has an impact on the students? [Listen to hear: if any assessments or monitoring data is collected and used to guide instructional leadership activities]

11. What challenges are faced by the vocational and technical subject teachers? [Listen to hear: how the leaders know about these challenges e.g. opportunities for meetings about instruction.]

12. In your opinion, what can be done to alleviate these challenges? [Listen for: instructional guidance and support strategies. Probe for: solutions that have been tried at the school or in the district.]

13. Who sources the instructional materials for the practical subjects and how do teachers know how to use the purchased materials for their subjects? [Listen for: the role of instructional leaders. Probe for: role of instructional leaders in providing guidance, how they do it and how often.]

14. Are there any other issues about your leadership of vocational subjects that we have not touched on that you would like me to know about?

I thank you for your time and the valuable information you have provided.

APPENDIX A2

Interview guide for Personal Interviews with the Heads of Departments (HODs)

Introduction

I am interested in establishing how you, as a departmental leader, give instructional guidance to vocational and technical subject teachers in order to facilitate effective teaching and learning. I will be asking a series of questions to help me understand more about your instructional guidance practices as an HOD.

I wish to tape-record our conversation in order to have an accurate transcription of the discussion. You will be given a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy.

Questions

1. Tell me a bit about yourself. Your qualifications, experience and the subjects you teach or have taught?
2. How were you appointed to the post of HOD and what are your specific duties?
3. Let us talk about the subjects under your leadership. Which ones are they and why these subjects?
4. How many teachers work under your leadership in the department?
5. Tell me a bit about how you do your work at this school. What activities do you do specifically as an H.O.D. (Take note of various activities and how often they are done, with who and how.)
6. Let us talk about how exactly you do each of the activities you have described. (Probe for details on how it is done, why and with what consequences.)
7. Coming to your supervisors, tell me who they are and what assistance do you get from them? [Listen and probe for: Names of key role players and how they assist. Probe further for what each one of the identified persons exactly does and how that is helpful to the teaching and learning of vocational and technical subjects. Probe further for those supervisors left out: how they are found helpful or not to the teaching of the vocational and technical subjects at school. Why or why not and also ask for specific examples to illustrate what they do and how it is helpful or not.]

8. Let us go back to your own work as a leader at the school, what are some of the things you do to support your teachers? [Probe for: What is exactly done, how they do it, with whom, how often and with what results? Listen also for the tools that they rely on to do the job.]

9. Are there policies that guide you in the work of assisting teachers and learners in these subjects? Tell me about these policies and how they assist you in your job.

10. How do the teachers perceive these policies? [Listen and probe for: do they feel supported by the policies? Do they adhere to the policies? How the H.O.D. knows it?]

11. There is a view that sharing ideas and exchanging views help teachers to grow professionally. What do you think? [Probe for why.]

12. How do teachers share ideas and exchange views in the department at this school? [Listen and probe for: who leads the sessions and how often they are conducted.]

13. What tools and/or documents do you rely on for supervising your teachers? [Listen for: evaluation instruments, guidelines, policies and meetings. Probe for: how each tool is used, by whom and how it is received by the teachers?]

14. Do you have the opportunity to visit the teachers in their classrooms? (Probe for number of visits per term, for what purposes and with what impact. Probe further for a specific example of what happened in a recent visit. Listen for the discussion topics generated and follow up mechanisms that are in place and whether the conversions are recorded and if so ask for the documents.]

15. In summary what would you say are the supervision strategies that you use to ensure successful implementation of vocational education programs at the school?

16. What problems do teachers face with the teaching and learning of vocational subjects at this school? How do you know these problems?

17. Looking at each problem that you mentioned, let us talk about how you assist the teachers with these problems specifically.

18. In closing, are there any other issues about your leadership of vocational subjects at this school that you want to bring to my attention and to be discussed?

Thank you very much for your time and the information you have provided.

APPENDIXA3

Interview Guide for Personal Interviews with the District Education Officer (DEO) and Education Officer (EO)

Introduction

I am interested in how you, as a district leader, give instructional guidance to vocational and technical subjects teachers in order to facilitate effective teaching and learning. I will be asking you a series of questions to help me understand more about your instructional guidance practices.

I wish to tape-record our conversation in order to have an accurate transcription of the discussion. You will be given a copy of the transcript to check for accuracy.

QUESTIONS

1. Tell me about your professional history. That is how long you have been in the education system and the different roles that you played. How you were appointed to your present post. [Listen for: are you a vocational subject specialist?]

2. Briefly tell me about your district, the number of secondary schools in the district and teacher establishment and its organisational structure and the schools that offer vocational subjects. [Listen for and probe for: who the leaders for vocational and technical subjects are and other teacher leaders]

3. What is your role as a District Education Officer DEO? [Listen and probe for: how do you assist schools that offer vocational education specifically, what activities are led from the district? What resources are provided, by whom and how?]

4. What policies guide your operations and those of the schools in implementing the vocational and technical subjects? [Listen for: where the policies come from? How they are communicated to schools and districts? How are they implemented and monitored etc. Probe for: Do you see these policies being used to improve the teaching and learning of vocational subjects? How do you know? Listen for tools and artefacts that are used to collect data and how they are used to generate this data e.g. meetings to discuss findings if at all they are held.]

5. What are some of the challenges that are faced by the schools in their efforts to vocationalise their curricula? How do you know about these challenges?

6. How does your office assist in resolving some of the problems? Let us take each of the problems you have mentioned, what leadership activities do you engage in to assist the schools in dealing with problem X? What about problem Y? [Listen for: what the district does, how, with what resources and how often]

7. In your position, do you have the opportunity to provide direct assistance for the implementation of vocational and technical subjects to the schools? Tell me about that assistance. [Probe: what do you do, why, how often and with what results?]

8. Are there any other activities or issues regarding your leadership of the technical and vocational subjects specifically that we have not discussed that you want me to know about?

Thank you very much for your time and for providing valuable information on the teaching and learning of vocational subjects in this district.

APPENDIX A4

Interview Guide for Focus Group discussion with vocational subjects' teacher

Questions

1. Let us briefly talk about your professional history. [Listen for the training that was received, in what subjects and for how long one has been teaching and what subjects are being taught or were taught?]

2. Tell me about the people who supervise your work and how often thatis done? [Listen for key instructional leaders, tools used for supervision, resources provided]

3. What assistance do you get from the supervision that is rendered [Listen for impact of the supervision and tools used]

4. What policies guide your teaching of the vocational and technical subjects in the school? How are the policies communicated to you and how do they assist you in your job? [Listen for: communication channels, do teachers feel supported and do they adhere to the policies?]

5. Coming to your work as a practical subject teacher, what strategies do you use in your teaching? What impact do these strategies have on students' learning and how do you come to know the impact? [Listen for: how the lessons are delivered. Probe for: artefacts used.]

6. What are some of the challenges that you face in the execution of your work? [Probe for: What solutions can be given for challenge X and challenge Y, etc.]

7. Is there anything about your work that we have not discussed that you want to bring to my attention?

Thank you for your time and the valuable information you have provided.

APPENDIX B1 APPLICATION FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Plot 52a Clipsham Park

P. O. Box 857

Masvingo.

03 February 2014

The Provincial Education Director

Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education,

P.O. Box 89,

Masvingo.

RE: **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH**

Dear Madam.

My name is Mandiudza Leona and I am presently studying for a PhD in Instructional leadership with the University of the Free State. As part of my studies, I am required to conduct research on an aspect of interest in Instructional Leadership. My research involves studying the Instructional Guidance Practices in the Vocational Subjects. The title of my study is: **Instructional Guidance for Marginalised Subjects in Zimbabwe: A case study of the vocational and technical subjects in the Masvingo district.**

The aim of the study is to explore the Instructional Guidance practices of vocational leaders in secondary schools of Masvingo District. The study will focus on only ten selected secondary schools which offer vocational subjects. The study involves interviewing the Heads of Schools, Heads of Departments for vocational education, the teachers of the subjects and the provincial and district officials responsible for the subjects. I also intend to observe the Heads, Heads of Departments and teachers doing their work of leadership at the school level. The interviews will not be longer than one hour at a time.

It is hoped that the study will make meaningful contributions to the improvement of instruction of vocational subjects and provide teachers and policy makers with a clear picture of how the subjects can be organised and supported for their effective teaching and learning. The results will be shared with the schools, the district and provincial personnel.

I hereby apply for permission to do the research in your district. I undertake not to interrupt the normal schedule of the schools while conducting my observations and interviews. I will work within the guidance and permission of the teachers and principals or Heads of the schools. Participation will be voluntary, and the teachers and principals have the right to withdraw from the study at any time should they wish to, without any penalty to them in any way.

My contact details and those of my supervisor are provided in case you need further clarification on the study or wish to make any suggestions about the study. Attached is a letter of support from my supervisor.

Yours faithfully   Supervisor:

Mandiudza Leona (Mrs)   Professor: Loyiso Jita

Cell: 0774 034 637.   Cell: 0514017522.

APPENDIX B2: LETTER FOR THE HEADS OF SCHOOLS.

Clipsham ParkPlot 52A

P.O Box 857

Masvingo

03 February 2014

Dear Participant.

RE: REQUEST TO BE A PARTICIPANT IN A STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES FOR VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS IN MASVINGO DISTRICT- ZIMBABWE.

My name is Mrs Mandiudza Leona and I am currently studying for a PhD degree in Instructional Leadership with the University of the Free State. As part of my studies I am required to conduct research on an aspect of interest in Instructional Leadership. My research involves studying the Instructional Guidance Practices in the vocational and technical subjects. The title of my study is: **Instructional Guidance for Marginalised Subjects in Zimbabwe: A case study of the Vocational and Technical Subjects in Masvingo District.**

The aim of the study is to explore the Instructional Guidance practices of vocational leaders in Zimbabwe's Masvingo district schools, with the view to enhance the teaching and learning of these subjects. The study will focus on only ten selected secondary schools in Masvingo district and it involves interviewing the Heads or Principals of the chosen schools, Heads of Departments and teachers of vocational subjects. Leaders at district and provincial levels, responsible for vocational education will also be interviewed. I also intend to observe the instructional leaders' activities especially meetings and lessons at school level. The interviews will not be longer than an hour at a time.

I hereby invite you to be a participant in this study. I believe that, being the Head of a school which offers vocational education, you have valuable insights to make to this study. The information you provide will be treated in strict confidence and will be used for research purposes only. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your participation at any time should you wish to do so.

It is hoped that the study will make an important contribution to the enhancement of the teaching of vocational subjects. It will provide Vocational education Instructional Leaders and policy makers with a view on how vocational education is supported and led in the schools and district. The results will be shared with the district officials and the schools. No real names of people or schools will be revealed in the reports of the study but only pseudonyms or false names will be used.

I undertake not to interrupt the normal schedule of the schools when conducting my observations and interviews. Each interview session will not be longer than one hour.

 My contact details and those of my supervisor are provided in case you might need further clarification on the study or wish to make suggestions about the study. You may keep this letter for your information and records but kindly fill in the attached Consent form and return it to me.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and cooperation in this study.

Yours faithfully

Leona Mandiudza (Mrs)   Supervisor: Professor L.C. Jita

Cell:+263 774034637.   Email: lmandiudza@gmail.com   Email: jitalc@ufs.ac.za

APPENDIX B3.LETTER FOR THE EDUCATION OFFICERS

Clipsham ParkPlot 52A

P.O Box 857

Masvingo

03 February 2014

Dear Participant.

RE: REQUEST TO BE A PARTICIPANT IN A STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES FOR VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS IN MASVINGO DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE.

My name is Mrs Mandiudza Leona and I am currently studying for a PHD degree in Instructional Leadership with the University of Free State. As part of my studies I am required to conduct research on an aspect of interest in Instructional Leadership. My research involves studying the Instructional Guidance Practices in the vocational subjects. The title of my study is: **Instructional Guidance for Marginalised Subjects in Zimbabwe: A case study of the Vocational and Technical Subjects in Masvingo District.**

The aim of the study is to explore the Instructional Leadership activities and practices that are in place for the vocational subjects in Zimbabwe's Masvingo district schools, with the view to enhance the teaching and learning of these subjects. The study will focus on secondary schools in Masvingo district and it involves interviewing the Heads or Principals of all chosen schools, Heads of Departments and teachers of vocational subjects. Leaders at district and provincial levels, responsible for vocational education will also be interviewed. I also intend to observe the instructional leaders' activities especially meetings and lessons. The interviews will not last for more than an hour.

I hereby invite you to be a participant in this study. I believe that, being a supervisor of the schools which offer vocational education, you have valuable insights to make to this study. The information you provide will be treated in strict confidence and will be used for research purposes only. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your participation at any time should you wish to do so.

It is hoped that the study will make an important contribution to the enhancement of the teaching of vocational subjects. It will provide Vocational education Instructional Leaders and policy makers with a view on how vocational education is supported and led in the schools and district. The results will be shared with the district officials and the schools. No real names of people or schools will be revealed in the reports of the study but only pseudonyms or false names will be used.

I undertake not to interrupt the normal schedule of the schools when conducting my observation and interviews. Each interview session will not be longer than one hour.

 My contact details and those of my supervisor are provided in case you might need further clarification on the study or wish to make suggestions about the study. You may keep this letter for your information and records but kindly fill in the attached Consent form and return it to me.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and cooperation in this study.

Yours faithfully   Supervisor

Leona Mandiudza   Professor L.C Jita

0774 034 637   051401722

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APPENDIX: B4. INVITATION LETTER FOR TEACHERS

Clipsham Park Plot 52A

P.O Box 857

Masvingo

03 February 2014

Dear Participant.

RE: REQUEST TO BE A PARTICIPANT IN A STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES FOR VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS IN MASVINGO DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE.

My name is Mrs Mandiudza Leona and I am currently studying for a PhD degree in Instructional Leadership with the University of Free State. As part of my studies I am required to conduct research on an aspect of interest in Instructional Leadership. My research involves studying the Instructional Guidance practices in the vocational subjects. The title of my study is: **Instructional Guidance for Marginalised Subjects in Zimbabwe: A case study of the Vocational and Technical   Subjects in Masvingo District.**

The aim of the study is to explore the Instructional Guidance practices of vocational leaders in Zimbabwe's Masvingo district schools, with the view to enhance the teaching and learning of these subjects. The study will focus on secondary schools in Masvingo district and it involves interviewing the Heads or Principals of all chosen schools, Heads of Departments and teachers of vocational subjects. Leaders at district and provincial levels, responsible for vocational education will also be interviewed. I also intend to observe the instructional leaders' activities especially meetings and lessons. The interviews will not last for more than an hour.

I hereby invite you to be a participant in this study. I believe that, being a teacher in a school which offers vocational education, you have   valuable insights to make to this study. The information you provide will be treated in strict confidence and will be used for research purposes only. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your participation at any time should you wish to do so.

It is hoped that the study will make an important contribution to the enhancement of the teaching of vocational subjects. It will provide Vocational education Instructional Leaders, policy makers and implementers with a view on how vocational education is supported and led in the schools and district. The results will be shared with the district officials and the schools. No real names of people or schools will be revealed in the reports of the study but only pseudonyms or false names will be used.

I undertake not to interrupt the normal schedule of the schools when conducting my observation and interviews. Each interview session will not be longer than an hour.

My contact details and those of my supervisor are provided in case you might need further clarification on the study or wish to make suggestions about the study. You may keep this letter for your information and records but kindly fill in the attached Consent form and return it to me.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and cooperation in this study.

Yours faithfully   Supervisor:

Leona Mandiudza   Professor L.C Jita

0774 034 637   05140172

lmandiudza@gmail.com   jitalc@ufs.ac.za

APPENDIX B5. .LETTER FOR THE HODs .

Clipsham Park Plot 52A

P.O Box 857

Masvingo

03 February 2014

Dear Participant.

RE: REQUEST TO BE A PARTICIPANT IN A STUDY OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP ACTIVITIES FOR VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS IN MASVINGO DISTRICT, ZIMBABWE.

My name is Mrs Mandiudza Leona and I am currently studying for a PhD degree in Instructional Leadership with the University of Free State. As part of my studies I am required to conduct research on an aspect of interest in Instructional Leadership. My research involves studying the Instructional Guidance Practices in the vocational subjects. The title of my study is: **Instructional Guidance for Marginalised Subjects in Zimbabwe: A case study of the Vocational and Technical Subjects in Masvingo District.**

The aim of the study is to explore the Instructional Guidance practices that are in place for the vocational subjects in Zimbabwe's Masvingo district schools, with the view to enhance the teaching and learning of these subjects. The study will focus on secondary schools in Masvingo district and it involves interviewing the Heads or Principals of all chosen schools, Heads of Departments and teachers of vocational subjects. Leaders at district and provincial levels, responsible for vocational education will also be interviewed. I also intend to observe the instructional leaders' activities especially meetings and lessons. The interviews will not last for more than an hour.

I hereby invite you to be a participant in this study. I believe that, being a Head of Department in a school which offers vocational education, you have valuable insights to make to this study. The information you provide will be treated in strict confidence and will be used for research purposes only. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your participation at any time should you wish to do so.It is hoped that the study will make an important contribution to the enhancement of the teaching of vocational subjects. It will provide Vocational education Instructional Leaders and policy makers with a view on how vocational education is supported and led in the schools and district. The results will be shared with the district officials and the schools. No real names of people or schools will be revealed in the reports of the study but only pseudonyms or false names will be used

I undertake not to interrupt the normal schedule of the schools when conducting my observation and interviews. Each interview session will not be longer than an hour.

My contact details and those of my supervisor are provided in case you might need further clarification on the study or wish to make suggestions about the study. You may keep this letter for your information and records but kindly fill in the attached Consent form and return it to me.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and cooperation in this study.

Yours faithfully   Supervisor

Leona Mandiudza   Professor L.C. Jita

0774 034 637   051401722

lmandiudza@gmail.com   jitalc@ufs.ac.za

APPENDIX B6

all communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Primary and Secondary
Education
  Telephone: 732006
Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"
Fax:794505

REFERENCE: C/426/3

Ministry of Primary and
Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
HARARE

23 January 2014

Mrs. Leona Mandiudza
P.O. Box 857
MASVINGO

Re: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH AT SELECTED
        SCHOOLS IN MASVINGO DISTRICT: MASVINGO PROVINCE

Reference is made to your application to carry out research at selected
schools in Gutu District, Masvingo on the title:

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDANCE FOR MARGINALISED SUBJECTS IN ZIMBABWE: A CASE STUDY OF THE VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS IN THE MASVINGO DISTRICT

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the
Provincial Education Director Masvingo who is responsible for the schools
which you want to involve in your research.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary
for Education, Sport, Arts and Culture.

Z.M. Chitiga
Acting Director: Policy, Planning, Research and Development
For: SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

APPENDIX B7
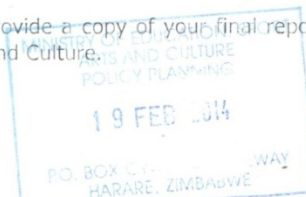
CONSENT FORM.

I hereby state that I consent to participate in the research study that is being conducted by LEONA MANDIUDZA of the University of the Free State.

I understand the nature and purpose of the study. I also understand that I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time and that the information I give will be confidential and will not be disclosed for any other purposes other than the research for the present study.

I therefore give my consent to participate in the study.

NAME: _____ DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____

Yours faithfully   Supervisor

Leona Mandiudza   Professor L.C Jita

APPENDIX C1:MINISTRY LESSON OBSERVATION FORM

Ref/..

EC No..

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE

Distribution

       H/O

       P/O

       Head

       Teacher

Section A: PERSONAL DETAILS

....   EC No...

Qualifications   a) Academic...

                         b) Professional...

Type of Appointment: ....

Date joined service: ....

Teaching Experience: ....

Name of School: ....

Registration No:0014   DPT/STN...

Responsible Authority   .... Reg No...................................

Region................................. District...

District............................. Date last assessed..

Date of current assessment ....

Purpose of Assessments

....
....

Subject/ Lesson Observed ....

SECTION B: TEACHING ASSIGNMENT AND RESPONSIBILITIES

    i.   Teaching assignment ....
    ii.   Post of special responsibility..
    iii. Co-Curricular responsibility..
    iv. Comment on the three above:
           ....
           ....
           ....

SECTION C: PROFESSIONAL QUALITIES AND COMPETENCE
Lesson
Introduction..
....
....
Development...
....
....
Conclusion...
....
....
Use of media..
Comment..
....
....
....

Teacher's records
Scheme-cum-plan ....

Register ....

Individual record ....

Test record book ....

Extension and remediation ....

Asset record ....

Other ....

Comment...

....

....

<u>Children's Written Work</u>

Subject	Work given	Work Expected	Variance

Comment...

....

Classroom Appearance

....

....

<u>SECTION D: PROFESSIONAL GROWTH</u>

Participation in curriculum development and examinations

....

....

Carrying out Action Research and Educational Survey ....

....

Involvement in school development projects ....

....

Improvement of professional and academic qualifications ....

....

Summary and Recommendations

....

....

....

....

....

....

Signature .... Date ....

Reporting Officer ....

Designation ....

Teacher Acknowledgement

Name .... Signature .... Date ....

APPENDIX C2: DEPARTMENTAL MEETING MINUTES.

DEPARTMENDAL MEETING

Date: 08 05 15
Venue: Room
Members Present: ████████████

Agenda: 1. Fund Raising
2. Exam Papers
3. Scheming
4. Front Flowerbeds

The meeting started with a word of
prayer from ████████████

1. Fundraising
The HOD is going to present a fundraising
proposal to the Head on monday.
Some of the proposed ways of fundraising were
a) Sandwiches
b) cake slices
c) wafle
d) hot dogs.
It was also agreed that the department will
request for the following equipment for
use in the fundraising project.
a) sandwichemaker
b) cake tins
c) waflemaker.
It was proposed that the bakery teachers will
prepare the food with the help of forms
3 & 4 during their off session time.
The teachers in session will help in the selling

APPENDIX C2 Continued

of prepared food at break time.

Exam Papers
The HOD reminded the members to submit their mid-year exam papers before 4pm.

Scheming
The HOD thanked all the members of the department for submitting their schemes on the agreed date.

Front flowerbeds
The HOD will request for the utilisation of the front flower beds (Front of the HE block) for a herbal garden & flowers.

Closing prayer @ @m

APPENDIX C 3: SCHOOL DEPERTMENTAL POLICY

BERE SECONDARY SCHOOL

DEPARTMENTAL POLICY FASHION AND FABRICS

1. Every teacher in the department should use the following details for scheme –cum lesson

Week Ending	Topic	Content	Objectives	Ref	Aids	Method	Strategies	Gen Com	Ind. Com

2. **Record of work:**
   Teachers to keep a record of marks for each test, exercise and assignment.

3. **Volume of work:**
   One exercise per fortnight
   One test per month
   One practical test per term
   One assignment per fortnight

4. **School Syllabus:**
   Complete school syllabus
   (i)   Arrange according to skills
   (ii)   All topics to be covered
   (iii) School syllabus to be updated annually with dates inserted.
5. Teachers to be punctual all the time
6. Teachers to have a clear record of the distribution of the given text books if not they are held responsible for any textbooks.
7. Teachers to be responsible for textbooks issued out of them and sign for them.
8. All textbooks issued out to pupils must be covered . Anyone found with an uncovered textbook, the book will be taken away from her
9. All issued out textbooks to be returned in the order they were when issued out, if not, pupils are to buy new ones.
10. At least two or three departmental meetings per term.
11. Exercise books to be covered and stencil written.
12. Pupils to bring their text books during lessons and any lost book to be replaced immediately.
13. Tapemeasures, shears, bobbins and bobbin cases to be counted after each lesson.Each class to be held responsible for any lost item during lesson.
14. Pupils to provide their pins and needles.
15. All work given to pupils to be marked including corrections.

APPENDIX C4 SCHOOL LESSON OBSERVATION FORM
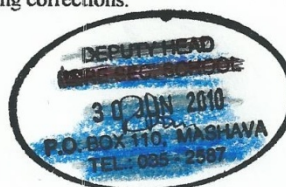
LESSON PRESENTATION REPORT

NAME OF TEACHER: ………………………………....... E.C NO: ………………….......... QUALIFICATION: ……………………..……….

SUBJECT: ……………………………………………… CLASS: ……………………………………….

TOPIC: …………………………………………………………………………………….........................

A. Scheming and planning:

B. Lesson Presentation:

C. Teacher's Personal Qualities:

D. General Comments and Recommendations:

Supervisor: ………………………………………………… Date: ………………………………

Teacher: ………………………………………………… Date: ………………………………

APPENDIX C5: DIRECTOR'S CIRCULAR

DIRECTOR'S CIRCULAR NO. 6 OF 2006

<u>DISTRIBUTION</u>
- Directors: Head Office
- Provincial Education Directors
- District Education Officers
- Heads of all Primary Schools
- Heads of all Secondary Schools
- Zimbabwe Teachers' Association: Chief Executive Officer
- National Association of Primary School Heads: Chairperson
- National Association of Secondary School Heads: Chairperson

<u>GUIDELINES ON WEEKLY WORK COVERAGE IN PRIMARY AND SECONDARY
SCHOOLS</u>

1.O Preamble
Inspection reports from all over the country do indicate that generally, the amount of written work administered by teachers to their classes is inadequate. The purpose of this circular is to lay out minimum work expectations in various subject areas. Other class activities are also covered.

It is important to note that this circular gives minimum expectations that should be exceeded whenever it is found that the situation on the ground warrants increased pupil activity.

2.0 SCHEMING AND DELIVERY OF LESSONS
2.1 All schemes of work should be drawn up in advance preferably before the beginning of each term.
2.2 Teachers must use a variety of teaching aids in order to make their lessons more vivid and exciting. They should prepare and use charts, pictures, objects within their schools' environment, literature from periodicals, magazines, newspapers and other textbooks, drama, songs and external resource persons must be made use of.
2.3 when necessary, educational trips must be organised to relevant subject situations like the Great Zimbabwe, local ancient ruins and cave paintings, plantations and other big industries like ZISCO steel etc
2.4 Teachers are reminded that all written work by pupils must be supervised. Such work include:
- All class exercise done
- All notes given to pupils by the teacher
- All notes made by the pupils themselves
- All tests and assignments
- All diagrams, maps and projects.

3.0 PRIMARY SCHOOLS MINIMUM WORK SPECIFICATIONS

3.1 ENGLISH	-	Written work daily
	-	composition once a week
	-	spelling once a week
	-	comprehension three times a week
	-	reading daily
	-	oral three times a week
3.2 MATHS	-	written work daily
	-	oral daily
	-	mental three times a week
3.3 SHONA	-	Written work daily
	-	composition once a week
	-	spelling once a week
	-	comprehension three times a week
	-	reading daily
	-	oral three times a week
3.4 SOCIAL STUDIES		
	-	oral lessons three times a week
	-	written work twice a week
3.5 SCIENCE ENVIRONMENTAL		
	-	oral and experiments three times a week
	-	written work twice a week

Page 1of 3

APEENDIX C 5 Continued

238

3.6 RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION
- theory twice a week
- practical twice a week

3.7 ART
- practical twice a week

3.8 MUSIC
- theory once per week
- practical once a week

3.9 PHYSICAL EDUCATION
- practical once a week

3.120 H.I.V/AIDS EDUCATION
- oral once a week

4.0 SECONDARY SCHOOLS MINIMUM WORK SPECIFICATIONS
4.1 ENGLISH LAGUAGE and LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

English Language F1-4:
- one free/guided composition every two weeks
- one summary exercise every two weeks alternating with compositions
- two language usage exercise every week
- two comprehension exercises every week.
- one full test 1 the middle of each term.

4.2 SHONA/NDEBELE
- one essay per fortnight   - (literature topics inclusive)
- short exercises   - grammar 1 per week
  - comprehension 1 per week
- formal tests   - at least two per term

4.3 SCIENCE -TEACHING REQUIREMENTS
In teaching science the stress is on discovery through practical work which should be conducted by the pupils whenever possible. For this reason, science lessons should be time tabled as double periods to allow the pupils time to carry out the Practicals.

ASSIGNMENTS:ZJC & O' LEVEL
One written exercise and a practical per week - to be marked and recorded.
- at least at the end of each chapter.
A' Level   1practical exercise per week (marked and recorded)
  1 test after covering each chapter (examination type of questions to be set)

4.4 MATHEMATICS
- One written exercise daily which is marked.
- One test per fortnight
- Pupils may be allowed to mark some of their daily exercise (at most two per week) under the teacher's supervision. The teacher should then put the totals in red to acknowledge supervision.
- Pupils are expected to do some written work during the lessons which the teacher should mark while the lessons is in progress. The recommended time for class work is 10 -15 minutes.
- All test marks should be recorded. Teachers are urged to test pupils on work covered in previous terms in addition to test per topic.

4.5 HISTORY: ZJC & O' LEVEL
- one objective type of written work per week.
- one essay per every two weeks
'A' level : one essay per week.

4.6 GEOGRAPHY ZJC & O LEVEL.
- one short exercise per week.
- one major written exercise per fortnight .
- 'A' Level one essay to be written under examination conditions per week.

4.7 TECHNICAL SUBJECTS (TECH - VOC SUBJECTS)
(a) ZJC & 'O' LEVEL (BUILDING STUDIES, WOODWORK AND METAL WORK)
- one exercise two per week .
- two test per term (theory)
- 2 projects per term.

APPENDIX C 5 Continued

- 2 Practicals per term.
(b) TECHNICAL GRAPHICS ZJC AND 'O' LEVEL
- two exercise per week.
- two test per term.
- one designed project per term.
(c) T.G 'A' LEVEL (GEOMETRICAL AND MECHANICAL DRAWING)
- three assignment per week.
- two test per term.
4.8 HOME ECONOMICS
(a) ZJC AND 'O' LEVEL FASHION AND FABRICS, FOOD AND NUTRITION, H/MANAGEMENT
- one short exercise per two weeks.
- one test per month.
- one practical project per term
- one practical per term.
(b) A' LEVEL (DRESS AND TILE, ARTS AND DESIGN, FOOD SCIENCE)
- one assignment per week.
- two test per term.
- 4-5 practical test per term.
4.9 COMMERCIAL SUBJECTS ZJC & 'O' LEVEL
Two exercises to be given per week as follows:
- one class work exercise
- 1 class work / homework exercise

- one essay per fortnight.
- one test per month or after a topic.
In Accounts, one exercise per lesson, which should be marked by the teacher and pupils.
4.10 AGRICULTUER: ZJC &'O' LEVEL
- one exercise per two weeks.
- one essay per two weeks
- two practical test per term
4.11 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: ZJC &'O' LEVEL
- one short essay per week.
- one essay per two weeks.
- context question per other fortnight.
- two other test per term.
'A' LEVEL DIVINITY
- one assignment per week.
- one essay per two weeks.
- three test per term.
- one research per term.

L.C. Bowora
Director : Quality Assurance
For: SECRITARY FOR EDUCATION, SPORTS AND CULTURE
/mm.coverage.quad

APPENDIX C 6

2 HIGH SCHOOL

LESSON OBSERVATION REPORT

Name of Teacher---EC NO----------------------------------

Subject--Class----------------------------------

Date--- Time----------------------------------

1. Lesson Introduction:---

----

2. Topic---

----

3. LESSON ACTIVITIES:--

----

4. USE OF TEACHING/LEARNING AIDS

----

5. SUBJECT MASTERY

APPENDIX C 7

PRACTICALS (TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL) DEPARTMENT

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide high quality education through academic excellence, imparting technical and vocational skills and cultivating appreciation of self reliance and resourcefulness.

Vision

To be the best providers of highly skilled, resourceful and self reliant students in Masvingo Province

Values

-Passion
-Diligence
-Honest
-Teamwork
-Respect
-Time
-Good public relations

DEPARTMENTAL MISSION STATEMENT.

APPENDIX C8: PAPER PRESENTED AT THE EO's WORKSHOP WITH HoDs

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SPORT, ARTS AND CULTURE:

MASVINGO PROVINCE

District Heads of Department Workshops by Provincial Inspectors

Title: DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS OF HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS IN A SECONDARY SCHOOL

Rationale: This paper is meant to make the HODs aware of their duties and functions with the intention of bringing effective and efficient administration of teaching and learning activities in a school situation.

DEFINTION OF TERMS

A. DEPARTMENT
   i. A section of a large organisation dealing with a specific area of activity.
   ii. Any of the units, each with specialised function, into which business, shop or organisation is divided

B. DUTY
   i. A moral or legal obligation
   ii. A task required as one's job.
   iii. A task that must be done, action required from a particular person

C. FUNCTION
   i. A purpose or natural activity of a person or thing
   ii. A natural or usual duty of a person or purpose of a thing

DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS

1.0 EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

1.1 Draw up school syllabi for the 3 levels (ZJC, O and A) covering all topics in the Ministry Syllabi

1.2 Design, institute and maintain functional departmental syllabi

1.3 Convene and chair department meetings

1.4 Formulate and distribute departmental policies

APPENDIX C8 Continued
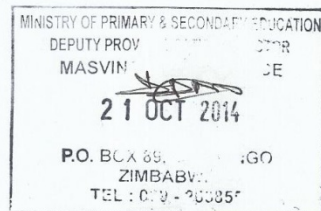
1.5 Construct and maintain a function departmental file (which should be constantly updated)

2.0 SUPERVISORY DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS

2.1 Ensuring punctual and regular attendance for lessons by teachers

2.2 Ensuring members have schemed for lessons before the lessons are taught.

2.3 Observing teachers teaching

2.4 Inspecting pupils written work for compliance

2.5 Ensuring the implementation of policies from the ministry.

2.6 Moderating internal examinations.

3.0 RESOURCE IDENTIFICATION ALLOCATION DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS

3.1 identifying resource needs (textbooks, stationery e.t.c) for the department

3.2 Submitting department orders to Head through Deputy Head.

3.3 Distributing textbooks and equipment to members in the department.

3.4 Building departmental library and reference shelves.

3.5 Compiling, maintaining and updating Asset register.

3.6 Ensuring each member is issued with teaching file.

4.0 CLASS ALLOCATION

4.1 Allocating classes to teachers

4.2 Advising head on specifications of new members to the department

5.0 CURRICULUM INNOVATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

5.1 Introducing new subject variations e.g. HEXCO

5.2 Expanding subject areas e.g. Additional Maths, Literature in English, Extended Science and communication Skills

5.3 Identifying individual talent in pupils for specific areas.

5.4 Introducing and sustaining subject related clubs and entering into competitions at various levels from school to national level and/or beyond.

6.0 STAFF DEVELOPMENT

6.1 Organising school-based in service training workshops and meetings

6.2 Giving orientation to new teachers

6.3 Researching and advising teachers on career patterns and self-growth

MINISTRY OF PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION
DEPUTY PROV. EDUCATION DIRECTOR
MASVINGO PROV. OFFICE
2 1 OCT 2014
P.O. BOX 89, MASVINGO
ZIMBABWE
TEL : 039 - 263855

APPENDIX C9: SCHOOL B MISSION STATEMENT

.MISSION STATEMENT

``To develop students academically, morally and physically. To improve the 'O' Level pass rate and beat the national target, to instill discipline in pupils in and outside the school''.

SCHOOL VISION

``To be the leading provider of quality and relevant secondary education in Masvingo district by 2020''.

APPENDIX C9 Continued

t

CORE VALUES

- ➢ Transparency
- ➢ Accountability
- ➢ Hardworking
- ➢ Dedication
- ➢ Honesty
- ➢ Teamwork
- ➢ Professionalism
- ➢ Commitment
- ➢ Empathy

MOTTO

DISCIPLINE,

SUCCESS,

A SHARED VISION