

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES TO INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN INCLUSIVE SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF ZIMBABWE

BY

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DECLARATION

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

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E. MURESHERWA

28/06/2020

DATE

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my late brother Oncemore Muresherwa with whom I started the long and winding academic journey that he did not survive to finish.

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ABSTRACT

This study explored challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools as perceived and experienced by school heads in this instructional environment. It sought to provide answers to the central research question: *What are the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools and how does sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in such school settings?* Although many countries, including Zimbabwe, have embraced inclusive education, at least on paper, very little is known about the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools as perceived and experienced by school heads. However, such knowledge is believed to have implications on the success of inclusive reforms in secondary schools. My study which is framed on a qualitative research approach and informed by an interpretivist paradigm and the enactive sense-making theory sought to bridge this knowledge gap. Research participants consisted of 3 school heads drawn from 3 inclusive secondary schools in the Masvingo district of Zimbabwe. The schools were identified through nominations by the district on the basis of the extent to which they had embraced the inclusive framework ahead of other schools in the same district. A combination of semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation and document analysis research methods was employed to collect data. Data were presented and analysed case by case, using a storied approach. The key finding was that, whilst there were some important areas of overlap in their understanding; consistent with the sense-making theory which informs this study, by and large, instructional leadership in the schools studied appeared to school heads as listening to different sounds from echoes of a single drum-beat. As a result, instructional leadership meant different things across these schools. This difference was shaped by interactions between the institutional contexts for the schools and resources of biography for each of the school heads involved. The schools' contexts comprised expectations from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), the Responsible authorities (RAs) and the community. Key challenges faced included that; education is a multi-stakeholder based social activity. As a result, its purpose and expectations varied across its key stakeholders. Other challenges included curriculum rigidity and inconsistency between the MoPSE's inclusive policy as practice (covert policy) and as written statements (overt policy). In theory, the MoPSE's policy spoke to inclusive education whilst in practice it was judged to support exclusionary practices. This discrepancy between written policy and practice made school heads to become disenchanted as they sought to couple diverse and, at times, conflicting expectations from multiple stakeholders. In practice, the RAs were seen to be more supportive of full inclusion than the MoPSE. The RAs appeared to be inclined to the social justice logic whilst the MoPSE seemed to favour the entrepreneurial logic and political inclusion of Black children to formerly group 'A' schools only. Basing on the level of support that school heads enjoyed from stakeholders and the effect of resources of biography on sense-making and practice, findings in this study suggest that, the future of full inclusive education in the district studied was in the hands of church related schools and/or properly socialised school heads. These findings elaborated and in many instances brought new insights on the work of earlier writers on school leadership and policy implementation studies. They also illuminated the challenges secondary school authorities grapple with, as they seek to make education more responsive to the needs of 'all' learners through embracing inclusive instructional practices.

Key words: educational leadership, Instructional leadership, inclusive instructional leadership, sense-making, inclusive secondary schools, Zimbabwe

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ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

‘A’ level: Advanced level

DDA: Disability Discrimination Act

D/Hm: Deputy Headmaster

EFA: Education for All

HOD: Head of Department

HG High School: Holy Ghost High School

HEXCO: Higher Education Examination Council

Hm: Head master

IL: Instructional leadership

OG High School: Open Gates High School

‘O’ level: Ordinary level

OVC: Orphaned and vulnerable children

SB: Senior Builder

MoPSE: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education

NCLB: No Child Left Behind

OECD: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

PIMRS: Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale

RA: Responsible authority

RAs: Responsible authorities

SCMZ: Student Christian Movement of Zimbabwe

TL: Teacher leader

ZIMSEC: Zimbabwe Schools Examination Council

CHAPTER 1: THE PROBLEM AND ITS CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

The movement towards inclusive instructional leadership continues to dominate academic discourse throughout the world (Ferguson, 2008; Mafa, 2012; Donohue & Bornman, 2014, Juvonen, 2019). This is probably so because inclusive education has increasingly been viewed from multiple angles, that is, politically, socially and legally, as the only fair, just, and equitable way of grouping learners for instruction across the globe (Dalton *et al.*, 2012; Mafa, 2012; Musengi & Chireshe, 2012). Naidu (2018: 33), citing Martin Seligman whom she views as ‘the father of Contemporary Positive Psychology,’ says, “Positive inclusive schooling is based on the values of freedom, trust and respect for human diversity.” The call for an inclusive approach to education began to appear in special education literature in the 1980s (McMaster; 2013; Choi *et al.*, 2020). It first appeared in the context of providing least restrictive environment to learners and has been identified with a quasi-resistance movement that emerged in response to increasing segregation of students identified for special education in the USA. Since its first appearance in academic literature, inclusive education has increasingly gained prominence as an alternative framework to special needs education and main streaming of students that previously have been served in a self-contained environment (Walton, 2018). Ramberg and Watkins (2020: 55) thus said, “In a historically relative short period of time, inclusive education has been established as a global field of educational research that has the potential to inform policy and practice at different structural levels” of school governance. However, high sounding and plausible as it may appear, the concept inclusive education, like many other constructs in the human sciences, seems to suffer from definitional plasticity (Ainscow *et al.* 2012; Walton 2018; Naidu, 2018).

Partly, as a result of this plasticity, full inclusion in many countries seems to be a paradox that has remained an unfinished business (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Joubert, & Harrington, 2020) in many countries across the globe. Slee (1996), Ainscow *et al.* (2012) and Singhal (2018), writing in Australia, observed a scenario in which a large number of learners both in Australia and beyond continue to be marginalised and excluded from main stream schools as communities choose to pursue policy frameworks that emphasise on competition, following a misguided belief that competition benefits all learners. Florian *et al.* (2016), therefore, observe a

growing trend towards increased commercialisation and marketisation of education as a social good throughout the world. Jansen (2002), Donohue and Bornman (2014) and Musengi and Chireshe (2012) thus concur that many countries, globally, are still grappling with inclusive instructional practices without any end in sight. However, many writers seem to agree that leadership, in particular instructional leadership, is the key to the success of any educational reform programme which is meant to improve teaching and learning in schools (Ng 2015; Malinga & Jita, 2016).

In the current study, I therefore sought to add a voice to this growing conversation (Walton, 2018), by exploring and unveiling the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools and how sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in this school setting. This is an area which to the best of my knowledge has not been fully explored and written about. The first chapter of the study outlines the background to this unique study. Furthermore, it highlights the problem statement, the theoretical framework and the research questions upon which the study is anchored. Chapter 1 also touches on the significance, limitations of and delimitations beyond which the study will not venture. The chapter winds down with clarifications of key terms to create shared assumptions on the major issues involved in the study.

1.2 The Background to the Study

“Inclusive education is a relatively new concept, having gained international attention in 2000, following the Education for All (EFA) campaign (Naidu, 2018:33). Internationally, inclusive education is grounded on conventions such as the Jomtien Conference (1990), the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994), and Millennium Development Goals (UNESCO, 2000) to which Zimbabwe is also a signatory. To domesticate the inclusive framework, most progressive countries, including Zimbabwe, have promulgated indigenous inclusive laws of their own. The United Kingdom (UK), for example, passed the Inclusive Charter in 1989. Australia passed the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) in 1992 (Slee, 1996; Forlin, 2006). Similarly, the United States of America enacted the Individual with Disability Education Act (1990), the No Child is Left Behind Act (2001) and more recently the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (Inserra, & Bossert,

2008; Howley *et al.*, 2019; Choi *et al.*, 2020) as the foundations for inclusive education.

In response to this global trend towards an inclusive drive, especially after the Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action in 1994, many African countries have made inroads towards embracing educational inclusion of learners with exceptionalities into the mainstream education system through promulgation of their own regional and home grown inclusive related policies. The SADC protocol on education and training (1997), for example, “acknowledges that education and training have the capacity to equip member states adequately for the 21st century and beyond” (Kamwendo, 2009: 4). The expectation is that education can empower every person to live happily and in sustainable ways. In South Africa, arguably the most developed country in Southern Africa, the government has therefore entrenched into the new constitution an explicit close on the rights of people with disabilities (Mhlolo, 2015; Malahlela, 2017) to enjoy the same access to education as anyone else. In 2001, the Department of Education enacted the Education White Paper Number 6 which explicitly speaks to the need for the education system to embrace an inclusive approach to education (Dalton *et al.*, 2012; Donohue & Bornman, 2014). Historically, present day inclusive education thought and practice is therefore seen to have developed from a foundation of well-established special education systems in the countries of the Global North, through various policy mandates (Naidu, 2018; Walton, 2018). Canada is credited as “the first country to use the term inclusive education and this appellation is generally preferred to terms like integration and mainstreaming,” which have been used, for example in the US. Inclusive education thought and practice has spread to countries of Global South through South Africa (Walton, 2018:32).

Like her southern neighbour (South Africa), Zimbabwe has also domesticated the inclusive framework (Mafa, 2012; Chireshe & Musengi, 2013). The resultant instruments include The Education Act of 1996, as amended; the Disabled Persons Act of 1996, and several MoPSE policies, such as the Secretary's Circular Minute Number P. 36 of 1990. Collectively, these instruments require that all learners, notwithstanding their differences and exceptional circumstances, have access to basic education (Chireshe, 2011; Mafa, 2012). However, regardless of this effort, full

inclusion in Zimbabwe largely remains a mirage, especially in the secondary schools' department (Kanyongo, 2005; Musengi & Chireshe, 2012).

It is not clearly understood why this is so despite this apparently enabling policy environment. On the face of it, it appears, instead of embracing full inclusion in line with policy pronouncements, early educational reforms in Zimbabwe seemed to have been pre-occupied with attempts to ensure equal access to education for all racial groups more than anything else. Political inclusion thus seems to have been the priority of inclusive education, at the expense of full inclusion of learners with exceptionalities into the conventional school system (Kanyongo, 2005). Previously discriminated and segregated Black children were therefore afforded access to educational institutions which were exclusively spared for Whites before independence. Apparently, this inclusive practice appears oblivious of the existence of other forms of exclusion that also had ramifications on equity and the future of children with exceptionalities as fellow human beings. Practically, these early reforms led to the abolition of education programmes that were meant specifically for children from the Black community. For example, the F2 education programme was scrapped as it was associated with preparation of Black children as wage slaves in the white owned enterprises and hence had no place in the new dispensation (Chitate, 2015).

At face value, it appears the adoption of the inclusive framework enshrined in the Education for All (EFA) framework (1990), the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994), the Millennium Development Goals (2000) and now the SADC agreement of 1997 (MoPSE, 2019; Kamwendo, 2009) have not been a priority in Zimbabwe's public schools' system in the early years of independence. In effect, most schools remain largely exclusionary up to this day in the backdrop of such an enabling policy environment, at least on paper. Anderson and Boyle (2015:4) considered that, even as its roots are anchored on special needs education of children with disabilities, "it is accepted that the meaning behind the term (full inclusion) has shifted from being exclusively about students with a disability to now encompassing the delivery of a high-quality education to all students." This explains the preference to use the term 'children with exceptionalities' for the term 'children with special needs', in some literature (McMillen, 2019).

As a result of an apparently lukewarm approach to embrace full inclusion of all learners with exceptionalities in the mainstream education system, education for children with exceptionalities, especially those with physical disabilities, seems to have remained largely charity work in segregated schools in the hands of religious and philanthropic organisations (Musengi and Chireshe, 2012). These included the Reformed Church in Zimbabwe and the Jairos Jiri Association which are very visible in the Masvingo District of Zimbabwe in which the current study was carried out. The trend seems to be that, most of the 'best schools' in the country are focusing on providing commercialised and competitive-market driven (Florian *et al*, 2016) educational opportunities to the gifted and non-disabled children only (MoPSE, 2019). Learners with learning difficulties seem to have joined the band wagon of discriminated children and were denied access to schools of their choice through selection tests or poor examination grades such as at grade 7 or 'O' level (MoPSE, 2013). At the same time, children with physical disabilities did not get access to the mainstream school system. Such children were relegated to some disadvantaged schools (poor schools) and special schools in the community unless the parents could afford the exorbitant fees paid in some private schools where education is a business and thus, provided on a commercial basis. Learners with learning challenges seem to be regarded as below the grade and therefore, relegated to some poor schools in the community where they will obviously fail their public examinations resulting in what the Student Christian Movement of Zimbabwe [SCMZ], (2013) describes as 'the manifestation of a neglected generation.' Dore (1997) describes this situation as the manifestation of the diploma disease or qualification escalation.

Ironically, this situation appeared very worrisome to many stakeholders in the education system, including the then President Robert Mugabe (MoPSE, 2015) and was happening in the backdrop of people celebrating Zimbabwe's education system as one of the best in Africa (ZIMFACT, 2018). It is against this background that the Permanent Secretary's Circular No. 13 of 2015 (MoPSE, 2015: 1) had this to say about access of children to schools:

The Ministry has noted that some schools are enrolling learners into Form 1 through an application of their own entrance tests and assessments ... This practice is discriminatory and violates the provisions of The Constitution of

Zimbabwe and the Education Act. It is against this background that Cabinet directed the Ministry to address the issues ... with a view to making education more ... accessible.

Reference to entrance tests, as given above, is testimony that some schools in Zimbabwe had largely grown to be highly exclusionary by the time of the current study. Clearly, this shows that due to passage of time and the changing environment from the Salamanca (1994) to date; new forms of exclusion which were non-existent before the Salamanca might have emerged to haunt present day educators. Agreeably, this is happening when the recommendations of the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994) and related conventions still comprise unfinished business in many countries across the globe (Naidu, 2018), including in Zimbabwe. As a result of these observations, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education put in place guidelines for enrolling children both into Form 1 and into the Lower Sixth Form through the enactment of the Secretaries' Circulars No. 13 of 2015, and No. 3 of 2016. At face value, the above regulations indicated a compelling desire on the part of the government to ensure a non-discriminatory (inclusionary), affordable, accessible and quality education for all.

Typically, the existing policy framework seemed sufficient to motivate schools across the nation to embrace the inclusive philosophy and be guided accordingly. This means that failure by Zimbabwean schools to fully embrace inclusive education could not be explained in terms of lack of an appropriate policy framework. However, the reality on the ground was that, like many other countries in the region, Zimbabwe was still grappling with full inclusion of children with exceptionalities in the mainstream education system even as authorities continued to improve on the related legal framework and conditions. The New Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022, and subsequent supporting policies, for example, also aimed, among other things, to correct this disparity (MoPSE, 2015). It was not clearly understood why, in the backdrop of such an enabling policy environment, the country still grappled with full inclusion more than 25 years after the Salamanca and 40 years after independence.

My preliminary review of related literature suggests that, regardless of the existence of inclusive related policies, the Zimbabwean education system is still characterised

by co-existence of highly selective and hence exclusionary schools apparently oblivious of the existence of the supportive policy framework discussed above. Only a few schools, apparently for voluntary reasons, seem to have adopted a non-selective and hence inclusive approach to education (Mafa, 2012; Mutepfa, 2013; Musengi & Chireshe, 2012). The critical issue in Zimbabwe is that, whilst some schools have adopted educational inclusion, most “good schools” remain largely selective and discriminatory; and appear motivated to maintain the status quo.

At face value, the situation in Zimbabwe seems to authenticate Spillane *et al.* (2002; 2003), Rigby (2015) and Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010)’s contention on the role of sense-making on successful implementation of policy reform programmes. The generally agreed view seems to be that an enabling political and policy environment alone may not be enough to motivate schools to fully embrace inclusive reforms. Instead, the way policy implementing agents mentally construct and understand policy provisions, and how they fit the resultant changes into their existing mental maps and practices is assumed to have an impact in the success or otherwise of educational reforms (Spillane *et al.* 2002; Rigby, 2015).

The New Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 show that, in addition to creating an enabling policy environment, the former State President had over the years also wished for full educational inclusion in the public schools’ system, but to no avail. For example, in his acceptance remarks for the new education curriculum, the former State President, Robert Mugabe, had this to say:

Over the years I have called for a relevant, quality and inclusive education in the school curriculum whose hallmarks are competences desired in life and work. Simultaneously, such education must remain accessible and affordable to all (MoPSE, 2015: i).

The above citation from the former president shows that throughout his over 36 years of reign, he always wished that all schools adopt inclusive education. Read together with the existing policies and conventions discussed in this chapter, it is clear that both the political and policy environment in Zimbabwe favoured inclusive instructional practices.

It was therefore, not clearly understood why, regardless of the existence of such an enabling policy and political environment, most of the “best schools” in the country still remained discriminatory (MoPSE. 2016; 2019). As a practising school head, I felt, it was not appropriate to venture deeply into the implementation of the New Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 with its renewed focus on inclusion (MoPSE, 2019) without an understanding of why schools in the past have generally been reluctant to embrace inclusive education in the backdrop of an enabling policy and political environment. Doing so would risk failure to realise the goals of the New Curriculum to promote full inclusion just as was the case in previous years. From the viewpoint of sense-making, this paradox could possibly be explained in terms of how school heads make sense of what it means to them to be instructional leaders in a school system that is built on the pillars of equality, justice and equity (Musengi & Chireshe, 2012) or in the context of this study, in inclusive secondary schools. This understanding justifies my study which sought to explore the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools and how sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in these school settings.

Since educational leadership was seen to be instrumental to the success of any educational programme (Jita & Mokhele, 2014; Spillane, 2015; Malinga & Jita, 2016; Howley *et al.* 2019), an understanding of how school heads in inclusive secondary schools construct and understand their roles in these settings was considered very important in the current study. This was particularly so given that, “sense-making is considered a pillar for the successful realisation of the goals of any policy programmes (Spillane *et al.*, 2002; Chimbi & Jita, 2019) such as policies on inclusive education. This understanding was also considered important given the assertion by Crocket (2007) that leadership for inclusive education calls for different skills and attitudes than are required for regular school settings.

It was assumed that an understanding of the challenges associated with instructional leadership could possibly shed light on the reasons why most schools failed to fully embrace the inclusive framework, even in the backdrop of an enabling legal and political environment. At the same time, an understanding of the opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools could enable people to

maximise on the opportunities available, in order to ensure effective learning for all. To the best of my knowledge, there was no study which had been carried out focusing specifically on the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools and on how sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary school settings. Studies that had been carried out on instructional leadership such as by Ruff and Shoho (2005), Jita (2010); Jita and Mokhele (2013), Rigby (2015), Mngo and Mngo (2018), Howley *et al.* (2019) and Hallinger, *et al.* (2020) did not approach instructional leadership in the context of sense-making and inclusivity as adopted in the current study. Locally, a number of upcoming researchers such as Mapetere (2015), Makaye (2015), Jinga (2015), Muranda *et al.* (2016) and Mutumburanzou (2019) have also written about instructional leadership, but not in the context adopted in this study which focused on instructional leadership in inclusive secondary school contexts. Hallinger (2018) also wrote about the importance of contexts in school leadership, but not within the framework of inclusive education contexts. Writing in South Africa, Malahlela (2017) studied inclusive education in the secondary schools department, but not in the context of instructional leadership and sense-making by school heads. The current study, therefore, sought to cover this knowledge gap and ensure that inclusive secondary schools become more effective in achieving their instructional goals and that more schools embrace the inclusive framework.

Effectively, my study was particularly unique in that it centred on instructional leadership in inclusive secondary school instructional environments from the perspective of sense-making by school heads whose most important responsibility, according to the Director's Circular No 15 of 2006, is instructional leadership (MoPSE, 2006). This fusion of instructional leadership, sense-making and inclusive education issues in secondary schools made my study unique and more worthwhile. The study was particularly important in the backdrop of renewed motivation towards inclusive education in present day Zimbabwe following promulgation of the New Constitution in 2013 and the introduction of the New Curriculum Framework 2015-2022 (MoPSE, 2015). Furthermore, the study was important in the backdrop of the understanding among many researchers that leadership is integral to the success of all educational reform programmes (Spillane *et al.*, 2002; Jita, 2010; Hallinger & Lee,

2013; Jita and Mokhele, 2014; Ng, 2015), such as inclusion of learners with exceptionalities in the conventional education classrooms. A focus on secondary schools was considered important since conceptualisations and practices of basic education in Zimbabwe have shifted from a focus in the primary schools' education only to include secondary schools' education (MoPSE, 2019; Education Amendment Act, 2020). This shift was first observed when in 2014 the Ministry of Education, Sport, Arts and Culture (MoESAC) was renamed the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), apparently emphasising the convergence of primary and secondary education to basic education as the minimum requirement for a meaningful and healthy life (Kamwendo, 2009). The Education Amendment Act of 2019 (Act 15-2019: 622) defines basic education to mean "education from early childhood education up to the fourth form ..." This clearly shows the integration of secondary school education to the basic education designation, and hence the beauty of my study. Finally this study is particularly relevant at a time when schools have assumed the role of socialising the young into the culture of the community to which they belong, following a steady and gradual disintegration of the traditional family system (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013) as an agent of socialisation.

1.3 Problem Statement

The background to this study revealed that most progressive countries all over the world have, at least in principle, embraced the inclusive philosophy in keeping with the recommendations of the Jomtien (1990) and the Salamanca Statement (1994) conventions (Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Musengi & Chireshe, 2012; Naidu, 2018). Preliminary literature has shown that leadership is one of the most important single factors which influence a school's effectiveness (Jita, 2010; Pan *et al.*, 2015; Jita & Mokhele, 2014) in achieving its set goals. Preliminary literature has further revealed that, although "Zimbabwe is a signatory to some key international and regional conventions on educational inclusion" (Chireshe, 2013: 224) with its own home grown inclusive related policies, its public education system still remains highly discriminatory of some children with exceptionalities (Musengi & Chireshe, 2012; MoPSE, 2015; 2016). This is happening more than 25 years after the Salamanca and 40 years after independence. Renewed emphasis on inclusive education in recent years, following the enactment of the new constitution in 2013 and the new curriculum in 2015 is expected to usher a more widespread adoption of the inclusive

framework in the Zimbabwean education system. However, it is not certain if this time around; inclusive initiative would be successful, in the absence of a clear understanding of the major challenges that militated against the success of earlier attempts and the opportunities that may be exploited to guarantee success.

What was clear is that leadership and in particular instructional leadership holds the keys to the success of instructional activities in any given school system (Malinga & Jita, 2016; Howley *et al.*, 2019). In this study, I therefore sought to explore the challenges to and the opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools and how sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools. It was assumed the findings of this study would form the basis for making existing inclusive schools more responsive and more effective in addressing the needs of learners and the communities they serve and for more schools to willingly embrace the inclusive framework for the benefit of all and every child. It was further believed that an understanding of how school heads, as policy implementing agents, make sense of policy programmes they are meant to implement is critical to the successful implementation of such policy programmes (Spillane *et al.*, 2002; Rigby, 2015). The current study was therefore found to be very fitting and worthwhile in an education system which is built on the pillars of equality, justice and equity (Chireshe, 2013).

1.4 Central Research Question

The study sought to provide answers to the central research question that: What are the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools and how does sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in these school settings?

1.5 Sub-questions

To answer the central question above, the enquiry was guided by responses to the following sub-questions:

- How is instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools constructed and understood by school heads?
- What practices characterise instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools?

- How does sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools?

1.6 Aim of the Study

This enquiry aimed to explore, from a sense-making perspective, the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools as perceived and experienced by school heads in inclusive instructional environments. It was assumed that an understanding of these challenges and opportunities would provide the foundation for improving the effectiveness and efficacy of instructional leadership initiatives in these settings, since school authorities at various levels, using evidence based decision-making, may devise ways of mitigating various challenges and maximising on the prevailing opportunities and, therefore, guarantee the success of inclusive education as a necessary policy intervention.

1.7 Objectives of the Study

Specifically, the study sought to:

- Explore how instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools is constructed and understood by school heads.
- Identify the practices that characterise instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools.
- Explore how sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools.

1.8 An Overview of the Research Methodology

The term methodology mirrors on the issues to do with research approaches, research designs and the rationale and logics behind the adoption of particular methods of data collection, presentation, analysis, and interpretation processes in a scientific enquiry (Creswell & Poth, 2016; Kumar, 2019). This part of the study summarises the research approach and the research design employed in the study. It also touches in summary form, on the methods and techniques used to collect, present, analyse and interpret the data needed to answer the central question upon which the enquiry was anchored. A detailed account of the methodology employed in this enquiry is presented in Chapter 3.

1.8.1 Research approach and research design

In simple terms, researching “is a systematic study of a problem attacked by a deliberately chosen strategy which starts with choosing an approach to preparing a blue print (design), acting upon this blue print in terms of designing research hypotheses, choosing methods and techniques, selecting or developing data collection tools, processing the data, interpretation and ends with presenting solution/s of the problem” (Grover, 2015:1). By a research approach we therefore refer to strategies and techniques for research that comprise the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Theoretically, there are 3 basic research designs that can be used by researchers in the social sciences, including in education, namely, the quantitative, qualitative and the mixed method research approaches (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The current study adopted a qualitative research approach and a case study research design.

A research design, according to Smith (2012: 95), is a “... plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems”. This echoes Bhattacharjee (2012: 35) who describes a research design as “... a ‘blueprint’ for empirical research aimed at answering specific research questions or testing specific hypotheses”. Furthermore, Bhattacharjee (2012: 35) points out that, “... a research design must specify at least three processes, namely the data collection process, the instrument development process, and the sampling process.” Kerlinger (1986: 279, as cited in Smith, 2012: 95) adds that a research design “... includes an outline of what the investigator will do from writing the hypotheses and their operational implications to the final analysis of data”. These explanations effectively illustrate that a research design makes researching possible.

The current study adopted a qualitative research approach and a case study research design framed by an interpretivist research paradigm (Gichuru, 2017) and illuminated by the sense-making theory. The qualitative research approach, the case studies research design and the nature of questions asked in the current study are consistent with the sense-making theory and the interpretivist paradigm upon which the study is grounded. Creswell (2017) views interpretivism and in particular social constructivism, for example as philosophical partners of qualitative research approaches and the sense-making theory as adopted in the current study. Langley

and Abdallah (2015) thus talk about interpretive sense-making as a building block for qualitative studies.

This relationship between interpretivism in particular, social constructivism (Cresswell, 2012), sense-making and qualitative research approaches justifies my choice of the methodology adopted in this study which combines, a qualitative research approach, a case studies research design, interpretivist research paradigm and sense-making lens as a theoretical framework. Leung (2015) thus notes that, “the essence of qualitative research is to make sense of and recognize patterns among words in order to build up (construct) a meaningful picture without compromising its richness and dimensionality.” According to Krauss (2005), every scientific enquiry, whether conducted implicitly or explicitly, is inclined to a specific research paradigm with its own philosophical assumptions concerning the type of reality and the way through which that reality can best be understood. Guba (1990, as cited in Lewis, 2015), views a paradigm or worldview as a basic set of beliefs that guide action such as in the current enquiry.

The case study research design employed in this study is of the type that Jita and Mokhele (2014: 4) describe as “a multiple-case study” design. Yazan (2015) defines this research design as a bounded case study design. The cases comprise three inclusive secondary schools in Masvingo District as research sites. The three schools were identified through recommendations by the district office basing on their implementation of the inclusive framework. Yin (2009), as cited in Langley and Abdullah (2015: 118), suggests that “three different logics can be used to select sites for holistic case studies: choose ‘critical’ cases for the ‘test’ of a particular theory, choose ‘extreme’ cases where something exceptional seems to be occurring, or choose ‘revelatory’ cases that offer high potential for developing new insight into an understudied phenomenon. Cases in this study were identified in terms of their extreme and revelatory character.

Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data from school heads on how they make sense of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary school settings and how this sense-making shapes their instructional leadership practices. Document analysis and non-participant observations were used to collect data on instructional leadership practices by school heads. Data were analysed and

presented using narrative approaches comprising a combination of vignettes and anthropological approaches blended with descriptive visualisations of observed practices (Reay *et al.*, 2019). Details of research methodology summarised in this section are further described and explained in Chapter 3.

1.9 Significance of the Study

Findings from this enquiry may be significant to many stakeholders in education. These stakeholders include, for example, researchers, parents of children with exceptionalities, members of the academic community, practising teachers, educational leadership at different levels of the education system as well as policy makers. As a researcher and practising instructional leader, the current study may help me in creating a more detailed appreciation of challenges associated with leadership of learning under inclusive secondary schools. This knowledge may assist me to carry out my duties as an instructional leader better, even under inclusive secondary school settings. The knowledge may also assist me to be a consultant and change agent for inclusive instructional leadership in a community where education is based on social justice and equity. This is particularly so given that the current study was carried out from the background where, during the time, and from a sense-making perspective, we knew very little about the challenges associated with leadership of learning in inclusive secondary school settings. Most studies in the area of instructional leadership had concentrated not on educational inclusion, but rather on instructional leadership in a traditional school system. In addition, most studies on instructional leadership had focused more on primary schools as opposed to secondary schools.

To parents of children with exceptionalities, the current study may help to dispel concerns about sending children to inclusive secondary schools. Parents risk developing a feeling of insecurity for their children as they enrol them into inclusive schools since they may not be too sure of how school heads conceptualise their instructional leadership roles in inclusive settings. According to the US Attorney General, Eric H. Holder, as cited in the US Department of Justice (2010), nothing is more important to a parent than the safety and welfare of their children. His assistant, Laurie O. Robinson, echoed this statement and further submitted that, "... as a parent, I cannot imagine anything more difficult than not knowing where your

children are or how they are being treated” (The US Department of Justice, 2010: ix). It was felt that a study that sought to understand the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership should help schools to work better with children with exceptionalities, thereby dispelling all the safety concerns that parents may have as they send their children to inclusive schools.

To the members of the academic community, this study should be a very useful source of literature that may be used as a basis for related or similar studies. The findings of this enquiry may also provide literature that may be useful for teaching purposes in universities and other institutions that are concerned with instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools. The current enquiry, which is involved in a field that has not been exhaustively explored by other researchers, may thus provide knowledge to be used for further research and teaching purposes by some members of the academic community.

To educational leadership at district and school levels, the knowledge generated from this study can sharpen skills needed to supervise instruction in inclusive secondary school settings. The knowledge on how school heads understand and construct instructional leadership for inclusive secondary school settings may therefore, enable instructional leadership at both school and district levels to assist learners to effectively benefit from their participation in inclusive secondary school environments. The study may also have implications on societal acceptance of full inclusion initiatives as the education systems are better informed of how to achieve the goals for which they are established and the purpose of education in society.

The study may also help policy makers to come up with more informed policies on instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools and how to enforce them. Such policies may ensure that instructional activities in inclusive secondary schools become more effective and that learners benefit the most from their participation in inclusive secondary school instructional environments. Policy makers in Africa and beyond may also take a leaf from the findings of the current study to inform policy formulation on instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools.

This study may ultimately provide insights on instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools that can be useful to a multiplicity of stakeholders in education.

Research findings from the study are expected to improve our understanding of inclusive instructional leadership (Howley *et al.*, 2019) and to add value to the prevailing discourse on instructional leadership in inclusive schools. This is particularly important given that most studies on instructional leadership focus on elementary schools and not on secondary schools. Such studies also focus on instructional leadership for the general educational system as opposed to instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools. The potential contribution of a study on instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools is therefore very important, especially at a time when most countries in the progressive world have adopted an inclusive education framework as a social justice and human right driven approach to education (Musengi & Chireshe, 2014).

1.10 An Overview of the Theoretical Framework

The current study is informed by the enactive sense-making theory (Spillane *et al.*, 2003; Weick, 1995). According to Brock *et al.* (2008: 450), “sense-making refers to building schematic mental models for decision-making by integrating different pieces of information in terms of individual emotions, projected outcomes, individual goals, and expectations.” Brock *et al.* (2008: 451) further points out that, “sense-making involves the generation of a mental model in response to a complex ... problem.” Chrispeels *et al.* (2008: 734) as echoed by Bingham (2019), posit that, “... mental models are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalisations, even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action.” This view is in line with Di Paolo *et al.*’s (2010) observation that people think through and act in terms of their interpretation of their environment and is also embraced in the current study which is based on instructional leadership, inclusion and sense-making.

Leithwood *et al.* (2004: 76) also postulate that mental models “serve as guides to making both big and little decisions,” and “present constraints because they are the first screen through which new information must pass.” Kara and Ertürk (2015: 2146) support this view as they assert that, “we think and act through our mental models.” Di Paolo *et al.* (2010) thus argue that the boundary of the mind is not the skull. Instead, human mind consists of the imbedded mind and the extended mind which together contribute to making people understand the reality around them and act accordingly. This thinking points to the existence of a firm relationship between the

mind, the environment and human action in sense-making and policy implementation (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2017). Spillane *et al.* (2002: 733), citing earlier work from Brown *et al.* (1989), Resnick (1991), Suchman (1988) and Weick (1995), thus aver that, "... sense-making is situated, that is, tied to the situation in which stimuli are noticed, interpreted, and subsequently acted on." Chrispeels (2008: 734), citing earlier work from Senge *et al.* (1994), submits that, "mental models often reflect undisclosed assumptions and images that exist below the surface and lead to different interpretations of the same evidence, decreasing the potential for organizational coherence." Chrispeels (2008: 734), further contends that, "although mental models generally are considered at the individual level, we argue that mental models can also operate at a team or group level over time as members continue to work together." What this means is that individual sense makers can construct and understand phenomena around them either differently or similarly, depending on the context of the environment in which they are operating. Leithwood (2017) classifies contexts of instructional leadership into person specific contexts and widely-shared contexts. On the other hand, Hallinger (2018) citing earlier work from Bossert *et al.* (1982) classifies school leadership contexts into institution specific, person specific and community context. Widely shared contexts exist in a broader organisation environment comprising economic, political and social factors and are closely related to what Hallinger (2018) sees as the community context. Institution specific context comprise the internal environment of a given organisation such as a school. On the other hand, person specific context comprises personal dimensions of school heads. These determine who a school head is, and "how he/she constructs and gives meaning to his/her work experiences, namely the links between identity and classroom practices" (Jita 2004: 25). Jita (*op-cit*) uses the term resources of biography for what Leithwood (2017) and Hallinger (2018) refer to as person specific context. From a sense-making perspective, all the contexts referred to in this section work together to shape how school heads construct and give meaning to their instructional leadership role expectations in their respective schools.

1.11 Assumptions

This enquiry is anchored on the foundation of the following grounding assumptions:

- School heads as social actors know what they are trying to achieve through their school leadership practices and can explain their thoughts, intentions, and actions if appropriately motivated to do so.
- An effective education system is one which caters for the needs of all learners in an effort to prepare each of them for a future life, independent of parents/guardians, each in his/her own unique way.
- School heads, in their capacity as instructional leaders, hold the keys to the success and full adoption of policy programmes including inclusive education.
- An exploration of how school heads make sense of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary school settings reveals the challenges to and opportunities for the future of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary school instructional environments.
- Reality is socially constructed (enacted) as people interact and interpret (make sense of) the things that exist and/or are happening around them.
- Sense-making is the bedrock for human action, including instructional leadership by school head.

1.12 Limitations of the Study

The current enquiry was constrained by four major limitations given below:

The first limitation was that I am a practising school head in the district. Relating with research participants who viewed me as a colleague presented challenges of formalising relationships. With school heads who regarded me as a colleague, the relationship at times ran the risk of being rather too informal than expected in such an important study. School heads at times made attempts to arouse my personal emotions on the issues at stake in ways that would negatively affect the findings of the current study. In all cases, I was always careful to ensure that my relationship with participants and interests in the issues at stake would not affect the validity and reliability of the findings of this study.

The current study was also constrained by time restrictions. This is because during the time that I conducted the study, I was a full time educational leader and manager as well as a full-time PhD student. Balancing the demands of work and those of the study proved to be very difficult. The limited time available for the completion of the study could have been too short to adequately address the challenges to and opportunities for leadership of learning in inclusive secondary schools in the Masvingo District. To mitigate time constraints, I applied for manpower development leave (MDL) and thus created enough time to work on this important study.

In addition, the period in which the current study was carried out was also a constraint to the enquiry. The enquiry was conducted at a time when teacher motivation in the country was at its lowest ebb. This was a time when the country was experiencing economic challenges characterised by low salaries for teachers and other civil servants, and shortage of liquidity in the economy. The emergent changes that characterised the education system also confused research participants such that during data collection, morale was at its lowest level. Given this situation, research participants could not be expected to be as cooperative as may be envisaged in a study of such a high level of importance. In order to be afforded interview time by school heads, I requested to have access to them even during weekends or any other time convenient to them.

Lastly, the current enquiry was also constrained by definitional pluralism and plasticity of constructs such as instructional leadership and educational inclusion. This pluralism and plasticity of concepts had the potential to make research participants baffled by issues at stake in the data collection instruments, and this could negatively affect the validity and reliability of research findings. Stereotypes among some members of the academic community on what constitute inclusive education and educational inclusion may also have militated against the validity and reliability of findings of the study. To override problems of definitional pluralism, plasticity of constructs, and a lack of motivation among research participants, I made an effort to clearly explain the purpose of the study and motivate the respondents to volunteer or refuse participation in the study without any condition.

1.13 Delimitations

The study on the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools was restricted to schools in the Masvingo District of Zimbabwe. One of the key variables was on how instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools was mentally constructed, understood and practised by school heads. Furthermore, and critical to the study, was the notion of how these mental constructions, understanding, and practises shape the provision of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools. The key participants for the study were secondary school heads in the 3 schools that were selected to participate in the study. Teachers were also involved given the fact that instructional leadership by school heads is in part directed on teachers and classroom observation done at the interface between leadership and teaching. As a researcher, I was therefore in contact with teachers during the time that I shadowed school heads in order to observe their practices. This means, teachers were part of this study, at the interface of instruction, supervision and observation by the researcher. School heads were found to be very central for the success of inclusive instructional practices in the secondary schools' department both today and in future and hence my interest in their direct participation in this study. Anything outside these geographical, social and conceptual delimitations was beyond the scope of the study.

1.14 Clarification of Terms

This section of my study clarifies key terms used in this enquiry to create shared assumptions on the major issues entailed, starting with the construct school leadership upon which the concept instructional leadership is anchored.

School Leadership: According to Goksoy (2015: 110), "leadership is defined as the process of influencing a group to reach goals" that they may not have achieved on their own accord. Freadman *et al.* (2003: .539) supports the above position when they regard a leader as "a person with the most or highest effect on members of the group and who influences others to act in a specific way for a specific purpose." School leadership in this study is viewed as the use of physical, social, and cultural resources (power) to create a positive learning environment and to influence group members to willingly expend effort towards the achievement of goals that group members might not have achieved on their own accord.

Instructional Leadership: Masuku (2011: 25), citing earlier work by Spillane *et al.* (2004: 11), defines instructional leadership as: "... the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material, and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning." Nkobi (2008: 18), as cited in Masuku (2011: 25), holds that, "instructional leadership seeks to improve the teachers' quality of classroom work for the ultimate purpose of enhancing learners' achievement and also improving their attitudes and behaviour towards school work as well as their personal life." Howley *et al.* (2019: 5) acknowledge that, conceptualisations of instructional leadership "vary, but the core meaning refers to principals' efforts to improve teaching practice as the key direction for the school." In this study, the construct instructional leadership refers to leadership of learning. In terms of the Director's Circular No 15 of 2006 (MoPSE, 2006), instructional leadership is the major responsibility of school principals in the Zimbabwean education system. Leadership in this sense is about both influence and creation of a positive school environment for effective learning.

Inclusion: The term inclusion generally refers to a practice whereby learners with either physical, and or learning disabilities enjoy their right to education with the needed support primarily in conventional classrooms alongside their peers without these exceptional designations (Chireshe, 2013; Malahlela, 2017). In this study, the term is used to refer to an educational system that gives equal access to all children regardless of the exceptional circumstances in which they find themselves (Chireshe, 2013; MoPSE, 2015; Malahlela, 2017). Inclusion is thus seen as an ethical and social justice approach to education and disability (Musengi & Chireshe, 2012; Florian, 2014) based on issues of equity and fairness to humanity. The term is used interchangeably with the concept inclusive education. It is not a legal issue only, but also, and largely so, an ethical issue

Disability: According to McMillen (2019) disability is an umbrella concept encompassing many forms of impairments, which limit activities, and restrict participation in social and economic programmes such as education. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), as cited in Peta (2017), defines persons with disabilities as including "those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various

barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.” This definition is also adopted in the current study. In other words, the term disability is used to refer to a condition where children with exceptionalities experience activity and participation limitations in learning and other life activities that their non-disabled peers are perceived as capable of doing.

Special Needs Education (SNE): According to the OECD (2012), SNE is a type of education which is provided to learners who are perceived as a result of their exceptional circumstances to be incapable of benefitting from the type of education which is normally availed to their peers without special support or adaptations in the content and teaching methods. In this study, the term refers to special education that is availed to learners with exceptionalities. This is the education that is afforded to learners who it is felt are not able to access and benefit fully from the education that is normally afforded to learners of the same age without additional support or adaptations in the method of instruction and the content of the learning materials.

Inclusive Education: The construct inclusive education refers to an educational system that is open and gives equal access to all children regardless of the exceptional circumstances in which they find themselves (Chireshe, 2013; Malahlela, 2017; Magnusson *et al.*, 2019). Inclusive education “acknowledges that schools should support all children in their district regardless of their differences, thus reflecting a normative balance of cultural, racial, ethnic and ability levels (Forlin, 2006: 266). Inclusive education as adopted in this study is understood as a method of humanising school systems across the district by making schools better able to attend to the needs of diverse learners, including those with various forms of exceptionalities as opposed to just those with disabilities in the conventional sense.

Children with exceptionalities: The term exceptionalities is used for addressing a learner with some area of functioning in which he or she is significantly different from an expected or established norm (McMillen, 2019). In its conventional sense, this definition includes both learners with disabilities and those with special talents or gifts. It is a broader term than special needs and is used to avoid the stigma associated with labels of disability, race, and language, among other areas in which individuals may deviate from expected functional norms, either physically or intellectually. In the current study, the term exceptionalities is seen as a more

inclusive term that reflects all learners that may benefit from individualised instruction either in special schools or in inclusive settings. It is used to refer to includable learners with physical disabilities, OVC and those with learning difficulties.

Inclusive School: Inclusive schools in the current study are those that are not selective of learners that are enrolled into them either in terms of disability or learning difficulties (Forlin, 2008). Such schools may best be referred to as non-selective schools (Singhal, 2018). These are schools that can afford to be selective of learners they enrol but decide to embrace an inclusive (non-selective) approach out of conviction and not desperation.

1.15 Organisation of the Study

Chapter 1 highlighted the research problem and the setting in which the enquiry was carried out. This chapter outlined the background to the study and the problem statement upon which the study is anchored. It further described key objectives to be achieved and the research questions that guided the study. In addition, it also outlined the limitations that constrained the study and the delimitations that show the geographical, conceptual and social boundaries beyond which the study does not venture.

Chapter 2 is about a review of related literature. Its focus is on what other researchers say about the issues at stake in the study. The chapter sought to provide theoretical answers to the central research question which guides the study. Literature is also reviewed in accordance with the objectives of the study, and the sub-questions upon which the study is anchored. The objective here is to clearly identify and highlight the knowledge gap that the study sought to fill. The chapter therefore helps to reveal the possible areas that may still need to be investigated in my area of interest.

Chapter 3 discusses in more detail the research procedure adopted in the study. It focuses on the research design, the sampling procedure, the population of interest, and the instruments that were used to collect the data that was needed to answer the central research question upon which the enquiry is anchored. The chapter further discusses procedures adopted in the collection, presentation and analysis of

research findings and the ethical issues involved in the study. It wraps off the discussion with a synopsis of the key issues entailed.

Chapter 4 presents, analyses, and interprets data collected from the three school heads who participated in the study. Data are presented, analysed and interpreted using narrative approaches comprising a combination of vignettes (Palaiologou, 2017) long data excerpts and anthropological approaches blended with descriptive visualisations of observed practices (Reay *et al.*, 2019), in line with the nature of data collected and the epistemological stance adopted.

Chapter 5 provides a cross-case analysis and discussion of research findings. It starts by examining key similarities and differences among research sites and research participants to establish the basis for explaining the findings of the study. The analysis and discussion of the findings of the study are achieved through an examination of data across the three cases involved in the study. From these findings, conclusions are drawn which then form the basis for recommendations for policy, practice and for further studies that were tendered at the end of the study.

1.16 Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 has highlighted the research problem and its setting. It unpacked and highlighted issues at stake in the area of study. In particular, the chapter gives a summary of the background to the study, and went further to clarify the problem statement, key objectives to be pursued and the overarching question together with the sub-questions that guided the study. The chapter further outlined the limitations that constrained the study before delineating the conceptual, geographical and social boundaries beyond which the study does not encroach. In Chapter 2, I will now focus on a review of the literature that is related to the study in my quest to identify and define the knowledge gap that the enquiry sought to close.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research problem and its setting. The current chapter focuses on a review of literature related to the study. It describes, clarifies, summarises, and evaluates the literature that is related to the study in order to illuminate knowledge gaps in the area of interest, and to create a clear appreciation of issues at stake in the study (Christmals & Gross, 2017; Hart, 2018). Literature in this study was reviewed in the context of three sub-questions upon which the study is grounded, paying special attention to the theoretical framework that informs the study and the conceptual framework upon which the study is framed. The study and hence this chapter is framed around key concepts of school leadership, instructional leadership, inclusive education and school leadership contexts. In my review of related literature, I made an effort in every case to establish what current literature says about the issues at stake to avoid using out-dated literature to inform current research. Only when I found it compelling to get back to the root of some specific issues, constructs or theories did I review sources that, at face value, may appear fairly distant. In the process, I was also guided by the conceptual and theoretical frameworks upon which the study grounded as further discussed below.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The current study was informed by the enactive model (Weick, 1995; Spillane, 2002; Thompson & Stapleton, 2008; Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2017) of the sense-making theory (Odden & Russ, 2018). Given the nature of the topic at hand, I found the study naturally amenable to a sense-making oriented analysis. The enactive sense-making theory was particularly preferred as a social lens for the current study because of its power to explain human action or lack of it in terms of the relationship between cognition, emotions and the environment as building blocks for action (Thompson & Stapleton, 2009; Rigby, 2015). The interaction of cognition, emotions and the environment is increasingly viewed as a plausible and instrumental framework for understanding and explaining goal directed behaviour among policy implementers in the present world (Coburn, 2004; Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2017; Chimbi & Jita, 2019).

Sense-making, that is, “the process through which individuals work to understand novel, unexpected, or confusing events, has become a critically important topic in the study of organizations” (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010: 551). The thinking that, human beings act towards things on the basis of the meaning that things have for them has a relatively short but rich history (Marz *et al.*, 2013; Chimbi, 2018). Charter and Loewenstein (2016: 148), for example, point out that, at the dawn of the 20th century, cognitive psychologists started to be “concerned with the acquisition of meaningful perceptions in ‘a chaotic world,’ ... as they rejected the long accepted stimulus-response model of behaviourist scholars by arguing that, “individuals do not simply respond to stimuli (policy signals) as givens.” Rather they react to situations in terms of the meanings (sense) that they attach to these situations (Spillane, 1999; Dzimir, 2019). Blumer (1969: 2) adds that, “human beings act towards things on the basis of the meaning that things have for them.” This view has become “the basis for the social interactionist tradition in sociology” today (Spillane *et al.*, 2002) and has been a bedrock for social research in the present world.

Garfunkel (1967) is credited for coining the concept “sense-making” in his ethnographic study on “how film actors interact, interpret and construct reality in their daily experiences” (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014: 60). This concept (sense-making) was also popularised by Weick (1969; 1988; 1995), in his ground breaking books, ‘*The Social Psychology of Organising*’ (Chimbi, 2018: 22); ‘*Enacted Sense-making in Crisis Situations*’; and ‘*Sense-making in Organisations*’ (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). These works have greatly influenced sense-making thought and practice among many scholars and, hence, my interest in the same.

Since Weick’s (1969; 1988 & 1995) seminal work on sense-making, empirical sense-making related “research has burgeoned, conducted in varied contexts and in methodologically rigorous and diverse ways” (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014: 59). In particular, literature has shown that, in recent years, scholarship in a number of disciplines emphasise an understanding of the role of policy implementers’ sense-making in the implementation of policy programmes (Odden & Russ, 2018). This emphasis underscores the thinking that, reform ideas that policy implementers construct from their interpretation of the context of their policy implementation environment influence “what they do and do not do in implementing that policy”

programme (Spillane, 2002: 733). Arguably, this thinking has triggered a lot of interest on sense-making among researchers and has yielded extensive literature on sense-making and implementation of policy programmes (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014). Despite this plethora of work, or perhaps, as a result of this extensive work, literature on sense-making is, however, fragmented and diverse (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; Odden & Russ, 2018). Whereas most writers tend to “agree on what triggers sense-making, they tend to disagree on several points, including what sense-making typically entails, how it is achieved, its temporal orientation, and the extent to which it is shared” (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014: 59). Some writers portray sense-making as a rather individual and cognitive process (Maitlis, 2005; Klein *et al.*, 2006; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014), whilst others present it as a collective activity (Gephart *et al.*, 2010; Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2017). Some writers cast sense-making as retrospective (Weick, 1995), but others believe it is also a prospective process (Spillane *et al.*, 2002; Maitlis & Christianson, 2014).

Spillane *et al.* (2002: 391) caution that the meaning of sense-making is “fraught with ambiguity and difficulties” since sense-making is a complex and fluid concept. Consistent with the complex nature of sense-making (Thompson & Stapleton, 2009) and the fragmented and diverse nature of literature on sense-making thought and practice (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; O’Connor, 2015), Chimbi (2018) observes that, “... a capsule definition of sense-making is not only unattainable but also intellectually undesirable.” This position is particularly plausible given the variations in ontological orientations of the academic community. This fragmented nature of literature on sense-making thought and practice, however, prompted Thompson and Stapleton (2009) to carry out a study titled; *‘Making-sense of sense-making.’* This work contributed to the increasingly louder discourse on sense-making and implementation and to the debate on what sense-making encompasses, but without putting to rest issues of the effect of varying ontological persuasions on what sense-making typically entails, in a particular field. Variations on how sense-making is conceptualised are mirrored in the variety of features and thoughts ascribed to this important concept as portrayed in literature and further reviewed below.

2.2.1 What then is sense-making?

Although the concept of sense-making has permeated much of the academic discourse in the present world, given its plasticity and different ontological persuasions of the academic community, there are considerable differences on how sense-making is understood and applied up to this day (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014; O'Connor, 2015; Chimbi, 2018). The following features of sense-making are, however, identifiable from an analysis and synthesis of available literature on this key concept and have implications to this study.

- “Sense-making is a dynamic process, concerned with transience rather than constancy, such that meaning is made in an on-going process in which past experience is projected upon possible futures” (Hernes & Maitlis, 2010: 27). This thinking defies the notion of objective reality outside the realm and experience of individual sense-makers in a given context.
- “Sense-making is triggered when “members confront events, issues, and actions that are somehow surprising or confusing” (Maitlis, 2005: 21) and when “discrepant events, or surprises, trigger a need for explanation” (Louis, 1980:229). In Weick’s (1995: 49) language, “sense-making is triggered and shaped by cues ...,” in a process in which individuals seek to “interpret and explain a set of signals from their environments” (Maitlis, 2005: 21).
- Regardless of ontological variations among members of the academic community (Maitlis & Christianson, 2014), sense-making is largely viewed as a social activity. This is particularly so because even individuals making sense on their own are embedded in a socio-material context where their thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are influenced by the “actual, imagined, or implied presence of” significant others and experiences (Allport, 1985, as cited in Weick, 1995: 39). In other words, sense-making does not occur in a vacuum.
- A number of writers view sense-making as a process through which “people create and maintain an intersubjective world” (Balogun & Johnson 2004: 524), and “produce, negotiate, and sustain a shared sense of meaning” (Gephart *et al.*, 2010: 285). The concept of “shared” or “intersubjective” meaning here does not point to an entirely overlapping and agreed-upon understanding of

issues of interest in this concept. Rather, it implies understandings that are close enough, or comparable, in ways that permit coordinated action within an organisation or among organisations (Weaver & Olson, 2006; Welford *et al.*, 2011). This means individual sense-markers can understand the same phenomena differently or similarly, depending on the nature of their individual and collective circumstances (Rigby, 2015). Leithwood (2017) defines such individual and collective circumstances as person specific contexts and widely-shared contexts respectively. Jita (2004) uses the term resources of biography to refer to what Rigby (2015) calls individual circumstances and Andrews *et al.* (2013) use the term technologies of self.

- Sense-making creates “rational accounts of the world that enable action” (Maitlis, 2005: 21). It is “a continuous effort to understand connections, either among people, places, and events, in order to forestall their trajectories and act effectively” (Klein *et al.*, 2006:72). This means sense-making is also “enactive of sensible environments” (Weick, 1995: 30). That is, the action that people take to make sense of a situation in their environment, in turn, enacts the environment that people seek to understand (Spillane, 2002). Weick (1995, as cited in Spillane *et al.*, 2002: 733) thus asserts, “sense-making underscores that, people generate (*construct*) what they interpret;” and that interpretation is part of sense-making and hence the concept interpretive sense-making (Langley & Abdallah, 2015)

Working from recurrent themes in literature as discussed above, Maitlis and Christianson (2014:67) therefore define sense-making as:

A process, prompted by violated expectations, that involves attending to and bracketing cues (signals) in the environment, creating intersubjective meaning through cycles of interpretation and action, and thereby enacting a more ordered environment from which further cues can be drawn to inform future action.

In the same vein, Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010: 551) define sense-making as “... the process of social construction that occurs when discrepant cues interrupt individuals’ on-going activity, and involves the retrospective development of

plausible meanings that rationalise what people are doing. Supporting the same view, Brock *et al.* (2008: 450) see sense-making as a process of “building schematic mental models for decision-making by integrating different pieces of information in terms of individual emotions, projected outcomes, individual goals, and expectations.” Chrispeels *et al.* (2008:734) posit that, “... mental models are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand (make-sense of) the world and how we take action.” Di Paolo *et al.* (2010) add that, people think through and act in terms of their interpretation of their environment.

What is said here points to firm relationship between the mind, the context and human action in sense-making, that is, the ways in which people derive meaning out of their environments and act accordingly. Spillane *et al.* (2002: 733) thus says, “... sense-making is situated.” The situated nature of sense-making and the thinking that instructional leadership is a collaborative activity (Jita & Mokhele, 2014), made it appropriate to use sense-making lenses to illuminate issues at stake in my study of instructional leadership in inclusive instructional settings. Chrispeels (2008: 734) argues that, “... although mental models generally, are considered at the individual level ..., they can also operate at a team or group level over time as members continue to work together.” This means, individual sense makers may construct and understand phenomena around them either individually or collectively (Cohen & Mehta, 2017; Chimbi, 2018) and, hence, act differently or similarly, depending on the context of the environment in which they operate and their own historical and biographic circumstances.

Ruff and Shoko (2005), Spillane and Anderson (2014) and Rigby (2015) are among the few writers that used the sense-making tool-kit to analyse instructional leadership practice by school heads, albeit in elementary schools and not specifically in inclusive instructional settings. Ruff and Shoho (2005) used Kim’s (1993) model to analyse instructional leadership thought and practice in three elementary schools in the United States of America. The model comprises four key dimensions, namely perceptual focus, standard for assessment, approach design and implementation tactics (Ruff & Shoho, 2005). Leithwood and Montgomery (1986) also proposed an alternative mental model which comprises four key dimensions encompassing vision

and goals, factors to influence, strategies used, and the nature of decision-making processes by school heads. The dimensions in the two models are closely related and are used to frame the current study. Kim's (1993) notion of perceptual focus, for example, aligns with the notion of factors to influence. The notion of vision and goals in school heads' practice similarly aligns with Kim's standard for assessment. Kim's approach design aligns with the descriptions provided in the decision-making category of practice styles and finally, Kim's implementation tactics are similar to the description of strategies. This means, from a sense-making perspective, instructional leadership may adopt a strategic orientation.

2.2.2 Why sense-making in the current study?

In the current study, I sought to understand how school heads construct and understand instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools and how sense-making explains instructional leadership practices in inclusive secondary schools. I adopted the enactive model or cognitive sense-making theory (Spillane, 2002) as my social lens. This model was preferred because issues at stake in the current study seemed to naturally lend themselves in the enactive approach to sense-making. The model is premised on the precept that sense-making is "grounded in identity construction" and takes place in the context of "on-going" projects leading to behaviours that "enact the environment" (Spillane, 2002: 734) hence fitting to issues in the study. The idea that "sense-making is situated, that is, tied to the situation in which stimuli are noticed, interpreted and, subsequently, acted upon" (Spillane, 2002: 734) illuminates the socio-cultural, socio-material, socio-historical and the socio-economic environment in which school heads in inclusive secondary schools operate. This enabled me, as a researcher, to explore the context of the instructional environment (Hallinger, 2018; Dzimiri, 2019) in which school heads, in inclusive secondary schools find themselves operating.

The enactive perspective further maintains that explanations of social phenomena and actions towards organisation goals are either enabled or constrained by implementers' "perceptions of social appropriateness and collective meaning" of policy programmes (op. cit.), including what Dequech (2013:13) refers to as the logic of consequences. This thinking was also assumed to hold keys to the explanation of

why schools in the district studied still grappled with inclusive instructional practices in the backdrop of an apparently enabling policy and political environment.

The explanation power of the enactive model of sense-making to issues in the current study rests on its acknowledgement of the idea that policy implementers' (social agents) actions are situated in institutional sectors that provide norms, rules, and definitions of the environment that either, constrain or enable action (Cohen, 1990). The enactive model also maintains that the tacit schemata (resources of biography) available in individual sense-makers define appropriate structures and give meaning and order to human action in institutional sectors (Scott, 1992). In this arrangement, action is centred on an effort to preserve the legitimacy of the institution (logic of social appropriateness) to maintain stakeholder support (Spillane, 2002). In addition, the enactive model acknowledges that a school's political circumstances are also an important context for mid-level managers' (school heads) sense-making. This equally suggests that sense-making is situated and instructional leadership practices enacted from instructional leadership contexts.

School heads, therefore, face major political (power) challenges because their position in the school hierarchy, for example, focuses their work on at least two directions. On the one hand, school heads "are street-level workers, dependent on and responsible to their local community stakeholders and the district office for implementing school policy" (Lipsky, 1980, as cited in Spillane, 2002: 735). Jita (2004:16) uses the term "accountability to the system" to refer to the responsibility such as referred to in this section. On the other hand, school heads "rely on other street-level workers (classroom teachers), for the successful implementation of the policy programmes they are tasked to implement." This acknowledgement of the enacted and situated nature of sense-making, therefore, made the enactive model of sense-making increasingly more appropriate as the social lens for informing the current study. The theory is also amenable to the conceptual framework upon which the study is grounded. The framework comprises instructional leadership, inclusivity and sense-making as key concepts in a study that sought to use evidence-based practice to encourage school authorities to ensure that, education systems become more responsive to the needs of the communities they are made to serve.

2.3 Unpacking the Instructional Leadership Black-box

This part of the study focuses on literature related to the concept, instructional leadership, in order to put the study into perspective by clarifying this key concept in the study. Spillane (2015: 277) supports this thinking by saying, “conceptualising phenomena under study, in a particular way, shapes how we might frame and hypothesise relations among these phenomena”, and that, weak conceptualisation of key constructs that frame a study leads to fuzzy research.

2.3.1 Mapping the landscape of school leadership and instructional leadership

According to Kara and Ertürk (2015: 46), “interest in leadership and related research has noticeably increased over the past century”. This observation is also advanced by Smith and Squires (2016: 65) who states that, “leadership is a concept that has been widely studied and researched across a variety of domains including both business and educational worlds.” Goksoy (2015: 110), citing earlier work from Lunenburg and Ornstein (2013), echoes the same position and further asserts that:

Although investigations on leadership concepts date back to Plato’s ‘*The Republic*’ written in 400 B.C., and that thousands of studies, books and movies exist on the topic; due to its importance which is to relate what is leadership and how to be a good leader, there still exists areas that are uncovered about this important concept.

According to Kara and Ertürk (2015: 2046), “Leadership is regarded as a key for the survival, regeneration, and success of organisations, which is reflected in the literature where we can come across numerous definitions,” and approaches to leadership. In other words, literature has revealed that leadership is one of the most significant single factors which determine school effectiveness (Pan *et al.*, 2015; Hamal, 2019; Howley *et al.*, 2019). However, the dynamic nature of instructional environments, performance demands and accountability requirements placed on school heads, and the effects of changing times have made the definition of educational leadership, thought and practice, very elusive through time and space (Hill, 2014). This observation prompted Kellerman (2015), as cited in Mestry (2017: 258), to assert that, “school leadership has become a high wire act that only the most skilled are able to perform successfully.” Spillane *et al.* (2003: 3) refer to this lack of clarity on what exactly is educational leadership and how to be a good leader

as the “black box of school leadership” thought and practice. This ‘black box’ nature of school leadership thought and practice, as Spillane *et al.* (2003: 3) observe, is also true of instructional leadership, which itself is an important component of school leadership. This observation gives credence to the current study which sought, in part, to appreciate how school heads make sense of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools and how this sense-making influence instructional leadership practices in this instructional environment.

In the traditional sense of the concept, educational leadership is viewed as a process of influencing people in organisations, teachers included, to work towards the achievement of organisational goals (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2016; Tsakeni, & Jita, 2019). In keeping with this traditional sense of school leadership, Kara and Ertürk (2015: 2046) see a leader as “a person who influences his or her followers and motivate them in line with their organization's goals.” Cezmi *et al.* (2014: 173) assert that, “leadership is therefore, known as an effort that directs organizational activities to achieve a common goal.” This means when organisational members are influenced by a single person towards the achievement of shared school goals, it should be understood that the process of leadership has occurred. The quintessence of the leadership process in the traditional sense, therefore, consists of the effect of one heroic individual on influencing others. Goksoy (2015: 110) supports the above thinking and goes further to reaffirm that “a leader in this leadership process is accepted as the person with the most or highest effect on the members of the group and causes others to act in a specific way or purpose.” The common point in all these definitions is the emphasis placed on the influencing aspect. Also important is the motivating nature of leadership and the observation that a leader cannot be understood as an individual isolated from his/her followers.

Steers *et al.* (2012) also weigh in and reaffirm that, whilst different definitions and explanations of leadership have a lot in common, we may be confronted by different leadership expectations if we analyse leadership from a social sciences perspective. The reason behind this diversity is that leadership thought and practice have been seen to vary both culturally and over time (Bajunid, 1996). According to Kara and Ertürk (2015), some cultures want, for example, domineering leaders that look down upon their followers whilst other cultures desire unassertive leaders that are largely

part of a big team. In the later, leadership is more about creating an environment for performance than influence (Dimmock & Tan, 2016; Hsieh & Liou, 2018).

Literature study has revealed that leadership thought and practice evolved over the course of time to a level where people can now talk of a large mix of leadership approaches and practices that educational leadership and management, such as school heads, can rely upon as they seek to mediate school effectiveness (Tsakeni & Jita, 2019). According to Bourne and Heaven (2016) and Hsieh and Liou (2018), these leadership approaches include instructional leadership, moral leadership, participative leadership, contingency leadership, transformational leadership and managerial leadership, among others. Other contemporary forms of leadership include collaborative leadership, shared leadership or distributed leadership.

The necessity of school leadership in promoting school effectiveness is confirmed by Portin *et al.* (2003: 7), who observe that, “notwithstanding school type, that is, primary or secondary, public or private, every school needs leadership in seven critical areas, namely instructional, cultural, managerial, human resources, strategic, external development, and micro political.” These assist a school to effectively achieve its goals. Isik (2020) also talks about ethical leadership which appears to be a cross-cutting approach among most of these leadership types. This seems to support the thinking that, “school leadership has become a high wire act that only the most skilled are able to perform successfully” (Mestry, 2017: 258), especially as people seek to strike a proper balance among the competing expectations and pressure from stakeholders (Dimmock & Tan, 2016).

It has been argued that, from the menu of educational leadership approaches and styles available for adoption by practitioners, instructional leadership has stood out to be one of the most fundamental and indispensable approaches that can be relied upon to promote school effectiveness and student learning as measures of school success (Bourne & Heaven 2016; Urick, 2016; Howley *et al.*, 2019). According to Bourne and Heaven (2016: 4), citing earlier work from Hoy and Miskel (2006), “instructional leadership is a particular form of leadership that emphasises the improvement of teaching and learning in the school’s technical core”. Instructional leadership has been identified as the only leadership approach with a direct relationship with schools’ teaching and learning programmes in ways that are non-

existent in other approaches to educational leadership such as transformational leadership (Kaparou & Bush, 2016; Urick, 2016). For this reason, several academics have linked high quality instructional leadership to very positive school performance outcomes, including improved achievement of learners (Hallinger & Heck, 1998; Lee *et al.*, 2012; Jita, 2010; Pan *et al.*, 2015). Dimmock and Tan (2016) thus define instructional leadership as learning-centred- leadership.

This conceptualisation of instructional leadership, as a key contributor to school performance and the ‘black box’ nature of school leadership practice (Spillane *et al.*, 2003), ignited my interest in seeking to understand how school heads make sense of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary school settings and how this sense-making influences their instructional leadership practice in these instructional environments. My review of literature related to this study has revealed scanty studies on sense-making related to leadership in educational leadership, instructional leadership and inclusive education. According to Kara and Erturk (2015), who wrote on mental models of the school principals on leadership in Bursa, Samsung Trabzon and Istanbul Provinces of Turkey, one of the few studies in this area was carried out by Ruff and Shoho (2005) in the United States. My review of related literature revealed Rigby (2015) as another writer who has specifically researched on sense-making and instructional leadership thought and practice, albeit not necessarily focusing on the important area of inclusive secondary school instructional environments. Howley (2019) also reports of the scarcity of research in this important area thus, effectively making it a black box of educational leadership practice (Spillane *et al.*, 2003) and hence the thrust of this current study to explore it.

2.3.2 Tracing the boundary lines of instructional leadership

Rigby (2015: 375), in concurrence with Bryk *et al.* (2010), maintains that, although “twenty first century principals are considered to be instructional leaders, conceptualisations of this role and associated practices differ significantly among different writers and practitioners.” Howley *et al.* (2019: 5), citing Leithwood *et al.* (2004), concur that, “conceptualizations of instructional leadership vary, but the core meaning refers to principals’ efforts to improve teaching practice as the key direction for the school.” Literature has further revealed that the concept of instructional leadership, as a dimension of school leadership, has been defined both narrowly and

broadly in time and space (Fowler & Walter, 2020). The narrow or broadness of instructional leadership thought and practice can be approached from two angles. The first angle is the content and objective of instructional leadership. The second angle is in terms of the school head as the person occupying the post of an instructional leader. According to Murphy (1988), as cited in Marks and Printy (2003: 374), “instructional leadership, narrowly defined, focuses on leadership functions directly related to teaching and learning.” This definition focuses instructional leadership on the content of instructional leadership practices and not on players. In other words, the people in the school system responsible for leadership are assumed and not directly identified and mentioned. This highlights that instructional leadership is about direct classroom activities which promote teaching and learning.

Greenfield (1987) also recognises this narrow conceptualisation of instructional leadership and highlights the narrowness from the perspective of players, and not the content of instructional leadership. Spillane *et al.* (2003), as echoed by Hallinger (2009) and Mestry (2017), talk of instructional leadership in its expanded view. In this view, instructional leadership is conceptualised as consisting of activities that school heads engage in so far as to create a satisfying and productive working environment for teachers and necessary conditions for students to excel. Urick and Bowers (2014: 98) support this position and attest that, “over the past two decades, the study of school leadership has shifted from a focus on traditional, top-down forms of educational leadership to educational leadership that is shared with teachers.” Instructional leadership, in this sense, is now associated with “the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material and cultural resources (artefacts) necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of innovation in teaching and learning” (Spillane *et al.*, 2003).

According to Fowler and Walter (2020: 465), “Instructional leadership is a concept drawn from the literature of educational leadership to describe the role that a school principal plays in helping to create a culture of instruction and assessment in a school, placing student learning at the centre of the instructional process, and fostering the professional growth of teachers as classroom instructors.” This definition signifies a shift from the narrow conceptualisation of leadership of learning as mere influence to one that sees leadership as creating a positive environment for

performance (Dimmock & Tan, 2016). In practice, this also implies a shift away from associating school leadership with venerable 'great man' or the 'heroic leader' (Allison *et al.*, 2016) to a more collaborative school leadership practice.

As can be observed from the above discussion, earlier definitions of instructional leadership incorporated the sense that individuals in school systems are responsible for instructional leadership. This narrowness of instructional leadership portrays the school head as directly and individually responsible for instructional leadership in a school setting. Alig-Mielcarek (2003: 3) supports this type of thinking in defining instructional leadership in terms of the "school principal's behaviour that leads a school to educate all learners to a level of high achievement."

Greenfield (1987), as echoed by Alig-Mielcarek (2003), expands the otherwise narrow conceptualisation by bringing in two variables of content and players in his definition of instructional leadership. The definition by Murphy (1988) clearly points at the school head as a solo player in instructional leadership. Evident in these definitions is identification of the purpose of instructional leadership to ensure effective learning by learners in schools. Alig-Mielcarek's (2003: 3) definition is particularly pertinent to this study as it refers to "... principals' behaviour that leads a school to educate all learners to a level of high achievement." While it does not explain what is meant by "educating all learners to a high level of achievement," that is, the criteria for performance in this situation, it implies an element of inclusion. However, it is also not clear whether emphasis was not mainly on academic performance ahead of other learning outcomes. This type of inclusion seems to be related to what Jita (2004:17) alludes to in the concept of "accountability to learners" as well as "accountability to the subject matter."

Grissom and Loeb (2009: 5) as echoed by Adams, *et al.* (2019) also identify instructional leadership from a narrow perspective though a bit more elaborate by describing "strong instructional leaders as hands-on with the curriculum and instructional issues, unafraid of working directly with teachers, and present often in the classroom." This narrow conceptualisation of instructional leadership typically implies that it is something done to teachers by school heads, the officially designated leaders. Grissom and Loeb (2009) and Adams, *et al.* (2019), typically like other writers in this tradition, portray instructional leadership as a direct and private

preserve of the school head, the officially designated school leader. Dahiru *et al.* (2017) support the idea that instructional leadership in the traditional sense implies something done to teachers by school heads with the aim of improving effective learning by all. The idea that instructional leadership aims at improving school performance by improving effective education for all is particularly important in the current study. This idea is important as it implies awareness that learners in classrooms may have different needs which should be attended to if each learner is to benefit from learning experiences. It also implies an element of inclusive education. Given the centrality placed on educating all learners in inclusive schools, the issue of 'improving education for all', as raised above and also suggested in Jita's (2004) principle of accountability to students, will be discussed in latter sections of this chapter. This is because educating each child according to individual need is central to the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary school settings explored in this study.

As reviewed above, some writers portray instructional leadership from its narrow sense while others portray it from a broad perspective (Dimmock & Tan, 2016). Marks and Printy (2003: 374), for example, observe that, "in a broader sense instructional leadership also refers to all other leadership functions that contribute to student learning, including managerial behaviours." Mestry (2017), in agreement with this broad sense of instructional leadership, maintains that, "instructional leadership is described as those actions that school principals take, or delegate to others, to promote growth in learners' learning". This brings to mind issues of collaborative leadership (Jita, 2010) which is a tenet of the modern school of instructional (Hornig & Loeb 2010: Dimmock & Tan, 2016). Naidoo and Mestry (2019), citing earlier work from Hallinger (2009) calls this modern form of instructional leadership, 'reincarnated' or the morphed type of instructional leadership. Mestry (2017: 262) further describes instructional leadership in this context as "an active and collaborative form of leadership where the principal works with teachers to shape the school as a workplace in relation to shared goals, teacher collaboration, learning opportunities, commitment and learner learning." Yu (2009: 724), citing earlier work from Liu (1984), also adds direct or indirect instructional leadership to the conversation and asserts that, "instructional leadership consists of direct and indirect behaviours that significantly affect teacher instruction and, as a result, learner

learning.” This shows that instructional leadership is a multidimensional social activity (Mestry, 2017; Naidoo & Mestry, 2019).

It is important to mention at this point that, whilst some academics seem to suggest that only learners will be learning, literature shows that other writers believe that, both teachers and learners learn during the process. For example, Spillane *et al.* (2003: 5) see “instructional leadership as an influence relationship that motivates, enables, and supports teachers’ efforts to learn and change their instructional practices.” Although Spillane *et al.* (2003) maintain the idea of an influence relationship as a key variable of instructional leadership; they also advance the idea of teacher learning and teacher motivation as influential in instructional practices which, in turn, impacts on learner learning. This shows that instructional leadership can also create a favourable environment for effective learning for all. Instructionally, effective schools are, therefore, viewed as having a positive learning environment characterised by highly motivated teachers, with a “... shared vision, a system of clear teaching objectives, commitment to academic goals, and a culture that facilitates learning and fosters high expectations and standards for students” (Pan *et al.*, 2015: 493). Such schools ought to present opportunities for teachers to learn so as to remain relevant for purpose. Bourne and Heaven (2016: 4), define instructional leadership “as a particular form of leadership that emphasises the improvement of teaching and learning in the school’s technical core”.

The above definitions confirm Rigby’s (2015) observation that conceptualisation of instructional leadership cannot be taken for granted. For example, literature reveals that instructional leadership can be understood as centred on the school head as an officially designated school leader (direct instructional leadership). Furthermore, it can be viewed as “an active and collaborative form of leadership where the principal works with teachers to shape the school as a workplace in relation to shared goals, teacher collaboration, teacher learning opportunities, teacher commitment, and learner learning” (collaborative instructional leadership) (Mestry, 2017: 262). The common feature among all definitions given above is that, the desired result of successful instructional leadership is improving learner learning. How this goal is realised is what separates the broad from the narrow or the direct from the indirect perspectives of instructional leadership.

In light of the above argument, it is evident that conceptualisations of what instructional leadership by school heads looks like in practice vary among writers and practitioners (Rigby, 2015). The general assumption among many writers and practitioners is that the primary responsibility of school heads is instructional leadership. That is, learning-centred-leadership (Dimmock & Tan 2016). Variations in the way we construct and understand instructional leadership is believed to have an impact on both theory and practice of instructional leadership. This thinking is aptly captured in Karl Marx (1819-83)'s famous dictum, as cited in Schwandt (2014) and echoed by Lloyd, (2017:1), that: "Practice without theory is blind, theory without practice is sterile." Schwandt (2014: 233) further points out that "practice is the site where theoretical knowledge is applied to solutions to practical problems."

Effectively, this means theory should inform practice which, in turn, should inform theory through enactive sense-making practices (Spillane *et al.*, 2002). This relationship between theory and practice makes my study very worthwhile as its major objective is to establish how secondary school heads in inclusive instructional environments construct and understand their instructional leadership roles and responsibilities as a basis for practice. Furthermore, how this sense-making influences instructional practices in inclusive settings is not clearly understood. Using the sense-making perspective, this study, therefore, sought to establish and explain how the conceptualisation (theory) of instructional leadership by school heads in inclusive secondary schools influences their instructional leadership practices in this instructional environment. It is clear from the definitions above that instructional leadership is constructed and understood differently by different writers and practitioners through both time and space (Jita, 2010). Instructional leadership, as a concept, thus suffers from the problem of definitional pluralism and plasticity and hence this lack of clarity on how school heads make sense of this key concept.

According to Jita and Mokhele (2013), definitional pluralism and plasticity, as evidenced in this construct is typical of most other constructs in the social sciences and should cause no anxiety. What is imperative is to appreciate the context in which a construct is used and then proceed from this perspective to apply the concept in one's own situation. Spillane (2015) also shares the same sentiments and observes that poor conceptualisation and operationalisation of constructs in research have,

however, resulted in the production of fuzzy research outputs. From this perspective, he challenges academics and practitioners to mitigate the effects of this definitional pluralism and plasticity of social science concepts by ensuring that terms used in any given study or context are properly contextualised, operationalised and clarified for the benefit of consumers of educational research outputs and policy programmes. This means both academics and practitioners should understand how concepts, such as instructional leadership, are constructed and understood in any given situation, for instance, inclusive instructional environments and even national or organisational settings. This would explain and improve practice in specific social settings such as inclusive schools.

In recent years, literature study has revealed that most Asian countries, for example, Taiwan and Malaysia, have embarked on a strong drive towards building an indigenous body of knowledge on educational leadership to include instructional leadership within their national contexts (Bajunid, 1996; Hallinger, & Walker, 2017). In their research on principal instructional leadership in Taiwan, Pan *et al.* (2015) support the idea of building an indigenous knowledge base of instructional leadership. This study also sought to contribute to building indigenous knowledge on instructional leadership in inclusive secondary school instructional environment with the goal of improving teacher effectiveness and hence learner learning in these instructional settings in both a Zimbabwean and African setting.

According to Bajunid (1996: 53), the motive for building this indigenous body of knowledge on educational leadership “is neither necessarily political nor intellectual arrogance but emerges from the desire to find meaning and relevance in the complex processes of defining individual and national intellectual and professional identities” and resultant practices. This approach makes research output immediately relevant to society. Building an indigenous corpus of knowledge on educational leadership is thus believed to be the basis for understanding national and probably regional practices and then relate them with international best practices as a launch-pad for improvement. Pan *et al.* (2015) and Walton (2018) observe that indigenisation prevents pitfalls of academic colonialism which results in writers and practitioners falling into the trap of blindly adopting and trying to apply concepts and theories developed in context different from theirs or ones that have outlived their

period of usefulness. This is why I say, blindly adopting the instructional leadership school in inclusive secondary schools presented by some writers whose study sites and contexts are outside Africa or Zimbabwe is like ignoring Karl Marx (1819-83)'s warning that: "Theory without practice is empty; practice without theory is blind" (Lloyd, 2017:1). To avoid pitfalls of this blindness of theory and/or emptiness of practice, Bajunid (1996), Pan *et al.* (2015), Hallinger, & Walker (2017) and Walton (2018), encourage academics to explore "indigenous perspectives and practices" by domesticating research in order to understand and inform context based practice.

The above encouragement is also applicable to the African situation, including in Zimbabwe, where both academics and practitioners may also be advised against blindly adopting and applying theories and practices that originated from social settings different from theirs, including concepts like inclusive education and instructional leadership, without a strong appreciation of the national and contextual needs behind the practice. This is not to mean that theories and practices should not be borrowed from other environments different from one's own, but that they should not be followed blindly without considering and adapting them to suit the local and/or prevailing situation of the time (Walton, 2018). The current study recognises the recommendation by Bajunid (1996), Pan *et al.* (2015), Hallinger, & Walker (2017) and Walton (2018), as cited above. It sought to understand, domesticate and apply instructional leadership principles as originating from such countries as the United States (Pan *et al.*, 2015). These are principles popularised by scholars such as Spillane, Murphy, Pan, Hallinger and Walker advocated in African setting by Jita and his students, among other writers.

The localisation of perspectives and practices recommendation by Pan *et al.* (2015), Bajunid (1996) and Walton (2018) is indicative of a strong conviction that successful leadership is constructed in accordance with people's educational values as embedded in their respective national cultures as a key context. This means successful instructional leadership in inclusive secondary school settings should be constructed in accordance with educational values and practices entrenched in societal culture about the purpose of schools and their roles in a given society (Howley *et al.*, 2019). Rigby (2015) refers to this set of values as the logic of social appropriateness. This implies that societal understanding of socially appropriate

action and evidence of educational achievement has a strong bearing on the success of instructional inclusion practices in any given community. It is not clearly understood how school heads in inclusive secondary schools construct and understand the purpose of their instructional leadership practice in terms of educational inclusion and educational achievement in Zimbabwe. It is also not clearly understood how school heads in inclusive secondary schools conceptualise what counts as evidence of both student learning and school achievement in the communities served by schools. The objective of improving school effectiveness through effective learner learning is irrefutable in the above definitions of instructional leadership. However, it is not clearly understood how effective student learning is enacted in inclusive secondary school settings given the exceptional nature of some learners in inclusive instructional environments and the perceived aims of education in the Zimbabwean cultural and economic setting. Furthermore, it is not clearly understood how school heads make sense of what instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school mean to them as individual sense-makers and actors (Rigby, 2015). The current study, therefore, sought to unpack this instructional leadership black box. In support of the black box nature of educational leadership theory and practice, Florian *et al.* (2016: 2) point out that, “understanding the purposes of schools and their role in society challenges all who are engaged in education whether they work in schools, universities or national or local governments.” In the context of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools, the challenges may stem from the fact that people have different logics for education, educational leadership and hence instructional leadership which, as explained in section 2.3.1 above, is itself a key element of educational leadership.

Florian *et al.* (2016) assume that the reasons why educationists face challenges in understanding the purpose of inclusive schools in particular, is because there is no agreement on the salient issues such as: “(i) the concept of achievement, (ii) the meanings of inclusion, and (iii) the use of evidence on achievement and inclusion to inform educational policies and practices” (p. 2). People therefore, use different logics when they approach issues concerning the purpose of education, educational leadership, and hence instructional leadership. It is not clearly understood what logics guide school heads as they perform instructional leadership duties in inclusive

secondary school settings and how these logics enmesh with societal expectations on the role and purpose of schooling in the community.

The current study on the challenges of and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools sought to close this gap by establishing how school heads in inclusive instructional environments make sense of: (i) the meaning and purpose of instructional leadership in inclusive settings; (ii) the meaning of school and learner achievement in inclusive schools; and (iii) the use and nature of evidence on achievement and inclusion to inform instructional leadership and practices and policies. The concept Rigby (2013) refers to as instructional leadership logics is what Jita (2004) terms 'resources of biography' and is now the focus of contemporary educational leadership debates. The next part of my review of related literature focuses on logics of instructional leadership.

2.3.3 Logics as sense-making tools for instructional leadership

Scott (2007), Rigby (2013, 2015), Dequech (2013), and March and Olsen (2004) share the view that human action is a product of logics that people use to interpret the social reality around them. According to Scott (2007: 170), logics are "belief systems and associated practices that predominate in an organizational field." Rigby (2013) sees instructional leadership logics as what instructional leaders, such as school heads, should believe, know and do in order to lead effective schools. In other words, instructional leadership logics are bundles of ideas which come together at a particular point in the life of individual instructional leaders and serve the purpose of enabling and/or constraining certain types of actions (practices) and not others (Rigby, 2013). By establishing what is appropriate, "logics encourage actions that are in line with what is acceptable at that given time and place; concurrently, they discourage actions that are misaligned with what is considered to be proper" (March & Olsen, 2006, as cited in Rigby, 2015: 376). From the perspective of educational leadership and in particular instructional leadership, what is said above means that instructional leadership logics serve the purpose of determining what instructional leaders may understand as appropriate action in any given instructional environment, such as in inclusive instructional environments. Logics are therefore, the building blocks to sense-making through their effect on mental modelling (Meagan *et al.*, 2008). They therefore form the basis of action.

Consistent with the thinking that logics determine appropriate action, March and Olsen (2004) and Dequech (2013) talk about the logic of social appropriateness, logics of consequences and the logic of action when referring to this bundle of ideas that guide human action. From this background, March and Olsen (2004) define the logic of social appropriateness as a view on how human action should be interpreted; policy formulation and policy implementation included. Dequech (2013: 95), on the other hand, conceptualised logics of action as:

... a set of socially shared rules of thought and behaviour (that is, socially shared mental models and behavioural rules) that involve a domain of action, the metric used, and the objectives or obligations associated with the positions people occupy in this domain.

Rigby (2013: 3) asserts that, “by establishing what is socially appropriate, logics encourage actions that are in line with what is socially acceptable at any given time and place; concurrently, they discourage actions that are misaligned with what is considered to be proper.” Rigby (2013) seems to suggest that action, such as instructional leadership is rule-based. With a caveat, Dequech (2013) partly supports this type of thinking by arguing that, “action is rule based, but only partly so” (p.13). In other words, Dequech (2013) seems to suggest that at times action may not be rule-based and hence not as predictable as people may want to believe. This however does not rule out the role of logics in sense-making and human action, but brings in to fore, the interplay of resources of biography (Jita, 2004), or technologies of self (Andrews *et al.*, 2013) with what Hallinger (2018) defines as the institution context of the school leadership environment.

However, using the concept of logics and its relationship with sense-making and action, it can be argued that there is potential tension in human action. There is tension between the identity-based logic (role-based logic) of appropriateness, on the one hand, and the preference-based consequential logic on the other hand. This is supported by Dequech (2013: 13) who contends that, “there is a great diversity in human motivation and modes of action. For example, human behaviour is driven by habit, emotion, coercion, and calculated expected utility, as well as interpretation of internalized rules and principles.” Spillane *et al.* (2002) use the concept of sense-making to explain how policy implementers negotiate the tension in the light of the

observation by Dequech (2013). In defining action logics as “socially shared mental models and behavioural rules ...” Dequech (2013) further acknowledges the link between logics and sense-making. In other words, logics are perceived as building blocks for sense-making (that is, development of mental models) which in turn influence human action.

Literature seems to support the key assumption in this study that sense-making is the bedrock for action. However, it is not clearly understood how school heads in inclusive secondary schools make sense of instructional leadership in these settings and how this sense-making influences their instructional leadership practices. This study, therefore, sought to close this gap.

In order to anchor my study in an existing body of knowledge, Rigby (2013)’s work on logics of instructional leadership was considered relevant to this research. Rigby (2013) clarifies the “identity-based logics of appropriateness and the preference-based consequential logics of action”. Dequech (2013: 13) documents the existence of more than just one classification and conceptualisation of logic of instructional leadership in the school environment. These are perceived as crucial in determining expectations and practices of school heads that are exposed to them. Rigby further expands the logics of appropriateness or the logics of action in ways that make the logics theory easily understood and applied in explaining research findings which are anchored on the link between sense-making and action, typical of the current study. According to Rigby (2013), there are three classifications of logics but only two competing classes of logics tend to dominate in influencing instructional leadership practices. The two alternative logics are the entrepreneurial and social justice logics of instructional leadership. The prevailing logic, as given by Rigby (2013), is a foundational logic from which the two alternative logics are perceived to have emerged as opposite ends of a continuum as further explained below.

2.3.3.1 Prevailing logic

According to Rigby (2013) and Rigby (2015), the prevailing logic of instructional leadership represented a shift from the traditional role of school principals in America more than twenty years ago. Instead of focusing purely on management of schools as organisations, principals also focus on instructional (teaching and learning) activities in the prevailing logic of instructional leadership.

Basically, the prevailing logic is centred on the view that school heads are both managers of their schools as well as instructional leaders. According to Howley *et al.* (2019:6), “Prevailing principals claimed both building management and instructional leadership roles, simply following conventional wisdom”. In terms of their leadership of learning roles, the goals of school heads are broad and include increasing learner achievement and building or maintaining teacher satisfaction. Overall, the prevailing logic calls for school heads to focus their effort on teaching and learning, establishing relationships with teachers, and in guiding teachers to improve their teaching with the objective of improving student learning. According to Rigby (2013), key terms such as effective learning, improved instruction and learner achievement, and even the set-up upon which results can be realised within the context of the prevailing logic are left undefined. As a result, they are exposed to subjective interpretation. What is clear from literature reviewed above is that, within the context of the prevailing logic, there are multiple goals in school leadership. The logic itself is therefore, broad and flexible and is capable of being implemented across a wide spectrum of instructional environments. The lack of clarity on the contextual meaning of such key concepts as student achievement is, however, contrary to Hopkins (2003: 173)’s proposition that “schools need to be explicit, eloquent and prolific in their definition of achievement”. This should then be celebrated and communicated to stakeholders for schools to achieve effectiveness in pursuit of their goals. In addition, education systems should have a reward system to eliminate the need for most sanctions associated with transactional leadership (Hopkins, 2003: 173).

2.3.3.2 Entrepreneurial logic

Entrepreneurial principles are “very similar to the prevailing type, but oriented to business models and accountability demands” (Howley *et al.*, 2019:6). The entrepreneurial logic is premised on the understanding that instructional leadership should alter inequitable learning outcomes by use of methods and techniques ‘borrowed’ from the private sector. It challenges instructional leadership logics that include multiple and flexible approaches to leadership of learning. Instead, it emphasises specific practical approaches, which lead to improved learner achievement and can objectively be measured in terms of standardised test scores (Rigby, 2014). According to Florian *et al.* (2016), the entrepreneurial logic is associated with the neo-liberal philosophy of education which is built on the business

principle of competition and hence marketization of social institutions including education. Accordingly, the entrepreneurial logic is seen as an approach to modelling “instructional leadership that removes instructional leadership thought and practice from the undefined bucket of the prevailing logic. Instead of taking an agnostic stance, however, the entrepreneurial logic takes a position on several key issues,” such as on goals of instructional leaderships and models of assessment (Rigby, 2013:14). As implemented in the American context, the approach aims at “achieving double-digit gains of more than 10% in test scores on standardized test” (Rigby, 2013: 13).

Literature describes how the entrepreneurial logic fills in the gaps and inadequacies of the prevailing logic. Anderson (2001: 205) supports this position by eloquently stating that, “the ambiguity in the prevailing logic allows the silences in the text [to] get filled by others.” Rigby (2013) echoes this thinking by saying, “in some cases the entrepreneurial logic simply highlights certain elements of the prevailing logic as central to instructional leadership practices, whereas in other cases the logic in fact fills the silence.” With reference to the role of teachers, for instance, the entrepreneurial logic draws similarities to the prevailing logic in that they both consider teachers as critical in the schools’ effort to achieve instructional goals. In other words, they both appreciate that organisations, schools included, achieve their goals through people. With entrepreneurial logic, however, instruction is data driven. There is practically a push in the entrepreneurial logic to associate teacher success with the performance of learners in standardised tests whose results are made public for all to see. Lortie (2002) as cited in Rigby (2013) supports this observation by pointing out that where teachers are normally able to shut their doors, for example, in the context of the prevailing logic, the entrepreneurial logic opens them at least with reference to learning outcomes. In the context of the entrepreneurial logic, achievement on the part of teachers and schools is measured only in terms of the performance of learners in standardised tests and are ranked and published for all to see like sport league tables. This, according to Florian *et al.* (2016), may be detrimental to successful inclusion as it sets schools into competition for results in an effort to guarantee their legitimacy.

Apple (2006) supports the thinking that the marketplace metaphor, as applied in the entrepreneurial logic, promotes exclusionary and not inclusionary instructional leadership practices. When certain schools in a community of schools, for example, are considered to be particularly successful following their performance in public examinations as the sole standard for achievement, they become motivated to employ covert learner selection criteria. Their instructional leadership moves away from a focus on the school to a focus on learners. Dimmock and Tan (2016) thus, talk about instructional leadership as learning-centred- leadership. In terms of a marketplace metaphor:

This practice ensures that demand for places in the most popular schools invariably outstrips supply, and so such schools are able to make choices about which children and parents are likely to enhance their reputation or position in local league tables they are placed (Florian *et al.*, 2016: 8).

This means the marketization of education (Mhlolo, 2015; Florian *et al.*, 2016), typical of the entrepreneurial logic, promotes exclusionary and not inclusionary instructional leadership practices. Lahann and Reagan (2011: 13) support the thinking that entrepreneurial logic “reinforces social inequities by failing to provide an excellent education to all students.” The underlying assumption in this logic is the neoliberal view that educational achievement is measured only in relation with the performance of learners in public examinations and that all learners are capable of doing well in standardised examinations.

From the perspective of the entrepreneurial logic, the problem with educational inequalities is that of learners not given equal access to education. Once such access is made possible, it is assumed that all and every learner is capable of competing for the best results in a market-oriented school system. In other words, once schools adopt data driven instructional programmes and performance is measured only with reference to achievement in standardised tests, then it is felt equality of educational opportunities is achieved. This sounds unrealistic if we are to rely on evidence from the experiences obtained from previous years.

Bambrick-Santoyo (2010: 2) defines data-driven instruction as involving changing a school’s focus from “what was taught” to “what was learned.” According to the

entrepreneurial logic (Rigby, 2014), if done within the backdrop of non-discrimination of learners on the basis of social, biological or economic reason, data driven instruction will guarantee successful inclusion. Inclusion in the above sense is more of a political or economic intervention and may not benefit learners with physical disabilities and those with learning difficulties, whose ability to compete for high standards of intellectual achievement may be constraint by their exceptionalities. Florian *et al.* (2016), therefore, associate the entrepreneurial logic with marketization of education. This could be detrimental to effective inclusion of learners with exceptionalities in the sense of physical disabilities and learning difficulties. In fact, it perpetuates marginalisation of such vulnerable groups as learners with physical and learning difficulties (*ibid*).

2.3.3.3 Social justice logic

The social justice logic is an alternative view to the entrepreneurial logic. According to Rigby (2013), the social justice logic is rooted in the experiences and inequitable educational outcomes of marginalised groups in competitive-market based education systems. It challenges the “neutral” systems of instructional practices that promote the reproduction of inequality in our society. The social justice logic proposes a set of instructional practices that raises educational achievement of all learners, preparing them as critical citizens, making sure that learners learn in inclusive classrooms; each according to his/her needs (Furman, 2012). The central role of school principals in the social justice logic “is not only to facilitate action, but also to change beliefs” (Rigby, 2014: 20) among social actors (providers and consumers) in public education. Rigby (2014) further avers that, “historically, the social justice logic was anchored in the ideas of John Dewey (1899), and more recently taken up by critical theorists, such as Paolo Freire (1970)” p. 20).

McKenzie *et al.* (2008) perceive three goals for leaders who adopt social justice logic as involving: (a) raising the educational attainment of all learners as measured by their performance in standardised tests; (b) preparing learners to live as critical thinkers in the societies to which they belong; and (c) ensuring that learners learn in inclusive classrooms, each according to his/her needs. Furman (2012: 194) advances that, irrespective of plurality and plasticity of definitions, a “common understanding among many leadership scholars is that social justice focuses on the

experiences of marginalised groups and inequities in educational opportunities and outcomes.” Arguably, such groups should also include learners with physical disabilities and those with learning difficulties. These should also be prepared, through the education system, to lead their own independent lives as adults and parents of their own children. Such learners risk to be left behind in a commercialised and marketised system (Florian *et al.*, 2016; Phasha *et al.*, 2017).

The presentation above shows that social justice logic sought to alter prevailing belief systems and actions so that schools effectively meet the needs of the historically marginalised learners. It calls “for a rethinking and reconstructing roles and relationships around a vibrant core purpose focused on social justice and directed at improving student learning” (Cambron-McCabe & McCarthy, 2005: 215). Learners with exceptionalities include both children with physical disabilities and those with learning difficulties, who are included in the category of learners considered as historically marginalised. There is a clear connection here between educational inclusion of learners with exceptionalities and social justice, especially if the concept of inclusion is not politicised and education not entirely marketised.

The literature reviewed in this section of the study revealed multiple logics to which school heads, in their capacity as instructional leaders, are exposed. As a result, it is not clear what logics guide instructional leaders in inclusive secondary schools as they go about their duties of leading learning in these instructional environments. Literature has, however, revealed that instructional leadership is a balancing act of persistent tensions amongst different logics of action. For example, instructional leadership attempts to strike a balance between the demands and duties of their offices and roles as perceived and calculated by school heads as actors in policy implementation matrices. In other words, literature has shown that school heads, as actors in policy implementation, may be expected to adopt postures that may make them “achieve desirable outcomes through methods that they recognize as inappropriate. They follow prescribed rules and procedures at the cost of producing outcomes they recognize to be undesirable” (Rigby 2013: 13). Jita (2010:16) describes how instructional leadership practices are a constant struggle to ensure “accountability to the system, accountability to the subject and accountability to students.” Instructional leadership is thus a multidimensional practice.

2.4 Growth and Development of Instructional Leadership Thought and Practice

The next subsections focus on literature on the growth and development of the theory and practice of instructional leadership. Reviewing literature on the origin and development of the theory and practice of instructional leaders is in response to the call for caution by Pan *et al.* (2015). Their warning calls for the need for academics to be careful to avoid the pitfall of academic colonialism by blindly adopting theories and practices that may have originated from a context different from the one at hand.

According to Pan *et al.* (2015: 493):

... the origin of instructional leadership can be traced back to the late 1970s and early 1980s with the emergence of research on comparisons of successful and unsuccessful urban elementary schools serving poor children in North America known as the effective schools' research.

A noteworthy point from Pan *et al.* (2015)'s observation is the idea that instructional leadership began with the emergence of research on comparison of successful and unsuccessful schools serving poor children. In the conventional sense, the mention of poverty implies that instructional leadership emerged because of the desire by academics to understand the education of learners with exceptionalities in the context of poverty and not physical disabilities and learning difficulties. Lee (2012: 588), citing earlier work from Hallinger (2005), supports this position and further avers that, "research into instructional leadership began in earnest in the early 1980s, as part of the school effectiveness movement."

In my enquiry, I sought to explore the education of both learners with exceptionalities in the context of disability and learning difficulties versus those considered 'normal' in an inclusive instructional environment. The similarity between the current study and the ones which formed the foundation for studying instructional leadership is in the provision of education for learners with exceptionalities in both cases. However, the nature of exceptionalities in the two studies is different. In the foundational studies to instructional leadership, emphasis was placed on poverty whilst in my particular study; emphasis is on physical disability and learning difficulties. Downey and Condon (2016) share the notion that poor children are special needs children. However, this is the point of difference as in the previous studies exceptionalities

involved only poverty and, in my study, exceptionality is broadened to include learners with physical and or learning difficulties and OVC. This means the current study focuses on learners who may find it difficult to perform to expected standards in certain forms of educational programmes because of their exceptionalities and thereby risk exclusion from some schools as a result of these limitations.

According to Pan *et al.* (2015: 493), during the time that research on instructional leadership emerged:

... leadership, particularly instructional, was identified as a key component to student success, as effective principals assumed an assertive instructional role, engaging in tasks, such as conducting consistent walk-throughs, engaging in dialogue with teachers about instructional strategies, and providing teacher development.

Literature study reveals that this period was followed by an era in the history of instructional leadership in which it had almost been written off as an approach, which was based on an autocratic philosophy, which no longer has any place in post-modern leadership practices (Seashore & Robinson, 2012; Hallinger, 2009). According to Hallinger (2009), instructional leadership at some stage virtually died a natural death. However, Hallinger (2009; 2015) agrees that instructional leadership has since reincarnated in a morphed sense of leadership for learning in response to increasing accountability standards now placed on the shoulders of those tasked with the responsibility to manage schools. The death and reincarnation of instructional leadership in its current form means instructional leadership in the traditional sense has effectively given way to a new form of instructional leadership. Horng and Loeb (2010) describe this new instructional leadership paradigm as educational leadership for instructional improvement.

In recent years, it has been observed that several countries have strengthened instructional leadership drive and have now adopted the practice as one of the most effective approaches to educational leadership that is associated with effective schools (Mestry, 2017; Bourne & Heaven 2016). Countries that have adopted instructional leadership philosophy are predominantly those in the Western world, such as the United States, from which the concept originated, Greece and the United Kingdom. In recent years, the concept has been embraced in Asian countries such

as Taiwan and Malaysia, among other countries (Kaparou, & Bush, 2016; Pan *et al.*, 2015; Bourne & Heaven 2016). The instructional leadership philosophy has found its way into Africa through South Africa, arguably one of the most developed countries on the continent (Taylor, 2008). Some of the countries that have also adopted the instructional leadership paradigm in Southern Africa include Zimbabwe and Botswana (Makaye, 2015).

In light of what is presented above, it can be said that, whilst instructional leadership knowledge base has developed significantly in the Western world over a long period of time, empirical studies on instructional leadership have only emerged recently in the countries of the developing world, such as in Asia, Latin America and Africa (Hallinger & Wang, 2015). This lack of research on instructional leadership has presented challenges in developing countries when school heads, whose role has traditionally been administrative, are suddenly being asked to become instructional leaders (Hallinger *et al.*, 2017) in the backdrop of lack of empirical evidence to inform practice. Lack of empirical evidence on issues of instructional leadership also brings in challenges of indigenous conceptualisation and contextualisation of instructional leadership in most countries of the developing world because most of them rely on evidence generated outside their national context. Pan *et al.* (2015) and Dimmock and Tan (2016), therefore, call for indigenisation of research to create context-based evidence that informs practice.

It can be noted that early efforts to generate definitive conceptualisations of 'instructional leadership' focused on the role of the school head (Hallinger, 2012; Mestry, 2017). This was probably because of what Spillane (2015) describes as a narrow conceptualisation of the construct, instruction and instructional leadership, as pointed out earlier on. Due to this narrow conceptualisation of instruction, most international writers have described instructional leadership around its key attributes defined by school heads' responsibilities and behaviours which promote student learning (Hallinger, 2009; Mestry, 2017). This narrow conceptualisation has, however, attracted several criticisms as instructional leadership came to be associated with a venerable man; a heroic leader whose place in educational leadership thought and practice is now deemed to have expired.

The shift from conceptualisations of leadership as influence, to an understanding of school leadership as creating an environment conducive to learning, has dominated educational leadership discourse and almost become a pillar of the present day understanding of instructional leadership. This was not evident in the early conceptualisation of instructional leadership. In this traditional sense, instructional leadership has been understood as a role ascribed to school heads as officially designated school leaders. It is not clearly understood whether school heads in inclusive secondary schools in Zimbabwe understand and practice instructional leadership from its narrow and centralised perspective or from its broad and collaborative sense. The current study, therefore, sought in part to close this gap.

2.4.1 Critics, ‘death,’ and the reincarnations of instructional leadership

Given the lack of agreement on the question of what really constitutes instructional leadership, Marzano *et al.* (2005), in agreement with Mestry (2017), submit that, although there is increasing evidence that instructional leadership is critical to effective performance of schools, the shortage of adequate research in this important area makes some members of the academic community doubt the credibility of some of the claims associated with this concept. According to Leithwood and Jantzi (2005), with concurrence from Heck and Hallinger (2009) as well as Harris *et al.* (2017), very few writers, especially in the developing world, have made an effort to contribute to the important question of how exactly leadership by school heads influences school outcomes. Whilst many academics have proved that indeed school heads do make a difference, they have, however, not clearly explained the how part of the question (Heck & Hallinger, 2009; Dimmock & Tan, 2016). Malinga and Jita (2016) lament the dearth of research on instructional leadership in Africa, especially in South Africa. The fact that the two specifically referred to the situation in South Africa may not imply that the situation in other African countries is at all any better than what prevails in South Africa. In fact, given that South Africa is one of the most developed countries in Africa, Walton (2018) sees the situation in African as much better much better than the rest of the other African countries.

The current study, therefore, sought to improve the situation by establishing how sense-making of instructional leadership by school heads explain their enactment of instructional leadership practices in inclusive secondary schools. To the best of my

knowledge, this area has not been fully explored; both in Zimbabwe and beyond. Most studies on both instructional leadership (Hallinger, 2012) and on educational inclusion (Chireshe, 2013) have tended to be skewed in favour of the primary schools sector. Furthermore, previous studies were also focused on areas other than the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership as constructed and understood by school heads in inclusive secondary school settings.

As a result of the skewedness of previous researches on instructional leadership in favour of the elementary school sector, as opposed to the secondary school one, and worse still not in the inclusive secondary schools, it has been argued that the resultant research findings obtained over time may not mean the same thing for secondary school heads as they do for primary school heads (Marzano *et al.*, 2005). It is also not known whether these research findings mean the same for principals in inclusive schools. This gap justifies the current study which focuses on the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools as perceived and experienced by school heads and on how sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in this school setting. It has been argued that many writers criticise studies on instructional leadership for over concentrating on the primary school level of education and then attempt to smuggle the resultant research findings to interpret the situation in the secondary schools department. In other words, critics of the instructional leadership paradigm generally feel that instructional leadership has largely remained a concept primarily associated with elementary schools, with very little relevance to the secondary schools sector. This is because there has been a lack of examples of instructional leadership practices studied in secondary school settings (MacNeill *et al.*, 2005); a gap that this study partly seeks to cover.

Goddard (2003: 15) for instance, cited an example of “the contempt of a high school physics teacher after the school head, with a background in teaching English language, described his lesson as boring.” According to Goddard (2003), this teacher did not take lightly the comments of the school head he felt was not a specialist in physics. This example reconfirms the contention that teachers in secondary schools are typically subject specialists, and that this subject specialisation may naturally exclude non-specialists in a certain subject area from

making any meaningful, informed and constructive contribution towards helping specialist teachers to improve their teaching in their area of specialisation. This notion is also supported by Blasé and Blasé (2000). On the face of it, this notion also sounds plausible for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools as well. It implies that school heads that do not have adequate knowledge in inclusive education may technically not be able to contribute meaningfully and constructively in the teaching of children with exceptionalities in inclusive secondary school settings. The head, therefore, will not be able to directly practice instructional leadership in the traditional sense of the concept under inclusive secondary school settings, unless a collaborative or a shared (Jita & Mokhele, 2014; Dimmock & Tan, 2016; Bush, 2019) approach to school leadership is adopted.

It has also been argued by critics of the instructional leadership paradigm that most literature on this construct tend to emphasise the behaviour of the school head as opposed to that of other members of the school system. This means that instructional leadership is generally perceived as the private preserve of school heads, with teachers, being passive recipients. In other words, instructional leadership is perceived as something done to teachers by school heads. As a result, most descriptions of instructional leadership define the concept in terms of behaviour of the principal who is presented as the hero of the education system (MacNeill *et al.*, 2003). The head leads teachers who are expected to take instructions as they come from above without questioning. Critics of the instructional leadership paradigm believe that this view of school leadership, which is based on positions, is considered to have outlived its period of usefulness and has no place in the current thinking in school leadership, especially in the secondary schools department. Urlick (2016: 154), citing earlier work from Bossert *et al.* (1982) and from Firestone and Martinez (2007), attests that, “the principal’s role in early instructional leadership research was critiqued as heroic, too centralized and top-down”.

Clearly the concept ‘instruction’ from which the construct instructional leadership was derived is polluted with judgemental overtones of power (Dimmock & Tan, 2016). In other words, it connotes command, within a characteristic approach to school leadership which is more closely related to transactional (managerialist) theories than leadership theories as constructed and understood today (MacNeill *et al.*, 2005;

Mestry, 2017). Managerialism is understood to be more inclined to the use of cohesive power than leadership (Ngara, 2013), something which is no longer fashionable in the present world. However, Spillane (2015) warned against conceptualisations of both instruction and instructional leadership in this narrow sense. It is for this reason that the definitions of instructional leadership that revolve around the school head (*the head teacher mentality*) have been considered as inadequate in present day school leadership literature (Mestry, 2017). Some writers, therefore, argue that, people (both researchers and practitioners) that still subscribe to the traditional instructional leadership trajectory are clinging to an out-dated view of instructional leadership in which only the top echelons of power are believed to drive change and effective learning in their respective schools (Hallinger, 2006). It is felt by some critics that this traditional view of school leadership has undoubtedly outlived its period of usefulness and should be condemned to the abyss of educational leadership history.

The discussion above shows that instructional leadership has been criticised mainly from a definitional deficiency perspective, and a narrow perception of what the concept instruction means, and not in terms of what it can contribute towards effective learning of students in our schools (Spillane, 2015). Dimmock and Tan (2016) criticised the instructional leadership framework on the basis of the length of period since the concept was first used in America. The thinking here is that a theory which might have been useful some 20 years ago, may no longer have the same explanation power today. West (2016) supported the idea that some theories are criticised merely in terms of the period for which they have been in use.

However, literature has shown that, regardless of these criticisms, a firm argument can still be advanced about instructional leadership and school effectiveness. Some writers argue that the collaborative instructional leadership paradigm, which emerged from the mid-1990s (Hallinger, 2009; Pan *et al.*, 2015; Seashore & Robinson, 2012), as an approach which resources, empowers, supports and motivates teachers to effectively carry out their duties of teaching has overthrown the autocratic school head driven approach to instructional leadership of the 1980s (Mestry, 2017). Lashway (2002), as cited in MacNeill (2003), and echoed by Dimmock and Tan (2016), thus said:

Instructional leadership of the 1980s was principal-centred, often accompanied by images of heroic leaders single-handedly keeping the school on track.... However, a growing number of academics say that instructional leadership should be distributed across the school community, with principals, superintendents, teachers, and policy makers having complementary responsibilities (Lashway, 2002, as cited in MacNeill, 2003: 5).

The discussion above draws attention to the complex or possibly the ever changing nature of school leadership (Dimmock & Tan, 2016; Lee *et al.*, 2012), which Spillane *et.al.* (2003) define as a “black box” and more recently, Kellerman (2015:258) describes as “a high wire act that only the most skilled are able to perform successfully.” The thinking here is that not all educational leadership that matters for student learning is instructional in the traditional sense of the concept. It is now generally accepted that restricting conceptualisations of instructional leadership to the principal’s behaviour towards promoting student learning directly is being myopic both in theory and practice (Mestry, 2017). Instead of using the term instructional leadership, some critics of the instructional leadership paradigm, therefore, feel that the concept ‘pedagogic leadership’ is a better term to refer to the leadership of learning in schools (MacNeill *et al.*, 2003). Whilst the term pedagogy may also be contestable, it is felt that this covers a wider array of important features of the teaching/learning activities that matter than the restrictive concept of instructional leadership (*op. cit.*) as derived from the autocratic and power based concepts, namely, “instruct” and “instruction.” Dimmock and Tan (2016) suggested the use of the concept learning-centred-leadership and Horng and Loeb (2010) suggest the use of the term organisational management for instructional improvement or leadership for learning.

The thinking among the critics of the inclusive leadership framework is that, the concept of pedagogy is much broader and more liberating than the concept of instruction. Pedagogic leadership is seen as an activity that motivates teachers better than instructional leadership. It seems MacNeill *et al.* (2005) are not comfortable using the concept instructional leadership which to them connotes an authoritarian (command type) style to educational leadership. Some writers, however, feel that the concept instructional leadership can still be used in compound contexts such as in ‘distributive instructional leadership’ (Diamond, & Spillane, 2016),

collaborative instructional leadership (Bush, 2019) or inclusive instructional leadership (Howley *et al.* 2019).

Clearly, the critics of the instructional leadership paradigm seem to generally take advantage of the deficiency of concrete definitions of the concept of instruction that is acceptable to all (Spillane, 2015). It appears these critics centre on the word and not the practice of instructional leadership. On the face of it, they appear to take advantage of the generic meaning of the terms instruct and instruction from which the concept instructional leadership is derived. Another general criticism that has also been proffered is that, given the complexity and size of present day primary and secondary schools, instructional leadership practice may not be possible. It can, however, be safely said that these criticisms of instructional leadership have not resulted in the death of the concept (Hallinger, 2005). Instead, this has made contemporary writers on educational leadership, such as Hallinger, Spillane, Bush, Howley and Jita to seek better understanding of the behaviour and practices of educational leadership that focuses on student learning in present schools.

It can be argued that the critics of instructional leadership have made contemporary academics to redefine leadership and instruction and to understand the most appropriate instructional environment that is needed for educational leadership to work towards improved student learning. A new thinking about instructional leadership has therefore, emerged (Hallinger, 2009). Spillane (2015: 279) thus advises that, "... instruction should not be conceptualised too narrowly, confined to classroom and/or focused exclusively on cognitive or academic matter." Instruction and instructional leadership should be conceived to extend "beyond the classroom to students' experiences in schools, more broadly in the hallways, lunchrooms and before and after school end times" (*op. cit.*).

Clearly, regardless of any criticism that can be levelled against the concept and practice of instructional leadership, several writers are convinced that 21st century principals are expected to be instructional leaders (Rigby, 2015). Among such writers are David Cohen, Phillip Hallinger, James Spillane and Loyiso Jita, to mention but only a few. The work of such writers has created renewed thinking in instructional leadership since 1980. This renewed thinking about instructional leadership since 1980 has ignited interest among other academics, and has made instructional

leadership a very topical issue in several countries up to this day. Jita, for example, has in recent years been promoting a lot of research in instructional leadership in Southern Africa including in South Africa, Swaziland and Zimbabwe. Following this development, Hallinger (2009; 2012) maintains that, although the construct instructional leadership has been criticised by many writers, it has emerged as one concept that has refused to die. According to Hallinger (2009), following an apparent death in the 1970s, instructional leadership has since reincarnated in a morphed sense, such as distributed instructional leadership or teacher leadership. Hallinger (2015) thus describes present day instructional leadership as a growing fade that has refused to die. This concept is further discussed below.

2.4.2 Reincarnated instructional leadership: A growing fade that refuses to die

Horng and Loeb (2010) seem to share similar sentiments by MacNeill *et al.* (2005) about the inadequacies of the traditional instructional leadership thought and practice to solve emerging challenges of leadership of learning in present day schools, given their size and complexity. Rather than recommending that academics discard the concept of instructional leadership as inadequate, in preference for 'more holistic' terms such as pedagogic leadership, Marzano *et al.* (2005) and Horng and Loeb (2010) feel that effective school leaders in present day schools must infuse traditional educational management roles. These roles include budgeting, evaluation, and scheduling with aspects of supervision of teaching/learning activities. According to Horng and Loeb (2010), this implies that, though instructional leaders are immensely involved in instructional and curricular issues that have a direct effect on student achievement, they should also be involved in general management activities that make schools become conducive to improved learning environments. They should also be involved in motivation, training, coordinating and school resourcing, among other things (Kirby, 2017). This is in line with the thinking that not every leadership that matters for effective school performance is instructional in the traditional sense of the concept and that there is no single leadership style that is good for all seasons.

Some writers in the traditional instructional leadership literature emphasise the direct teaching/learning aspects of educational leadership with the assumption that a strong and directive school head who is focused on the curriculum and instruction, is

critical to school effectiveness (Marzano *et al.*, 2005; Dimmock & Tan, 2016). As pointed out above, the writers in the old tradition of instructional leadership have tended to characterise successful school leaders as “hands-on leaders who are deeply involved in and engaged with both curriculum and instruction issues, and are unafraid to work directly with teachers” (Cuba, 1984, as cited in Hallinger, 2005: 226). Such heads should also monitor lessons and assist teachers as they carry out their day-to-day teaching activities. The resultant literature from such writers has created a prototype of what is considered to be an ideal instructional leader for all schools. Such leaders have been portrayed as outstanding teachers who are motivated to use their excellent teaching skills to promote excellent learning among students. Such exceptional leaders would mentor the members of their teaching staff by observing them in practice, giving them feedback, and demonstrating instruction when necessary (Dimmock & Tan, 2016)

What is said above gives the impression that the prototype school head, as previously portrayed in this chapter, should be conversant with the teaching of each subject in the curriculum, and spares the time to visit and assist every teacher at an individual level. Although this is an attractive picture of the ideal, the model is not necessarily suited to the reality of the situation in many present-day schools, given their size and complexity. Some contemporary writers therefore perceive this as inadequate because, for example, this is not amenable with leadership in secondary schools for several reasons (Horng & Loeb, 2010; Dimmock & Tan, 2016). One of the reasons is the fact that, most schools today have grown to be very large high schools serving thousands of learners. Such schools also provide a multiplicity of learning areas ranging from humanities, commercials, technical-vocational and sciences, among others. Emphasis in educational inclusion by some schools may also further complicate instructional leadership practices by school heads.

It can be observed that, no matter how thorough the training of an individual school head might have been, there is virtually no way anyone could have the content knowledge and adequate skills to effectively assist every teacher on how to teach different subjects across the curriculum (Dimmock & Tan, 2016). This is evident in secondary schools, and more so under inclusive settings within the context of the traditional instructional leadership framework. Even if school heads have the

requisite expertise, it is still hard for them to regularly observe and assist several teachers found in some of the present-day schools. This means that with the ever-increasing size and complexity of present-day schools, and hence the numbers of teachers involved, it is increasingly becoming difficult for school heads to afford intensive hands-on mentoring on instructional and curriculum issues across the curriculum (Horng & Loeb, 2010). It is thus evident that there is surely a prima-facie case for a new paradigm and a new definition of what characterises instructional leadership in present day secondary schools and in an African context. This is particularly so in inclusive secondary schools where leadership is assumed to be different from regular schools which have not embraced inclusion. This is also supported by Boscardin (2007) who contends that leadership in special education related schools is different from leadership in conventional schools. This calls for a different view of instructional leadership.

According to Horng and Loeb (2010: 67), a new paradigm of instructional leadership should emphasise “organizational management for instructional improvement rather than day-to-day teaching and learning alone”. This is also supported by Gunawan (2017). Some researchers have established that, in present day schools, the quality of education can be affected only slightly by a school head’s direct participation in classroom teaching alone (Horng & Loeb, 2010; Marzano, 2005). The same researchers have also concluded that school heads and other educational leaders can have a remarkable influence on the performance of learners “through the teachers they hire, and how they assign these teachers to classrooms” and motivate them for performance (Horng & Loeb, 2010: 67). Also important is the way schools keep the talent that they hire, and how opportunities for teachers’ development are created within schools (Dimmock & Tan, 2016).

Instead of being directly involved in instructional activities, coaching and mentoring teachers on how to conduct lessons and to evaluate teaching, school heads ought to concentrate on creating a school vision, and hiring the right teachers for the right jobs. They are also expected to reward these teachers to keep them motivated. As instructional leaders in the current school system, school heads ought to be involved in what is now referred to as organisational management for instructional improvement, and then distribute the actual supervision, coaching and mentoring to

specialist teachers in their respective departments. It is however, not clear whether the additional elements of organisational management of instructional leadership is not perceived as watering down the instructional leadership roles of school heads, and whether educational stakeholders view such heads as being effective. The current study, therefore, sought in part, to explore these issues.

It ought to be appreciated that Zimbabwe has also embraced the philosophy of instructional leadership in educational leadership practices. The significance of instructional leadership in a Zimbabwean perspective is summarised in the Director's Circular No. 15 of 2006. This circular presents instructional leadership as one of the most imperative responsibilities of school heads today. Assessment tools for school heads in present day Zimbabwe also place a large premium on the extent to which school heads carry out their instructional leadership practices, including supervising and guiding teachers in classroom practices (MoPSE, 2015). This means that, even in inclusive settings, secondary school heads should be assessed for their prowess in leading instruction across the curriculum. Even in performance evaluation instruments used to assess teachers, emphasis is put on the number of classroom visits made and the number of supervision reports compiled.

Recently, Zimbabwe has also turned its educational leadership attention to issues of inspection. Most titles of district level instructional leaders are now associated with the concept of inspection as opposed to leadership. For many years the head of education at district level had been referred to as District Education Officer (DEO) but it has now changed to District Schools Inspector (DSI). His/her subordinates at the district level are called School Inspectors. It is not clear, however, as to the nature and extent to which the District Schools Inspectors' activities effectively promote instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools. In addition, it is also not clear whether these inspectors assist in training, motivating and supporting school-based instructional leaders, especially in inclusive secondary schools, to effectively carry out their duties of providing equal opportunities to all children, including those with exceptionalities. What is clear is that, as key stakeholders, these Ministry officials and structures have the capacity to motivate, support or even frustrate school-based instructional leaders' effort to promote inclusion (Driscoll & Crombie, 2001). The current study, therefore, sought, in part, to explore how school

heads make sense of the nature and extent of the support they enjoy from District education officials (inspectors) in promoting instructional leadership or learning-centred-leadership in inclusive secondary schools.

2.4.3 Instructional leadership practices available for adoption

As highlighted above, literature is awash with various descriptions of instructional leadership models that have been used to draw descriptive definitions for this important construct and to influence practice (Mestry, 2017). Review of literature also revealed a general agreement among scholars that instructional leadership is a key component of educational leadership, which is uniquely linked to student learning (Bush, 2007; Hoadley *et al.*, 2009). Instructional leadership is, however, multidimensional (Lee *et al.*, 2012) and fluid and hence different writers and practitioners may construct, understand and, in some cases, practise it differently. It is my assumption in the current study that, the multidimensional nature of instructional leadership makes it to be understood differently by school heads in different school settings, including those in inclusive secondary school settings. It is also my assumption that these multiple conceptualisations have implications on instructional leadership practices by school heads in inclusive secondary school instructional environments, which are not clearly understood but can be established through a research. Literature study has shown that several writers have weighed in with different mixes of instructional leadership behaviours (practices) that principals may harmonise and adopt during the process of leading student learning in schools. This is consistent with the definitional pluralism and plasticity of instructional leadership mentioned in section 2.4.2 and referred to above.

Nettles and Herrington (2007: 725), as also echoed by Hoadley *et al.* (2009), wrote about instructional leadership in South Africa. They describe instructional leadership practice in a series of seven principal behaviours (activities) which include the following: “(i) making suggestions, (ii) giving feedback, (iii) modelling effective instruction, (iv) soliciting opinions, (v) supporting collaboration, (vi) providing professional development opportunities, and (vii) giving praise for effective teaching.” Nettles and Herrington (2007: 725) further characterised effective principals as displaying eight common effective traits, namely:

(i) recognizing teaching and learning as the main business of each and every system in the school, (ii) communicating the school's mission clearly and consistently to all stakeholders, (iii) fostering standards for teaching and learning that are high and attainable, (iv) providing clear goals and monitoring the progress of students toward meeting them, (v) spending time in classrooms and listening to teachers, (vi) promoting an atmosphere of trust and sharing, (vii) building an effective staff and making professional development a top priority, and (viii) not tolerating ineffective teachers.

Robinson *et al.* (2008) concur with the tradition of defining instructional leadership through descriptions of its main activities as given above. Nettles and Herrington (2007) identified the following five dimensions as defining variables that constitute instructional leadership practices by school heads:

... establishing goals and expectations; resourcing strategically; planning, coordinating, and evaluating teaching and curriculum implementation; promoting and participating in teacher learning and development; and ensuring an orderly and supportive environment” (Nettles & Herrington, 2007: 725).

Robinson *et al.* (2008) established that dimensions with the strongest effects on learner outcomes are the ones to do with the school heads' promotion and participation in teacher training and development, and with the establishment of appropriate goals and expectations for performance. In their ranking of key instructional leadership activities that affect students' performance, Robinson *et al.* (2008) established that, the dimensions to do with planning, coordinating and evaluation of teaching and curriculum implementation were considered as second major factors in the list of instructional leadership variables available for adoption.

According to Marzano *et al.* (2005), one of the most outstanding typologies of instructional leadership practices that achieved a high level of visibility in academic literature since the inception of the concept is the one by Smith and Andrew (1989). Unlike Marzano *et al.* (2005), some writers believe that since the inception of the instructional leadership paradigm in the USA and its subsequent filtering into other countries of the world, Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model has been the most prominent of all (Bellibas *et al.*, 2017). For example, Lee *et al.* (2012) submit that Hallinger and Murphy (1985)'s model is most widely used internationally for exploring

instructional leadership. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) are, therefore, credited for instituting a model of instructional leadership practices that has become the keyhole for the analysis of how society constructs and understands instructional leadership thought and practice (Harris *et al.*, 2017; Lee *et al.*, 2012). The model conceptualises instructional leadership through three key dimensions and ten sub-dimensions (Harris *et al.*, 2017; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

Hallinger and Murphy (1985: 220) assert that “studies of instructionally effective schools suggest that the instructional management role of the principal can be subdivided into three general dimensions: defining the school vision and mission, managing the instructional programme, and promoting a positive learning climate.” In agreement with Hallinger and Murphy (1985), Bellibas *et al.* (2017) observe that in the first dimension, instructional leaders determine school vision and goals which are then communicated purposefully and effectively to the entire gamut of the school stakeholders including teachers, students, and parents. The contribution by such writers as Bellibas *et al.* (2017) has resulted in Hallinger and Murphy’s first dimension of instructional leadership being rephrased in recent literature as defining and communicating school vision and goals.

According to Bellibas *et al.* (2017: 53), citing earlier work from Hallinger and Murphy (1985), “the second dimension of instructional leadership involves developing an effective instructional programme that includes supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, and monitoring student progress.” The final dimension involves developing a positive school learning climate. In order to realise this end, “school heads must protect instructional time by ensuring that, teaching is not interrupted by distracters” (Bellibas *et al.*, 2017: 53). Harris *et al.* (2017) further opine that effective leadership also provides incentives for both teachers and learners. In addition to the above, effective instructional leaders should be available in their respective schools. They should also be ready to provide support to both their teachers and learners as they find necessary. Finally, “instructional leaders should make available various professional development opportunities for teachers to engage in continuous learning” (Bellibas *et al.*, 2017: 53). Some writers often add the use of instructional leadership artefacts (Makaye, 2015) as a key variable for instructional leadership practices. This inclusion is also adopted in the current study.

The OECD report (2009), although using different terminology, also contends that effective instructional leadership is characterised by three key activities (practices). The three practices are “management for school goals, instructional management, and direct supervision of instruction” (Lee *et al.*, 2012: 589). The three dimensions above are closely related to the activities put forward by Hallinger and Murphy (1985). For example, the OECD’s dimension on management for goals is closely related to Hallinger and Murphy’s first dimension of defining and communicating the school vision and goals. The second dimension of instructional leadership put forward by the OECD (2009) overlaps with Hallinger and Murphy’s dimension of managing instructional programme. The third domain on direct supervision of instruction refers to “actions to directly supervise teachers’ instruction and learning outcomes” (Lee *et al.*, 2012: 589). This too is observed to partially overlap with Hallinger and Murphy’s second dimension. This overlapping authenticates the centrality Hallinger and Murphy (1985)’s model has played in shaping conceptualisations of instructional leadership among writers up to this day. For example, Robinson *et al.* (2011, as cited in Lee *et al.*, 2012: 589) borrow from Hallinger and Murphy’s model to categorise “two broad dimensions of direct instructional leadership (e.g., setting and ensuring goals are effectively communicated, leading teacher teaching and instruction) and indirect instructional leadership (e.g., organizing instructional programme, protecting instructional time).”

According to Bourne and Heaven (2016: 2), as cited in Persell and Cookson (1982), a review of more than seventy five research studies based on leadership revealed the following instructional leadership practices by principals whose schools experience academic success: “(a) demonstrating a commitment to the establishment of academic goals, (b) creating a climate for high expectation, (c) establishing order and discipline, (d) consulting effectively with others, (e) effective use of time, (f) marshalling resources, and (g) evaluating results.” Heaven and Bourne (2016) further point out that Persell and Cookson model highlighted that the instructional leader cannot focus on any one element only, in order to attain high performance standards. Instead, the above discussion shows that educational leaders should employ different mixes of instructional leadership practices as they seek to maximise the performance of their schools. From the above reviewed literature, imprints of Hallinger and Murphy’s (1985) model are still discernible.

Literature study summarised above shows most writers accepting Hallinger and Murphy's (1985) model as one of the most popular and bedrock models of instructional leadership frameworks that have shaped instructional leadership thought and practice internationally in recent years (Harris *et al.*, 2017). Lee *et al.*, (2012: 589) conclude that, "In sum, OECD's conceptualization of instructional leadership is similar to the PIMRS, the most widely used instrument internationally for exploring instructional leadership." Although Lee and colleagues settled for the OECD's instructional leadership framework as a model for framing their study "on contrasting effects of instructional leadership practices on student learning in a high accountability context in Hong Kong," they highlighted that the model by Hallinger and Murphy is one of the most seminal works on instructional leadership. A striking feature of most of the studies referenced above is that none of them talks directly about instructional leadership and inclusive education.

Howley *et al.* (2019: 4) are some of the few writers who wrote directly about instructional leadership in inclusive schools. They saw the key constructs of inclusive instructional leadership as "defined in terms of six key leadership practices: (1) visioning, (2) using data well, (3) using research and evidence to guide instruction, (4) sharing leadership, (5) coaching teaching, and (6) reflecting on practice" (p. 4).

According to Lee *et al.* (2012: 589) "regardless of the variety of models and subsequent debate in the area of instructional leadership, at last two common agreements cut across studies of instructional leadership the world over." The first agreement is on the "positive impact of instructional leadership on school improvement and the second is the multifaceted nature of the construct; instructional leadership which has defied any concrete definition" (Lee *et al.*, 2012: 589). These common agreements have, however, not been watertight in shielding instructional leadership thought and practice against criticism. However, they help to harmonise contrasting views in the conversation regarding instructional leadership thought and practice by various writers in this field. Howley *et al.* (2019:5) thus says, "Conceptualizations (*of instructional leadership*) vary, but the core meaning refers to principals' efforts to improve teaching practice as the key direction for the school."

2.4.4 Empirical anchor on sense-making and instructional leadership practices

According to Kara and Ertürk (2015: 2146), “studies about mental models (sense-making) related to leadership in the field of education management are very scarce.” The only study that Kara and Ertürk (2015) were able to identify was conducted by Ruff and Shoho (2005) in the United States of America. More recently Rigby (2015) has also contributed to this discourse. Ruff and Shoho (2005) used the mental models thesis (logics) to explain how school heads make sense of instructional leadership practices in three primary schools in the United States of America. They concluded that mental models demonstrated by these school heads were different from each other. The differences were explained in terms of different circumstances that the school heads found themselves. In other words, the school heads operated in different contexts and had different lengths of experiences as school heads. Literature study has confirmed a strong influence by the environment on both sense-making and practice (Spillane, *et al.* 2002; Spillane *et al.* 2011; Rigby, 2015).

Ruff and Shoho (2005) and Rigby (2015)’s studies also confirm the role and importance of sense-making in educational leadership and how environmental factors, such as length of teaching experience impact on sense-making. Spillane *et al.* (2002), writing on implementation studies, confirmed that sense-making by policy implementers influence the extent to which policy programmes are accepted and implemented. Spillane *et al.* (2011) equally confirmed the link between the environment, sense-making and practice when they used the coupling thesis to explain the seemingly weak link between policy and practice in educational leadership. It can be said that the study by Kara and Ertürk (2015) may be counted as one of the few studies that directly related to sense-making of school principals on leadership. Admittedly, the study by Kara and Ertürk (2015) deals with issues of sense-making by school principals, however, unlike the current study, not about instructional leadership in inclusive secondary school settings. It can therefore, be argued that, whilst there may be several studies that have touched on sense-making and educational leadership, very few studies have focused on instructional leadership. In addition, the few studies which focus on instructional leadership, such as by Ruff and Shoho (2005), did not interrogate instructional leadership in inclusive instructional environment. Howley *et al.* (2019) talk about inclusive instructional leadership but did not use the sense-making lenses. The way sense-making is

influenced by the environment and how it (sense-making) influences practice dominate previous studies on sense-making and school leadership.

Brock *et al.* (2008) highlight the importance of sense-making in decision-making and action (practice) when they affirm that when people are faced with unusual, complex and ambiguous problems, with ramifications for self and others, they tend to develop responses by actively engaging in sense-making. Seashore and Robinson (2012: 631), echoing earlier work from Spillane *et al.* (2002), support this view as they opine that, “how people in organisations act is determined in part by the way in which they interpret and make sense of ambiguous events and environments.” Louis and Robinson (2012: 631), further aver that, “sense-making involves turning circumstances into a situation that is comprehended explicitly in words and serves as a springboard into action.” It is therefore, undoubted that, “people construct mental models for understanding the challenges they face in life, based on their interpretation of the situation, and their personal and professional frames of reference whenever they are trying to make sense of ambiguous situations facing them” (Brock *et al.*, 2008: 450). March and Olsen (2004), Dequech (2013) and Rigby (2013) use the term logics to refer to what Brock *et al.* (2008) are referring to as personal and professional frames of reference. Andrews *et al.* (2013) use the term technologies of self. Andrews *et al.* (2013) use the term technologies of self.

In the light of the above, it may be argued that a sense-making perspective may also enable us to conceptualise the logics (personal and professional frame of references) that school heads use to construct and understand their role expectations as instructional leaders in inclusive secondary school settings. Due to the scarcity of research on sense-making in educational leadership, as revealed by Kara and Ertürk (2015), it is not clearly understood how school heads in inclusive secondary school instructional environments make sense of their instructional leadership roles and responsibilities. Furthermore, it is also not clearly understood how this sense-making explains their instructional leadership practices in these instructional environments. What is known from the current literature review is that sense-making is itself a product of the interaction between the logics, with which social actors approach ambiguous issues in the environment, and the contingencies of the environment, which influence practice (Seashore & Robinson, 2012; Spillane

et al., 2002). According to Lee *et al.* (2012) individuals vary in the way they make sense of different aspects of the problems that they face in life, and in line with the varying circumstances in which they operate. Spillane *et al.* (2011) and Hallinger (2018) accept that, environmental factors have an impact on how people construct and understand their role expectations in society. In agreement with this perspective, Harris *et al.* (2017: 208) assert that, “instructional leadership practices are contextually influenced and that the principal’s effects on student outcomes are mediated by certain features of the school environment.” This implies that school heads’ conceptualisation (mental models) of instructional leadership in inclusive settings is also guided by their interpretation of the prevailing situation at any given time. This thinking is also consistent with the assertion by Spillane *et al.* (2002) that sense-making by policy implementing agents is key to the success or otherwise of policy programmes such as instructional leadership reform programmes. Priestley and Drew (2016:6) support the agency proposition and further assert that:

This concept of agency highlights that actors always act by means of their environment rather than simply in their environment so that the achievement of agency will always result from the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual and structural factors as they come together in particular and, in a sense, always unique situations.

The above argument further authenticates the position by Seashore and Robinson (2012: 631), echoing earlier work from Spillane *et al.* (2002) and Brock *et al.* (2008), that, “how people in organisations act is determined in part by the way in which they interpret and make sense of ambiguous events and environments.” This may be read to mean that, “as critical change agents and system players, formal leaders (school heads) interpret reform demands and translate them into school practices through a process of sense-making” (Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2017). Such reform demands also include instructional leadership in inclusive school settings that many countries have been trying to implement since the inception of the Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action (1994) on inclusive education.

2.5 Conceptualising instructional leadership in the Context of Inclusive Education

According to Florian *et al.* (2016:7), the inclusive principle can be traced to 1948, when the United Nations Declaration of Universal Human Rights identified “education as a fundamental right for all people.” This declaration and subsequent conventions, such as the Salamanca and the Education for All (EFA) have formed the bedrock for inclusive initiatives across the globe, in the present world (Naidu, 2018, Walton, 2018).

Educational inclusion, just like many other constructs in the social sciences, is one concept which has suffered from conceptual pluralism. According to Chireshe (2013: 226), the construct, “inclusion means different things to different people.” Furthermore, Florian *et al.* (2016) has also noted that, even up to this day, interpretations of both ‘education’ and ‘all’ and hence educational inclusion tends to vary across countries and time. Polat (2011: 51) as echoed by Anderson and Boyle (2015) submits that, “the definition and practice of inclusive education can vary significantly not only between cultures and educational systems but also within cultures and educational systems.” Whilst many writers would prefer to narrowly confine this construct to the inclusion of learners with disabilities into the mainstream education classrooms, other writers prefer to use a broad view of educational inclusion, which also encompasses the inclusion of other vulnerable groups in society, in addition to those with disabilities (Chireshe & Musengi, 2012; Anderson & Boyle, 2015). In other words, there is no universally agreed and accepted definition of educational inclusion (Mitchell, 2017). This conceptual pluralism of social science constructs, according to Jita and Mokhele (2013), citing earlier work from Yulk (2002), is typical of most concepts in social sciences and hence, should not cause any anxiety. In this study, it suffices to describe the dynamic concept of inclusion as an educational practice founded on the principle of education for all as we seek to operationalise this key concept.

According to Ainscow and Cesar (2006), recent studies suggest five different ways of classifying educational inclusion. Ainscow and César (2006: 234) demarcate five different ways of conceptualising and understanding educational inclusion as consisting of the following dimensions:

- Inclusion as concerned with disability and 'special educational needs',
- Inclusion as a response to disciplinary exclusion,
- Inclusion as involving all groups that are vulnerable for exclusion,
- Inclusion as the promotion of a school for all, and
- Inclusion as Education for All (Ainscow & César, 2006: 234).

UNESCO (2008), as cited in Mafa (2012: 15) and echoed by Anderson and Boyle (2015), views inclusion as implying the following key terms:

- It is essentially a process of looking for the most appropriate ways for responding to diversity, as well as of trying to learn how to learn from differences.
- It is linked to motivation and development, through multiple strategies, of students' creativity and their capacity to address and resolve problems.
- It comprises the right of the child to attend school, express his/her opinion, experience quality learning and attain valuable learning outcomes.
- It implies the moral responsibility of prioritising those students who are at risk of being marginalised and excluded from school, and of obtaining low learning outcomes (Mafa, 2012: 15).

Mutepfa *et al.* (2007: 1), citing earlier work by Chimedza and Peters (1999) and Mpofu (2004) see inclusive education in the Zimbabwean situation, as, involving “the identification and minimization or elimination of barriers to students' participation in traditional settings (i.e., schools, homes, communities, and workplaces) and the maximization of resources to support learning and participation.” Chireshe (2011: 157) as echoed by Walton (2018) submits to the conceptual plurality of educational inclusion but further points out that:

... although inclusion may mean different things to different people, it is generally believed to mean the extent to which a school or community

welcomes children with special needs as full members of the group and values them for the contribution which they make.

According to Chireshe (2013: 223), as supported by Anderson and Boyle (2015), “inclusive education is concerned with the presence, participation and achievement of learners with special needs in the mainstream school system.” The question which is not answered in this definition concerns what comprises special needs of learners. Florian (2008: 203) seems to address this question by pointing out that, “... inclusive education is based on the principle that local schools should provide for all children, regardless of any perceived difference, disability or other social, emotional, cultural or linguistic difference”. Learners who may be identified as special needs learners would then include those with physical disabilities, psychological challenges, learning difficulties, hearing impairment, and those with blindness or visual impairment who, it is perceived, may benefit from inclusive practices (Mutepefa *et al.*, 2007; Anderson & Boyle, 2015). These should however be judged to be includable.

From the above descriptions, it can be observed that inclusion does not only involve disabilities (Anderson & Boyle, 2015; Naidu, 2018; Walton, 2018). Instead, it also involves other forms of exceptionalities other than, for example, physical disabilities. In his definition, Chireshe (2013: 223) sees inclusive education as the “the education of all children, particularly those with special needs in mainstream schools, and requires schools to consider their structures, teaching approaches and use of support in order to respond to the needs of all children”. However, this definition seems to show an internal bias of inclusive education perspective on disability.

In this study, the construct educational inclusion is used to refer to the situation in which learners with physical disabilities and those with other forms of exceptionalities such as learning difficulties receive their education alongside their peers without such exceptionality designations. To anchor my study, I considered the discourses of special education needs (SEN), disability and learning difficulties together, “although I am aware of the danger of reductionism in doing so” (Cole, 2005: 331). In any case, the study is not about what educational inclusion means in general, but rather what educational inclusion means to school heads specifically as designated school leaders tasked with the responsibility of superintending the education of children in schools. The study is, therefore, partially about how school heads construct and

understand educational inclusion as a basis for their understanding of the role that they should play as instructional leaders in inclusive secondary school settings. It is also about how sense-making explains school heads' construction and practice of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary school settings.

Inclusion of children with learning difficulties, as adopted in this study, was meant to avoid the pitfall of adopting a narrow sense of inclusion which, according to Ainscow and César (2006) and Garner and Forbes (2013), is problematic. It was also in an effort to understand the education of all learners who risk being left behind as education systems adopt more and more of the market metaphor and inclusion focuses only on learners with physical difficulties and those from marginalised societies typical of the Zimbabwean situation, for example, during the colonial era. According to Cole (2005), learners with learning difficulties have the highest risk of being excluded from a competitive-market based mainstream education system typical of most education systems since the last twenty years of the 20th century. Cole (2005: 332) argues that:

The creation of a quasi-market in education, which has been observed in many countries, such as in the US and the UK, has created tensions for many children, their parents and teachers, especially those who are concerned with the education of children who experience learning difficulties.

Inclusion of learners with learning difficulties in this study, therefore, enables me to avoid the pitfall of adopting a narrow and otherwise stereotype of associating inclusion with disability studies or the de-colonial approach of associating inclusion with affording black children to formerly 'Whites-only, schools.' That is, a narrow view of educational inclusion.

According to Ainscow and César (2006), whilst this narrow view has attracted a lot of attention from a number of stakeholders, it risks the perpetuation of the exclusion of the already excluded in our midst including, learners with learning difficulties. Ainscow and César (2006) further highlight that the utilitarian value of this narrow approach to inclusion has been questioned by some academics for several reasons. Key among these reasons is the fact that, in trying to increase the participation of learners with exceptionalities in the least restrictive learning environments, attention

is only directed on the physical disability part of them whilst disregarding any other significant ways that may also hinder or improve full participation of learners in the education system (Ainscow & César, 2006). For example, children with learning difficulties would naturally be ignored as these are generally not classified as disabled in the conventional sense. Needless to point out that the same children with physical disabilities may also be having learning difficulties which may be ignored as people concentrate on the physical aspect of the learners' exceptionalities.

The adoption of the narrow definition may also result in schools that enrol children with learning difficulties not classified as inclusive schools and yet they are typically inclusive in the sense that they embrace learners who are otherwise excluded in some schools for reasons of their perceived deficiencies (Anderson & Boyle, 2015; Singhal, 2018). It may also be pointed out that rejecting a perception of inclusive education that revolves exclusively around issues of disability in the conventional sense also risks education systems losing attention to the continued exclusion of learners with disabilities. Such learners are normally classified as learners with special needs in the conventional sense, and attention for them should never be lost, just like is the case with learners with learning difficulties. For the above reasons, my study focuses on educational inclusion as involving learners with disabilities and those experiencing difficulties in handling intellectually related learning materials, by design and not by default. It is premised on the multiple and differential intelligence hypotheses (Scott, D. 2016; Bas & Beyhab, 2017; Chen, et al. 2018).

Highlighting the five typologies of inclusive education given by Ainscow and César (2006) and Chireshe (2011), as cited above, would help us to appreciate the idea that inclusive education and the definitions of inclusive schools should not be restricted to the narrow sense in which they are associated only with disability in the conventional sense (Anderson & Boyle, 2015; Naidu, 2018). Ainscow and César (2006) and Singhal (2017), for example, have conveyed to us the important point that inclusion should not only be viewed as involving learners with physical disabilities, but rather children with exceptionalities; and this includes, for example, children with learning disabilities, and those in difficult circumstances that would otherwise make them unable to access education.

Mittler (2012), Anderson and Boyle (2015) and Naidu (2018) concurs with the thinking that there is a rising tendency for educational inclusion to be perceived largely in terms of avoiding segregation, discrimination and exclusion, in relation to individuals or groups that are susceptible to exclusionary pressures, up and above those children with physical disabilities. Mittler (2012) further observes that, in some communities, this broader view of educational inclusion is related to such terms as “social exclusion and social inclusion.” If used in the context of education, social inclusion refers to issues of groups or individuals whose access to education is at risk due to social circumstances in which they find themselves. Such groups or individuals include orphans, children affected with chronic and terminal illnesses and girls who become pregnant while at school or have babies, among other social circumstances (Mittler, 2012; Nziramasanga, 1999). Chireshe (2011), citing Loreman *et al.* (2005), concludes thus, “Inclusive education is an educational practice based on the social premise of justice that advocates for equal access to educational opportunities for all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional or learning disability.” In other words, the guiding philosophy in educational inclusion is that all learners, regardless of exceptional circumstances in which they might find themselves, have a right to learning in mainstream schools.

According to Mafa (2012: 15), adoption of such an inclusive philosophy by instructional leaders “results in the creation of classes composed of pupils having different abilities, rates of learning and understanding of concepts, learning styles, motivational levels, special education needs and socio-economic backgrounds.” It appears this broad perspective is the one which is entrenched in Zimbabwe’s New Curriculum Framework, which defines inclusivity as referring to “an education system, which takes into account and addresses the different learners’ needs and abilities without disadvantaging any group or individual” (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2017: 15). It is, however, not immediately clear whether school heads in inclusive secondary schools to start with, construct and understand inclusive education in the context entrenched in the new curriculum or not.

The current study, therefore, focuses in part on whether school heads in inclusive secondary schools construct and understand inclusivity as comprising learners with physical disabilities and those with learning difficulties together, or not. It is felt these

learners are among some of the children and young people whose chances for continued growth and development, including in education, are grossly threatened, especially in a competitive-market based environment (Cole, 2005). Admittedly, these groups of learners constitute only a fraction of what are generally considered as children with special education needs. Focusing on inclusion of learners with physical disabilities and those with learning difficulties, leaving out some learners with special needs, such as OVCs in general, was meant to make the study more focused and to avoid a situation where the study attempts and claims to be solving all earthly problems.

A sample of learners selected for this study, especially those with learning difficulties, are sometimes defined in certain circles as ineducable (Gruskin & Tarantola, 2008; Florian *et al.*, 2016), and would normally be excluded from certain schools that select children based on their probability to do well in examinations. It is not clearly understood if this type of inclusion is what school heads, as mediating agents of policy implementation (Lee *et al.*, 2012) conceptualise as inclusion in the Zimbabwean context. Kanyongo (2005) hinted that the type of inclusion that may be most attractive to most governments of newly independent countries is political rather than social inclusion. This means most such governments may be more attracted to inclusion as promotion of education for all (Ainscow & César, 2006). In the Zimbabwean situation, this would mean inclusion affording 'black children' access to schools which were previously exclusive for 'white children.'

In the context of inclusive education, participating schools in this study could be referred to as non-selective (inclusive) as opposed to selective (exclusive) because they were non-selective of applicants (learners). According to Kitchen and Hobbs (2016), as echoed by Ho and Bonner (2018), selective schools admit most, if not all, of their learners on the basis of a specified criterion, such as ability. In contrast, a non-selective school accepts learners regardless of their aptitude or ability; although in cases of oversubscription, such schools may be forced to select in order to manage the situation. A non-selective school, may however, stream, track, or band learners by ability or aptitude. This may take place inside the school system instead of across different schools (Clark, 2010), thereby risking schools to practice what Slee (1996) defines as exclusion within inclusion. The current study focuses on non-

selectivity in terms of both learners with physical disabilities OVCs and those with learning difficulties as comprising children with exceptionalities.

Mafa (2012), as supported by Musengi and Chireshe (2012) view educational inclusion of children with exceptionalities in the context adopted in the present study, as a recent creation in Zimbabwe. In most secondary schools, full inclusion is still a mirage (Mafa, 2012). Donald, *et al.* (2007) and MoPSE (2015) highlight that transformation of the education system to embrace a more inclusive orientation as has always been the wish of the former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, as contained in the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education's New Curriculum Framework 2015 - 2022. Teachers may, however, refuse to modify their actions, thinking and own cultural biases and value systems towards inclusion. For this reason, inclusion remains a mirage.

Proponents of the inclusive paradigm contend that separate schooling, and special classes or any other form of excluding learners with exceptionalities from the general classroom settings should come about only when the nature and severity of the exceptional circumstance affecting the child is such that learning in the general classroom, even with the use of assistive and supplementary services, cannot be realised (Mafa, 2012). According to Chireshe (2013: 223), citing Nguyet (2010), inclusive education in this sense "is a process of addressing and responding to the diverse needs of all children by increasing participation in learning and reducing exclusion from and within education." Furthermore, Musengi and Chireshe (2012: 108) suggest that, "This is a method of increasing the participation, presence, and achievement of all learners", including those with exceptionalities in the mainstream education system. In this sense, inclusion is more of human rights than a pedagogic initiative and is a variable of instructional leadership which falls in the category of creating a positive environment for learning (Mestry, 2017). The concept implies that, as of right, children with exceptionalities should be accommodated in the regular and neighbourhood schools they would have normally attended if they did not have the exceptionalities entailed (Musengi & Chireshe, 2012; Mafa 2013). The question which remains unanswered is that, if inclusion is imposed on schools as a right, to what extent will children with exceptionalities experience community acceptance and the benefits associated with membership (Andrew, 2019).

Chireshe (2013: 224) embraces the right approach to inclusive instructional practices when he reaffirms that inclusive education “involves mainstreaming children with special educational needs into regular classroom settings, allowing them to learn side by side with their peers without disabilities.” Citing earlier work from Bunch (2008), Chireshe (2013: 224) further contends “that inclusive education in this way constitutes a new human rights and social justice approach to education and disability.” He sees this as a symbol of respect for all human kind, regardless of circumstances. According to Kisanji (1999) and Armstrong (2005), echoed by Chireshe (2013), under inclusive education, the learner with exceptionalities does not need to adjust to the school environment. Instead, the education system or the school should adjust to meet the educational needs of all learners in the community, including those learners with disabilities. This means that inclusion and instructional leadership for inclusive settings should involve restructuring policies, cultures, and practices in schools and communities so that they respond to the diverse needs of all learners, including those with disabilities and learning difficulties (Dimmock & Tan 2016), instead of learners adjusting to the needs of the schools.

It is not clearly understood how school heads in inclusive secondary schools conceptualise and practise instructional leadership for educational inclusion. In other words, it is not clearly understood whether, depending on their construction of inclusion and the inclusive policy, school heads feel they should fit learners to the needs of schools or schools to the needs of learners and, hence the focus of this study. By meeting the needs of learners, schools guarantee children with exceptionalities, including those with physical and learning difficulties, their right to quality education and thus, enable school heads, as instructional leaders, to assist education systems to achieve equality of educational opportunities for all (Chireshe, 2013). The key is, however, on giving such learners relevant and quality education in these settings.

2.5.1 The origin, growth and development of inclusive instructional practices

Kauffman *et al.* (2011) maintain that, understanding any field of study requires knowing something about how it got started and being able to discuss important aspects of its current methods and controversies. This also translates to saying that an understanding of the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership

in inclusive secondary schools calls for an understanding of not only inclusive instructional leadership, but also the foundational ideas about the subject. This further calls for an understanding of where and how the key concepts in the subject at hand were formulated, the social forces that shaped these concepts, and the legal and moral bases upon which the field's practices are grounded.

Talking about the origin of inclusive education and hence inclusive instructional practices, Kauffman *et al.* (2011) point out that, whilst some scholars would not want to directly associate and restrict educational inclusion to special needs education (SNE), preferring to associate it with the concept of social inclusion, it is undisputable that educational inclusion, as we know it today, has its roots in SNE. Indeed, inclusive education is SNE which evolved through time to its modern form as society continued to refine and redefine the what, how, why and the where questions of SNE (Chireshe, 2013). Some scholars view inclusive education as special education in the conventional classrooms in which instruction is adapted to the needs of learners and not learners adjusted to the needs of the school (Chireshe & Musengi, 2012).

It has been argued by present day researchers and practitioners that inclusive education is a form of special needs education in the conventional classroom. If this is anything to go by, then this implies that, leading instruction in inclusive school settings is typically leadership for a special type of special education. Such leadership calls for adequate training, motivation and support on the part of both school heads and their teaching staff. This thinking is supported by Boscardin (2007) who highlights that leadership for special education is different from leadership for the regular school system. It is, however, not clearly understood whether school heads and their teachers in inclusive secondary schools in Zimbabwe are adequately trained, motivated and supported for instructional leadership.

According to Kauffman *et al.* (2011) and Muthukrishna and Engelbrecht (2018), special education, which birthed educational inclusion, is understood to have been pioneered in the US by scholars such as Jean Marc Gaspard Itard (1774-1838), Eduard Seguin (1812-1880), Maria Montessori (1870-1952), and Ovide Decroly (1871-1932). Hallahan and Mercer (2001: 3) classify the history of learning disabilities into 5 historical periods. They referred these as "The European Foundation Period (1800 to 1920); The US Foundation Period (1920 to 1960);

Emergent Period (1960 to 1975); Solidification Period (1975 to 1985); and The Turbulent Period (1985 to 2000).” In line with the Salamanca Statement (1994), the period after 2000 can safely be referred to as the inclusionary period. The important issue to be understood here is that special education has a long history, and its roots are grounded in both the US and Europe.

Regardless of the long historical path followed in the evolution of SNE up to the modern inclusive paradigm, academics have concurred that for many years, most public schools, the world over, did very little to educate learners with exceptionalities and to put in place inclusive learning environments (Teigland, 2009; Chireshe, 2013). It is only recently that educational institutions internationally, including in Zimbabwe, have started to have an interest in educating children with exceptionalities, especially under inclusive settings (Kauffman *et al.*, 2011; Chireshe, 2013). Teigland (2009) echoes the above sentiments by pointing out that in 1970 more than 1.75 million learners with exceptionalities in the US alone were totally excluded from the public education system as they were considered to be ineducable. The few learners that were considered “educable” received their education in “special” segregated and self-contained classrooms in some special schools. These were schools for the blind or schools for the deaf intended only for learners with similar circumstances. Those children who were not considered “educable” received very little if any education at all (Teigland, 2009; Chireshe, 2013). In the Masvingo district of Zimbabwe, Henry Murray School for the Deaf and Kapota School for the Blind are examples of the special schools that catered for children with disabilities.

On realising the human rights violations associated with denial of education to children with exceptionalities, human rights activists in the US, in particular, started to challenge the status-quo in the provision of public education. As a result of this activism, a number of “right to education” cases concerning learners with exceptionalities reached the federal courts for determination. The success of these court cases opened floodgates to embrace the emerging paradigm of perceiving education of learners with exceptionalities as a human right that should be observed and supported in a less restrictive environment (Teigland, 2009; Chireshe, 2013). This became a global trend among most progressive nations.

It can safely be said that, the special needs education we see in our schools today; the special needs education that now forms the pillar of national policies of most progressive nations across the globe; the special needs education that continues to emphasise on the questions about the issues of individual differences, the proper role and organisation of public schools, and the meaning of equality; that special needs education emerged on Henry Street in the Lower East Side of Manhattan in the classroom of one teacher, Elizabeth Farrell in the US (Kauffman *et al.*, 2011). According to Kauffman *et al.* (2011), special needs education which seems to have evolved to what we call inclusive education today has developed from the imaginations, convictions, and tireless efforts of this young woman who was assisted and abetted by philosophical and political allies who supported her during the time. This also survived the tide associated with resistance to change as a result of politicians and school administrators of the time, who either joined in her movement or found it worthwhile to avoid standing in her way (Kauffman *et al.*, 2011).

The important thing that can be understood from the above discussion is that instructional leadership for inclusive education requires stakeholder support, if ever it is to be successful. For this reason, the current study also sought to understand the extent to which school heads in inclusive secondary schools in Zimbabwe enjoyed stakeholder support in educational reforms related to inclusion. This is particularly interesting given Donald *et al.* (2007)'s assertion that transformation of the school system to embrace a more inclusive framework is held ransom by individual stakeholders who refuse to modify their cultural biases, value systems and actions. Cole (2005: 338) shares this view by saying, "it takes professionals who are willing to take risks, to see inclusion as a positive issue ..."

Even as Farrell was developing the current special needs education, she herself was swept along in a wave of transformative incidents, ideas and obstacles that were characteristic of the United States during the time. These transformative and turbulent events comprised landmark litigations that typically transformed the special education arena in the US (Kauffman *et al.*, 2011). Such litigations include the landmark case of Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens vs. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (P.A.R.C.) in 1971. The outcome of this litigation asserted the right of all learners with exceptionalities to education (Kauffman *et al.*,

2011). Another landmark case which closely followed the P.A.R.C in both result and time was the Mills vs. Board of Education. In both cases, the courts upheld the right of learners with disabilities to access education in conventional classrooms as opposed to segregated classroom settings. This typically showed the first signs of the strong desire to enforce policies on the least restrictive learning environment requirement of the American education system of the day (Kauffman *et al.*, 2011; Kirby, 2017). Effectively, these landmark court cases worked in favour of inclusive education in the US and all those who supported the philosophy behind the inclusive paradigm. This points to the position that “most reasons for the inclusion of children with exceptionalities in the regular programmes falls within the following: (a) social ethical, (b) legal legislative and (c) psychological educational arguments” (Mafa, 2012: 16). It is not clearly understood, in which category inclusive education in the schools that participated in the current study belongs.

Since its inception, the concept, inclusive education has now spread into a number of countries globally (Anderson & Boyle; 2015). Among successful countries in the implementation of the inclusive paradigm are; the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Finland and Australia. A common feature among these countries is that they have also successfully promulgated a range of very progressive policies and legislative instruments that support the rights of learners with exceptionalities to access education under inclusive settings (Department of Education & Training, 2004; Jarvinen, 2007; Cole, 2005). This clearly shows the significance of legal backing for educational reforms, if countries should successfully implement educational reforms. It is, however, not immediately clear why Zimbabwe, especially in the secondary schools department, has generally failed to fully embrace the inclusive philosophy to the extent that even by 2015, the State President still lamented and wished to see the country embrace full inclusion of learners with special needs (MoPSE, 2015).

What is clearly understood is that, just like the US, the UK and New Zealand, Zimbabwe is a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), The World Declaration for Education for All (1990), The UNESCO’s Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action (1994), and The Dakar Framework for Action (2000). It is also a signatory to regional conventions such as the SADC protocol on education and training (1997) among key

treaties and conventions. Cumulatively, these conventions and frameworks have formed the basis of inclusive education programmes for many countries throughout the world, and should also have done the same in Zimbabwe.

Literature reviewed above shows that on paper, Zimbabwe has made inroads into educational inclusion through the promulgation of such instruments as the Education Act and the Zimbabwe Disabled Persons Act in line with global trends (Mutepfa *et al.*, 2007; Chireshe, 2011; Mafa, 2012). The New Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 also talks of issues of educational inclusion. In fact, one of the guiding principles of the new curriculum is inclusivity (MoPSE, 2015). Before the enactment of the new curriculum, it has not been mandatory that schools, especially in the secondary schools department, implement the inclusive paradigm. Prior to this, special needs education was provided for in some special schools established by some religious or philanthropic organisations, such as The Reformed Church in Zimbabwe and The Jairos Jiri Association. It is only a recent development that all other schools, mainly at primary school level, are now expected to operate special classes or resource units to provide special education to children with exceptionalities as part of a national education reform programme. This development leads to a parallel school system that caters for the needs of those learners who are perceived to require special attention. This trend was more common at primary school level where resource units and special classes for children with exceptionalities became the norm (Chireshe, 2013). Apparently, oblivious of the policies against discrimination and the Education Act's provision on equality of educational opportunities, most schools still exclude children with exceptionalities for various reasons (Musengi & Chireshe, 2012).

Following the introduction of the new curriculum in 2015, most schools in the country are now expected to embrace the inclusive philosophy as pointed out above (MoPSE, 2015). This notion is supported by Musengi and Chireshe (2012) who maintain that, in future, inclusion should be the way to go for most schools. This is particularly so given that it is not in the best interest of children with exceptionalities, or even society in general, for children with exceptionalities to be excluded from the mainstream education system (Musengi & Chireshe, 2012). Exclusion of children with exceptionalities from the mainstream education system is itself atypical of

society in which children with exceptionalities are going to live when they finally leave the school system (Nziramanga, 1999), and is against the philosophy of equity and social justice (Mutepfa *et al.*, 2007).

The literature study has also revealed that the success of inclusive reforms, as encapsulated in the new curriculum, rests on the effectiveness of school leadership. Dahiru *et al.* (2017), citing earlier work from Kythreotis (2010), observe that educational leadership in recent years has generally emerged as one of the most fundamental and indispensable factors of school effectiveness. The success of such leadership, however, depends on several factors including how school heads, as officially designated school leaders, construct and understand their roles and expectations as instructional leaders. It is unclear, however, if educational leadership in Zimbabwean secondary schools today are adequately trained, supported and motivated to provide leadership of instruction in inclusive environments. Mokhele and Jita (2012) support the idea that adequacy of teacher training is increasingly becoming the key to successful implementation of educational reforms. It is also unclear whether the Zimbabwean community, as stakeholders in education, is ready to embrace and support inclusion.

2.5.2 Instructional leadership, inclusion and school effectiveness

Literature study has revealed that the major goal of school leadership is to promote effective school performance. Regardless of the acclaimed relationship between instructional leadership and effective school performance, it has been observed that there is no consensus among academics, practitioners, policy makers and even parents on what characterises effective schools performance. Dahiru *et al.* (2017), for example, observe that conceptualisations of school effectiveness vary across the social divide as this is contextually determined. According to Glanz *et al.* (2017), the accountability movement, a contemporary international phenomenon, has led to most education systems the world over to associate school effectiveness with performance of learners in standardised tests as opposed to closing the gap.

Florian *et al.* (2016) attributes the global trend of relating school effectiveness to performance of learners in public examinations with what they referred to as the marketization of education. This competitive-market orientation of present day education systems is associated with neoliberal philosophies of education. As

pointed out earlier on in this chapter, Rigby (2013) associates the competitive-market based education system with an entrepreneurial logic to instructional leadership. In this context, school heads are no longer simply perceived as managerial or organisational administrators, as in the case of the prevailing logic (Rigby, 2014). Instead, school heads in this context “must combine traditional school leadership duties such as budgeting, scheduling and facilities maintenance, with the additional challenge of deep involvement in teaching and learning to directly affect student achievement” (Glanz *et al.*, 2017: 5) in terms of academic goals. In fact, present day school heads “have to see instructional leadership with a focus on academic results and school improvement as their primary responsibility” (ibid).

According to Gunawan (2017), citing Hallinger and Heck (2002):

The underlying conceptualization in instructional leadership assumes that schools would improve if principals were able to create clear academic goals, motivate teachers and students to work towards those goals, monitor progress, and align teaching and learning activities to achieve the desired academic outcomes.

In other words, teacher preparedness, for example, through proper motivation, training, and support from key stakeholders, all work to ensure that policy programme, such as instructional leadership in inclusive settings yield the desired results (Dimmock & Tan, 2016). This means that, for any serious policy programme to realise the desired ends, there is need for policy implementers to be adequately trained, supported and motivated as they work towards inclusive education goals. Inclusive education reforms and instructional leadership in inclusive settings in Zimbabwe can, therefore, not be an exception. This also means, for instructional leaders in inclusive secondary schools to achieve the goals of educational inclusion, there is possibly need for appropriate training, motivation and support for both officially designated leaders, teacher leaders (Jita & Mokhele, 2014), and teachers they lead. Training, motivation and support from key stakeholders in the education system will have an effect on instructional leadership through its impact on sense-making, for example.

It is not clear if teachers and the school-based leadership in Zimbabwe are adequately trained, motivated and supported for instructional leadership in inclusive

secondary schools, especially given the dynamic nature of the environment in which they are working. This part of the study, therefore, sought to review literature related to the needs of teachers to be adequately prepared, motivated, and supported for educational inclusion. It is assumed, in the current study, that the three are key variables for facilitating instructional leadership practices on the part of school heads, for example, through collaborative instructional leadership, shared instructional leadership and support for inclusive initiatives as reviewed below.

2.5.2 .1 Teacher preparation for inclusive instructional practices

An underlying assumption for the success of educational inclusion is that school heads and their teachers should have attained an optimum level of knowledge and skills about educational needs of children with exceptionalities in inclusive settings. This is because different learners under inclusive settings may require different teaching techniques and curriculum strategies, depending on their diverse needs, to make inclusion possible (Anderson & Boyle; 2015). In support of this point, Florian and Rouse (2009: 596) state that, “the task of initial teacher education is to prepare people to enter a profession which accepts individual and collective responsibility for improving the learning and participation of all children.” If school heads and classroom teachers are trained in SNE, instructional leadership for inclusive education, even in the contemporary paradigms of distributive leadership or collaborative leadership become much easier as both these key stakeholders are adequately prepared for inclusion (Chireshe, 2013). This means, appropriate training for both school heads and teachers involved in inclusive instructional practices comprise an important context for the success of instructional leadership for inclusive secondary school.

According to Oswald and Swart (2011), modern-day teacher training in South Africa, for example, equips teachers with skills on how to handle diverse students in a single classroom. Naidu (2018) also reports similar practices in India. It is not clear if this is also true of secondary school teacher training programmes in Zimbabwe. It is, therefore, not clear whether teachers in inclusive secondary schools in Zimbabwe have been adequately trained and prepared to handle inclusive classes, let alone to lead others under an inclusive secondary school setting, within the context of collaborative or shared leadership. This is particularly important as, according to

Boscardin (2007), some of them may be tasked to participate in shared or collaborative leadership initiatives (Jita & Mokhele; 2013). It is also not clear whether school heads and the rest of the other members of the locally based leadership in schools are adequately trained, either through initial training or in-service, to handle inclusive settings. To the best of my knowledge, general teacher training curricula in Zimbabwe, as also noted by Chireshe (2013), have traditionally not included any module on special needs (SNE) or inclusive education, especially in secondary school teachers' colleges.

It may only be now that institutions, such as the Great Zimbabwe University have factored into their curricula some modules on SNE for training secondary school teachers whose curricula mainly involves subject specialisation. Such teachers, once they enter secondary schools, both as teachers and leaders, may be better placed to handle inclusive classes and/or to lead others in inclusive settings than is the case with someone who has not received any training in SNE or inclusive education. However, it is not known to what extent such teachers are now available in secondary schools that have adopted inclusive education.

The impact of adequate training for instructional leadership as an institutional context in inclusive settings in Zimbabwe has also not been researched on. It is, however, not known if districts have initiated in-service training programmes to equip secondary school teachers with the knowledge and skills needed for leading instructions in inclusive settings. This makes the current study relevant to the Zimbabwean education system given the thrust being given now to educational inclusion in the new curriculum. The study is also consistent with the recommendations of the Presidential Commission of Inquiry Report into Education and Training (Nziramasinga, 1999). Availability of adequately trained teachers for SNE, and educational inclusion in particular, will provide the human resources needed for what Jita and Mokhele (2013) referred to as teacher leadership initiatives.

Literature reviewed in this section is, therefore, important in that it sought to establish what other academics elsewhere have unearthed concerning the importance of adequate training in SNE for both school heads and teachers involved in leading instructions in inclusive settings. The assumption here is that leading teachers who have been adequately trained for the job that they are doing is different from leading

those that have not received enough training. It is also assumed that a leader who is adequately trained for the job in which he/she is leading others is more effective than one who has not received enough training for a job in which he/she is supposed to lead others (Woodcock & Woolfson, 2019). Even the Bible has it that a blind man cannot lead another blind man (Luke 15:14). It is also assumed that adequate training will have an impact on the sense-making process on the part of both teachers and school head as social partners in instructional leadership.

Savolainen (2009), as cited in Donnelly (2010), supports the above contention when he posits that appropriate teacher training plays an essential role in quality education at all levels. The term teacher is used here in its generic sense to include even the head teacher (school head). Donnelly (2010: 16) citing McKinsey and Company (2007) further points out that: “the quality of an education system can never exceed the quality of its teachers.” This type of thinking amounts to saying that teachers are strategic resources in any intervention meant to improve the quality of learning in our school systems. This also translates to say that leadership of teachers in our schools should include instructional leadership as a strategic endeavour, and this should be approached as such.

Studies carried out in Tennessee (USA) point to the fact that the quality of teachers in a school contributes more to the performance of learners than any other variable that people may consider important, such as class size, class composition, or even the background of learners (Crispel & Kaspersky, 2019). The attitude of the teacher towards learners and towards work has a strong bearing towards the performance of schools, vis-à-vis the objectives for which they are established. All this may imply that leading instruction among teachers who are properly trained and have a good attitude towards both their job and the children that they are teaching is much different from leading instruction in a setting in which teachers are not adequately trained for the job at hand (Gore *et al.*, 2017). If teachers involved in teaching inclusive classes are found not to be adequately trained for the job at hand, it signifies a yawning gap for teacher training. To adequately and effectively lead instruction in inclusive secondary schools, school heads and their teachers should, therefore, be adequately trained for the job at hand (McKinsey *et al.*, 2007; Chitiyo *et al.*, 2019). According to Freeman and Alkin (2000), under inclusive instructional

settings, education systems should move away from the practice which only values academic outcomes of education to the detriment of social outcomes. This means that, for inclusive education to be successful, leadership above the school level should also be trained to appreciate issues at stake in instructional leadership under inclusive settings. Given the type of teacher training at colleges and the criteria that is used to promote teachers to the posts of Education Inspectors, District Schools Inspectors (DSIs) or even Provincial Education Directors, it is not clear whether the leadership above the school level in Zimbabwe has adequate training on instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools. It is not clear if such leaders are prepared to consider changing the evaluation criteria of schools from one that is based on the evaluation of academic outcomes only, to one that also gives credence to social outcomes of educational programmes (Freeman & Alkin, 2000). An understanding of the adequacy of training that educational leadership at various levels of the education system have received on inclusive education and instructional leadership under inclusive settings is considered important for successful implementation of inclusive programmes (Chitiyo *et al.*, 2019). In other words, this is critical to the success of instructional leadership in inclusive settings.

According to Hassard (2012), appropriate teacher training is more important today than it has been in half a century ago. This is as a result of rapid changes in technology, and the changing perceptions of people on the role of education in society which has, among other things, resulted in bringing about educational inclusion in schools (Crispel & Kaspersky, 2019). The present study, therefore, sought in part to establish if teachers as well as school heads and the rest of the instructional leaders in inclusive secondary schools are adequately trained to handle inclusive classes and/or lead instructions in inclusive settings. It is assumed that such training would, among other things, help to inculcate positive attitude towards inclusion in school heads, teachers and the rest of the instructional leaders in the education system. Such an attitude is important for the success of inclusionary programmes as it facilitates inclusive education on the part of both classroom teachers and position-based educational leadership in the schools through its effects on creating a positive teaching/learning environment (Page *et al.*, 2019).

In a study conducted by Shipley (1995) involving teachers and parents on educational inclusion in Western Pennsylvania, it was reported that both groups of research participants agreed that proper teacher training was key to improved performance of learners. It was reported that the majority (98%) of teachers and 94% of parents who participated in the study were concerned that mainstream classroom teachers were not adequately trained to handle inclusive classes and yet this training is very important. Both teachers and parents in the study, however, agreed that proper training in handling inclusive settings was a pre-requisite for successful inclusion (Shipley, 1995). This is also supported by Chireshe (2013), and Kurniawati *et al.* (2017). This means that, where teachers are not properly trained for inclusive education, those who are tasked with the responsibility of leading instruction under such settings will find it very difficult to function.

Some practising teachers who participated in the above study indicated that learners were included into their classes and then teachers were trained to adjust their teaching materials to meet the needs of the learners when it was already late for both teachers and learners (Mafa, 2012). Most teachers in inclusive schools involved in the study mentioned above, felt that most inclusive programmes dwelt on the philosophical and idealistic aspects of the concept, rather than the concrete techniques that would make children benefit from inclusive settings. This raises questions on the degree to which teachers were equipped with inclusionary knowledge beforehand. This shows that teachers, due to a lack of proper training, did not have the correct attitude for inclusion. Where the school head and the rest of the school-based instructional leaders are also not properly trained, this may create further problems of instructional leadership (Munk & Dempsey, 2019). This increasingly becomes a problem, especially in secondary schools where teachers are more of subject specialists than pedagogical experts. The majority of parents in the study by Shipley (1995) agreed that teachers were probably insufficiently trained to use inclusion in their classes. This was a cause for concern as children under those conditions would not benefit from instruction under inclusive settings.

According to Chitiyo *et al.* (2019), the shortcomings of inclusion can best be resolved through appropriate training and preparedness of teachers to embrace inclusion. Training does not only strengthen the ability of teachers to work with children with

exceptionalities. Instead, this also results in creating among teachers, a positive attitude and motivation towards educational inclusion. Where the adequacy of such training and preparedness for inclusion is seen to be questionable, it becomes a cause for concern for parents of children with exceptionalities and other key stakeholders in education (Mafa, 2012; Yada *et al.*, 2018)

McKinsey (2007: 37) analysed research data from twenty-five schools in the UK and established that, generally, the high-performing schools “get the right people to become teachers; they develop these people into effective instructors; they put in place systems and targeted support to ensure that every child is able to benefit from excellent instruction.” This conclusion further authenticates the importance of appropriate training in SNE for both mainstream teachers and educational administrators involved in educational inclusion. The present study sought to understand the extent to which teachers and educational leaders at various levels of responsibilities in inclusive secondary schools are adequately prepared, either through initial training or in-service training, to handle inclusive settings. It is assumed that this knowledge has a strong bearing on instructional leadership in inclusive settings and should be the basis for future training if inclusive education should be a success in Zimbabwean schools. Chireshe (2013) sees effective teacher training for inclusion as crucial to the success of inclusive initiatives and should involve the inculcation of both appropriate skills and proper attitude for inclusion.

Various other challenges beset instructional leadership in inclusive school environments. For example, Mapuranga and Nyakudzuka (2014: 68) posit that, “teachers with special education qualification are still insufficient to make an impact in the country.” At the same time, teachers in mainstream schools find it challenging to teach a lesson in the regular classroom to children with say intellectual challenges on how to use ablution facilities (Chimedza & Peters, 2001). These teachers would consider preparing learners for public examinations as ‘the lesson,’ as opposed to teaching self-help skills. This means that teachers in regular schools would not consider teaching self-help skills as important. This is despite the fact that, from a SNE and inclusionary perspective, these skills would lead such learners to independence, acceptance, and functionality in their future lives (Mapuranga & Nyakudzuka, 2014). The teacher would be preoccupied with preparing learners for

examinations – a key aspect of regular education objectives. Such teachers may even resist the placement of children with exceptionalities into their classes on the basis that this would dilute the performance of their classes in public examinations, upon which they are also evaluated. Issues like these also raise questions on the purpose of education and the extent to which inclusive education can be practiced.

2.5.2 .2 Stakeholder support and inclusive instructional practices

According to Gunawan (2017: 64), citing earlier work from Hallinger (2005) “successful instructional leaders work with other stakeholders to shape the purposes and to fit the needs of the school to its environment.” Increased involvement of stakeholders in the issues to do with educational leadership and in the affairs of public education institutions is a recent development which has since been entrenched in public education the world over (Jowi, 2003, as cited in Gichohi, 2015). According to Gichohi (2015), as echoed by Page *et al.* (2019), the results of academic performance of schools are now seen as dependent on the involvement of many stakeholders and the influence that these stakeholders have on school leadership. Okyere *et al.* (2019) thus perceive inclusion as going beyond teachers.

Other stakeholders, such as district education officials, policy makers, and parents of children in any school have an influence on school policy programmes, for example, inclusion of children with exceptionalities. According to Gichohi (2015: 15),

... research studies show that improved instruction, better learning, and enhanced school effectiveness and organizational efficiency are the most commonly cited reasons for implementing collaborative school practices such as school councils, collegial instructional leadership and parental/community involvement. ... Moving the school closer to the community and listening to the sentiments of concerned parties create a synergy and ... connectedness that promotes a learning organization towards better decisions.”

Furthermore, stakeholders have an indirect influence on leadership activities in the school (Gichohi, 2015; Spillane, 2015). Some academics in educational leadership thus contend that collaborative leadership practices have the potential to develop higher levels of motivation, morale and obligation to perform among teachers (Adams *et al.* 2018). It has also been established that allowing teachers to participate, for example, in making decisions on issues that affect them and their lot,

yields positive results for the good of learners (Dimmock & Tan 2016). Participatory leadership also creates a sense of ownership of school programmes. This makes stakeholders in education to have strong desire to support school programmes, such as educational inclusion programmes, as entailed in the current study (Dimmock & Tan 2016). In the Zimbabwean secondary school situation, educational stakeholders who may affect instructional leadership include Ministry of Education officials, responsible authorities (RAs) of schools, the community served by schools and even parents. How this happens is not clearly understood.

It should, however, be appreciated that stakeholders in education, like in any other organisation, have different degrees of power and influence (Gichohi, 2015). The more powerful a stakeholder is, the more influential he/she is in educational roles, such as instructional leadership. To the best of my knowledge, the nature and extent of stakeholder influence and support on instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools, especially in Zimbabwe, has not been fully understood. The current study, therefore, sought to close that knowledge gap.

2.5.2 .3 Motivation for stakeholder participation and involvement

Literature has classified the drive behind participatory leadership in two ways. First is the humanistic drive (Koopman & Wierdsma, 1998; Hamal, 2019). The basis for this motive is that people have a natural drive to be involved in making decisions in which they are affected. The assumption here is that people have the ability to intelligently participate in decision-making on issues that affect their lives either as individuals or groups. According to O'Hair and Reitszug (1997), another important justification for the participatory approach to leadership has been labelled as human relations or pragmatism. This school suggests that stakeholder driven leadership is the key to improving productivity (Palmer *et al.*, 2018). In educational leadership literature, participation can be in the form of distributive leadership (Spillane, 2005; Diamond, & Spillane, 2016), collaborative or shared leadership (Dimmock & Tan, 2016; Mestry, 2017; Bush, 2019), and teachers are very well placed to help their colleagues through these approaches. It is not in all cases that stakeholder involvement in educational leadership will always yield positive results (Jita & Mokhele, 2013). The extent to which stakeholder participation in inclusive education helps to improve student learning in inclusive secondary schools in Zimbabwe is not clearly

understood and documented. This study, therefore, sought in part to close this knowledge gap. The next section focuses more closely on the conceptual framework upon which the study is framed.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

This section focuses on the conceptual framework upon which the study is grounded. According to Jabareen (2009: 51), the term conceptual framework refers to “a network or ‘a plane’ of interlinked concepts that together provides a comprehensive understanding of a phenomenon or phenomena” in a study. This study is informed by enactive or cognitive sense-making. It is framed around key concepts of school leadership, instructional leadership, inclusive education and school leadership contexts. The ground assumption here is that instructional leadership is a component of the broad concept of school leadership which itself is shaped by the context of its environment as portrayed in Figure 2.1 (Clarke, & O'Donoghue, 2017; Hallinger, 2018; Dzimiri, 2019). Coburn (2004: 211) posits that, “What happens in the environment matters for what happens inside of schools.” The thinking is also embraced by Rigby (2015: 375) who submits that, “Actors in organizations confront multiple and sometimes conflicting ideas that are carried through the environment as summarised in Figure 2.1.

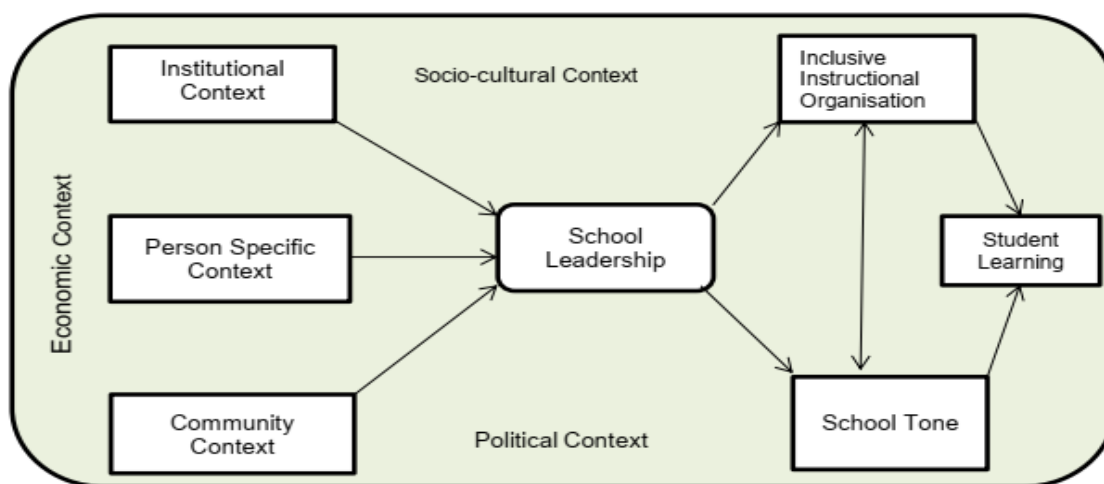


Figure 2.1: The Far West Lab Instructional Management Model. (Source: Adopted from Hallinger, 2018: 18, and adjusted by the researcher)

Writings from previous researchers and practitioners on school leadership in recent years have emphasised the idea that, “interpretations of school leadership are shaped by the context” (Coburn, 2004; Goldring *et al.*, 2008; Rigby 2014; Leithwood,

2017; Hallinger, 2018). From a sense-making perspective, this observation is also consistent with the thinking that sense-making is a situated experience (Spillane, 2002; 2003; Rigby, 2015). The context specificity of school leadership was not in doubt even at the inception of this study. However, it was not immediately clear how these broad factors of the school leadership environment, specifically influence sense-making and shape instructional leadership practice by school heads.

Drawing from the work of previous writers and practitioners, I framed my study around the key concepts of school leadership, instructional leadership, inclusivity education and sense-making as informed by messages from the context of the school leadership environment in which school heads find themselves operating. The framework, as presented in this part of the study, is in line with Jabareen (2009: 50)'s observation as also echoed by West (2016) that, "... in contemporary times, most social phenomena are complex and linked to multiple bodies of knowledge that belong to different disciplines." Coburn (2004: 211) argues that messages from the environment, in a process that is framed by actors' "pre-existing beliefs and practices and the nature of the messages themselves, influence practices by teachers." Goldring (2008), as cited in Hallinger (2018: 7), maintains that, "a leader's life experience and personal resources act as a prism through which information, problems, opportunities and situations are filtered and interpreted." In the same vein, Marz *et al.* (2013:15) add that, "Based on their experiences ..., teachers (school head included) develop a personal system of knowledge and beliefs that act as a cognitive and affective lens through which they look at their job, give meaning to it and act in it." Jita (2004) calls these personal resources, resources of biography. Andrews *et al.* (2013) use the term, technologies of self.

In line with the literature reviewed for the current study, instructional leadership was viewed as a dimension of educational leadership and curriculum implementation practice whose goal was to improve student learning. My study, therefore, sought to explore in part what it means for school heads to be instructional leaders in inclusive secondary schools. Another ground assumption in framing this study was that instructional leadership thought and practice could best be understood and explained in terms of the sense-making perspective which, itself, is a situated and enactive practice (Spillane *et al.*, 2002). The current study, therefore, sought to explore the

institutional context, personal context and the community context of the school leadership environment that shape instructional leadership thought and practice by school heads. The fact that such broad factors existed was a given fact. However, it was not immediately known what factors of the school leadership context specifically influence how school heads construct and understand instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools and how this sense-making shape instructional leadership practices in this school leadership environment.

Drawing from literature that stressed on the context specific nature of school leadership, I therefore, framed this study with full consideration of the context specific nature of instructional leadership thought and practice (Hallinger, 2018), the plastic nature of social science concepts, such as instructional leadership and inclusive education (Jita & Mokhele, 2013) and the enactive and situated nature of sense-making (Spillane, 2002; 2003). Since this study was mainly about the how questions of instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools and not the what questions, the conceptual framework for the study was in sync with the enactive sense-making theory that informs the study. The operational definition of instructional leadership in the current study is conceptualised and operationalised in the context of Hallinger and Murphy's model (Hallinger, 2005). The model which frames this study proposes different mixes and emphasis on the following key dimensions for the instructional leadership role of the school head: *redefining and communicating the school vision and mission; managing curriculum and instruction; promoting a positive learning environment; observing and improving instruction; and assessing the instructional programme* (Hallinger, 2005; Fowler & Walter; 2020).

2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature that is related to the study. Literature was discussed in the context of research questions and objectives upon which the study is anchored. The chapter also proffered possible areas that can be investigated; areas that it was felt could inform the objectives and purpose of this study. Literature reviewed in this part of the study also provided a framework for analysis, social lenses for understanding and the language for expressing and articulating issues at stake in the current study. Chapter 3 will present the research methodology embraced in this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The forgoing chapter reviewed literature related to the study. Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology used to organise the study and to collect data on the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools in Zimbabwe as understood and experienced by school heads in these instructional environments. Research methodology outlines “the procedures by which researchers go about their work of describing, explaining and predicting phenomena” (Rajasekar *et al.*, 2013: 5). The current chapter outlines the work plan of the study, giving reasons for taking a particular route, and not the other (Kumar, 2019). The chapter therefore, focuses on the research paradigm, research design, research approach, study sample, instrumentation, and the data collection, presentation and analysis techniques adopted in the study. To avoid losing focus of these key issues along the way, I begin this chapter by a restatement of both the central and the sub-questions upon which the study is grounded.

3.2 Research Questions

The major question to which the current study sought to provide answers was:

What are the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools and how does sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools?

3.2.1 Sub-questions

In order to answer the overarching question above, I was guided by responses to the ensuing sub-questions:

- *How is instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools constructed and understood by school heads?*
- *What practices characterise instructional leadership practices in inclusive secondary schools?*
- *How does sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools?*

3.3 Research Paradigm

According to Krauss (2005: 759) as echoed by Kothari (2016), “every research, whether conducted explicitly or implicitly, is inclined to a particular research paradigm which has its own philosophical assumptions concerning the type of reality and the way through which that social reality can best be understood” and explained. Bhattacharjee (2012: 17) echoes this thinking by saying, “our design and conduct of research is shaped by our mental models, or frames of reference that we use to organize our reasoning and observations”. He termed these “mental models” paradigms. Creswell (2017) uses the term knowledge ‘claims’. According to Corr (2020: 2), citing earlier work from Barnes (1982), a paradigm is “an accepted problem-solution in science, a particular concrete scientific achievement.” Taylor and Medina (2011) see a paradigm as a comprehensive belief system, world view, or framework that guides research and practice in a field.” The central theme emerging from the various usages of the concept paradigm points to “paradigms as shared belief systems; a world view that influence the kinds of knowledge researchers seek and how they interpret the evidence they collect” (Morgan, 2007: 50).

The concept “paradigm” was coined by Thomas Kuhn (1962) in the landmark book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (Morgan, 2007; Bhattacharjee, 2012; Kelly *et al.*, 2018). It is widely accepted in research studies that paradigms constrain or enable our thinking and reasoning about how we approach research problems, collect data and draw conclusions on the observed phenomena. This means our personal paradigms are akin to tinted glasses which affect the way we envision the world around us and the way we construct meaning (make sense of) about what we see in that world. Citing Kuhn (1922-1996), Kelly *et al.* (2018) thus acknowledge “... a paradigm as a way that scientists (within their relative time and society) make sense of their world and its reality. From an interpretivist perspective (Lincoln *et al.*, 2011), this implies that any two researchers moving from different paradigmatic standpoints, such as positivism and interpretivism, approach research problems using different toolkits and, hence, may arrive at different conclusions about the reality they both seek to understand and explain (Ormston *et al.*, 2014).

The existence of numerous paradigms, possibilities of a paradigm shift with time and the different epistemological stance of subjectivity and intersubjectivity within the

interpretivist and probably, the constructivist paradigms (Weaver & Olson, 2006; Welford *et al.*, 2011), have made it a common practice among researchers in human science research to reveal their personal paradigms in the spirit of reflexivity (Finlay, 2002; Darawsheh, 2014; Woods, 2019). Scholars in human science research such as the one in hand, have adopted the culture of displaying some form of self-analysis and self-disclosure so that users of the resultant knowledge are made aware of the philosophical, methodological and ontological assumptions that went into the production of the knowledge that they interact with. This self-disclosure also promotes research ethics (Woods, 2019; Taylor *et al.*, 2020).

In this particular study, I adopted an interpretivist research paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln 2011; Kelly *et al.*, 2018), namely social constructivism (Creswell, 2012). This research paradigm was found to be consistent with the sense-making theory and the qualitative research design adopted in the current study and the research problem at hand. This research problem sought to explore the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools as perceived and experienced by school heads, and how sense-making by these school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in such school settings. Arguably, the study naturally lends itself into a sense-making perspective, qualitative research approach, and an interpretivist (social constructivism) research paradigm whose ontological stance reflects on “lived experiences” (Lincoln *et al.*, 2011; Welford *et al.*, 2011; Creswell, 2012) of research participants.

Leung (2015) observes that, “the essence of qualitative research is to make sense of and recognize patterns (*interpret*) among words in order to build up a meaningful picture (*construct*) without compromising its richness and dimensionality.” Consequently, adopting an interpretivist paradigm in a study of this nature runs strongly in the veins and arteries of qualitative studies and is in sync with conventional thinking in the present era. This is also consistent with the theoretical and philosophical assumptions upon which the study was grounded. In particular, this is in line with the ontological, epistemological, axiological, rhetorical and methodological stances upon which the study is grounded (Creswell, 2017). Such stances question positivist science as the only plausible source of scientific knowledge (Kelly *et al.*, 2018). Conventional thinking in the present era, and adopted

in the current study, is built on the assumption that positivist science is not the only way of finding and explaining scientific truth in the present world since interpretivism and in particular social constructivism also offer viable options (Panhwar *et al.*, 2017; Kelly *et al.*, 2018).

The key ontological assumption in the current study is that reality is socially constructed as people interact and interpret (make sense of) the things that exist and/or are happening around them (lived experience). This means, depending on their social interpretation (sense-making) of their lived experiences, different researchers construct (enact) different realities about the real world around them just as is the case with the individuals studied and the readers of qualitative research outputs (Lewis, 2015; Usher, 2002). My adoption of the interpretivist paradigm, in particular, social constructivism (Cresswell, 2012) as opposed to, say, post-positivism for example, aimed at reporting these multiple realities of how school heads interpret, make sense and construct instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools. It also aimed at reporting how this sense-making explain school heads' understanding and practice of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools' instructional environments.

Consistent with the ontological stance given above, the epistemological assumption adopted in the current study supposes that conducting a qualitative enquiry requires a researcher to get as close as possible to research participants. This assumption agrees with the observation by Lewis (2015: 18) that, in practising qualitative studies, researchers carry out their studies directly from the "field" where participants live and work so that they obtain a clear understanding of what participants are saying, feeling or doing. Lewis (2015) goes further to observe that the longer a researcher keeps in the "field" or gets to know participants, the more he/she "knows what they know" first-hand. As a result of this epistemological assumption, I tried as much as possible to minimise the social "distance" or "objective separateness" between myself as a researcher and research participants involved in the study. Data needed in this study were therefore collected through interviews, non-participant observation studies and document analysis (Ridder, 2017). These methods of data collection kept me for four weeks at each research site for the main data collection stage with intermittent call backs whenever the need arose even after the scheduled period for

data collection at each single research site was over. As a result of this long stay, a relationship of trust was developed with research participants. This long stay also enabled me to experience first-hand instructional leadership practices by school heads in inclusive schools studied. Data related to school heads' understanding of instructional leadership in an inclusive secondary school were then related to instructional leadership practices as part of triangulation of data collection methods

The axiological assumption adopted in the current study is that all researchers bring values to a study as consumers of research output also do (Usher, 2002; Eisner, 2017). As a result of this assumption, I acknowledged the value-laden nature of this study and therefore unreservedly reported my values as well as the value-laden nature of the data collected from the field. All this was done in the spirit of reflexivity (Darawsheh, 2014; Eisner, 2017). Being a qualitative enquiry, the objective of the axiological assumption of the current study is not centred entirely on external validity and generalisability but also on internal validity, transferability, and credibility, built on the foundation of rigour and flexibility (Ridder, 2017) as further explained below.

3.4 Research Approach

In the current enquiry, I adopted a qualitative research approach guided by an interpretivist research paradigm and informed by the enactive sense-making theory. Creswell (2017) views interpretivism, which is embraced in the current study, as a philosophical partner of qualitative research approaches and the sense-making perspective. This inherent relationship justifies my choice of a research methodology which employs a qualitative research approach and built on the foundation of interpretivism and sense-making as social lens for analysis. This approach is also in line with Leung's (2015) proposition that, "the essence of qualitative research is to make sense of and recognize patterns among words or processes in order to build up (construct) a meaningful picture without compromising its richness and dimensionality." Langley and Abdallah (2015) thus talk about interpretive sense-making as a building block for qualitative studies of social reality. Spillane *et al.* (2002) call this practice, enactive sense-making.

3.5 Research Design

A research design, according to Smith (2012: 95), is a "... plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or

problems". This echoes Bhattacharjee (2012: 35) who describes a research design as "... a 'blue print' for empirical research aimed at answering specific research questions or testing specific hypotheses". Kerlinger (1986: 279, as cited in Smith, 2012: 95) adds that a research design "... includes an outline of what the investigator will do from writing the hypotheses and their operational implications to the final analysis of data". Clearly, a research design makes researching possible (Ridder, 2017) transparent and replicable (Aguinis & Solarino, 2019).

The current study employed a case study design (Langley & Abdallah, 2015; Ridder, 2017). In terms of content, the study employed what Jita and Mokhele (2013) and Yin (2014) refers to as a multiple case studies research design. Yazan (2015) defines this research design as a bounded case study design. In terms of its contribution to theory, this study employed what Ridder (2017) describes as the 'the gap and holes' case studies design. This design is closely related to what Gilbert and Christensen (2005) define as the 'anomalies' case studies research design.' Among others, this design signifies a move away from strict adherence to the classical case study design (Ridder, 2017). The latter tends to emphasise on single cases and theory generation as the main purpose for research, apparently oblivious of other goals within the theory 'generation, theory development and theory testing continuum' (Ridder, 2017) of scientific enquiry. My study is centred on theory development (expansion) and theory elaboration thereby bringing new insights on findings by earlier writers on inclusive education and instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools.

According to Yin (2014: 14), as echoed by Ridder (2017), a gap and holes case study design includes: "A 'how' and 'why' question such as embraced in the current study. In this research design, existing theories such as sense-making, instructional leadership, inclusivity and implementation theories (Chireshe, 2013, Spillane, 2003; Cohen et al, 2007) form the basis for scientific enquiry. Propositions or frameworks of such existing theories provide direction, reflect the theoretical perspective, and guide the search for relevant evidence. The purpose of my study is partly to explain, using sense-making lens and narrative analysis, the observed 'anomaly' of why Zimbabwe still grapples with full inclusion despite a political and policy environment which seem to be supportive of inclusive instructional practice. This 'anomaly' still

prevails 40 years after independence and 25 years after the Salamanca Statement and Framework. Clearly, this ‘anomaly’ defies logic and demands answers and hence my interest in this topic. This interest is in line with Ridder (2017) who points out that a researcher normally looks at what is ‘interesting and what is ‘surprising’ in a social context that existing theory cannot fully explain in its current state. My aim here was therefore, not to reject existing theory but to establish whether such existing theories fully explain the observed anomaly between the policy/practice gaps. Resultant knowledge from my study thus forms a basis for developing and/or expanding existing theories in order to make them more applicable to areas that might not have been envisioned and considered for analysis before. This study, therefore, contributes to scholarship in ways that may also affect practice. As Ridder (2017: 284) avers, “... an anomaly does not reject theory, but rather, demonstrates that the theory may be incomplete in explaining given phenomena.” In such studies, theory can be improved by turning anomalies into exemplars. In practice, this is what the current study sought to achieve.

Figure 3.1 presents a descriptive visualisation of the case study research design employed in the current study.

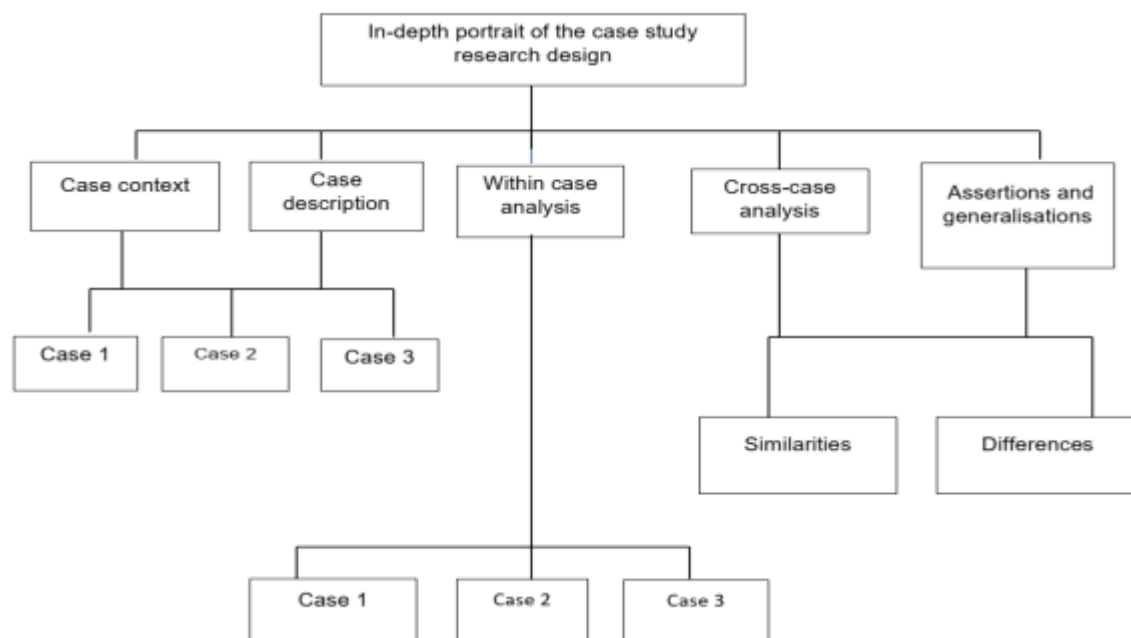


Figure 3.1: Case Study Research Design. (Adopted from Creswell, 2007: 172 and modified by the researcher)

As shown in Figure 3.1 above, the study design embraced in the current study comprises three cases identified as case 1, case 2 and case 3. This approach was seen to be amenable to the nature of questions asked and the type of data needed to provide answers to such research questions. My adoption of the multiple case studies is in line with Eisner (2017) who advises that, not every challenge affecting education today can be understood through quantitative enquiry. Clearly, there seems to be some truth to the saying that “not everything that matters can be measured and not everything that can be measured matters” (Choi *et al.*, 2015:543).

The case studies design such as employed in the current study is often described “as naturalistic, interpretive approaches, concerned with exploring phenomena from the interior” (Flick, 2014: 27). The most important characteristic of case studies that made the design even more pertinent and appealing to this study is taking research participants’ perspectives and accounts as a starting point in research (Ormston *et al.*, 2014). Denzin and Lincoln (2011) thus viewed qualitative enquiry as:

“... a set of interpretive material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations photographs, recordings, and memos to self ... qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings attempting to make sense or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (p. 3).

The characteristics of multiple case studies, as given above, made this design very fitting in a study that uses a sense-making perspective to understand the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools. The study further sought to understand how sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools. It was therefore, cognisant of Eisner’s (2017) observation that qualitative studies, in particular, the ones that employ the case study designs provide an opportunity for researchers to get in touch with research participants that they seek to understand, to see them and use what they see as sources for interpretation and appraisal.

3.6 Target Population

A research population is a clearly-defined collection of elements that are of interest to researchers (Creswell, 2012). Kombo and Tromp (2009: 76) see “a population as a group of individuals, objects, or items from which samples are taken for

measurement". Botma *et al.* (2010) maintain that there have been many arguments concerning the terms that should be used to denote human beings who participate in research projects as units of analyses. In previous years 'research elements or subjects' were the terms that were most often used. With passage of time, these changed to 'research respondents', and now to 'research participants' (Mathafena, 2015). In the current study, I adopted the term research participants. According to Polit and Beck (2008), research participants are people who have been called to partake in a study and have been well-informed about the research and are willing to take part and contribute their best in the study.

In this study, the main population of interest from which direct participants were drawn comprised all the school heads in inclusive secondary schools in Masvingo District. Teachers were also involved as targets of the observation part of the study since school heads do not work in isolation and that instructional leadership is done on teachers. This study was based on an exploration of the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools as understood and experienced by school heads in inclusive secondary school settings. As a result, it was felt school heads could act as direct participants that could provide insights into the issues at stake in the study. Since school leadership is in part directed on teachers and classroom observation done at the interface between leadership and teaching, teachers were also involved in the current study at the observation and document analysis phases. Teachers therefore also comprised important participants in the current study. The population of interest for the current study was delineated with full consciousness of the assertion that a good population is one that has knowledge about issues at stake and is able and willing to take part in the study (Kombo & Tromp, 2009).

3.7 Research Sample and Sampling Procedure

The term sample refers to a subset of a population that directly participates in a study through, for example, responding to questionnaires, interviews or any other data gathering instrument (Kombo & Tromp, 2009). It is a collection of objects or individuals (research participants) who have been drawn from the population so that they would directly participate in the study through providing the data needed to answer research questions (Klopper, 2008; Setia, 2016). Sampling refers to the

procedure used by researchers to draw from a population a subset of research participants to directly participate in a study (Etikan & Bala, 2017). In the current study, a multi-stage purposive sampling technique (Sedgwick, 2015) was used to identify the district, three secondary schools and the three school heads that participated directly in the study. Masvingo District in the Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe was identified for its accessibility to the researcher and for its history in special needs education. The district houses three major special schools for children with various forms of exceptionalities. The three schools that participated in the current study comprised those that were identified as having embraced the inclusive framework more meaningfully, ahead of all other schools in the district. Borrowing a page from Langley and Abdullah (2015), these are extreme and revelatory cases based on the prevalence of inclusive practices embraced. Table 3.1 shows the context of research sites for this study. For ethical reasons, pseudonyms were used to identify the schools that participated in the study.

Table 3.1: Characteristics of the Qualitative Research Sites

Name of School	School Enrolment & Teacher Establishment							Nature of Exceptional Learners Enrolled
	Location, School type & Ownership	Number of Learners			Number of Teachers			
		M	F	Total	M	F	Total	Learners with learning difficulties; Second chance learners; OVC and learners with physical disabilities (including learners with visual impairment & learners with albinism)
Open Gates	Urban, church run day school	1113	1131	2244	22	53	75	
Holy Ghost	Peri-urban, church run boarding school	378	394	772	23	15	38	Learners with physical disabilities (mainly learners with visual impairment and those with difficulties in mobility)
All Souls	Peri- urban church run day school	225	243	468	17	5	22	Learners with learning difficulties; OVC; learners who are deaf and dumb; and Second chance learners

Source: Primary Data:

Key Y- Yes; N – No; M: Male; F: Female; B- Boarding School; D- Day School; OVC - Orphaned and Vulnerable Children

Following the identification of the schools that should directly participate in the study, their school heads automatically qualified as research participants in the research

and they were drawn into the study sample on the basis of their headship in the selected schools. Table 3.2 summarises the personal characteristics and experience of the three school heads that participated in the current study. Pseudonyms were used to identify the school heads in this study.

Table 3.2: Personal Characteristics and Experiences of Research Participants.

Name	Age	Professional Qualifications	Training in SNE	Promotion status	Teaching Experience	Experience as Head	
						Elsewhere	Current school
Simango	54	MEd BEd + CE (S)	N	Graduate Head	25	15	9
Sithole	52	MEd + BEd + CE (s)	N	Deputy head	24	4	4
Moyo	55	BA+ CE (s)	N	Graduate Head	27	13	13

Source: Primary data

The school heads that participated in the current study were part of the sample because they worked in inclusive schools. Since the study partly involved shadowing the school heads, observing their interaction with teachers and eliciting their interpretation of the situation during school leadership practices, all teachers in the schools studied were, by default, part of the study population. As a result, I also interfaced with teachers as I shadowed the school heads' practices.

3.8 Instrumentation

In research literature, the concept instrumentation is used to refer to the construction and provision of data collection instruments that researchers use to collect data needed to answer research questions in a study (Mohajan, 2017; Kumar, 2019). Since this study was based on the interpretivist paradigm and informed by the sense-making theory as the basis of scientific knowledge, three key sets of research instruments were found appropriate for collecting the qualitative data needed (Langley & Abdallah, 2015). The instruments comprised an interview protocol and two separate sets of check-lists as further explained below.

3.8.1 Designing interview guides

The interview guide was considered an inherently appropriate research instrument for the collection of self-reports by school heads (Ridder, 2017). This was found suitable because of the types of questions asked which employed multiple case studies approach (Yin, 2014: 14) within a “gap and holes” framework (Ridder, 2017).

Consistent with the qualitative research design embraced in the study, a semi-structured interview guide was designed to collect self-reports from school heads about their lived experiences. This comprised 35 open-ended items which enabled research participants to express themselves and to share their views, emotions and experiences without any undue influence from the researcher. They also afforded the researcher the opportunity to probe and seek further clarification from participants in cases where it was felt more information could be gleaned from their responses.

3.8.2 Designing check-lists

To ensure that document analysis and observational studies remained focused on the important issues involved in the study, I designed two separate check-lists which guided my data collection. The first check-list guided the collection of observation data, and the second guided on collection of document analysis data. These were designed to cover a broad spectrum of issues related to instructional leadership practices by school heads. Items on the check-list for observational studies covered issues such as defining instructional leadership strategy (school vision and goal setting), implementation of instructional leadership strategy and assessment of instructional leadership practices and the instructional leadership environment. These items formed the backbone of the study (Langley & Abdallah, 2015).

The check-list for document analysis comprised items about instructional leadership artefacts, examination results analyses reports, progress report books, lesson supervision instruments, school mission and vision statements, minutes and agenda for staff meetings and all other relevant and accessible instructional leadership artefacts found in the field. These artefacts were also analysed to check on who spoke in staff meetings, whose voice was heard, the variety of issues involved and whether staff meetings touched on issues of instructional leadership or not. All these variables were envisaged to shed light on instructional leadership practices by school heads in inclusive instructional environments. Clearly, these variables specifically shed light on the challenges to and opportunities for the future of inclusive instructional leadership in the district and beyond.

3.9 Pilot Study

The concept 'pilot study' has often been used in two distinct ways in human science research, including in educational research (Polit *et al.*, 2001; Kinchin *et al.*, 2018).

Firstly, it can be used to refer to a feasibility study (Vogel & Draper-Rodi, 2017). In this sense, it means a “small scale version or trial run, carried out in preparation for the major study” (Polit *et al.*, 2001: 467). Secondly, it can be used to refer to ‘trying out’ (pre-testing) research instruments before the actual data collection process commences (Polit & Beck, 2008; Kinchin *et al.*, 2018). In both cases, “pilot studies have the advantage that they may give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or where proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated,” for the work in hand (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2002: 35). In light of this, De Vaus (2013: 54) cautions thus, “Do not take the risk, pilot test first.” A pilot study, therefore, serves an important purpose of improving validity and reliability of research instruments and research procedures (Vogel & Draper-Rodi, 2017).

After a pilot study, research instruments are ‘cleaned’ and modified to ensure that questions that sound ambiguous and unclear to research participants are rephrased or left out (Janghorban *et al.*, 2014). At the same time, research procedures that prove to be untenable should be avoided (Kinchin *et al.*, 2018).

In this study, a pilot study was carried out in a school of a similar nature as the cases included in the study. However, the school was drawn from the neighbouring Bikita District and not Masvingo District which had been selected for the current study. Pilot testing in the current study ensured that the final research instruments used in the actual study were both valid and reliable. The pilot study was used both as a trial run for the major study and for pre-testing research instruments before the actual data collection process commenced.

From the pilot study, it was established that the original research instruments were too many and with overlapping questions. Originally, there was a questionnaire guide for teachers and an interview guide for school heads as two separate instruments. The questionnaire had 20 items and the interview schedule 32 items. After the pilot study, it was established that the questionnaire for teachers could serve little purpose in a study centred on school heads. Consistent with this finding, items on the questionnaire for teachers were merged with items on the interview guide for school heads with overlapping items discarded. The interview guide was expanded from 32 items to 35 items in order to accommodate the adjustment. The pilot study

ensured that the research approach finally adopted was appropriate for the purpose and that, the research instruments used to collect the needed data were clean (Janghorban *et al.*, 2014; Vogel & Draper-Rodi, 2017; Kinchin *et al.*, 2018).

3.10 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection methods adopted in the study were relative to the research questions they sought to address as summarised in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3: Summary of Data Collection in Relation to Research Questions

Research Question	Data Collection Method	Participants/Elements Involved
(a) How is instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools constructed and understood by school heads?	Interviews	Interviews with school heads
(b) What practices characterise instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools?	Observations	Staff meetings, morning devotions, morning assemblies, school heads routines and direct classroom activities.
	Document analysis	Minutes and agendas for staff meetings, children's exercise books, supervision reports, job descriptions (i.e., of school heads, deputy heads, HODs, class teachers), inclusive & school leadership policy instruments.
(c) How does sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools?	Analysis, interpretation and synthesis of interviews data	Interviews with school heads
	Analysis, interpretation and synthesis of observational data	Staff meetings, morning devotions, morning assemblies, school heads' activates and routines
	Analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of document analysis data	Minutes of staff meetings, children's exercise books, supervision reports, job descriptions (i.e., of deputy heads, HODs, class teachers), inclusive & school leadership policy instruments

Table 3.3 above shows the three key data collection methods, namely semi-structured interviews, non-participant observations and document analysis, used to collect data for answers to the research questions that guided the study. Data collection was scheduled for a period of twelve months starting July 2017 to July 2018. To collect data, I personally visited the study sites and collected the data first-hand from the purposively selected sample. My first call to the three schools was to

check on their inclusive nature, ask for authority to collect data and request the consent of research participants. Although the study did not specifically interview teachers, all teachers in the schools studied were made to sign consent forms. The reason for asking all teachers to complete consent forms was that, in one way or the other, they were involved in the study during the observation phase in which I shadowed school heads such as during morning devotions, caucus meetings and walk-throughs. In all the three schools studied, all teachers consented to partake in the study in the ways expected of them. All the school heads were also asked to complete consent forms.

Following the consent of research participants, I then booked for appointments to collect data. The data were collected using a sequential approach consisting of interviews, observations and document analysis. The observation phase was, however, cross-cutting. During the document analysis phase, for example, flashes of observation data often presented themselves and were recorded. The data collection phase of the study kept me for at least four weeks at each research site with intermittent call-backs whenever the need arose. Such call-backs occurred even after the scheduled period for data collection at each single research site was over. Specifically, I made four call backs at Open Gates High School and three apiece at Holy Ghost and All Souls High Schools during the scheduled data collection period. Such call backs were meant to seek clarification on some grey areas arising from data analysis.

3.10.1 Interviewing

In the initial stage of data collection, a semi-structured interview technique was employed to gather research data from school heads. This was done to collect data needed to answer sub-questions 1 (section 1.5). Semi-structured interviews were used here because they were associated with a plethora of benefits to the researcher. Holloway and Wheeler (2010) and Ridder (2017) view the semi-structured interview as one of the most common forms of interview techniques available to researchers in the multiple case studies research design. This approach involved the use of pre-determined questions in which the researcher was free to probe for more information or for clarification where the need arose. In other words, whilst key questions were asked to all participants, I also used probes and follow-up

questions included in the interview guide as and when the need arose (Spillane *et al.* 2011). In this approach, the interview process collected similar types of data from every research participant in the study sample (Ridder, 2017).

3.10.2 Non-participant observations and documents analysis

Following the interviews phase, document analysis and non-participant observations were carried out to gather data on instructional leadership practices of school heads. This was done to provide answers to sub-questions 2 (section 1.5). It was also meant to triangulate data collection methods and to validate data emerging from the interview phase of the data collection process. This phase consisted of two stages, i.e., the observation and document analysis stages and follows directly after the interview phase. For this phase, I visited one school at a time and spent four weeks collecting and analysing observational data on instructional leadership activities and on documents analysis before proceeding to the next school as explained below,.

3.10.3 Non-participant observations

Ameyaw *et al.* (2018:87) citing Spradley (2016) defines observation techniques as “the systematic activities of witnessing and recording the behavioural patterns of objects, people, and events without directly communicating with them.” McMillan and Schumacher (2010) see observations as depending on a researcher’s hearing and seeing of phenomena, and recording the results instead of depending on research participants’ responses to questions asked. Such observations can be of events, facts or behaviour or qualities. Observational data may complement survey and interviews data thereby validating research findings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Numale (2007) thus points out that, one way of understanding people is through constant observation of their behaviour in different situations.

In the current study, I adopted non-participant observation of staff meetings, morning devotions, supervision of teaching and learning activities, controlling of movements of both teachers and learners in the schools and school heads’ routines and interactions with teachers, learners, support staff and parents as and when the opportunity presented itself. In order to get a clear understanding of issues at stake in the study, participants were asked to explain observed practices whenever the need arose. This enabled me, as the researcher, to get insights on the reasons for school heads to embrace practices as observed. In the process, I audio recorded

and photographed the data where possible and also took notes using pen and paper. All these activities provided valuable insights on the issues at stake in the study.

3.10.4 Documents analysis

As part of my data collection process, I collected various texts from school heads' lived experience (Lincoln *et al.*, 2011; Welford *et al.*, 2011). According to Chikwature *et al.* (2016: 823), "... text is anything written, visual or spoken that serves as medium for communication ...". The documents that were analysed in this study included minutes for staff meetings, mark schedules, supervision reports, report books, schools' mission statements; communications to the MoPSE, curriculum documents, supervision guides, staff detail charts and results analysis tables. Minutes of staff meetings were analysed in order to have an appreciation of the breadth and depth of instructional leadership activities by school heads, that is, the nature of activities involved and the extent of leadership distribution. Supervision reports also provided further evidence on leadership distribution or lack of it. They also provided data on the type of assistance that teachers got from their supervisors on how they could best help children with exceptionalities to achieve their best from their learning experiences. School curriculum charts also provided data on the extent to which inclusive schools catered for the needs of all learners in line with their exceptionalities. All these provided valuable data on instructional leadership practices by school heads in inclusive secondary schools.

3.11 Data Presentation and Analysis

Following data collection, the next stage in educational research is data presentation and analysis (Mapetere, 2015). The following section discusses the data presentation and analysis techniques employed in the study. I begin my presentation by focusing on the qualitative data presentation methods employed in the study.

3.11.1 Qualitative data presentation

In my effort to organise and present research findings in ways that depicted rigour and guarantee credibility invested in the study, I had to experience first-hand and overcome the reality that, "part of the challenge of doing qualitative research lies in writing it up to communicate its insights in a credible way" (Langley & Abdallah, 2015: 108). I overcame the challenge by applying a systematic conceptual and

analytical discipline that lead to credible interpretations of data in ways that should help to convince readers that my conclusions in this study are both plausible and defensible (Gioia, 2013: 16). The first challenge that I had to overcome from the qualitative approaches involved gleaning information from large quantities of data that were sometimes messy, disjointed and seemingly meaningless at first sight (Reay *et al.*, 2019). The second challenge was that, case study research is based on different epistemological, ontological and methodological stand points that have to be understood and reconciled if one should present a convincing narrative from qualitative case studies (Gehman *et al.*, 2018; Kelly *et al.*, 2018). Lastly, data presentation involved creating a workable balance and plausible trade-off between limited space available for presenting a convincing story and the need to present credible evidence of claims arising from data analysis processes.

Practically, there are numerous data presentation approaches available for adoption by qualitative researchers to organise empirical findings in their field (Gioia *et al.*, 2013; Strang & Siler, 2017). As a result, finding an appropriate technique that suited the type of questions asked and the nature and variety of data collected in the current study required higher levels of skill, patience and time than normally available to student researchers (Fusch *et al.*, 2018) doing research for learning purposes. The multiplicity of both philosophical assumptions and methodological orientations among academic researchers and reviewers (Gehman *et al.*, 2018; Kelly *et al.*, 2018) also made it more compelling for me to come up with a convincing data presentation mix. This mix portrays the level of rigour expected in academic research processes of this nature, whilst ensuring credibility of research findings all at once.

Reay *et al.* (2019: 213) advise “authors, readers, and reviewers to be sensitive and accommodative to the existence of multiple ways to organise and present qualitative data,” some of which may still be relatively uncommon in certain fields of study today. In this study, I found it important and worked hard to devise a hybrid data presentation technique. In the process I came up with a hybrid approach, with hybrid vigour and ability to speak to the unique needs of my research purpose. At the same time, this told the story of the lived experiences of research participants with a high level of novelty and vividness as expected of qualitative studies at this level of proficiency. Examples of data presentation techniques that were available for

adoption either as discrete techniques or in combinations as mixes that showed innovation and ingenuity include the “Gioia” template, the “Eisenhardt” template; vignettes, temporal phases, long data excerpts and anthropological techniques (Langley & Abdallah, 2015; Reay *et al.*, 2019). Early proponents of qualitative techniques of data presentation in social scientific research such as Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Miles and Huberman (2013) also offered other viable options for consideration. Miles and Huberman (2013), for example, talk about the use of the thick descriptions approach to data presentation.

Data presentation in the current study was practically approached in full view of (a) the multiplicity of qualitative data presentation techniques available to researchers for adoption; (b) the need to strike a balance between issues of rigour, novelty and credibility, typical of evolving trends in qualitative research; and (c) Reay *et al.* (2019: 203)’s submission that, present day “authors should be encouraged to structure their findings in ways that are most appropriate, flexible and novel for their particular empirical discoveries and research perspectives.” Appropriateness of data presentation techniques that I finally settled for was therefore considered critical in order to meet the criteria of rigour, whilst maintaining trustworthiness. Trustworthiness in the context of this qualitative research is measured in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability of research findings (Creswell, 2017). As a budding qualitative researcher, I therefore made a painstaking effort to devise appropriate ways to organise my findings so that readers can appreciate the richness of the underlying data and the rigour of my analysis (Myers, 2013; Abdallah, 2017). This was done as I also sought to tell a convincing and engaging story about the issues at stake without trading-off issues of credibility and rigour with limitations of space in the way that negatively affects the flow and/or credibility of the stories emerging from the data analysis process.

Data in the current study are therefore, presented using a hybrid approach comprising vignettes and anthropological techniques (Reay *et al.*, 2019) in order to improve the richness of the findings and the novelty of the stories. Anthropological techniques present data in a naturalistic format (Langley & Abdallah, 2015). They focus on verbatim transcriptions (Hennink *et al.*, 2020) or thick descriptions (Miles & Huberman, 2013; Sachs *et al.*, 2017) of interview data, visual presentations of

observed practice and artefacts, for example, in the form of photographs as taken from the field. Vignettes are short scenarios/stories in written, pictorial or in tabular form designed by the researcher (Palaiologou, 2017). Reay *et al.* (2019: 207) describes a vignette as “... an evocative description or an account of a short event or episode. ...” In a purely vignettes based presentation, “raw data extracts are rare. Instead, authors reconstruct scenes (the vignettes) that make readers feel like they are there” (Reay *et al.*, 2019: 207). In the current study, Tables of analysed and synthesised data are combined with the author’s narrations.

The downside of vignettes is that, if overused, the narrative may adopt a journalistic style and thereby loses the level of credulity expected. At the same time, the overuse of verbatim transcriptions (thick descriptions) and very long texts may also create unnecessarily long stories. In the current study, a combination of vignettes and verbatim transcriptions provided an opportunity for showing and telling (Abdallah, 2015) at different levels of depth and breadth. However, some samples of analysed documents whose contents were summarised in vignettes were conserved as appendices. This was done in order to mitigate potential noise that may be caused when too many and/or too long text are included in the write up in order to pass the credibility test of qualitative research. The approach embraced in this study created flowing stories on lived experiences of school heads whilst maintaining credibility standards expected in a study of this nature and level all at once. The practice and resultant benefits justify my use of the concept hybrid approach, with hybrid vigour.

3.11.2 Qualitative data analysis

Whilst literature is awash with different techniques and methods for analysing research data, the current study employed the interactional narrative analysis approach (Oliver, 1998; Harding, 2018) as a guiding framework. According to Oliver (1998), narrative analysis uses stories to describe human experiences and action. Breheny and Stephens (2015: 284) also submit that, “Narratives are stories that order events across time and also structure accounts of these events in ways that give meaning to the lived experienced of storytellers.” Weder *et al.* (2019: 1) sees narratives as representing “storied ways of knowing and communicating” research data. It involves knowing what research participants know through the stories they tell and in turn communicate these stories (Harding, 2018). Since my interest in the

current study was in part to tell the story of school heads' understanding of the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools, a methodology was needed that captures how they interpreted the meaning of their lived experiences and perceptions. The method used in this study was the narrative analysis, in particular, the interactional narrative analysis as guided by the analytic framework below (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Analytic Framework for Interactional Narrative Data Analysis

Themes from sub-questions	Sub-themes: Informed by the theoretical framework	Categories: Guided by conceptual framework	Guiding lines for dialogical questions asked during data interpretation & analysis
School heads' understanding of IL for an inclusive secondary school	What it means to be an instructional leader in an inclusive secondary school and the school leadership stance taken by each school head	Factors to influence (i.e. what the school heads saw as their role expectations) and the reason for this orientation.	Issues emerging as the most important responsibilities of school heads and reason behind
			The extent to which perceived responsibilities relate to IL & inclusive education
	Reasons for embracing a particular school leadership stance	Personal & institutional contexts of the school environment	Factors of the personal and institutional context shape school heads' perceptions & experience & their impact in this direction
School heads' assessment of his IL leadership context	Societal attitude & support for recognition for inclusive practices	Macro level support and recognition	School heads' assessment of the nature & extent of support from the macro level environment
		Micro level (internal context) support & involvement	School heads' assessment of the sensitivity and suitability of the micro level context inclusivity
	Availability & sensitivity of IL artefacts to inclusive practices	The School Curriculum	Sensitivity of curriculum content & examination system to inclusivity
		Supervision & policy instruments	Extent to which supervision policy instruments speak to inclusivity
School heads' IL practices	Direction setting activities	Defining & communicating the school vision & purpose	Who is involved & whose voice is heard?
	Implementing IL strategy	Managing teaching/learning programmes	What activities are involved, with what effect & why?
			Whose voice is heard and with what effect?
Establishing the stories told by the 3 cases	Cross-case analysis	Similarities within the 3 cases	Using case narratives to establish how experiences and perspectives of school heads reveal the challenges to be overcome and opportunities to be exploited as people work towards social justice by challenging master narratives that may have damaging effect to lives
		Differences within the 3 cases	

Source: Designed by the researcher in line with the research paradigm and the conceptual framework and philosophical assumptions embraced in the study

As shown in Table 3.4 above, narrative analysis of data as embraced in the current study was carried out in a systematic and rigorous fashion. Specifically, this happened at two major levels of the research process. These levels comprise within-case analysis and cross-case analysis levels. Data analysis did not wait for the end of the data collection phase of the study before it began. Instead, this occurred simultaneously with the data collection process. Data collected after each day's work was analysed on the same day in preparation for the next day's work. Whilst in practice, data analysis does not occur in a linear format (Oliver, 1998; Reay *et al.*, 2018), in the current study data analysis is guided by the analytic framework as captured in Table 3.4. The approach involved what Andrews *et al.* (2013) and Harding (2018) refer to as interactional narrative analysis. Whilst, like in the thematic and in the structural narrative analysis approaches, data in the interactional narrative analysis approaches are also structured around themes either in a priori or posteriori format, as shown in Table 3.4 above, my emphasis in using this approach is not on the themes but on the dialogic process (Harding, 2018) between the tellers and myself as a sense-making and sense-giving listener. Storytelling in this approach was viewed as a process of co-construction, where the teller and the listener created meaning collaboratively, for example, through questions and answers.

As a researcher, I made special effort to listen to stories and within the stories, that is, emerging stories within stories of the three school heads studied. My narrative analysis was not cherry-picking of verbatim transcripts and vignettes to create a high sounding narrative about issues at stake in the study (Reay *et al.* 2019). Instead, it involved making a rigorous effort to organise and make sense of seemingly messy, disjointed and ostensibly meaningless data in order to discern the narratives in the rich stories of research participants. As Oliver (1998: 246) thus advises:

Stories go in circles. They don't go in straight lines. So it helps if you listen in stories because there are stories inside stories and stories between stories and finding your way through them is as easy and as hard as finding your way home. And part of the finding is in the getting lost. For, if you are lost, you really start to look around and listen."

In my analysis of data, I rigorously followed the "circles" comprising school heads' stories, carefully listening to the stories within the stories and the stories between the

stories (Oliver, 1998), until I understood the lived experiences and perspectives as intended. In Chapter 4, I then presented the school head's experiences in a storied form and cross-analysed these stories in Chapter 5, until I provided answers to the important questions upon which the study is grounded.

3.12 Validity and Reliability

Lin (2018), citing earlier work from Joppe (2000:1), describes validity as “determining whether the research truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. Validity thus begs the question: Does the research instrument allow you to hit ‘the bull’s eye’ of your research object?” If the results of a study can be reproduced under a similar methodology, then the research instrument is considered to be reliable.” However, modern researchers associate validity and reliability with quantitative studies (Alsharari & Al-Shboul, 2019). From a qualitative perspective, the equivalence of validity and reliability would be credibility, trustworthiness and transferability (De Vaus, 2013; Leung, 2015), which all amounts to “convincingness.” The current study is therefore based on this key principle of “convincingness” as a measure of rigor. The salient and specific criteria of “convincingness” which also build on the notions of credibility and trustworthiness of this study are centred on the issues of authenticity, plausibility and criticality (Alsharari & Al-Shboul, 2019).

In this particular study, credibility, trustworthiness and transferability were ensured in several ways. For example, after constructing research instruments, I sent them to a language editor to ensure that they are clearly constructed. After the instruments were language edited, I then sent them to the supervisor who then used his expert eye to guide me make them relevant for the task at hand. Instruments were also pilot tested. The data collection process was also done rigorously as I took more than four weeks collecting data from each study case, and made several call backs whenever the need arose. The data analysis process was also done meticulously. As a researcher, I took time to listen in stories, to the stories inside the stories and to the stories between the stories of the research participants in order to find my way through these stories and to present evidence based narratives of the “lived experiences” (Lincoln *et al.*, 2011; Welford *et al.*, 2011; Breheny & Stephens, 2015) of the three school heads studied. Trustworthiness was also ensured through

reflexivity in which, as a researcher, I went through a process of self-disclosure (Anney, 2014) to reveal the assumptions upon which the study was grounded as well as my professional background. In addition, I also made an effort to describe and explain clearly and in detail, the entire research process to facilitate replication by other researchers interested in the topic.

3.13 Ethical Issues

The ethical issues that were considered in this study include the following:

3.13.1 Ethical clearance

Before commencing the data collection process, I first sought ethical clearance from the University of the Free State (see UFS clearance in the appendices). This was an attempt to ensure that a high level of ethical standards was observed as also expected by the university.

3.13.2 Permission

To ensure strict adherence to issues of ethics, I also sought permission to collect data from the research sites identified. This permission was sought from both the MoPSE which superintends over all schools in the country and then from the school heads (see applications and permissions in the appendices).

3.13.3 Informed consent

Research participants were given a clear and honest briefing on the purpose and nature of the study. Armed with this knowledge, participants were given the chance to give informed consent or decline any further participation in the study. They were also informed that, at any stage into the research process, they were free to withdraw their involvement for any reason that they may consider as compelling them to do so. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2011: 23), “human subjects have the right to choose the extent and manner in which they will share or withhold information about their behaviour, attitudes or opinions.” Makaye (2015: 101) supports this argument, and further points out that, “human subjects have a right to refuse to participate in any study, for example, if they think or suspect that the study goes against their cultural, religious or social beliefs.” Informed consent was, therefore, sought from research participants to avoid violating this natural right.

3.13.4 Anonymity of data sources

To protect the identity of participants, no actual names of research participants and/or research sites were used in the research report. Instead, acronyms and pseudonyms were used to identify both research sites and research participants who would normally be identified by real names including the churches that run the schools studied. The three schools that participated in the study were, therefore, code-named Open Gates (OG) High School, Holy Ghost (HG) High School and All Souls (AS) High School. The school heads were named Mr Simango, Mr Sithole and Mr Moyo. No systematic criteria were used to come up with these names except my desire to ensure anonymity of research participants and research sites. The acronyms adopted for research sites, however, depict the general character of the school as perceived and experienced by the researcher.

3.13.5 Harm to participants

This study passed the test of ethical ramifications and integrity for three basic reasons. Firstly, the study was not prone to causing any psychological or physical harm to participants. Secondly, the research was designed such that its findings would not satisfy merely the individual goals of the researcher without any benefit to society and, in particular, to the people that participated in making this study possible. Instead, the study was designed such that it benefitted a number of stakeholders both in Zimbabwe and beyond. By contributing to a field of expanding knowledge on instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools, the study also sought to benefit members of the academic community and policy makers. The potential for the researcher to benefit, not only the personal interests of the researcher, but also the interests of other educational stakeholders, including policy makers and consumers of educational policy programmes, naturally rendered the current study very ethical.

3.14 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on the research methodology employed to collect, analyse and present data needed to answer the central research question upon which the study is grounded. The chapter outlined the research paradigm, research design, instrumentation, and data collection presentation and analysis techniques embraced in the study. Chapter 4 proffers data presentation on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

The current study sought to explore the challenges and opportunities of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools as perceived and experienced by school heads in these school environments. It sought to provide answers to the central research question: *What are the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership (IL) in inclusive secondary schools and how does sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in these school settings?* Data needed to answer this overarching question were collected from three secondary schools in Masvingo District of Zimbabwe. The previous chapter focused on the methodology employed in the study. The current chapter presents data on the findings of the study. The results are presented as cases, using a storied approach (Harding, 2018). Barrera (2019) also refers to this as the narrative approach. The stories in this study are constructed using vignettes of observation and documents analysis data and from thick descriptions or snippets (Andrews *et al.*, 2013; Reay *et al.*, 2019) of data collected through interviews with school heads. Data are here presented in the form of texts, photographs and tables, as guided by the following sub-questions:

- How is instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools constructed and understood by school heads?
- What practices characterise instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools?
- How does sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools?

Each story is constructed in line with how each school head interpreted what it meant to him to be an instructional leader in an inclusive secondary school environment and how this sense-making influenced school leadership practices in the particular school studied. To ensure ethical practices, pseudonyms are used as codes to identify both research sites and research participants for the study. The three secondary schools are code-named Open Gates (OG) High School, Holy

Ghost (HG) High School and All Souls (AS) High School. The school heads for these schools are code-named Mr Simango, Mr Sithole and Mr Moyo respectively.

4.2 Case 1: The Story of Mr Simango

Love without expectations: The voice of a disenchanted team captain

(a) At times I ask myself, when will we learn? ...

(b) You can do a lot to humanity if you don't care about, who gets the credit...

4.2.1 Mr Simango's background and his school leadership context

My first encounter with Mr Simango, at a personal level, was when I visited his school to request for permission to carry out my study and to ask for his consent to be a participant in the study. Previously, I had known him only as one of my fellow school heads in the district. Mr Simango is aged 54, married and a father of two girls and a son whom he named after his late brother, Tryagain. He explained the naming as follows; "I named my only boy child after my disabled brother in order to show the world how much, as a sibling, I loved my brother, regardless of his physical circumstances." From the very beginning, Mr Simango could not hide his motivation to participate in a study on issues of inclusive education when he added that, "I have so much interest and respect for children with special needs. I mean, I am very eager to learn what you have to say about inclusivity in your study" (smiling). In further explaining his personal background and interest, Mr Simango disclosed, "I grew up in our rural home, and alongside Tryagain whom I can safely say was also my childhood friend, in addition to him being my brother." My conversation with Mr Simango shows that he already had experiences with exceptionality at an early stage in life.

With reference to his qualifications, Mr Simango holds a certificate in education, a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in educational leadership. He has 25 years of teaching experience, nine of which as a school head. His experience and qualifications suggest that he is appropriately qualified for his job. When one listens to his voice carefully, one gets the feeling that Mr Simango is grossly immersed in the inclusive philosophy embraced in his school, but somehow appears disillusioned by the prevailing situation in his school leadership environment. This view is evident in his repeated use of the question, "*When will we learn?*" during the interview

discussion. In talking about his leadership practices, Mr Simango preferred to use the terms selective and non-selective school instead of inclusive and non-inclusive schools. He explained this observation thus, "... I think the terms selective and non-selective schools are more appropriate for what we do at this school. They take inclusive education beyond issues of physical disabilities ..."

Open Gates (OG) High School is a church run urban day school located in one of the high-density suburb in the city of Masvingo. The school was founded by a missionary of the Mission for Africa Church (not its real name) in 1981. Mr Simango revealed that, "the white missionary founder of the school passed on in the 1990s. His death left the school in the hands of a local missionary as the responsible authority (RA)."

Mr Simango further revealed that "OG High School was built to accommodate young people whose education had been disturbed by the protracted war of liberation and returning refugees who were coming back home from neighbouring countries following the end of the war and the birth of an independent Zimbabwe in 1980." Clearly, from its inception, the school was built to accommodate disadvantaged members of society. By the time of this study, OG High School had an enrolment of 2244 learners and a total of 75 teachers. According to Mr Simango, "The school also offers non-formal education to "second chance learners." These comprised learners who may have failed their examinations in previous attempts and those learners who may have dropped out of school for such reasons as unplanned pregnancy and have decided to go back to school and hence the designation non-selective school.

4.2.2 Mr Simango's understanding of IL for an inclusive secondary school

In this part of my study, I present data on Mr Simango's conceptualisation of his role as an instructional leader in the school.

Talking about what he viewed as his most important responsibilities as an instructional leader, Mr Simango's first expression was that "I feel I am the torch bearer for my school. I am therefore expected to make sure that the school has a well-defined vision and purpose which is shared by all the people who matter". When I requested him to clarify on whether he viewed defining a school vision and purpose to be his singular responsibility or not, he responded:

Issues of the school vision should involve all key stakeholders, rather than being my private preserve as the head of station. ... On my part, as the school head, I should be seeing to it that the school vision and goals agree with public policy, expectations of the RA and the needs of the people for whom the school was built. ... I mean children. These are the targets for education and therefore the main clients for the school. ... As a torch bearer, I should be supervising, motivating and controlling the work of my team so that all eyes are kept on the goal. I mean that which we all agree we should expend our effort to achieve.

The verbatim quotes above show that Mr Simango viewed himself as the torch bearer for his school. He believed that, though he should take a leading role in defining the vision for his school, he needed to be guided by input and expectations from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE), the Responsible authority (RA) and perceived needs of learners. His concept of “torch bearing” also involved supervising, motivating and controlling the work of his team members.

Clarifying further what he viewed as his most important objective as he led learning programmes in his school, Mr Simango described his role as follows: “I should be creating an environment in which all children are given the chance and motivation to learn, each according to his or her needs... I mean, I should be providing every student with the best education possible and necessary for his or her circumstance”. When asked to explain his response, Mr Simango quietly reached for his cell-phone which was placed on the table and asked me to read a message that he had recently received from a colleague (fellow head of an inclusive school). He indicated that the message was a letter by a school head written to parents whose school children were due to write examinations for the 2017 academic year. The letter, which he later forwarded to me, read as follows:

Dear parents

The exams for your children will start soon. I know you are all really anxious for your child to do well. But please do remember. Among the students who will be sitting for the exams, there is an artist, who does not need to understand maths. There is an entrepreneur who does not care about history or English literature. There is a musician whose chemistry marks would not matter. There is an athlete whose physical fitness is more important than physics. If your children do get top marks, good luck. If they don't, please do not take away their self-confidence and dignity from them. Tell them it is okay. It is just an exam. They are out for much bigger things in life. Please do this and watch your children conquer the world. One exam or low marks will not take away their dreams and talent. And please do not think

doctors and engineers are the only happy people in the world (A letter forwarded by Mr Simango from an unknown author who was also a school head).

In clarifying what this letter meant to him as a school head and why he was sharing it with me, Mr Simango had this to say: “I think as a school head in a non-selective school, I am in the same predicament as the author of this letter. You may need to understand that the people that you see out there (*pointing through the window*), including myself and you are as poor as they are because they are sending children to school, at times for the wrong. If people could borrow a leaf from this type of thinking, then, education in this country will be more worthwhile for both children and their parents”. Clearly, Mr Simango understood academic oriented education as not suitable for learners that may be gifted in areas, other than academic. He added:

This discussion reminds me of the time I was at school. I had this friend of mine; Mabhena (*not his real name*). ... Mabhena was such a talented athlete. He specialised in twelve rounds and no one in the district could out-compete him in this race. Unfortunately, in class he was a very slow learner, but school authorities forced him to follow the academic route ignoring his real calling. At the end, Mabhena left school with nothing of value after failing his O-levels. I believe, if his talent was properly identified and nursed; he could have been a very successful athlete even at an international level. To Mabhena, time at school was time wasted. ... During my time as head, I see it as my responsibility to create an environment in which every child enrolled at my school will prosper in his or her own unique way regardless of varying life circumstances and not like what happened to my good friend, Mabhena [emphasis].

The evidence suggests that Mr Simango believes in multiple and differential intelligence of learners in his leadership of learning. He further expressed this view saying, “I should be facilitating learning for every child admitted in the school ... In my view, I don’t understand why after spending four years at high school, a child should be allowed to leave school empty handed”. In clarifying his point, Mr Simango explained:

You may have noticed that in most schools, when admitting children, the first consideration is what the child can potentially do for the school and not what the school can do for the child. People want to make names out of children without thinking of the future of such children first [laughing]. At Open Gates High School, we practise what we call, love without expectations. We don’t aim at making names out of children but at children making names out of us [emphasis]. ... The guiding question when enrolling a child at this school is, “What will I do for the child and not what will the child do for me if I admit him/her in this school?”

Evidently, Mr Simango viewed his role as being multidimensional. This understanding appears to be in line with the job description of school heads which was availed to me for analysis during data collection (Figure 4.1).

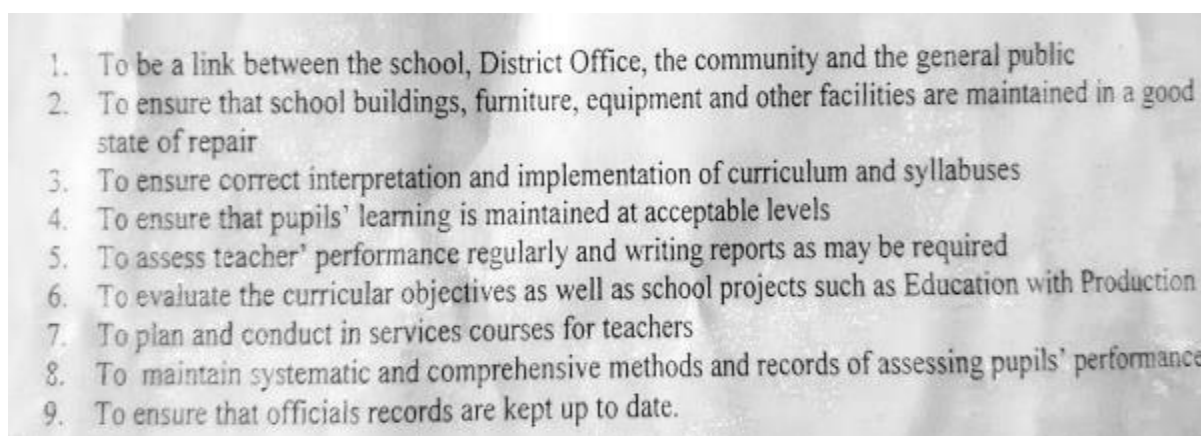
- 
1. To be a link between the school, District Office, the community and the general public
 2. To ensure that school buildings, furniture, equipment and other facilities are maintained in a good state of repair
 3. To ensure correct interpretation and implementation of curriculum and syllabuses
 4. To ensure that pupils' learning is maintained at acceptable levels
 5. To assess teacher' performance regularly and writing reports as may be required
 6. To evaluate the curricular objectives as well as school projects such as Education with Production
 7. To plan and conduct in services courses for teachers
 8. To maintain systematic and comprehensive methods and records of assessing pupils' performance
 9. To ensure that officials records are kept up to date.

Figure 4.1: Job Description for School Heads.

As shown in Figure 4.1, the job description of school heads is supportive and almost prescriptive of the multidimensional character of school leadership by a school head as perceived by Mr Simango. Mr Simango also revealed that “this job description was handed down to schools by the district office as a guide for performance and is captured in all vacancy announcements circulars for school heads.” The broad and multidimensional character of Mr Simango’s responsibilities could also be seen from the minutes of staff meetings as analysed during the document analysis. Figure 4.2 below is an extract from minutes of a staff meeting involving Mr Simango and the members of his school management team (SMT).

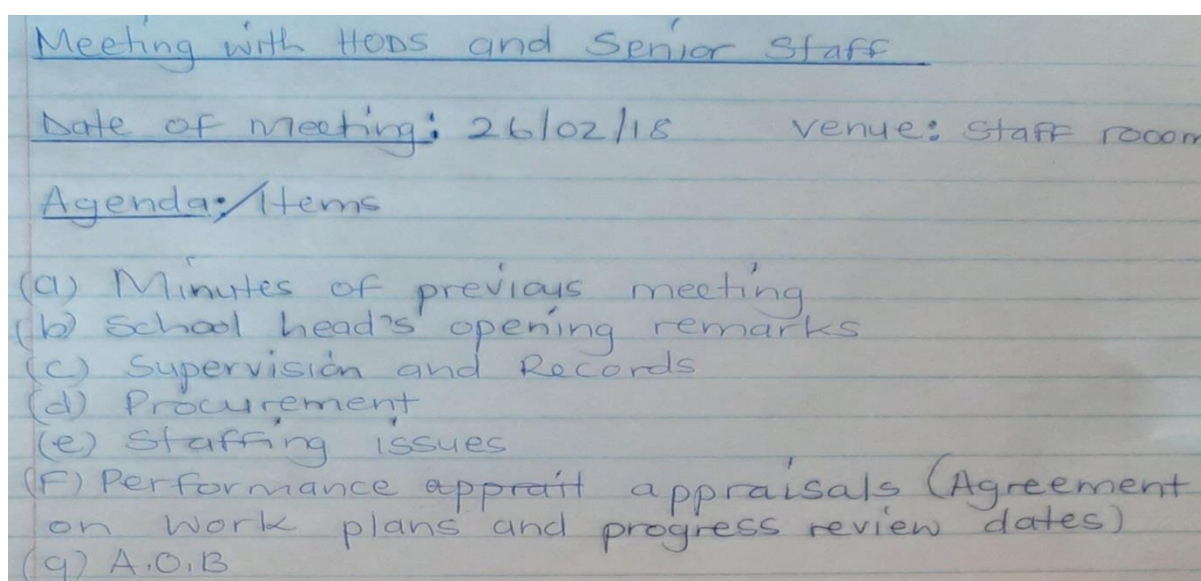
- 
- Meeting with HODs and Senior Staff
- Date of meeting: 26/02/18 Venue: Staff room
- Agenda/Items
- (a) Minutes of previous meeting
 - (b) School head's opening remarks
 - (c) Supervision and Records
 - (d) Procurement
 - (e) Staffing issues
 - (f) Performance appraisal appraisals (Agreement on work plans and progress review dates)
 - (g) A.O.B

Figure 4.2: Agenda for the Head's Meeting with Members of the School Management Team. *(Extract from the schools' staff-meetings minute book)*

Minutes of staff meetings as captured in Figure 4.2 support the multidimensional character of school leadership as understood by Mr Simango. In total, minutes of ten different meetings were analysed to further explore the spread of agenda items involved. Table 4.1 below summarises some of the main issues discussed in these meetings.

Table 4.1: Agenda Items that Characterised Staff Meetings for the Period 2017 – 2018.

No	General classifications of meeting	Main agenda items
1	School term opening meetings	Subject allocation; timetable; records; class allocations
2	Meetings with administration staff	Supervision; timetabling; discipline; school resourcing; construction projects; Money generating projects; Fees payments; teachers on duty
3	Meetings with HODs	Supervision; production units; school resourcing, staffing, records; performance appraisals; reports & report writing
4	Workshop on PSC regulations	Public service regulations; acts of misconduct.
5	Sports meetings	Sports calendar; equipment; allocation of coaches
6	End of term tests	Setting tests; invigilation; marking; review of results
7	Annual merit awards	Awards committee; lists of awards; sourcing prizes
8	End of term meetings	Review of term's work; records; holiday duties

Source: Primary data

Clearly, data presented above confirm the multidimensional nature of Mr Simango's responsibilities and that direct instructional leadership was just one dimension of his multiple role expectations. School heads' responsibilities also involved constructing school buildings, money generation for the school and material resourcing. The data in this section also show that Mr Simango had a positive disposition towards inclusive instructional practices as embraced in the school.

4.2.3 Mr Simango's drive for embracing inclusive instructional practices

To understand some of the factors that shaped Mr Simango's construction and understanding of instructional leadership for his school, I focus the next part of the presentation on his early socialisation and experiences with exceptionalities in his own life. When asked about his inclination to a non-selective approach to education, a visibly motivated Mr Simango emphatically explained:

Well. Tendai Manzwanzwike once said, "The images, scars and victories that we live with have shaped us into the people we have become. We will never know who a person is until

we understand where they have been.” For me, I can safely say my school experience with Mabhena and life with my brother, Tryagain, prepared me to be what I am. Tryagain had a physical disability. Virtually, no one expected him to achieve anything meaningful in life. However, against all odds, he became a Maths teacher of repute. He could teach Maths at high school from a wheel chair in a way that you just had to see to believe. I wish if God had given him a longer life to practise his talent. I am pleased, however, that he died a happy man after society afforded him the chance to follow his passion. Such is what schools should do and I, as a school head, should make every child in my hands become his or her best.

Clearly, Mr Simango’s attitude towards inclusive education was partly shaped by early socialisation and experience with a brother who had a physical disability and a friend with low intellectual ability. Mr Simango’s acceptance of people with exceptionalities was further revealed when he confided in me that, “I named my only boy child after my disabled brother in order to show the world how much, as a sibling, I loved my brother, regardless of his physical circumstances”. Continuing the discussion on his preference for inclusive instructional practices, Mr Simango clarified as follows:

As you are fully aware, Open Gates High School does not exist in a vacuum. As a public school, we have a number of stakeholders to which we should also pay special attention. I think; our most important stakeholders in this respect are the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, the Church and the community around us. In all what we do as a school, we should stand guided by public policy and expectations of the RA and the needs of the people that we are meant to serve. All these key stakeholders should agree with what we aim to achieve as a public schools. In the process, I should also work to improve the examination pass rate and keep it above the national average, just like any other school.

Clearly, in making sense of his role as an officially designated leader, Mr Simango believed that he was in part guided by what the key stakeholders for his school expected of him. These stakeholders comprised the MoPSE, the RA, and the community he served. Mr Simango was also guided by his personal conviction and understanding of the needs of learners and perceived expectations of parents. His disposition towards a child-centred and inclusive instructional approach was guided by the question: “What will I do for the child?” rather than, “What will the child do for me if I admit him/her in this school?” Clearly, Mr Simango’s practices were centred on the best interest of the child principle as guided by the ministry and the responsible authority’s expectations.

4.2.4 Mr Simango's assessment of his school leadership environment

Talking about the nature and extent of support he enjoyed from the community he served, Mr Simango expressed his view thus:

In my own assessment, I feel my adoption of inclusive education is not fully supported by the community we are serving. I can safely say mine is a harvest of thorns [laughing]. Because of the non-selective stance we adopted in this school, vis-à-vis what other schools are doing, our performance in public examinations is sometimes not as high as is the case with some of our neighbours. As a result, people around us from whom we expect support view us negatively. At times we are even labelled: "*kwahuyayi mose; bamba zonke*" (derogative terms for a school that enrolls even garbage; a good for nothing type of school) ...

Mr Simango saw his school's adoption of inclusive instructional practices as not accorded the support it deserved from the community. Elaborating on this negative evaluation he narrated the following story:

A friend of mine, who is a university lecturer at GZU, after realising the extent to which this school is developing in terms of infrastructure and student discipline, since the time I came in, advised me to now consider strict selection of students in order to improve my pass rate and the image of the school in the community. It is only after I explained to him my understanding of the beauty of a non-selective stance in the future life of individual children that he admitted my non-selective stance was good for the community. ... Otherwise my good friend had been equally negative, regardless of his own position and potential influence in society.

Mr Simango's positive attitude towards inclusive practices was further spotlighted when he clarified the response he gave to his friend's advice in which he said:

Oh, yes. I told him that when admitting children in this school; our focus is not on what we expect them to do for the school but what we expect the school to do for them. ... At OG, we practise what we call love without expectations. Our guiding principle is that you can do a lot to humanity, if you don't care about who gets the credit ... Of course, with inclusive education, you expect anything; even a harvest of thorns. If you expect an orange, don't be surprised when you are given a lemon. In this school when we get lemons we make lemonade. ... We may not be getting the best, but surely we are creating the best out of what we get [smiling].

The verbatim account above suggests that Mr Simango believed he embraced inclusive practices even in a context of an exclusionary community which did not fully appreciate his inclusive stance. Responses above show how he puts a positive spin on all the negativity surrounding his leadership practice. In one parents' meeting that

I attended as I shadowed him, Mr Simango was talking about his non-selective practice and how it was good for the community he served. One parent in the meeting interjected saying, “What about results? You should tell us about results. Don’t hide the pass rate.” Evidently, the parent was convinced the school was not doing well in public examinations and hence saw it as a poorly performing school in that context. In response, Mr Simango explained, “I think our academic results are not bad. Whilst yes, we could make them better if, like other schools, we adopted a selective approach, in my view, our results are good and well above the national average”. This discussion shows Mr Simango was steadfast in supporting his non-selective stance even in the absence of support from the community.

Talking about his assessment of the nature and extent of support and recognition he enjoyed from the MoPSE, Mr Simango remarked: “It’ is clear that we are not enjoying deserving support. ... I see people somewhat negative, especially concerning our admission of children with low ability to learn.” Following a short pause, apparently thinking about how best to explain his views, he continued:

Last year when the province was visited by the Minister of education, did you hear how a senior Ministry official who accompanied him introduced me? [Smiling] ... Did you hear her saying, “This one is Mr Simango? His school, we call it bamba zonke” (*derogative term for a school that enrolls even garbage; a good for nothing type of school*). I know she was not aware of the negativity of what she said, but obviously, this tells a story about the Ministry’s attitude towards us as a school. Surely, given this type of experience, I cannot say the MoPSE fully supports us. Whilst policy talks about inclusive education, what is on the ground is exactly the opposite. It appears my acceptance of low ability children is an invitation to negative labelling since schools are not recognised for inclusion but for academic results.

Clearly, Mr Simango was not satisfied with the level of support and recognition he received from the MoPSE for his inclusive stance. He was also aware that inclusive education negatively affected the image of his school in the community. Table 4.2 shows the classification of schools for the purpose of recognising and rewarding teachers during district merit awards which he also brought to my attention.

Table 4.2: Classification of Schools for District Merit Awards for the Year 2017.

Category of school	No of Schools in the category
Boarding Schools	4
Urban Schools	5
Peri-urban Schools	10
Rural Schools	35
Special Schools	1
Total number of schools	55

Source: Primary data (Extract from the district's merit awards list: MoPSE, 2017)

Commenting on the classification of schools as captured in Table 4.2 above, Mr Simango expressed, “As you can see, the list is silent on inclusive schools. It covers special schools only.” He emphasised “To me, special schools are different from inclusive schools.” In explaining this difference, he went on: “Special schools are specifically designed schools to cater for learners with specific learning needs such as due to physical disabilities, learning difficulties, or behavioural problems in an institutionalised setting.” Following a short pause for emphasis, he added, “Unlike special schools, inclusive schools such as OG High School are designed to bring all includable learners into the mainstream school system. They cannot, therefore, be compared with selective schools. They are also not special schools.” Clearly, Mr Simango viewed inclusive schools and, hence, inclusive education to be different from special schools and special education respectively. During the conversation, he showed me how he felt practices by the district office contradicted ministry expectations at national level as expressed in Figure 4.3.

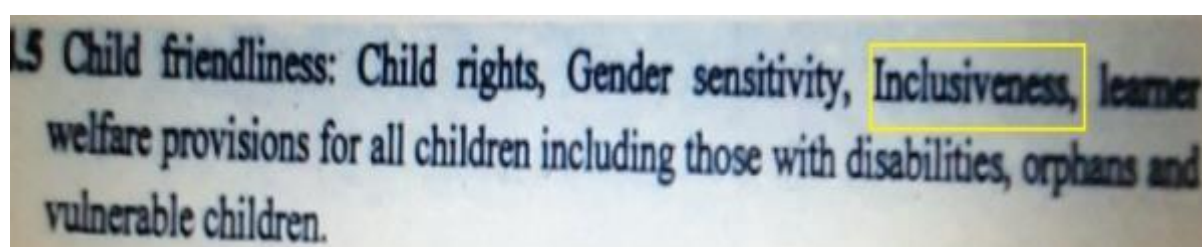


Figure 4.3: An Extract from The Secretary's Circular No. 8 of 2014. (*Guidelines for The Secretary's Merit Awards. p. 4*)

After pulling off a circular from one of his files, he validated his views as follows: “You see here Mr Muresherwa, whilst at district level we appear not to value inclusivity, at

national level, this is an issue. You see?” In the process he was pointing to the section in The Secretary’s Circular No. 8 of 2014 which talks about the criteria for selecting schools for the Secretary’s merit award (Figure 4.3). What is said here suggests that, whilst at national level, the MoPSE sought to reward inclusivity; it appears Masvingo District did not recognise inclusivity for reward purposes. The district seemed to support special schools ahead of inclusive schools. This suggests inconsistency on the part of policy makers. The reason for this apparent contradiction between practices in the district and expectations from the national office is an area that needs further investigation.

During our conversation on whether teachers in the school were adequately trained for inclusive education, Mr Simango remarked, “There is no one trained in inclusive education as it were.” He explained, “Lack of teacher training on inclusive education is an indication that the Ministry is not fully committed to inclusive education...” He believed, if government had genuine interest in inclusive education, teachers would have been empowered through training on how to handle learners with exceptionalities. Talking about whether or not he believed his school was properly resourced for inclusive education, Mr Simango explained as follows:

To be honest with you, sir, this school is not adequately resourced and supported for inclusive education. For example, the District appears not to prioritise non-selective schools like ours when deploying teachers. Since last year, this school has been understaffed by 14 teachers, yet as a non-selective and community focused school, we should get priority over other schools as some of our children are very difficult to handle. In addition, we also have serious shortage of teaching and learning materials needed by special needs children.

Mr Simango viewed his school as not accorded the deserved support from the MoPSE, a key stakeholder in education. He further expressed, “As a non-selective school, we should have facilities for more practical subjects than the theory education that the system focuses on but does not suit most of the children we admit.” Mr Simango was uncomfortable with a system which emphasises on literacy and numeracy only. Talking about his assessment of the support he was getting on teacher motivation for performance, he explained; “One of our greatest challenges is that the MoPSE is also not keen to see teachers being rewarded for their performance at school level even when resources are available.” Mr Simango’s

assessment is supported by the excerpt below (Figure 4.4) which was extracted from the headmaster's response to an audit report compiled by the MoPSE's auditors.

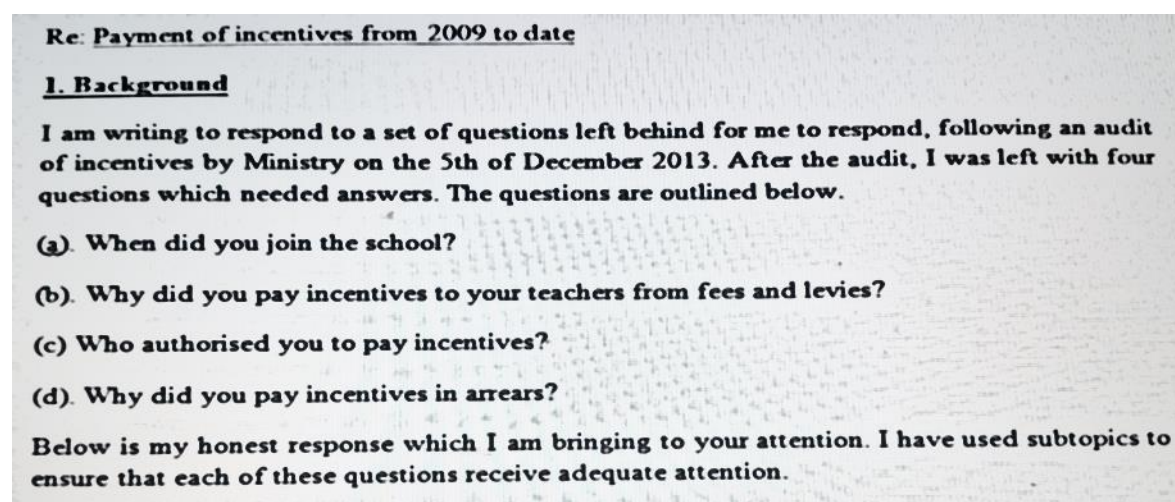


Figure 4.4: Extract from Mr Simango's Response to an Audit Report on Teacher Incentives. (Source: Finance and Admin File: OG High School)

The questions above suggest that the MoPSE did not expect schools to give any form of incentive to teachers from fees and levies. Mr Simango clarified, "The challenge is that, when the Ministry rewards teachers, for example, during district merit awards, emphasis is placed on academic performance and never on participation in inclusive education. I mean, for closing the gap." Clearly, Mr Simango was worried that the MoPSE did not support the idea that teachers be given incentives at a school level. He elaborated his understanding thus, "As a result of our non-selective policy, most of our teachers will not benefit from Ministry based rewards since their examination results may be on the lower side of the scale." Table 4.3 below shows the pass rate at OG High for the five years up to 2017.

Table 4.3: O-level ZIMSEC Examination Pass Rate for the Period 2013 – 2017

EXAMINATION INFORMATION FOR THE PAST FIVE YEARS		
Academic year	School pass rate	National average
2013	38.33	20.72
2014	44.67	22.38
2015	48.49	27.46
2016	47.72	29.96
2017	52.41	26.26

Source: Primary data (Extract from information chart in the head's office)

As shown in Table 4.3 above, the pass rate for ZIMSEC 'O' level examination results at Open Gates High School for the five years under review was generally on the low side. An interesting feature of data in Table 4.3 is that the chronic low pass rate which Mr Simango associated with the non-selective stance adopted in the school was always above the national average. This seems to support his earlier statement that, "... strictly intellectual intelligence based examinations are not meant for every child." Interestingly, as Mr Simango displays data on examination results, apparently in compliance to the MoPSE's school assessment criteria for narrative reporting on a school head (see Appendix 10). When displaying the school's examination pass rate, he displays this together with the national pass rate (see Table 4.3) above.

Talking about his assessment of the sensitivity of the Updated Curriculum Framework for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2015 – 2022 to inclusive education, Mr Simango expressed, "No, no, Sir. The idea of a one size fits all curriculum is not good for inclusion. ... This is where I sometimes miss the F2 education system. To me, this was a more realistic system than the current system."

By wishing for the return of the F2 education system, Mr Simango revealed his preference for a more vocationally oriented education system that was discarded after independence in 1980.

In further explaining his assessment of the examination system as an instructional leadership artefact in his inclusive school, Mr Simango added:

The 5 'O' level subjects' syndrome affecting the country today is making people lose focus on the purpose of education in society. Since independence, most children have always found it difficult to pass the required 5 'O' levels including English and Maths. I see a serious need for educators to rethink over this 5 'O' level thing, wherever it came from. People should make education relevant to every child and not a race for certificates. Some of our children can do well in life, even with only a few subjects but relevant skills. ...This is why at times I ask myself, when will we learn?

Mr Simango viewed the desire by schools to have every child obtain 5 'O' level subjects including English and Maths as a 'syndrome' and a challenge which discouraged schools from embracing inclusive education.

For Mr Simango, the examination-oriented character of the curriculum in Zimbabwean schools, and the value placed on academic pass rate, is a disincentive for inclusive education. He further regards the 5 'O' level passes bench-mark criteria for assessing school performance as an enemy of inclusion. My analysis of the Curriculum Framework for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2015 – 2022 showed that the new curriculum proposed “the use of continuous, practical and summative assessments regimes in the measurement of theoretical and applied learning” (p.66). However, competence based assessment, though noble, may seem to have died a still-birth. The Examination Circular No. 11 of 2018, which I also analysed for the purpose of this study, provides that, “Except for practical and technical subjects, the November 2018 public examinations shall not include continuous assessment”. This circular, therefore, suspended the practical component of the examination system. Concerning his assessment of support from the responsible authority, Mr Simango explained:

Whilst MoPSE does not have any incentive schemes to motivate teachers in non-selective schools such as ours, the RA supports us in a very big way. We, for example, have food hampers and organise speech and prize giving days in which we give all our teachers prizes both in material and in monetary terms, courtesy of the responsible authority's support.

Whilst in his assessment, Mr Simango regarded the MoPSE, the official representative of the government and the custodian of education in the country, as not fully supportive of inclusive instructional practices; he confided in me that, “With the support of the RA, we still give all our teachers performance related incentives when our school performs well in examinations.” Clearly, from his assessment of the school leadership environment, Mr Simango had mixed feelings about the support he got from some key stakeholders. Only parents of children with the special needs and the church were considered to be fully supportive.

4.2.5 Mr Simango's instructional leadership practices

Having discussed Mr Simango's conceptual construction of instructional leadership in his school, this part of my study focuses on his leadership practices. I begin my presentation by looking at the key dimension of defining and communicating on instructional leadership vision and strategies.

4.2.5.1 Defining and communicating instructional leadership vision and strategies

The observation phase of my study revealed that Mr Simango clearly defined the vision for his school which he also displayed in his office (Figure 4.5).

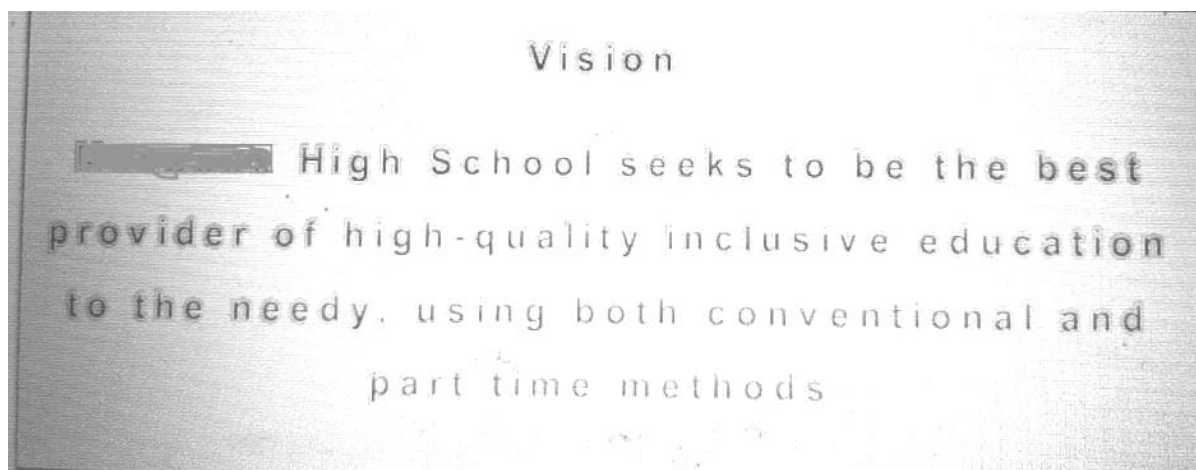


Figure 4.5: Vision Statement for Open Gates High School. (Extract from information charts in the head's office)

It is clear that the vision statement for OG High School drew strong similarities with the MoPSE's vision statement which positions the Ministry; *"To be the lead provider of inclusive quality education for socio-economic transformation by 2020"* (see Appendix 9). The vision statement for the MoPSE was displayed in the school head's office. An interesting feature of these two vision statements is that, they both speak to inclusive education. This shows the influence of the MoPSE on school level visioning. However, whilst my discussion with Mr Simango shows that school visioning was also influenced by the RA; my observation revealed that the school did not have a written vision statement from the church to draw on. He explained:

Although the church has not provided us with a written vision statement, from its very beginning, this school was built with the disadvantaged in mind. As I indicated, this school was built at the end of the war of liberation in order to accommodate children who had been disadvantaged by the war including returning refugees and children who were injured during the war and were returning home following the end of the war in 1980. OG High School has been non-selective from the word go. As we define our purpose, we therefore stand guided by this original vision and purpose for this community based school.

Verbatim quotations above show that issues of school visioning at Open Gate High School were approached from a strategic leadership perspective. The school vision

was derived from higher up the hierarchy and only refined at a school level. Contrary to expectations, Mr Simango did not have in his office, a written vision statement of the church on education. However, he still felt that he was “guided by the original purpose for which his school was built.”

Talking about strategies used to communicating the inclusive vision that he championed and therefore created a shared vision among key stakeholders, Mr Simango asserted, “The whole thing is about team work. As a leader, I work with and through others. In the process, we use various forms of media.” Figure 4.6 shows one of the media that was used for this purpose at the school.

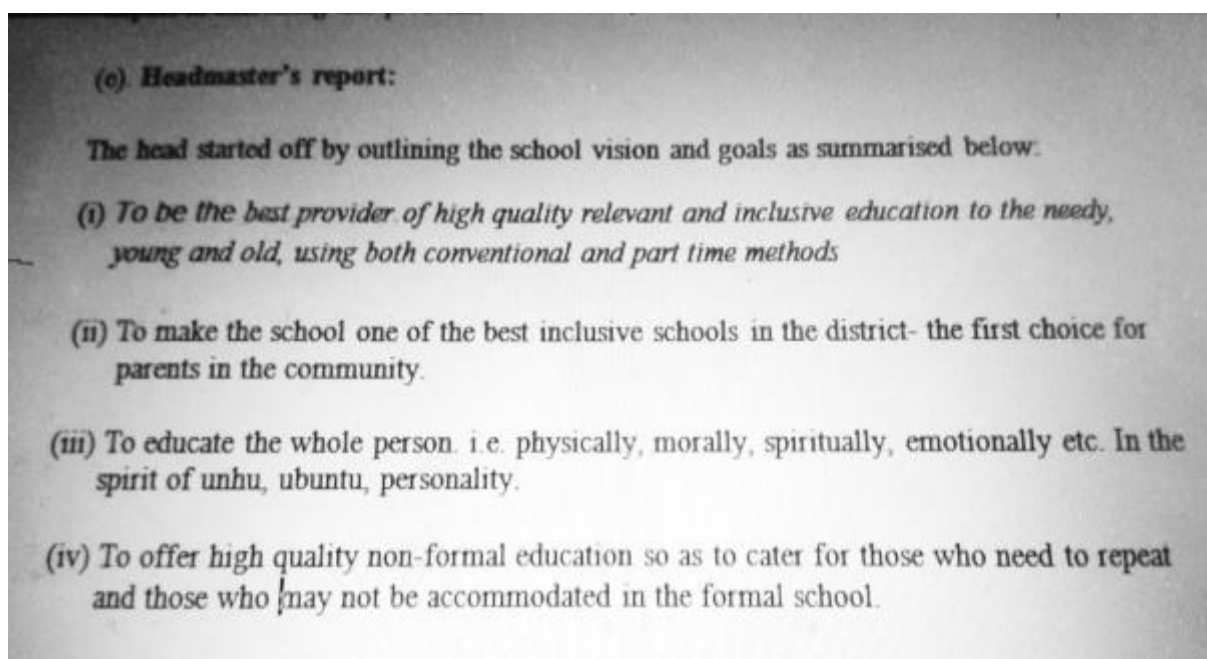


Figure 4.6: Extract from Minutes of a Parents' Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Figure 4.6 is an extract from minutes of a parents meeting held at OG High School. During the meeting, Mr Simango shared the school vision and instructional purpose with parents. He also used school magazines and progress report books issued to learners for this purpose. In addition, official vehicles for the head and the deputy head had stickers with the following inscription:

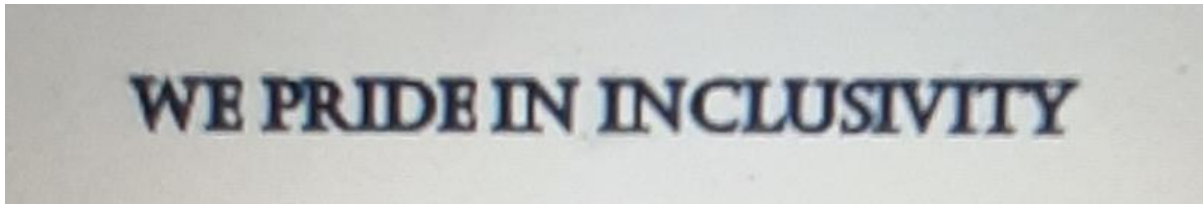


Figure 4.7: School Motto (*A sticker displayed on the official vehicle for the deputy head*)

The school vision statement and the school motto were also displayed on notice boards in the deputy head's office, the senior teachers' offices, the HODs' offices and the staffroom. This shows collaboration of internal stakeholders in communicating the school vision and purpose to the school's publics.

4.2.5.2 Implementing the instructional leadership strategy

Talking about how he approached his responsibility of implementing the instructional leadership strategy, Mr Simango began by explaining his student admission criteria. In his own words, he narrated:

In selecting and admitting learners, our primary qualification is the mere fact that one is a human being. Whilst some school authorities admit children on the basis of what they expect them to do for the school when they finally write examinations, here, our focus is on the child and not the school... I believe that schools are built for children. They should therefore, never be managed for anybody's fame or gratification. ...Schools should not be about the school head or his teachers, but about the child and the child alone. ... As OG High School, we don't aim to benefit from the children we admit, but children benefitting from us [emphasis].

Mr Simango's words were confirmed when, during one observation session in which I was shadowing him, a prospective parent entered the office with what looked like a teenaged boy dressed in a girl's uniform. This was a sad and emotive sight as Mercy (*not her real name*) and her mother entered the head's office. The encounter between the prospective parent (Pp) and the school head (Hm) was in Shona language and is translated below:

Hm: Morning madam. You can have a seat.

Pp: Thank you, sir.

Hm: How can I help you?

Pp: I am looking for a form 2 place for this girl child of mine [*emphasising the point that the child before us was female*]

Hm: *[Focussing his attention to the child, he politely asked].* My girl, can you wait for us at the reception for a moment? *[The 'girl' went out and closed the door behind her].*

Hm: Mother, tell me the story about this child.

Pp: Thank you for asking the child to go out for a while. Let me tell you my problem.

Following the remarks as captured in the observation segment above, Mercy's mother proceeded to narrate the 'girl's' story. She confided in Mr Simango thus:

The problem with my child is that she is bisexual. Because of this problem, she is being teased by her school mates such that she no longer wants to go to school. She wishes if we could look for private teachers who can help her from home. Even her performance in class has dropped so much that, as parents, we are left with no option other than to withdraw her from the school. ... I was advised by a neighbour to transfer her to this school on the basis of its child friendliness *[literal translation from Shona]*.

During the discussion, Mercy's mother handed to Mr Simango, Mercy's report book which she brought with her from her former school (Figure 4.8)

SUBJECT	TERM MARK	EXAM MARK	GRADE	TEACHER'S COMMENT
Agriculture	20		9	work harder
Physical Education & Mass Displays				
General / Combined Science	10		9	work hard
Mathematics	28		9	Be serious
Indigenous Language	29		9	Shanda mwasimba
English Language	34		9	Work harder
Heritage Studies	42		7	work hard
Geography	42		7	A'm higher
History				
Literature				
Family And Religious Studies	25		9	Work hard please. v.m
Accounts				
Commerce	24		9	work harder
Business & Enterprise Skills				
Practical (FP / FN / WW / MW / TG / Music / Art / Computer Studies)	25		9	Put more effort

Figure 4.8: Academic Profile Showing an Extract from a Report Book.

When Mr Simango admitted Mercy into his school, the mother virtually wept with joy. As the two left the office, Mr Simango handed Mercy's report book to me explaining:

You see? These are some of the cases we face as a non-selective and child friendly school. Look at the child's condition and her report book. ... I am accepting her with such a condition because my concern is about her future, and not my name. I do so, believing that she will find

new hope. As you can see, the primary and most pressing goal for Mercy and her parents is to seek love and acceptance... She is looking for a loving community. I think this school will afford her just that. ... Have you seen, on realising that we are prepared to help her, this parent ended up shedding tears of joy? **Such is the joy that this church school brings in people's life as we show love without expectations"** [Bold for emphasis]. ... That's why I say, you can do a lot to humanity, if you don't care about getting a credit for your service to mankind.

An analysis of Mercy's report book (Figure 4.8) shows that her academic profile was very weak. Pass grades at lower secondary school ranged from 1 unit (distinction pass) to 6 units (marginal pass). Anything outside this range is considered an outright fail. Mercy was admitted into the school even after failing all 10 subjects she sat for in the last end of term examination wrote at her previous school (Figure 4.8).

My analysis of grade 7 results for new entrants into Form 1 further confirms the non-selective stance adopted at the school. Figure 4.9 below is a grade 7 result-slip for a new entrant into form 1 for the academic year 2018.

ZIMBABWE SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL 2017		GRADE SEVEN
PROVISIONAL RESULTS FOR THE		OCTOBER GRADE SEVEN EXAMINATIONS
SCHOOL	DATE OF BIRTH	
ENGLISH	9	(NINE)
MATHEMATICS	9	(NINE)
AGRICULTURE	9	(NINE)
SHONA	9	(NINE)
GENERAL PAPER	9	(NINE)

N.B. This is not a certificate (See reverse)

Figure 4.9: A Grade 7 Result Slip for John, a New Entrant into Form 1 in 2018.

The result slip above shows that John (*not his real name*) was admitted with a poor academic record. His results were typical of many other learners in the school. Clearly, these extracts from the learners' results confirm the non-selective nature of Mr Simango's practices. This practice was consistent with his desire to establish a school in which children are loved without expectations.

Mr Simango also shared with me on how he designs the school-based curriculum and group learners for instruction at his school (Table 4.4).

Table 4.4: Curriculum Chart for Form 3 classes at Open Gates High School

Class	Subjects offered to form 3 level												Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10-11	12	13	
	Eng	Sho.	Maths	Scie	H/S	Agri	PE	Geo	FMS	His	FF/B	Wt./Ft	
3 ₁	x	x	x	x	xxx	x	x	x	x	x			12
3 ₂	x	x	x	x	xxx	x	x	x	x	x			12
3 ₃	x	x	x	x	xxx	x	x	x	x	x			12
3 ₄	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	10
3 ₅	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		10
3 ₆	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		10
3 ₇	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	10
3 ₈	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x		10

Source: Primary data

Classes at OG High School were broadly classified as Science classes, for example, Forms 3₁ - 3₃ and non-science classes, Forms 3₄ - 3₈ in Table 4.4 above. The yellow box in the middle of the table reflects on hard sciences (i.e., Physics, Chemistry and Biology). On the other hand, the green box to the extreme right reflects on practical subjects (i.e. Textile Technology, Building Technology, Wood Technology and Food Technology). Mr Simango described his practice as follows:

On getting new students, we assess their potential. When we realise someone has potential for maths and science, for example, we place him or her in science classes... Those with low ability to handle maths and sciences subjects, we advise them to follow the non-science route where they learn subjects in the categories of humanities, commercials or Voc-Tec. ... Our best three classes at junior level and O-level do pure Physics, Chemistry, and Biology as we prepare them for hard sciences at 'A' level. Those that cannot handle sciences, we prefer them do practical subjects including those offered by HEXCO (Higher Education Examination Council). As I told you before, they too should not go out empty-handed.

Clearly, Mr Simango practised some ability streaming in his school. His leadership practices seem to have been shaped by his subscription to the multiple intelligence and differential intelligence hypotheses. Inclusive education at OG High School seems to be based on principles of equity in the context of fairness as opposed to equality in the sense of sameness. Mr Simango explained his practice as follow:

The challenge for school leadership today is not about who is in which class but about exposing students to the right curriculum in a non-discriminatory school environment. Even if one may not group children by ability but at the end of the day you make all children to do exactly the same subjects regardless of their varying abilities and needs, I don't think we will be doing them justice. ... At this school we group our children by ability without marginalising low ability learners by shutting our doors behind them. Once admitted, we offer them a wide curriculum which includes sports and theatre arts in a serious way. We are being real here.

Clearly, Mr Simango was concerned about creating an inclusive school even as classes may be exclusive in character. On paper, all learners in the school were meant to take 7 compulsory subjects as stipulated by the Updated Curriculum Framework for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2015 – 2022. In practice, classes that followed the sciences route added five additional subjects from the list of optional subjects provided. Non-science classes were also offered elective subjects from the same Updated Curriculum Framework. In addition to these ZIMSEC based learning areas, non-science classes also took HEXCO based subjects. Furthermore, learners were exposed to a rich mix of sports and performing arts related activities. Figure 4.10 shows a collection of trophies won by learners in various sporting and performing arts disciplines offered at the school.



Figure 4.10: Trophies of Achievement Displayed in the Head's Office.

Pointing to a table full of trophies (Figure 4.10) in the corner of his office, Mr Simango said, “You see, these are accolades won by our students in different disciplines of education, mostly outside the academic fields. ... I feel this is the

direction that we should follow as educational leaders, if our children should benefit from their learning experiences.” In explaining why he offered HEXCO subjects when the Updated Curriculum Framework for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022 did not stipulate that these subjects ought to be taught at secondary school level, he said, “We offer HEXCO subjects not because we are forced to do so. We are only trying to provide a window for our academically low potential students to do tertiary level education at secondary school. ... I mean, we are trying to make education more relevant. Our approach here is not based entirely on rights as in legal rights (*smiling*), but on issues of ethics and morality.” Mr Simango’s responses suggest that HEXCO subjects ensured that the school-based curriculum had something for everyone. His practice is also consistent with his subscription to the multiple intelligence and differential intelligence hypothesis. He thus said, “We should never lie to children that one day they will all go to university [laughing].” Mr Simango’s view as shown here is also in line with his love without expectations hypothesis, especially as the school ropes in ‘low ability learners’.

During one of the sessions where I shadowed Mr Simango, I witnessed three teachers in the senior master’s office with their timetables. Figure 4.11 shows this important segment of my observation sessions as I shadowed the school head.



Figure 4.11: Teachers Correcting Teaching Timetables with the Senior Master.

On seeing the teachers in the senior master's office when they were supposed to be teaching their classes, Mr Simango sought the reason from the senior master. The conversation between them went as follows:

Sm: Morning sir.

Hm: Morning Mr Bhebhe. How are you?

Sm: I am fine.

Hm: What's wrong? Why are these teachers here?

Sm: They have problems with their timetables. That is what we are trying to fix.

Hm: That's fine. Assist them.

Further investigations showed that two of the teachers wanted HEXCO subjects to be fitted on the timetable, and the other one had some lessons clashing. These situations, if left unaddressed, would have disrupted the normal running of teaching programmes in the school. Consequently, teachers wanted the senior master to attend to these challenges for effective teaching/learning to be possible. This excerpt points to what I saw often; a collaborative character of school leadership practices at OG High School. Acknowledging this collaborative practice, Mr Simango said, "At Open Gates, we work as a team. With the size of the school, the number of subjects offered and the many responsibilities that are on my shoulders, there is no way I can go it alone". Clearly, Mr Simango believed he should share instructional leadership responsibilities with his fellow teachers, if for no other reason, for feasibility and human resources reasons. He further explained:

... At secondary school level, teaching is about subject specialisation..., it is not possible for me to be good at all subject areas. I therefore, need to work with a team of motivated cadres, to be successful. ... At times you don't have time to do everything all by yourself. As head, I am the production manager, the finance manager, the public relations manager, the human resources manager, the marketing manager and the operations manager for the school, all at once. ... In fact, I am responsible for everything which makes this institution a school and I just have to play a proper balancing act to make sure no area may suffer. One way to this end is to involve others, which is exactly what I do in this school.

The excerpt above makes the point about the multidimensional character of Mr Simango's responsibilities. Shadowing him helped me to see and appreciate this multi-dimensionality in practice. Figure 4.12 for example shows a segment of my observation sessions wherein Mr Simango was supervising a classroom block under construction.



Figure 4.12: Mr Simango Supervising Constructional Projects in Progress.

As we moved away from the construction site, Mr Simango remarked, “You see? This is why I say my job is not as easy as people may want to believe.” As a result of this conceptualisation of his role as complex and multidimensional, Mr Simango rarely sat in the office unless when there was real need; such as when he is attending to visitors and/or checking on books of accounts which I saw him doing very often. His daily routines involve moving between construction projects, production units, classrooms and his office.

Figure 4.13 shows Mr Simango observing a lesson during a spot-check session *[Standing to the extreme left of the class, facing the same direction]*.



Figure 4.13: Mr Simango (standing to the left) Watches a Lesson in Progress.

Figure 4.13, is a segment of my observation sessions of the school head. Mr Simango was in Form 3₄ observing a lesson in progress during a spot-check session. As we got to this class, we found Mrs Sibanda, HOD Science, observing the same lesson during her own monitoring session. After Mr Simango was satisfied that learning was in progress, he whispered to Mrs Sibanda, “Very good madam. This is what I expect from an HOD. Be visible in your department. That is the magic for success.” Mrs Sibanda responded by a smile as we left the class.

I wanted to know why Mr Simango walked through that much when he had his team members doing the same job. He explained, “I walk around to see what teachers are doing well so that I reward them. Actually teachers enjoy it that way. ... In this case Mrs Sibanda is happy that I saw her doing her monitoring work ... This is why I say my responsibility is to create good environment for performance.” The multi-dimensional and collaborative character of school leadership by Mr Simango was also evident during one morning briefing session wherein I was shadowing him. One of the senior teachers (ST₁) opened the conversation which unfolded as follows as another senior teacher (ST₂) and the headmaster (Hm) joined in:

ST₁: Ladies and gentlemen, I have noticed that some of us are no longer attending to our classes as expected. Although some of us are involved in invigilation, I suggest that whenever we are not invigilating; we should make sure that we attend to our classes...

Hm: Thank you so much madam Dube [*not her real name*] for such an important observation. I also noticed that some teachers have already resigned from attending to their classes. Let us please go back to the classroom.

ST₂ You are right sir. A day like today we have a short paper and only ten candidates will be writing. This means very few of us will be invigilating. I think it is possible that we go back to our classes and start to teach seriously again.

The verbatim excerpts above confirm the collaborative and multidimensional nature of instructional leadership practice by Mr Simango. The data show that even the voices of teacher leaders were heard. In supporting the collaborative and multidimensional character of his practice as observed during this morning briefing, Mr Simango reiterated; “This school is so large that, it is not realistic to imagine that I can go it alone. Furthermore, at secondary school level, teaching is about subject specialisation. We therefore should work as a team, with me working as a team captain; leading by example and creating an atmosphere of success by all.” Clearly, data presented above show that Mr Simango acted as a team captain while HODs, for example, acted as technocrats, subject specialists and sources of expert knowledge and senior teachers providing the needed support for effective teaching.

Mr Simango also played the role of a motivator. During one Monday morning assembly when I was shadowing him, Mr Simango was addressing learners who were due to sit for their ordinary level final examinations. He remarked:

For all the years that I have been a teacher, I have not been convinced that there is anyone who is incapable of learning. In fact, the difference between what you are capable of achieving and what you will finally achieve as a student is your attitude. If you put on a proper attitude, you will find yourself doing things that will surprise, not only others, but even yourself. Remain focused for the remaining part of the year and see what will happen.

Clearly, Mr Simango encouraged all learners to do well in public examinations and to cherish the possibility of this happening. This observation is consistent with his objective; to create an environment that promotes effective learning by all. However, it is inconsistent with his belief that not every child is university material. My analysis of comments in teachers’ schemes of work and children’s exercise books showed that teachers were always encouraged to give positive comments on children’s work. Comments seen in these documents included: (a) *Please make sure you comment*

positively in pupils' exercise books; (b) Be generous with positive comments; and (c) Please use constructive and informative comments.

Mr Simango shared with me the reason he encouraged positivity in teachers' comments on learners' work when he said, "Whilst positive comments cost nothing to teachers, they are worth a lot to students." In explaining why he believed that not every child was university material, but still encouraged all learners to do their best in examinations, Mr Simango clarified: "We make sure that every child tries his/her luck as we also attend to special needs of some children." His narrative seems to expose dilemma and disenchantment on what really is the purpose of schooling in society.

Figure 4.14 captures a segment of another morning assembly that I attended when shadowing Mr Simango.



Figure 4.14: Teachers Appreciating Achievement of their Colleagues.

During the morning assembly in which the snapshot above was taken, the school was receiving three of its teachers who were coming back from a graduation ceremony at a local university (Great Zimbabwe University). In preparation for this day, teachers were asked to report for the Monday morning assembly in their academic regalia (Figure 4.14) in appreciation of the achievements of their colleagues. When addressing his learners during the devotion, Mr Simango expressed:

Allow me to welcome and congratulate Mrs Shumba, Ms Mlausi and Mr Shoko for their achievements. ... As you can see, today is a very special day in the history of our school. We are receiving three of our teachers who have graduated with degrees from Great Zimbabwe University. I challenge you to be inspired by the achievements of your teachers, your own parents. If teachers, with so many responsibilities as parents and as your teachers achieve such great things, this should tell you that everything is possible with a determined mind ...

Parading his graduate teachers and publicly talking about the achievements of three of his colleagues, Mr Simango showed his desire to motivate learners for high academic achievements. Addressing his teachers during a briefing which followed the morning assembly with learners, Mr Simango further expressed; “I want to congratulate Mr Shoko, Mrs Shumba and Ms Mlausi for their achievement. I encourage all of you to continue learning in order to avoid outliving your period of usefulness.” Clearly, Mr Simango also promoted learning among both teachers and learners. This further demonstrates the multidimensional character of his practices.

4.2.6 Mr Simango: The story of a disenchanting team captain

Data presented above show the case of Mr Simango as a story of a disenchanting team captain. Mr Simango saw leadership in his school as a multidimensional and collaborative social activity in which direct instructional leadership was only one element in a plethora of other roles competing for his attention. In practice, Mr Simango embraced an inclusive instructional leadership approach in which he admitted learners on the basis of what he assumed the school could do for them and not what learners were expected to do for the school. His leadership was based on creating a positive environment for effective learning by all. However, Mr Simango was worried that the MoPSE, as the custodian of education in the country, paid lip service to full inclusion. He was also worried that the community he served was not fully supportive. Mr Simango saw lack of support from such key stakeholders as emanating from the five ‘O’ level subjects syndrome and the certificate for employment disease which affected the country since independence from the white colonial rule in 1980. He saw this ‘disease’ which existed in the backdrop of a high examination failure rate at ‘O’ level, as a vestige of colonialism. According to Mr Simango, these remnants of colonialism were supported and perpetuated by powerful people in society and social institutions that associate schooling with the pursuit of certificates. To Mr Simango, the high failure rate which condemned to

hopelessness many children who wrote examinations each year since 1980 was reminiscent of the manifestation of a neglected generation and potentially a socio-economic time bomb. A disenchanted Mr Simango therefore asked, “*When will we learn?*”

4.3 Case 2: The Story of Mr Sithole

Coupling and decoupling stakeholder expectations: In search of self-legitimacy and protection of personal identity.

(a) It is not like I come up with my own vision from the blue and start to pursue it blindly...

(b) As head ..., I should represent the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 100% and the church 100%, if I should be seen to be worth my salt.

4.3.1 Introducing Mr Sithole and his school leadership context

Mr Sithole, the head of Holy Ghost (HG) High School is a member of the Zera Church of Christ (not its real name), the responsible authority (RA) for the school. He revealed that, “I was baptised in this church at a young age of 12.” He joined HG High School as a teacher in 2010 when he was promoted to the post of substantive deputy head. He explained his rise as follows: “I assumed headship of HG High School in 2012 when the incumbent head moved to another school run by our church.”

Mr Sithole has a bachelor’s degree in religious studies, a certificate in education and a master’s degree in curriculum studies. Listening to his voice, one could easily discern from the background, a strong desire to balance pressure and expectations of diverse stakeholders in order to guarantee self-legitimacy as the head of Holy Ghost High School and to protect personal identity.

HG High School is a church run boarding school located in a farmland less than 100 kilometres outside the city of Masvingo. It was opened in 1981. Mr Sithole revealed, “HG High School was opened in line with the philanthropic philosophy of the church. This school was opened to provide education to the disadvantaged children within the church and beyond.” The school offered education from Form 1 to 6. At the time of this study, it had an enrolment of 772 learners, comprising 378 boys and 394 girls. Most of the learners were boarders. Mr Sithole revealed that, “This school also accommodates learners with various forms of exceptionalities.” Among them were

14 learners with visual impairment, 2 learners that were wheelchair bound and 81 learners identified under the category of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC). All this shows that HG High School was a viable and inclusive school.

4.3.2 Mr Sithole's understanding of IL for an inclusive secondary school

This section presents data on how Mr Sithole conceptualised and constructed instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school. I begin the presentation by looking at his role as a policy implementer, a characterisation that emerged from the interview discussions.

Talking about what he regarded as his most important responsibility as an instructional leader, Mr Sithole began by saying, "I view myself as a policy implementer." In further describing his perceived role expectations, he said. "I think you are aware that every school is built for a purpose and this school is no exception. To be seen to be worth my salt as the man on the ground, I should act as the policy implementer and foot soldier for both the church and the MoPSE.

The phrase "*worth my salt*" was repeated several times in the discussions. When asked to explain what he meant by this term, Mr Sithole clarified thus; "Like any other worker, I have my superiors above me who look forward to seeing me perform to their expectation." He also explained the term "*foot soldier*," as follow: "I mean, as head, I am responsible for carrying out very important work for the good of the people to whom I am directly answerable, like a soldier defending a territory." Clearly, this shows Mr Sithole associated his leadership with a search for self-legitimacy in the eyes of those in power to whom he felt a high level of accountability.

Mr Sithole was very specific in describing his role in which he viewed himself as a worker and foot soldier when he stressed, "As a frontline worker and foot soldier for my school, I focus my attention on maintaining the inclusive framework on which the school is built and make sure that children pass their exams [emphasis]." He explained what he meant by inclusive framework as he also clarified on the nature of inclusivity in the school by saying:

Yes. Inclusion is defined differently by different people but in this school, we take inclusive education to mean bringing children with physical disabilities and OVCs into normal classrooms so that they learn side by side and compete with their peers who ordinarily do not

have special needs designations. It is church policy to help such special needs children learn together with others in an environment of equality. The whole idea is about giving children chance and as the school head and the foot soldier on all educational matters concerning the church, I should make sure that the founding purpose for the school is maintained [emphasis].

Data presented above show that Mr Sithole, in line with expectations of the church, viewed his role as partly to maintain inclusive education of children with physical disabilities and OVC in his school. In the discussion, he repeatedly used the terms *'foot soldier,' 'worth my salt'* and *'giving chance.'* This suggests his inclusive thrust was influenced by forces beyond him from whom he sought to guarantee self-legitimacy and support and that his focus for inclusion was to allow learners to compete as they also seek their place in a competitive world.

In further discussing his roles, Mr Sithole explained that, "As the foot soldier for the school, I should also see to it that the school is properly resourced for all types of children enrolled..." To support his point, he took me to the resource room for the visually challenged. Figure 4.15 shows a set of braille machines I saw in the resource room during this segment of my observation.



Figure 4.15: Braille Machines for Use by Learners with Visual Impairment.

When showing me the assistive devices above, Mr Sithole expressed, "As you can see, these devices are specific and indispensable if we are to be successful in helping visually challenged children." As we left the resource room, Mr Sithole also

took me to the science laboratories. Figure 4.16 is a snapshot of some of the science equipment that Mr Sithole showed me during this observation segment.



Figure 4.16: Science Equipment in the Biology Laboratory at Holy Ghost High School.

Standing in the science laboratory, Mr Sithole, referring to both assistive devices (Figure 4.15) and the science equipment (Figure 16), recounted:

This is what I mean by appropriate resourcing. As the man on the ground, it is my responsibility to ensure that such equipment, as you can see here, is made available and in good working order. ... Since we accommodate children with special needs together with some of the best brains from around the country, I need to make sure that an optimum supply of teaching/learning resources is maintained if meaningful learning for all should take place.

Clearly, the excerpt above shows that Mr Sithole viewed himself as a facilitator of learning, responsible for school resourcing. He believed that he needed to facilitate the acquisition of material needed to promote learning by what he referred to as “brilliant children” as well as assistive devices for use with special needs learners all at once. In addition, Mr Sithole also talked about his role as a school-based supervisor and chief accounting officer of his school when he said:

As the school-based supervisor, I am supposed to account for the performance of all my teachers, including financial resources available in the school. ... I think you are aware that education is about results and we get these results through people. Without good supervision, motivation and proper accounting for resources, we cannot dream of good results. It is my duty as the local chief accounting officer to supervise, motivate and account on the

performance of my teachers and the resources trusted in my hands. This is what guarantees effective performance of the school towards its goals.

It is evident here that Mr Sithole viewed his role as much wider than direct supervision of teaching/learning activities only. Figure 4.17 below is an extract from minutes of a staff meeting that Mr Sithole held with members of his SMT.

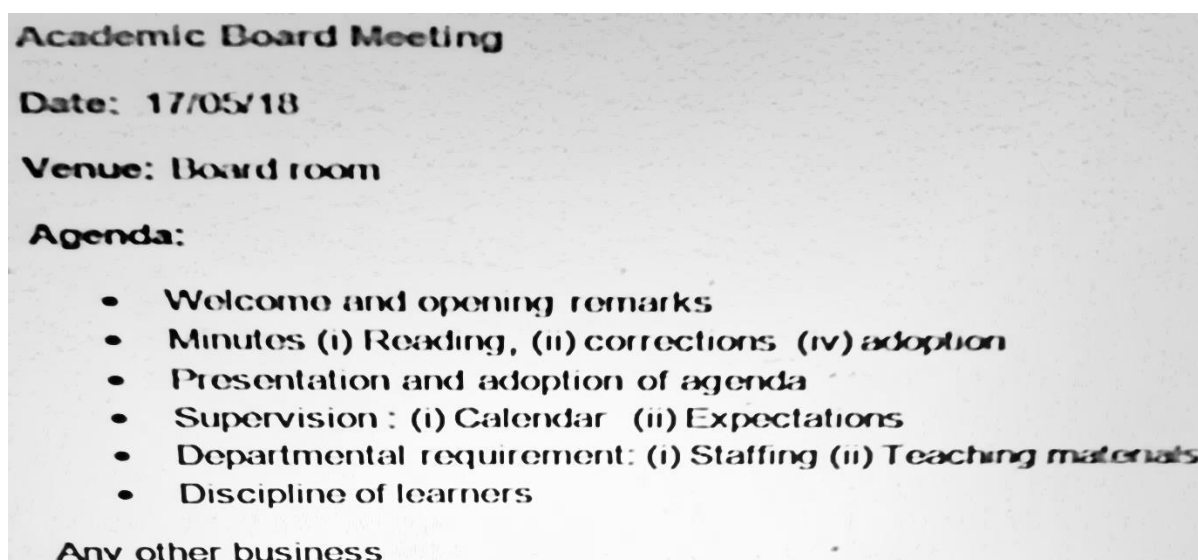


Figure 4.17: Agenda for the Head's Meeting with Members of the School Management Team. (Extract from the schools' staff-meetings minutes file)

Agenda items as captured in the extract above support the multidimensional character of Mr Sithole's school leadership thought and practice as emerging from our interview discussions. A total of eight different meetings were analysed and in all these, the data point to a multidimensional character of instructional leadership thought and practice (See Table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Agenda Items that Characterised Staff Meetings at HG High School for the Period 2017 – 2018.

General classifications of meeting		Main agenda items discussed
1	School term opening meetings	New teachers; subject allocation; schemes & records
2	Bereavement fund constitution	Chair person's presentation; suggested adjustments
3	Academic board meeting	Supervision calendar; departmental requirements; staffing issues; discipline of learners
4	Workshop on PSC regulations	Public Service Regulations; Acts of misconduct.
5	O & A-level examination results analysis	Subject by subject analysis; headmaster's remarks; approaches to improve pass rate
6	Sports meetings	Calendar; sports equipment; review of last season;
7	Discipline of learners	Disciplinary committee; managing discipline

Source: Synthesised from document analysis data

The agenda items presented above confirm the multidimensional character of Mr Sithole's school leadership roles. These data suggest that, for Mr Sithole, direct instructional leadership was only one element in a wide range of school leadership roles expected of him by his role set. In the context of this multidimensionality, I was keen to understand what motivated Mr Sithole's pursuit of his brand of inclusive instructional practices. Our discussion to this effect unfolded as presented below.

4.3.3 Motivation for embracing an inclusive instructional framework

During one of our interview discussions, Mr Sithole opened up on his motivation for embracing his brand of inclusive education when he categorically stated:

Inclusive education practised in this school is more a project for the church than anyone else. From the church's viewpoint, this school was built as an evangelical centre and to provide for disadvantaged children, both within the church and beyond. ... The Bishop is fully behind inclusive education as we see it in this school. To be specific, it is his baby through which he demonstrates practical Christianity. As the man on the ground, I am only supporting this founding vision of church leadership. ... I am a tool in his hand [emphasis].

The above quote suggests that Mr Sithole viewed inclusive education at his school as a project of the church to demonstrate practical Christianity. The church's vision statement (Figure 4.18) is contained in the church's policy document on education.

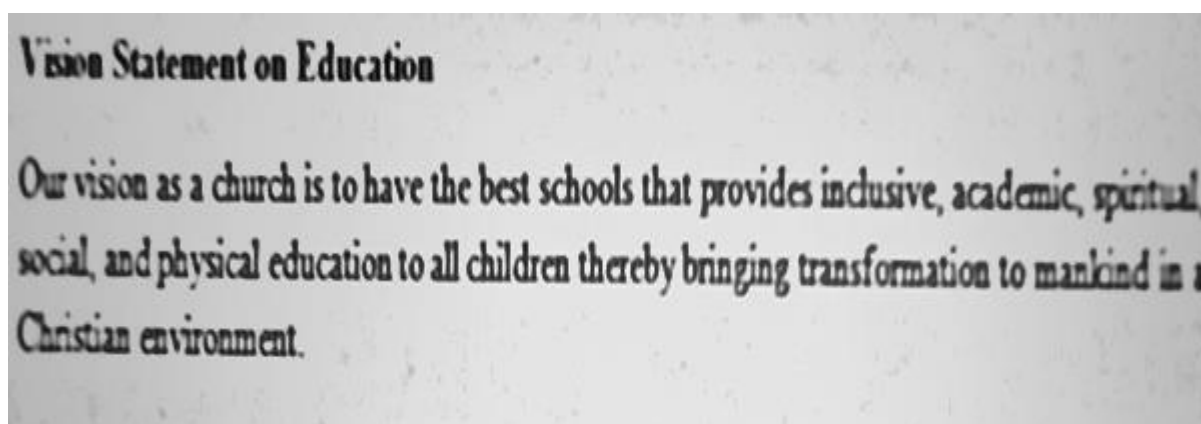


Figure 4.18: Vision Statement for All Souls High School: *Source: Church policy Statement.*

Figure 4.18 confirms that Mr Sithole, as a policy implementer, felt obliged to embrace the inclusive framework in order to be seen as supporting the vision of the church. In his own words, Mr Sithole asserted that, "As head ..., I should represent the Ministry

of Primary and Secondary Education 100% and the church 100%, if I should be seen to worth my salt.”

Concerning the influence of the MoPSE on his adoption of an inclusive framework, Mr Sithole expressed the following opinion:

Whilst this is the key ministry in terms of education in this country, the MoPSE seems not to have a genuine interest in full inclusion beyond the regulation it has put in place. There is nothing on the ground by way of practice to show its interest. The Ministry appears to be interested in examination results and inclusion of Black children in former Whites only schools; something like what happened at X High School (*a secondary school formerly reserved for white learners, prior independence*). For the Ministry, inclusion as we practise it here is only a paper thing. There is nothing to show on the ground.

Evidently, Mr Sithole believed that the MoPSE had put in place the necessary regulatory framework to enable inclusive education to take root. He even showed me a collection of government policy instruments which spoke to inclusivity. Table 4.6 shows an abridged list from a synthesis of these policy instruments and an analysis of how they spoke to inclusive education issues.

Table 4.6: Inclusive Related Circulars and Policy Instruments Available at Holy Ghost.

Name of policy document	Source	Focus
The Constitution of Zimbabwe, Amendment (No.20) Act, 2013	Legislation	The State and all institutions ... at every level within the limits of the resources available to them, should assist persons with physical and mental disabilities to achieve their full potential and to minimise the disadvantages suffered by them (Section 22, paragraph 2)
The Education Act (Cap 25.04)	Legislation	Education is provided for as fundamental right for every child and that, every child is conferred with a right to be enrolled at a school closest to him unless if the school is full (Part II, Section 4)
The new curriculum framework (2015 – 2022)	MoPSE	To provide a wholesome education for all. Inclusivity is stated as the first among 10 of its guiding principles
Disabled Persons Act, 1996	Legislation	Makes provision for the welfare and rehabilitation of disabled persons
Secretary's Policy Circular No. P36, 1990	MoPSE	Requires that all students, regardless of race, religion, gender, creed, and disability, have access to basic education (<i>Redefined to mean education up to Form 4</i>)

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.6 confirms Mr Sithole’s narrative which suggests that there is evidence of an enabling policy framework to promote inclusive education throughout the basic

education continuum in Zimbabwean schools. However, Mr Sithole views the MoPSE as paying lip service to the agenda of inclusive education advanced in these policies. He regarded the inclusion practised at his school as more of the RA's rather than the MoPSE's programme. According to The Education Amendment Act (2020:622), "basic education means education from early childhood education up to the fourth form ..." Clearly, this shows inclusive education at secondary school level has been legislated for. However, data in Table 4.6 seem to suggest that policy talks about inclusion only in general terms, without specific enforcement strategies.

4.3.4 Mr Sithole's personal assessment of his leadership context

Discussing further his personal assessment of the nature of support and recognition enjoyed from the community served by schools and school leadership context generally, for embracing inclusivity, Mr Sithole had this to say:

I don't see the community we serve as very supportive... People at times expect schools to get good results at any cost and inclusion means you may also enrol children whose passing is not guaranteed. As a result of high societal expectations on performance of schools in examinations, when some of these children fail, I see people in the community, especially those in position of power, growing goose pimples. They are not likely to explain the failure rate in terms of inclusive practices adopted in the school but in terms of incompetency on the part of school authorities. ... As a school head, I therefore aim to be above the tide, otherwise I will sink if I fail to keep my head above water and swim [smiling].

Evidently, Mr Sithole viewed the community around him as partly negative and/or not fully supportive of his inclusive initiatives. He added, "Once a school fails to perform to expectations, no sane parent will risk sending his or her children to a poorly performing school; especially when the child is brilliant" Clearly; Mr Sithole considered the performance criteria used in schools as promoting exclusionary practices since schools were not recognised for embracing inclusion but for their performance in public examinations only. His narrative suggests that schools, including his, preferred, selecting out children whose passing was not guaranteed, in order to avoid negative evaluation when learners fail their examinations.

Talking about this negativity further, this time in the context of whether he saw secondary school heads being rewarded and/or recognised by the MoPSE for their participation in inclusive education, Mr Sithole rhetorically asked, "In the just ended

district merit award, did you see which schools received the most meaningful awards? Did you see that awards were biased towards selective schools only?” Clearly, Mr Sithole felt, inclusive secondary schools were not rewarded for embracing inclusive education. He further explained:

You may have noticed that even the best school head in the district was determined, basing on the performance of her school in examinations, not to provide access to education to children who are often excluded from other schools. Not even in terms of the quality of education offered. I see the criteria of selecting and rewarding schools basing on examination results only as reinforcing exclusion of children with exceptionalities from some schools. ... In fact, I don't see the MoPSE genuine in its drive for full inclusion. This explains why I say inclusion in this school is a project of the responsible authority and not the MoPSE.

Mr Sithole regarded the MoPSE as paying lip service to the inclusive drive. He summed up his views saying, “Even on inspection of schools by district inspectors, inclusion is a peripheral dimension for assessment. ... I mean, it is least considered when school inspectors visit schools, if at all it is considered, otherwise it is not.” Table 4.7 summarises issues that were considered by the MoPSE when inspecting schools for the purpose of the Secretary’s Merit Award competition and for purposes of narrative (institutional) reporting on school heads.

Table 4.7: Assessment Criteria for Secretary’s Merit Award and Institutional Reporting

Merit Awards Selection	Narrative Inspection Report on a School
School vision, mission and client charter	Office organisation, e.g., display of vision statements
Compliance on policy for school governance	Enrolment, staffing & infrastructure details
Examination results since the last three years	Provision and maintenance of infrastructure
Technical/Vocational Education	Administrative responsibilities
Child friendliness	Professional responsibilities
Use of ICT and e-learning	
Disaster risk management plan	

Source: Extracted from the Secretary’s Circular No. 8 of 2014 and assessment guide for narrative reporting on school heads

Table 4.7 above shows the major topics that comprise the assessment criteria used for purposes of the Secretary’s merit award competitions and for compiling annual inspection reports (narrative reports) on a school head [see Appendix 10]. Whilst there were differences on some of the dimensions inspected, there were also significant similarities. Figure 4.19 is an extract from the inspection guide for narrative reporting on a school head (see Appendix 10).

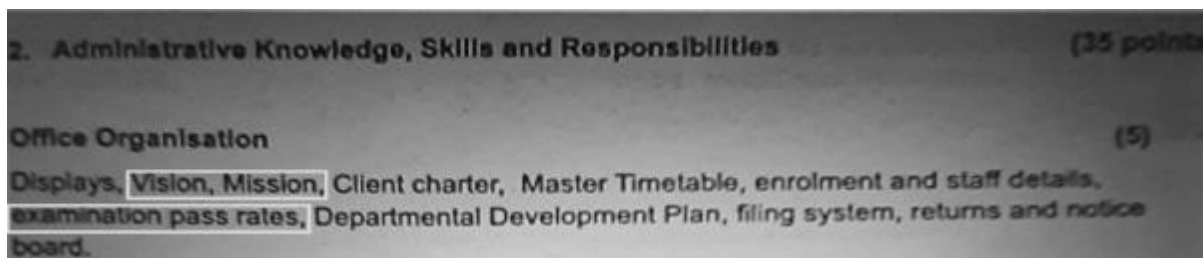


Figure 4.19: An Extract from the Narrative Report on a School Proforma. (MoPSE, 2016: 21)

The excerpts above show that, like the guidelines for the Secretary's merit award, inspection proforma for institutional reporting on a school head also talked about the school vision and mission. This commonality shows the importance of the school vision and mission on school leadership. The two guidelines also emphasised on examination pass rate. The guideline for the Secretary's merit award as analysed in the study (Table 4.7), also talked about child friendliness. Key variables for this dimension included inclusivity. However, guidelines for assessing school heads for purposes of institutional reporting on the performance of school heads were silent on issues of inclusivity (see Appendix 10). Talking about this silence, Mr Sithole said, "Failure by the Ministry to assess and recognise schools and school heads for embracing inclusive practices is a sign that the Ministry is not really into inclusive education. Or is it that we don't share a common definition of this key concept?"

Turning his attention to his assessment of the extent to which teachers were trained for inclusion, Mr Sithole opened, "Most of our teachers in this school have not received any formal training in inclusive education, except only three." He also saw failure to train teachers on inclusive education as lack of genuine interest in inclusive education by the MoPSE. He argued, "Lack of teacher training in inclusive education is a sign that the Ministry is not particularly interested in full inclusion in secondary schools." Mr Sithole further explained that the three teachers with training in special needs education in his school started off as primary school teachers who upgraded themselves to become secondary school teachers. Teachers are trained to teach mainly for examination purposes." He reiterated.

Clearly, Mr Sithole believed he was working in an environment that did not favour inclusive education of learners with low ability to pass. Talking about the extent to which his school was properly resourced for inclusion, he remarked:

I cannot say we are getting enough support on procurement of teaching resources in particular. ... Under normal circumstances, the Ministry and the donor community, for example, should assist us in procuring teaching materials for use with children with special needs since parents alone cannot afford to do so. However, nothing is coming our way except from the church. ... The donor community, in particular, appears to be more attracted to special education for children with physical disabilities in institutionalised settings than inclusive schools such as ours which also focus on highly intelligent and able bodied children.

The excerpts above illustrate that Mr Sithole saw his school as still wanting in terms of both human and material support for resourcing the inclusion initiative. For him, even the donor community appeared more interested in the traditional system of institutionalising special needs learners than including them in conventional schools. He regarded the lack of support by the MoPSE as illustrative of lack of genuine interest in inclusive education. This provides further evidence to the narrative that the school leadership environment was not aptly conducive to full inclusion. However, whilst some stakeholders were seen as not very supportive and at times contradictory, others, namely responsible authorities were seen to be fully supportive of the brand of inclusive education embraced in the school. Talking about the responsible authority for his school, for example, Mr Sithole was full of praise when he reiterated and articulated that:

Truly speaking, inclusive education in this school is a project of the church. Children with physical disabilities and OVC are at the heart of the RA. *Izvi hamutombodi kuudzwa (This, you don't need to be told. You can just see)*. The support being given to the school, teachers and even to children with special needs is a textbook example of the fact that inclusive education is at the heart of the church. However, I don't see the MoPSE doing the same by way of rewarding and recognising schools that have embraced inclusive education

Mr Sithole considered the RA of his school as a stronger proponent of inclusive instructional practices than the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education. Talking about his assessment of the attitude and the support he enjoyed from parents for embracing inclusion, Mr Sithole stated:

The fact that most of our children are so brilliant and assured of passing at any cost makes us remotely worried about the attitude of parents towards the school, if at all. ... The whole thing revolves on how you perform in public examinations... If your school is doing well, like we do here, then you have no sleepless nights about the attitude of parents or even the entire community. I think for now, as HG High School, we are fully respected for what we are by our

parents' community. ... I think we should guard this good name jealously. We need not take this loyalty for granted. It is an asset, a trademark that should be protected.

The excerpt above suggests that Mr Sithole did not see inclusive education having any adverse effect on the image of his school in the minds of parents, at least at the time of this research. He further explained that, "As a boarding school we get students from all over the country and can attract some of the best brains to enrol with us. Because of this large catchment area, we can afford to select the cream of the cream. As a result, we are doing very well academically..." To support his point about the performance of his school in public examinations and its effect on the attitude of parents towards the school, Mr Sithole drew my attention to the examination information displayed on the notice board (Table 4.8).

Table 4.8: O-Level ZIMSEC Examinations Pass Rate for the Period 2013 – 2017.

SCHOOL PASS RATE FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS		
Year	Pass rate (%)	Position in the district
2015	90	3/55
2016	92	5/55
2017	95	2/55

Source: Primary data (Extract from information tables in the head's office)

As he showed me statistics on past performance of the school in 'O' level examinations from which Table 4.8 was extracted, Mr Sithole explained:

... You can see from this table. Our 'O' level pass rate is not bad since we also attract a lot of academically gifted children in this school. ... Children with physical disabilities and OVC that we admit do not necessarily have any effect on our pass rate. ... In any case, they are normally a very small fraction of our student population. In addition, some of the OVC we admit are so brilliant that, given the learning environment we create for them, some of them will obviously fly... Even the church is very proud about the high pass rate that has become our trade-mark as Holy Ghost High School. Even on my part, I am proud to associate myself with intelligent children that are entrusted into our hands by our parents' community.

Mr Sithole appeared to hold the view that inclusive education had the potential to negatively affect parents' image of a school. This could happen if the school admitted more low ability learners due to its policy of inclusion. However, for him, the

image of his particular school was not affected. Inclusion at his school involved children with physical disabilities and OVC only. Some of the children he considered had high intellectual ability and hence inclusion did not affect the pass rate of the school and therefore, its image. Mr Sithole was proud to associate himself with good examination results and he wished to maintain the good name of the school.

When speaking about the extent to which teachers accepted and supported the inclusive framework embraced in his school, Mr Sithole articulated as follows:

Generally, our teachers are very supportive. ... I think the motivation to embrace inclusive education by our teachers is partly a result of the support and the interest that the church has shown for children with special needs. All our teachers are aware that special needs children in the school are at the heart of the Bishop. For them to be seen as supporting church programmes, teachers accept all children in the school, including those with special needs. ... In fact, most of the teachers, including myself, are church members. For this reason, we feel ownership of the school and its programmes. To us, working in the school is part of praying as this school is part of the ministries in our church.

Talking about the context of his instructional leadership environment, Mr Sithole, who was also a member of the church, viewed teachers as supportive of inclusive instructional practices. He associated teachers' support with the influence of the church. In view of their church membership, the support they were given by the RA and the desire to be seen to be supporting church programmes, teachers also seem to have embraced school programmes, including inclusive education. Mr Sithole added, "With adequate training on inclusive education, no doubt, teachers would be more effective in dealing with the cases we sometimes meet, especially with children with blindness." Clearly Mr Sithole appreciated the importance of proper training.

When I wanted to know whether in his personal assessment Mr Sithole viewed the schools' curriculum as suitable for inclusive education, he answered as follows:

Personally, I see the new curriculum as not suitable for some of the includable children in our schools. I think; the assumption that every child is capable of managing any subject and as many as 10 subjects and pass is misplaced. It may not be every child who can manage every subject and such a large number of subjects. In fact, some includable children in the school system need just a few subjects and not so many. ... Everything else about the curriculum is way, way too rigid and prescriptive.

Mr Sithole believed the school curriculum, even in its updated form, may not be meeting the educational needs of some children with exceptionalities. His main worry seemed to be on the number and combinations of subjects offered to learners. The Secretary's Circular No 2 of 2017 (Implementation of the Curriculum Framework for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2015 – 2022) which gave effect to the implementation of the new curriculum and was availed to me for analysis during data collection mandates that:

Each learner shall participate in at least ten (10) learning areas, seven (7) of which will be cross cutting and three (3) to five (5) others will be necessary electives (p. 4)

Mr Sithole felt that too many subjects were imposed by the updated curriculum framework on some includable learners. He was worried about curriculum rigidity even in examinations. He said, "My real worry about examinations is where all children are made to take the same subjects and are expected to pass them." Clearly, Mr Sithole was worried about a policy that forces schools to teach exactly the same subjects to all learners as in his view this militated against the effectiveness of inclusive education initiatives in schools, especially on issues of multiple and differential intelligence. He did not say much against the nature of the examination as a challenge to or opportunity for inclusive instructional practices.

An analysis of The Secretary's Circular No 2 of 2017 (MoPSE, 2017) confirms Mr Sithole's worries about the nature and number of subjects offered. Most subjects among the 7 compulsory learning areas stipulated in the curriculum framework were theory based. In addition, all learners were required to take Physical Education, Sport and Mass Displays (PESMD) and Agriculture as compulsory practical subjects. Mr Sithole thought some of these subjects were inappropriate for some learners. In fact, looking at the nature of compulsory subjects prescribed by the Curriculum Framework 2015 – 2022, it seems the curriculum is silent on differential intelligence among learners; a key factor in the inclusive education framework. Mr Sithole thus regarded the curriculum as more political than socio-economic as in a jocular fashion, he reiterated that, "The Ministry appears to be more interested in the inclusion of Black children in former Whites only schools; such as what we see happening in former group 'A' schools of the past era." He also saw the new curriculum as rigid in terms of its content, that is, subject mixes expected of learner.

Regarding whether he believed the education system had put in place appropriate policy instruments to promote inclusivity, Mr Sithole argued that:

I think policy makers have done quite well in providing the necessary legal basis for inclusive education... Like I said before, we have many policies which talk about inclusive education in this country. Look at the new curriculum and the new constitution, for example. You find that they all talk about inclusive education in one way or the other. What I see lacking is the enforcement element. This explains why I said earlier on that inclusive education as we practice it at Holy Ghost High is primarily, a project of the Bishop. Without him, I think we could also be selecting the cream only as is being done in other boarding schools in the district. There is no doubt about this.

Mr Sithole believed that the education system had put in place adequate policy instruments to enable inclusion to take root. He also said, “Although policies existed that speak to inclusive education in general, it appears there is no specific inclusive policy, especially for secondary schools. I think this is an area where we should improve on as a nation, if full inclusion should be embraced by all schools.” This confirms my analysis of the regulatory instruments available such as the National Constitution, the Education Act and the Disabled Persons’ Act which shows that these regulations tend to frame inclusive education in general terms. Emphasis seems to be on education as a fundamental right and the need for public institutions to avoid discrimination. For example, the Education Act (Chapter 25: 04, as amended), provides that: *“Every child of school-going age shall be entitled to be enrolled at the primary or secondary school, as the case may be, nearest to the place where he is ordinarily resident, unless such primary or secondary school is fully enrolled”* (Government of Zimbabwe 2004: 631).

When I wanted to understand whether in his understanding, Mr Sithole viewed supervision instruments used in the district as encouraging schools to embrace an inclusive approach to secondary education, he confided; “Wherein the new curriculum talks about inclusive education, the truth is we don’t seem to have any supervision tool to monitor compliance. Even performance management forms and lesson supervision instruments are silent on inclusive education to say the least”.

The excerpt above brings out the point that Mr Sithole believed the MoPSE did not have adequate supervision tools to monitor implementation of inclusive policies in

schools. His narrative suggests that, whilst the MoPSE had put in place a policy framework which favoured inclusive education, it may be lacking in the supervision instruments needed to monitor and/or enforce compliance, clearly suggesting a policy/practice gap.

4.3.5 Mr Sithole's instructional leadership practices

Having discussed the ideas on how Mr Sithole constructs instructional leadership in his school, this part of the study focuses on his leadership practices. I begin my presentation by looking at how he approached the instructional leadership dimension of defining and communicating the school's instructional vision and purpose.

4.3.5.1 Defining and communicating instructional vision and purpose

The observation phase of my study revealed that Mr Sithole clearly defined the vision for his school which he also displayed in his office (Figure 4.20).

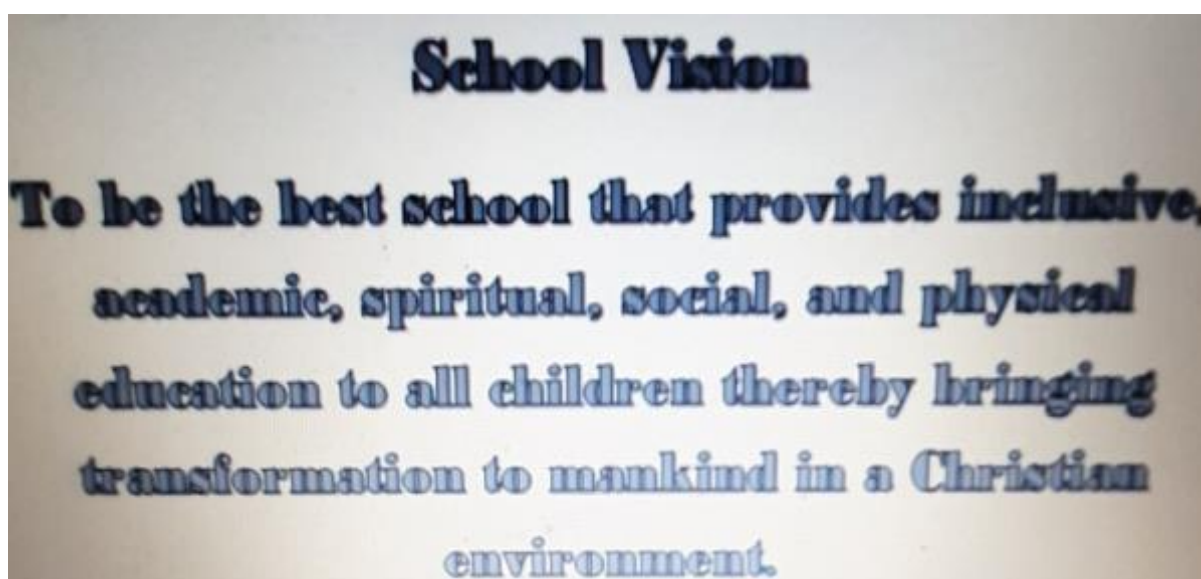


Figure 4.20: Vision Statement for HG School. *Source: Chats in the head's office.*

Mr Sithole was very clear about how he approached his leadership task of defining the school vision and goals. He described his practice as follows:

It is not like I come up with my own vision out of the blue and start to pursue it blindly. As a public school, obviously, the church and the Ministry play a pivotal role in determining what we set our eyes to achieve. My duty is to work from the Ministry and the church's blueprint to come up with a school vision which speaks our own school purpose. Remember, I should represent the Ministry 100% and the church 100% if I should be seen to be worth the salt.

The quote above shows that, in coming up with the school's vision statement; Mr Sithole was influenced more by the desire to achieve the goals of the MoPSE and the RA all at once. His narrative suggests that the MoPSE and the church were the two most important stakeholders in defining the school vision when he said, “To come up with our own vision and mission statement, we are influenced by the church and the MoPSE.” This balancing act is also reflected in Table 4.9 below which abridges the three vision statements to facilitate analysis.

Table 4.9: Vision Statements for the MoPSE, the RA, and the School.

Institution	Vision Statement
MoPSE	To be the leading provider of inclusive quality education for socio-economic transformation by 2020
Church	To be the best school that provides inclusive , academic, spiritual, social, and physical education to all children thereby bringing transformation to mankind in a Christian environment
Holy Ghost	To be the best inclusive education centre in Masvingo province and beyond, which offers a holistic education to the Zimbabwean youth for social and economic transformation.

Source: Primary data

Table 4.9 shows a strong relationship among the vision statements above. This relationship suggests that in defining the school vision, Mr Sithole was guided by the desire to achieve the goals of the RA and the MoPSE all at once. This coupling desire was further highlighted when he said; “It is not like I come up with my own vision out of the blue and start to pursue it blindly ...” and that, “ I should represent the MoPSE 100% and the church 100% if I should be seen to be worth my salt.”

Discussing his role of marketing the school vision and purpose, Mr Sithole shared:

I don't think we should really be aggressive in marketing our brand at least as of now. If this school was a business, I can safely say its life cycle is at the cash-cow stage where we should not be worried much about huge promotion budgets. We are only worried about internal marketing so that teachers, as brand ambassadors, are clear of what the school says it sets its eyes to achieve. ... Like I said earlier, at the moment, our name is still good and we can do justice to ourselves by just protecting it.

Mr Sithole was not so much worried about the need to be aggressively marketing his brand. He felt, the school name was already good. He explained his practice using a common Shona expression saying: “*Nyama inonaka inotaura yega.*” (Good meat markets itself). This expression suggests that since his school was doing well, he

saw no good reason for aggressive marketing. Mr Sithole believed the high pass rate that characterised the school was doing enough to create a good name for the school. He also displayed in his office the school motto (Figure 4.21).



Figure 4.21: School Motto. (Source: Extract from information charts in the head's office)

When asked to explain the school motto, Mr Sithole responded: “The message is clear. As a good school in the district, we aim to attract the best brains available and develop them to be the best that they can be, academically. ... Truly speaking, I take pride in brilliant students.” Mr Sithole’s narrative suggests that, even as he also admitted some learners with exceptionalities, his heart was mainly on high academic achievement of his learners.

4.3.6 Implementing instructional leadership strategy

Mr Sithole shared with me on how he implements instructional leadership strategies at his school. Starting with his student selection practices, he elaborated as follows:

Here we use a combination of selection procedures. In doing so, we are guided by Ministry policy, church policy and trends in the market. ... Whilst like all boarding schools, we are expected to select students into Form 1 through the e-mapping platform, here, we also get some of our students through referrals from the church and the Department of Social Welfare. However, it is through the e-mapping platform that we get some of the best brains we admit.

The quote above shows that Mr Sithole employed a combination of methods to select learners admitted in his school. In explaining his practices, he reiterated; “Only children with special needs who may not compete for places on the open market are the ones who may be referred to us by the church and at times the Department of Social Welfare. Otherwise, we admit most of our best brains through the e-mapping platform in line with Government policy.” The phrase “best brains” was emphasised in this discussion. Mr Sithole explained, “By “best brains, I mean brilliant children who are assured of passing their exams at any cost.” Clearly, this shows his bias in favour of high ability learners that he also referred to as “cream of the cream.” His student admission practices revealed coupling the covert expectations of the MoPSE

with the overt expectations of the responsible authority. In the process, he decouples from policy as written statements (overt policy expectations).

To show what he meant by “best brains,” Mr Sithole pulled from one of his files, a Grade 7 result slip for one of the new entrants into Form 1 and handed it to me (Figure 4. 22).

ZIMBABWE EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL 2017 GRADE SEVEN
PROVISIONAL RESULTS FOR THE OCTOBER GRADE SEVEN EXAMINATIONS
PRIMARY SCHOOL DATE OF BIRTH 05/05/2002

ENGLISH	1	(ONE)
MATHEMATICS	1	(ONE)
AGRICULTURE	1	(ONE)
SHONA	1	(ONE)
GENERAL PAPER	1	(ONE)

Figure 4.22: A Grade Seven Result Slip for a New Entrant in Form 1 in 2018.

Mr Sithole also reached for piles of learners’ progress record books in his office where he pulled one report book which he opened and handed to me (Figure 4.23).

Form: 3N Term: 1 Year: 2018
Position: 9 Out of: 176

SUBJECTS	Term Mark	EXAM MARK	CLASS AVERAGE	SUBJECT POSITION	REMARKS
English	80	95(A)	79	1/174	Copy work 52
English Lit.					
Shona					
Maths	100	96(A)	82	8/176	Well done!
Geography	98	94(A)	83	15/174	Very good work
Commerce					
History	87	92(A)	79	4/89	Good work
Religious Studies					
Accounts	99	98(A)	84	9/174	Excellent work
F/Fabrics					
Agriculture					
Core Science					
Physics	98	86(A)	70	20/57	V. good work. All.
Chemistry	87	91(A)	86	24/176	Well done
Biology	92	87(A)	84	43/173	Good work
Building					
Woodwork					
Computer Studies	96	98(A)	79	8/174	Well done
T/Drawing					

No of subjects passed: 9 Out of: 9
Overall performance Pass/Fail: Pass

Figure 4.23: A Student's Progress Report. (An extract from a report book)

Mr Sithole handed the report book to me, as I analysed the Grade 7 result slip saying, “Look at the marks for these brilliant students. I tell you, this is why I say, as the current head of this school; I pride myself in admitting brilliant students. See the class averages in this Form 3 class. This is just a brilliant class, cream of the cream.”

It is clear from data presented above that Mr Sithole had an appetite for high intellectual ability learners. This appetite was also spotlighted in his use of such terms as; “*best brains*,” “*cream of the cream*,” and “*brilliant*,” for high ability learners. Somehow, this appetite may be contrary to the vision statements in Figure 4.20 which seem to speak about equality of opportunities, regardless of intellectual ability.

Talking about how he grouped learners for instruction once admitted at his school, Mr Sithole narrated, “When we admit children, say at Form 1, we allocate them to classes according to their subjects of interest and our assessment of their potential.” Mr Sithole did not call his practice ability streaming. He preferred to call it, “*subject interest and needs based grouping*.” He clarified his position by saying, “There is no need for ability streaming here. As I told you, most of our students are very brilliant... Very few children referred to us by the church tend to give us head-ache. However, in most cases, these children don’t even fill a class of their own at any given level.”

Table 4.10 summarises data showing class lists for new entrants into Form 1 for the academic year 2018 as analysed and synthesised from the admission register. Source documents were not included in this section for feasibility and ethical reasons. They contained names and personal details of learners and were bulky.

Table 4.10: Summary of Class Allocation Lists for the Academic Year 2018.

Class	No of Students in Class	Grade 7 Results in Each Class
Form 1A	45	5 – 7 Units
Form 1B	45	7 – 8 Units
Form 1C	42	8 – 10 Units
Form 1D	43	10 Units and above

Source: Primary data

Table 4.10 shows a general shift in grade levels moving from one class to the next. The last class (Form 1D), for example, had learners with 10 units and above. Whilst 10 units are still considered a good pass, this data show Mr Sithole’s inclination to ability streaming. However, he did not wish to define his practice as ability streaming.

Relating to his role of defining the school-based curriculum, Mr Sithole expressed:

To come up with the school-based curriculum, we are guided by the new curriculum framework. I think you are aware that all schools are now expected to implement the new curriculum to its fullness. We can vary on the optional subjects we offer to some specific classes as we see it fit, but without any deviation, all our classes take 7 cross-cutting learning areas as dictated through curriculum policy. There are no two ways about it [emphasis].

Figure 4.24 below shows the school based curriculum at HG High School.

SCHOOL-BASED CURRICULUM (NEW CURRICULUM) FORMS 1- 4	
	Subjects offered
1	English Language
2	Shona
3	Mathematics
4	Combined Science
5	Agriculture
6	Heritage Studies or History
7	Physical Education and Mass Displays
8	Physics
9	Chemistry
10	Biology
12	Geography
13	Computer Science

Figure 4.24: School-Based Curriculum at HG High School: Forms 1-4. *(Extract from information sheets in the school head's office)*

Mr Sithole made an effort to adhere strictly to the dictates of the new curriculum policy as contained in the Secretary's Circular No. 2 of 2017. The practical subjects offered were agriculture and PESMD only. Mr Sithole justified his practice saying, "It is difficult to add a third practical when students already have two compulsory practical subjects." The school used ZIMSEC examinations only to assess student learning. In explain his practice, Mr Sithole said, "Currently, we find no reason to use any other examination board."

In talking about how he approached his school leadership task of monitoring and supervising teaching/learning programmes, Mr Sithole said:

Given the number of responsibilities that I have as headmaster, the special needs of some of the children we admit in this school, and the specialist nature of secondary school level subjects, it is not possible to do everything in person. During my training, I specialised in teaching ChiShona and Religious Studied only. It is not possible for me to imagine that I can effectively assist teachers on how they can teach each and every subject on the secondary

schools' curriculum list. Let alone to learners with special needs who at times need special assistance. Because of these factors, I rely on expertise of my colleagues.

Table 4.11 shows the composition of the SMT (*pseudonyms used for office bearers*).

Table 4.11: Management Team at HG High School.

Title of Post	Names of Office Bearers (<i>Not their real names</i>)
School head	Mr Sithole
Deputy Head	Mr Thomas
Senior Master	Mr Sigauke
Senior Woman	Mrs Saungweme
HOD Maths and Science	Mr Jonson
HOD Humanities	Mrs Saidi
HOD Languages	Miss Peterson
HOD Practical Subjects	Mr Ngirande
HOD Sports (Sports Director)	Ms Thandi
HOD Special Needs Education	Mrs Gono

Source: Primary data

As shown in Table 4.11, Mr Sithole put in place a management team comprising the head, the deputy head, two senior teachers, and six HODs. Of interest in this study is that the school also had an HOD specifically for special needs education (SNE). Mr Sithole explained this position as follows, "Here we have a fully-fledged SNE department and we obviously need a specialist to coordinate this department and to assist other teachers." During one of the sessions where I was shadowing the school head, I came across the HOD (SNE) assisting a fellow teacher in translating learners' work from braille to conventional print (Figure 4.25).



Figure 4.25: HOD SNE (sitting) Helping Fellow Teacher to Translate Braille Print.

Figure 4.25 shows the collaborative character of Mr Sithole's leadership practices. When I wanted to know, whether, as head, he also helped teachers to work on braille in the same way, he said; "Aah no. On braille I don't. This is the responsibility of the HOD SNE and her team. Like I said, these are specialists in that area." Mr Sithole's narrative shows that he roped in members of the school management team (SMT) to assume instructional leadership roles for human resources reasons. Clearly, this practice was not so much about distributed leadership in the conventional sense as it was about the fact that Mr Sithole did not have the required expertise himself. This explains my use of the concept, 'human resources reasons.'

For school leadership purposes, Mr Sithole also made use of subject based departments. The following is an excerpt of the department duty roaster for second term of 2018.

Departments Duty Roaster for Term 1: 2018	
Period	Department
Week 1 & 2	Maths and Science
Week 3 & 4	Humanities
Week 5 & 6	Languages
Week 7 & 8	Practical Subjects
Week 9 & 10	Maths and Science
Week 11 & 12	Humanities

Figure 4.26: Departments Duty Roaster. *[Extract information charts in the head's office]*

Figure 4.26 above shows that teachers were organised into department teams which helped in maintaining an environment conducive to effective learning. Figure 4.27 captures a segment of the observation that I made while shadowing Mr Sithole around the school and demonstrates the collaborative nature of school leadership at Holy Ghost High School. During this occasion, the school head went to the entrance gate to check if the department on duty was playing its part of monitoring punctuality among learners and thus promote a school tone that promotes effective learning.



Figure 4.27: Mr Sithole Talking to Learners during a Walk-through in the School.

The picture above shows Mr Teta (*not his real name*), a member of the Maths and Sciences department taking down the names of learners who had come to school late. As he got to the scene, Mr Sithole just watched Mr Teta doing his work, without saying anything to him. As we left the gate, I wanted to understand what was happening and why Mr Sithole did not say anything. He explained: “As you can see, the department on duty is doing its part. I only wanted to monitor and see first-hand that things are in order. The whole idea is to see things first-hand. If I had CCTVs, I could monitor everything from my desk, first hand. Because I don’t have CCTVs, I need to make spot-checks physically.” Mr Sithole’s practice appears consistent with his earlier statement that, in the light of the context of his job and his responsibilities, it was impossible for him to do everything all by himself. His narrative portrays someone who wished to share school leadership responsibilities for feasibility reasons, as he also retained control. Figure 4.28 shows a check-list form that is used at Holy Ghost High School, for monitoring teaching progress at the school.

SCHEMES OF WORK AND RECORD OF MARKS INSPECTION CONTROLLER REGISTER I

SCHOOL: _____ DEPARTMENT: GEOMETRY

NAME OF HOD: _____ E.C. No: _____

DATE: 27/09/18 LAST DATE OF INSPECTION: 18/09/18

NAME OF TEACHER	E.C. No	Classes Taught	Schemes and record submitted	Schemes and record submitted on time	Schemes were updated	Maximal evaluation	Amount of work recorded as a fraction of expected	COMMENT
		10/10	✓	✓	✓	✓	2/3	Fair
		2-27	✓	✓	✓	✓	3/3	Good
		2-4	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	Records not submitted
		5/10	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	To update records
		8/10	✓	✓	✓	✓	—	
		12/10	✓	✓	✓	✓	4/3	Good

Figure 4.28: Check-list for Teaching Documents. (Source: Supervision Files)

Mr Sithole revealed that, “Copies of this form are completed by HODs as they inspect teaching/learning documents in their respective departments. Teachers who may be failing to meet expected standards are referred to the office for discussion.” During one such discussion, I observed Mr Sithole talking to Ms D, a Maths teacher who was reportedly failing to meet expected standards (Figure 4.28). The conversation between them went as follows:

Ms D: Morning sir. I am told you wanted to see me.

Hm: Morning Ms D. You are right. You can sit down.

Ms D: (*Visibly worried as she pulled a chair and sat down*). Thank you, sir.

Hm: I am worried about your performance madam. It sounds like you are consistently failing to meet the expected standard for written work. What is your story?

Ms D: Yes sir. I think my problem is the number and size of classes.

Hm: No, no, no. I will not take that for a good reason. You are not the only one with such a teaching load. Make sure you meet at least the minimum expectations.

Ms D: It's okay, sir.

Hm: You go and attend to the HOD's recommendations. Next week I want to see a change. If this is not done, disciplinary action may be preferred against you.

Ms D: Thank you, sir.

The conversation captured in the observation segment above confirms Mr Sithole's collaborative approach in his leadership practices. His narrative shows he remained hands-on even as he also shared school leadership responsibilities with his team members. His wish for a CCTV may be suggestive of his desire to control teachers directly. This desire is also evident in the check list above and in his discussion with Ms D in which he showed his strict time management expectations. His approach also seems to be shaped by accountability demands placed on him as the officially designated school leader. This understanding was highlighted when he said, "*We also have a name to protect,*" and in his repeated use of the statement "... *I should be seen to be worth my salt.*"

As he aimed to positively motivate his teachers, Mr Sithole also aimed at controlling them, demanding high performance standards and effective utilisation of time. Figure 4.29 below is an excerpt from a minute he wrote to one of his teachers, demanding an explanation for failure to attend lessons.

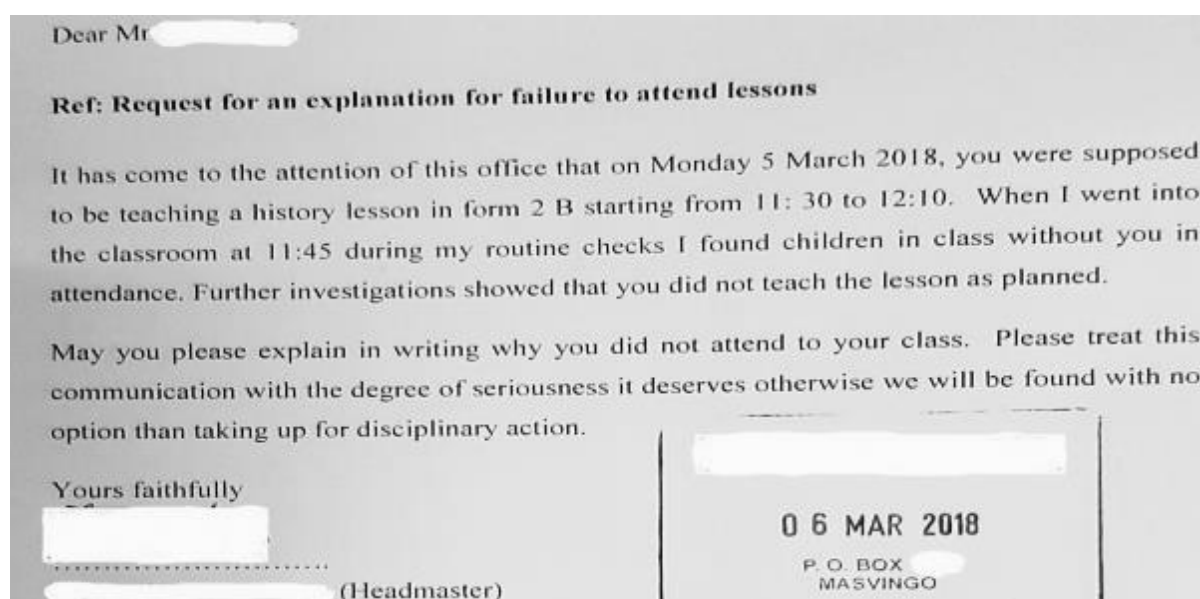


Figure 4.29: Letter to Mr Mlilo Demanding Explanation for Failure to Attend a Lesson.

It is evident from the excerpt above that Mr Sithole's practices were premised partly on reporting and controlling teachers. This practice appears to be consistent with his perceived role as a policy implementer. His practices appeared to vacillate between policy implementation in an administrative sense and in the leadership sense. As a result, he employed control, involvement and motivation activities. During one of the

morning devotions I attended while shadowing the school head, a teacher on duty, Mr Lovemore (*not his real name*), had this to say:

Ladies and gentleman, if the school is going out of its way to help us this way, we should be seen to be doing our part as well. It does not make sense for us to receive food hampers today and tomorrow we are found sitting in the staffroom when we are supposed to be out there teaching. As for me, if I find you sitting in the staff-room without attending to your classes, I will make sure I force you out to teach. What do you expect the school to do for it to be seen as supporting us more than what was done yesterday?

Turning to the school head (*with applause and clapping of hands from his fellow teachers*), Mr Lovemore said, “Sir, on my own behalf and on behalf of my colleagues, I would want to take this opportunity to thank you. Please pass our message to the responsible authority. We are going to do our best to make you happy.” Clearly, Mr Sithole allowed even the voices of his teachers to be heard. He explained his practice saying, “If you allow teachers to speak, you will understand their emotions better. ... As they speak and share their views and emotions they will be motivating each other to remain focused, in the process.”

Mr Sithole was worried about teacher motivation. Figure 4.30 is an excerpt of a commendation letter written by the district education inspector in appreciation of the headmaster’s effort to recognise and report on good performance by his teachers.

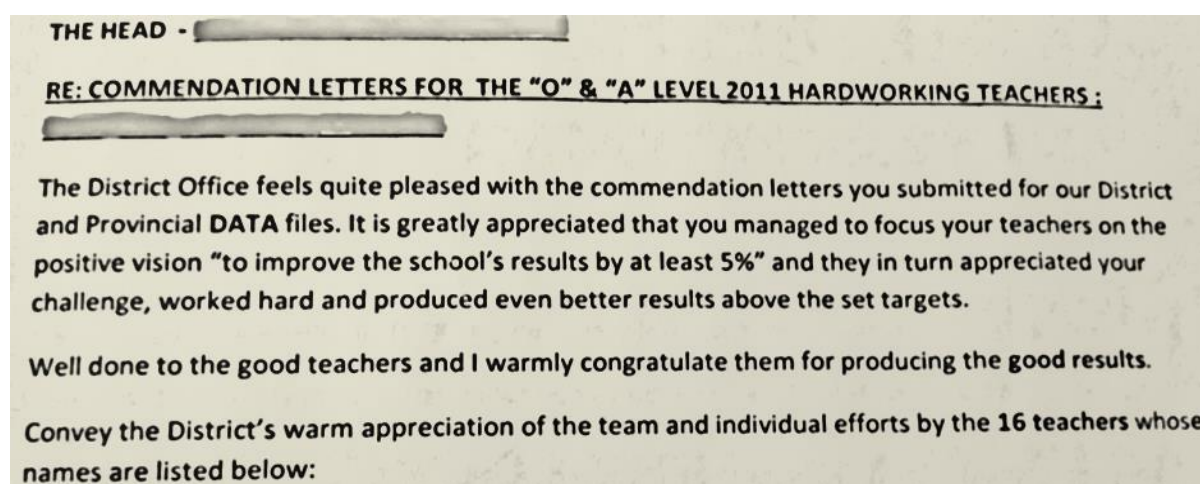


Figure 4.30: Commendation Letter for School Performance in Public Examinations.

The extract above shows that Mr Sithole also used commendation letters to motivate his teachers. Copies of these letters were further submitted to the district as a way of reporting on the performance of teachers. Mr Sithole summed up his practice thus:

As a system, we believe teachers need to be motivated for them to be effective in helping the school to realise its goals. We therefore use different techniques to achieve this end. For example, we motivate teachers both financially and materially. Teachers are given monthly allowance and food hampers to augment their salaries. ... All this is done through the responsible authority's office in order to avoid being seen as violating government policy. ...

Data presented above show that at HG High School teachers were exposed to different forms of external motivation initiatives. The teachers received rewards at a school level, in addition to what they got from the employer. They were rewarded through the RA's office in order to avoid being seen as violating public policy as contained in the Secretary's Circular No. 6 of 2014. This practice amounted to "decoupling" practices from the MoPSE's policies on incentives.

Mr Sithole also supported teacher professional development (TPS). This drive was first spotlighted in a staff meeting in which he expressed:

Ladies and gentleman, allow me to welcome Mr Muresherwa in this meeting. As previously communicated to you, Mr Muresherwa is a student with the University of the Free State. He is here carrying out his research as required by his degree programme. I want you to be challenged by the fact that Mr Muresherwa has almost become a perpetual student. Take a leaf from what he is doing and you will reach great heights. ... Mr Muresherwa, sir, we thank you for choosing our school for your study ... Certainly you help to inspire us.

It is clear that Mr Sithole typically encouraged his teachers to professionally advance themselves. Table 4.12 shows data on staff movement from January to July 2018.

Table 4.12: Staff Movement for the Period from January to July 2018.

Name of teacher	No. of days away	Reason for absence
Ms Betty	2	To attend to a sick child;
Mr Golden	10	To attend lectures. To write examinations
Ms D	12	To prepare for examinations. To write examinations. To attend to pressing family problems
Mr Johnson	2	To attend to a family funeral
Mr Arnold	1	To see a Doctor for medical treatment
Mr Sesenyani	8	To write examinations. Going to university
Mrs Petty	1	To attend visiting day for a child in boarding school
Mrs Loveness	13	To attend to a sick relative; To prepare for examinations; To write examinations

Source: Primary data

Table 4.12 shows that a large number of days of teacher movement out of the school were related to TPD. Leave forms reviewed at the school also showed that teachers applied for vacation leave for the purpose of pursuing their studies and leave days were granted. Data presented above show that, Mr Sithole who, himself held a master's degree encouraged his teachers to keep learning. He further explained, "The idea is that teaching is about developing people. You cannot develop others when you are not fully developed yourself." Clearly, Mr Sithole believed teachers could not effectively develop others when they were not fully developed themselves and hence his motivation for teacher professional development.

Similarly, whenever he got the opportunity to address learners, Mr Sithole motivated them to aim higher in their academic pursuit. During the first morning assembly I attended as I shadowed him, he addressed his learners thus:

My good students, you need to be very positive about your potential. Think big and be focused. If you think like an ant, you start to act like an ant. If you think like a lion, you will achieve great things. I like the attitude of a lion. Whilst it is not the largest of all animals in the jungle; because of a proper attitude, a lion has gained itself the title of the king of the jungle. ... Even animals as big and imposing as elephants will listen when the king of the jungle roars [*emphasis*]. This is the attitude I expect from all of you. ... Avoid a defeatist attitude. I have never heard of anyone dying because of reading, but I have heard of people dying of lack of knowledge. So be focused and work hard all the time. You will make a difference.

Mr Sithole gave words of inspiration to the learners for them to develop a positive attitude towards education, regardless of different life circumstances. Clearly Mr Sithole's focus was on the academic achievement of his learners. He used animal analogies to strengthen his view. In yet another morning assembly I attended, he repeated his animal analogies as he said:

If you want to succeed in life, you need to have an attitude of an eagle and not that of a chicken. The eagle has the attitude of a hunter, whilst a chicken lives in a false comfort zone thinking that people feed it out of love. It spends its entire life running away from hunting eagles, only to be eaten by the farmer. ... I assure you, all of you have the potential to shine in your own way. Stand up and fly like an eagle. Don't expect the world to feel pity for you. You need to fight for your space in this world of competition.

Data presented above show that, whenever the opportunity presented itself, Mr Sithole took the opportunity to always encourage learners to remain focused and to

work hard towards their academic goals. An analysis of his narrative suggests that his leadership was mainly focused on academic performance. He encouraged every one of his learners to try his/her best academically ahead of anything else.

4.3.7 Mr Sithole: The case of coupling and decoupling expectations

Data presented in this case study shows the tale of Mr Sithole as a story of coupling with and decoupling from expectations of key stakeholders. This was done in search of both self and school legitimacy and for protecting personal identity in the eyes of key stakeholders. Mr Sithole felt duty bound to achieve goals that were embraced in policies by the MoPSE and the RA whilst all at once protecting his own personal identity and self-legitimacy as head of Holy Ghost High School. However, this coupling of expectation seemed difficult to achieve in situations where real goals and expectations of the MoPSE and those of the RA were sometimes misaligned. In addition, the MoPSE's policy as written statements (covert policy) also seemed to be misaligned with its policy as manifested in practice (overt policy). This created a dilemma in Mr Sithole as he sought to meet expectations of all stakeholders.

Whilst the church was seen to be supportive of inclusive instructional practices, the MoPSE's practices seemed to be less aligned with written policy. However, Mr Sithole thought that he should ensure that expectations and goals of all key stakeholders for his school were realised as much as possible. His practice, therefore, seemed to be guided by a desire to safeguard both self and school legitimacy in the eyes of the school's publics and hence my use of the word "*coupling*." Misalignment between the MoPSE's policy as written statements and as practice, coupled with overt accountability expectations motivated Mr Sithole to decouple from the MoPSE's inclusive policy as a written statement in favour of its policy as manifested in practice and hence my use of the word, "*decoupling*."

4.4 Case 3: The Story of Mr Moyo

Viewing life through the eyes of his learners, hearing through their ears and feeling through their heart:

- (a) Only people without septic wounds on the mouth will say we can't eat food with pus...
- (b) I feel my heart purified when I work for the good of others ...

4.4.1 Introducing Mr Moyo and his school leadership context

My first encounter with Mr Moyo, at a personal level, was when I visited his school to ask for permission to conduct the research and for his consent to participate in the study. Previously, I had known him simply as one of my fellow heads in the district who had a physical disability. Mr Moyo is aged 55 with 24 years of teaching experience, eight of which as a school head. He exhibited a very positive self-image and could talk freely and positively about his own disability. By merely talking to him, one could discern an impression of a very confident leader who was directly immersed in his brand of inclusive practices. Mr Moyo exhibited a strong sense of internal locus of control and a positive self-image as a school head. However, he seemed to believe that people around him looked down upon people with disabilities in general and learners with exceptionalities in particular. He called these learners, “differently abled children or the less fortunate.” In expressing his positive attitude towards such learners, and the lack of similar attitude by what he referred to as “the more fortunate people in society”, Mr Moyo said, “Only people without septic wounds on the mouth will always say, we can’t eat food with pus on the mouth.”

In terms of his teaching qualifications, Mr Moyo attained a Bachelor of Arts degree in ChiShona and Philosophy, a special honours degree in ChiShona and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education. By the time of this study, he was studying for a Master of Education degree in African languages. His strong educational background and subject specialisation seemed to make him well-placed to understand and articulate issues at stake in the current study. His own disability seemed to make him rather sensitive and motivated to participate in a study involving children with exceptionalities. This was evident when at the beginning of this study he warned: “I can tell you all you want to know about my understanding and experiences as head of this inclusive school, as long as you don’t frustrate me” [smiling]

4.4.2 Mr Moyo’s instructional leadership context

All Souls High School is a church run high school situated in the outskirts of the city of Masvingo in Zimbabwe. It is located very close to a special school (primary school) for the deaf, a mission hospital that specialises in optical related ailments and a teachers’ training college that trains primary school teachers including teachers for special needs education (SNE). All Souls High School was built in a

mission community, at the administration centre of FCZ (*not its real name*); the church that owns and runs the school. The church also had eight other high schools in the Masvingo Province of Zimbabwe. All these schools were boarding schools except for All Souls High School, the odd one out.

Mr Moyo reveals that, “The church also runs a special school for the blind, a psychiatric centre and a school for the deaf in the same district of Masvingo.” He thus bragged, “Ours is an inclusive system in the real sense. In our church, we have come to realise and accept that people that are differently abled are naturally equal partners in this short journey of life.” He also revealed, “This school was built to provide secondary education to a growing population at this FCZ mission headquarters.” The school opened its doors to its first intake of students in 1996. “Its primary target were children from the mission centre who, for one reason or the other, could not get access to education in any one of the boarding schools dotted around the province, even those that are run by our church,” Mr Moyo added.

At the time of this study, the school had a total enrolment of 468 learners from Form 1 to Form 6 and a teacher establishment of 27. This comprised 17 male and 10 female teachers. “All our teachers are government employees through the Public Service Commission and are supervised by the MoPSE,” Mr Moyo revealed.

4.4.3 What it means to Mr Moyo to be an instructional leader in an inclusive secondary school

In this section, I present and interpret data on what Mr Moyo believed instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school meant to him. I begin my presentation by looking at his professed role of giving hope to the hopeless.

Responding to the question on what he understood as his most important responsibility in his capacity as the officially designated instructional leader at his inclusive school, Mr Moyo expressed; “I see my most important role as to make sure that every child admitted at this school feels a sense of belonging, loved and accepted. My purpose for life is to give hope to the hopeless.” In explaining his thoughts, he referred to his own experience and that of his parents, saying:

As a person living with a disability myself, I feel I am what I am because of the people who accepted me as I am. As much as possible, I should help people in similar circumstance to develop and live their own independent life as healthy, responsible, and productive citizens who own and control their destiny. You know what? Even as a parent, when you have a child with a disability, and you find people who stand with you, you will feel very light in your heart. I remember my own parents felt relieved when, as a child with a disability; I was accepted as a person worth school authorities' attention. I therefore am convinced beyond any doubt that the purpose of my life is to bring hope to the life of people in similar circumstances as mine. ... Through embracing a non-selective approach, I feel I am responding to the needs of the community that I serve.

Clearly, Mr Moyo seemed to view himself as an advocate for the welfare of children with exceptionalities who faced discrimination in the mainstream school system. He saw his duty as to assist such children to develop their full potential so that they would be able to live independently as healthy, responsible, and productive citizens in control of their own lives. He added: "At times what some of these children need is a community of love. I mean, they need love and respect as fellow human beings." Mr Moyo's feelings seemed to stem from his own lived experiences (Lincoln *et al.*, 2011; Welford *et al.*, 2011; Kelly, 2018) as a person living with a disability.

In further explaining what he viewed as his role expectations, he added:

Considering the nature of some of the students we enrol in this school, I also see it as my duty to come up with a school curriculum that equally addresses the varying needs of differently abled children. Children who are deaf and dumb and those with low intellectual ability, for example, need more practically oriented education than others and I should ensure that such learners also see learning in this school as a worthwhile experience. ...

Following a pregnant pause, which he aptly interpreted as asking for more, he rhetorically asked, "You know what, sir?" as he prepared to articulate in detail:

Some of the students we admit in this school may never pass a theory-based examination, even under open book conditions. It is illogical to subject such learners to a purely academic and examination-based learning. If they are exposed to a practical and skills-based curriculum, even the so-called slow learners will surely excel in their own way, even without a full O-level certificate. Relevant education for such children should be more vocational than academic. I see it as my full responsibility to ensure that as a community, we move away from theory-based learning to more authentic learning which yields tangible results for all.

Evidently, Mr Moyo thought he should also focus on providing a relevant curriculum for all. Such a curriculum should emphasise on practical skills and competencies usable in life rather than on theory and examinations only. His concept of differently abled learners seemed to encompass children with low ability to learn.

To elaborate on his perceived roles, Mr Moyo further expressed, “I also see it as my responsibility in this situation to improve the school name so that it becomes attractive to every parent.” Mr Moyo clearly felt that, over and above his other responsibilities, he should also work to improve the image of his school for it to be marketable to parents. He explained his position in detail saying:

Originally, this school was meant to cater for children of mission workers and those from the surrounding community who could not afford fees in boarding schools. This includes children that fail to get the required Grade 7 passes for acceptance in boarding schools. When I joined the school, we, of course, started to enrol children from X *School for the Deaf* (pseudonym), our primary school, just across the road. In addition to these differently abled children, we also target to attract and rope in parents of high ability children who, under normal circumstances, may send their children to boarding schools to consider sending their children to us. Such parents may help to support the school financially since as a school we mainly survive on fees paid by parents on top of the survival support we get from the church.

It is evident here that, Mr Moyo was uncomfortable with his school being associated with poor parents only. He felt he should also be attracting parents that were able and willing to pay for the education of their children as he remarked, “Some poor parents who send their children here, just ‘dump them’ in the school. They simply pay initial fees demanded on admission and you will never see them again. This is not good for us.” After a short pause which appears typical of his character and shows a sense of control, he added, “Remember, we are no longer allowed to send away children on account of failure to pay fees.” Mr Moyo’s narrative points to his school leadership as a multidimensional and inclusive practice. There was also an element of frustration as he felt some parents viewed his school as a last resort for placing their children. The multidimensionality of school leadership by Mr Moyo was also reflected in his daily work-plans which were availed to me for analysis. Figure 4.31 is an excerpt from Mr Moyo’s daily work-plans showing the multidimensional character of his daily activities.

Routine activities	Time	Non-Routine activities	Time
(a) Visit the main gate to monitor punctuality	7:30-8:00	(a) Visit to the district office (paysheet collection)	11:30-13:00
(b) Monitor examinations starting time (opening)	8:00-8:20	(d) Visit to production units	Lunch 14:00-15:00
(c) Attending to visitors	8:20-9:00	(e) Reading the Labour Act on waiver of salaries for auxiliary staff	15:00-16:00
(d) checking on teaching documents submitted	9:00-10:00		
(e) checking attendance registers of lessons	10:30-11:30		
(f) Planning for the next day	16:00		

Figure 4.31: An Extract from the Daily Work Plan Book for Mr Moyo.

Furthermore, Figure 4.31 supports the multidimensional character of Mr Moyo's daily routines and therefore, his school leadership responsibilities. The multidimensionality of Mr Moyo's responsibilities is also reflected in Figure 4.32.

Headmaster's meetings with HODs	
Date: 11/05/17	
Venue: Head's Office	
a) Issues to be discussed	
i) Headmaster's remarks	
ii) Feedback on previous term (HODs)	
iii) Departmental supervision	
iv) Feedback on ICT workshop and forward (HODs)	
v) Mid-year examinations	
vi) AOB	
b) Closing remarks (Headmaster)	
b) Closing remarks (Headmaster)	

Figure 4.32: Agenda for the head's meeting with HODs. (Extract from the schools' staff-meetings minute book)

Agenda items as captured in the extract above supports the multidimensional character of Mr Moyo's school leadership thought and practice as was evident in the interview discussion above. Several meetings, touching on different issues of school

leadership were analysed. Data from this analysis confirm the multidimensional character of instructional leadership as practised in the school (See Table 4.13).

Table 4.13: Items that Characterised Staff Meetings for the Period 2017 – 2018.

General classifications of meeting		Main agenda items discussed
1	Opening meetings	Distribution of resources, master timetable; appraisal forms; allocation of responsibilities; teaching loads
2	Meetings with HODs	Supervision calendar; calendar for departmental meetings; staffing issues; performance appraisal; supervision reports; feedback on ICT workshop
4	Sports meetings	Calendar; sports equipment; review of last season;
4	Workshop on PSC regulations	Public service regulations; acts of misconduct.
5	Invigilation meeting	Examination circular;
6	End of term meetings	Reports from HODs; submission of records; holiday duties; vacation school

Source: Primary Data

It is clear from Table 4.13 and Figure 4.32 that Mr Moyo's responsibilities were characteristically broad and multidimensional. His narrative portrays direct classroom supervision and inspection of learning processes as one element among a broad spectrum of his school leadership responsibilities. These multiple roles, Mr Moyo believed, should be carried out within the context of an inclusive school environment in which he should also be promoting inclusion of learners with multiple exceptionalities. Clearly, Mr Moyo appears to be a "*multiple inclusionist*" (Mitchell, 2017). His dream was of full inclusion of all includable learners at his school.

4.4.4 Mr Moyo's motivation to embrace an inclusive framework

Talking about his motivation to embrace differently abled learners in his school, Mr Moyo was quick to say, "All Souls High School was established as a non-selective school from its inception." By embracing inclusive education, Mr Moyo believed that he was pursuing the founding vision and goals of the school. This point became even more clearer when he remarked: "What we are doing is to simply follow the vision of the founders ..." Clearly, this shows that the church had a strong influence in shaping leadership thought and practices at All Souls High School. Mr Moyo clarified:

For many years, the church has been involved in the education of children with special needs in this district. This school was established for a similar purpose but with OVCs and low ability learners in mind. Some of our schools employ an institutionalised approach to

disability whilst others, especially boarding schools strictly select high achievers. ... At All Souls, we employ an inclusive approach. In line with the original purpose for the school as envisioned by church authorities, we accommodate every child including low ability children.

Whilst there are many stakeholders in education, Mr Moyo seemed to identify the church as the roots for the non-selective approach adopted at his school. It is upon this foundation that he built his own inclusive practices when he joined the school as a head teacher. He also explained his internal motivation to embrace inclusive instructional practices in terms of his fellow feeling as follows:

As an individual with a disability myself, I believe people who are differently abled are naturally equal partners with anyone else in this short journey of life. It is for this reason that I say, only people without septic wounds on the mouth will say we can't eat food with pus on the mouth. Affected people like some of us appreciate that people with special needs are human too and should be treated as such [emphasis].

Clearly, Mr Moyo's lived experiences coupled with what he saw as the purpose for which the church built the school seems to have contributed to shaping his personal attitude towards inclusive education. He clarified his fellow feeling as follows:

You see my leg? I was affected by polio when I was a small boy. However, this disability never prevented me from living my dreams. If anything, it made me more resolute and to understand that anyone can be disabled at any time. It also taught me to believe that people should treat the less fortunate around them with dignity, hope and respect. I believe, I should love, respect and give hope to the less fortunate among us. My own life circumstances have taught me to realise that, success in life is not about how high you climb the social ladder as an individual, but how many lives are happy because of your own God's gift of life ...

Mr Moyo's narrative tells a story of a rational and empathetic leader endowed with the ability to see life through the eyes of his learners, hear through their ears and feel through their heart. His story demonstrates conviction to inspire and assist similar circumstanced people to achieve their personal ambitions and to survive. By embracing an inclusive approach to instructional practices, Mr Moyo also believed he was responding to the needs of the community that he was serving as he also pursued the purpose for which his school was built. He clarified his position as follows: "As a person with disability myself, I feel my heart purified when I work for the good of others ... What makes us human is not our ability to think, but our ability to love one another." My discussion with Mr Moyo shows that, whilst his school was

originally meant for OVC, low ability and other indigent children, given his own circumstance, he also became naturally attracted to children with different forms of exceptionalities, including those with physical disabilities with whom he empathised.

4.4.5 Mr Moyo's assessment of his school leadership environment

Talking about the nature and level of support he enjoyed from the MoPSE, the official representative of the state and custodian of education in the district, for embracing inclusive education, Mr Moyo expressed:

It is clear that there is nothing much for non-selective schools, in support or appreciation of inclusive practices by the MoPSE. When you practice inclusive education, as we do in this school, and you are getting good examination results, it is fine, but if you cannot get good results, surely, you will be frustrated to the bone-marrow. The system will never recognise you if your school is not doing well academically because of your inclusive philosophy. In fact, they will write you off their books like a bad debt in a corporate entity. You don't have any reason to exist in their minds where performance is measured in terms of your academic results only [Laughing]

In clarifying his view Mr Moyo explained, "I think you are aware that in this country, schools are assessed on the basis of performance of children in examinations only. When your school takes in children who cannot pass, you will be judged as a poor performer and you will lose respect. In fact, you will be frustrated, I tell you." Undoubtedly, Mr Moyo experienced inclusive instructional practices in his school with an amalgam of empathy, love, frustrations and dilemma. In his assessment, Mr Moyo seemed to believe he was not getting deserving support from policy makers who seem to believe that every child is capable of passing O-level examinations.

Talking specifically about inclusive instructional practices and the curriculum, Mr Moyo said, "It is clear; the national schools' curriculum was not designed with differently abled children in mind." He clarified his position by saying:

For prescribing too many compulsory subjects, it is clear that curriculum planners did not put the needs of differently abled children in mind. I don't understand the reason for policy makers to come up with as many as 39 subjects at O-level, only to turn back and declare 7 of them as compulsory. I see the large number of compulsory subjects forced on children crowding out other subjects that may be more appropriate for differently abled children. ... It appears the Ministry is effectively saying children's choices for practical subjects, for example, should be restricted only to PE and Agriculture. ... I think this curriculum is too rigid as it does not give

students meaningful choice to decide. Given choice, obviously some children may go for other Voc-Tech subjects outside, PE and Agriculture for example.

Mr Moyo questioned the logic of policy makers in including too many subjects in the Curriculum Framework for the MoPSE 2015-2022, only to come back and make it impossible for schools to teach some of the subjects. To support his thinking that, the curriculum was too rigid and prescriptive, Mr Moyo availed to me The Secretary's Circular No. 2 of 2017 which gives effect to the implementation of the new curriculum. Figure 4.33 is an extract from this important circular.

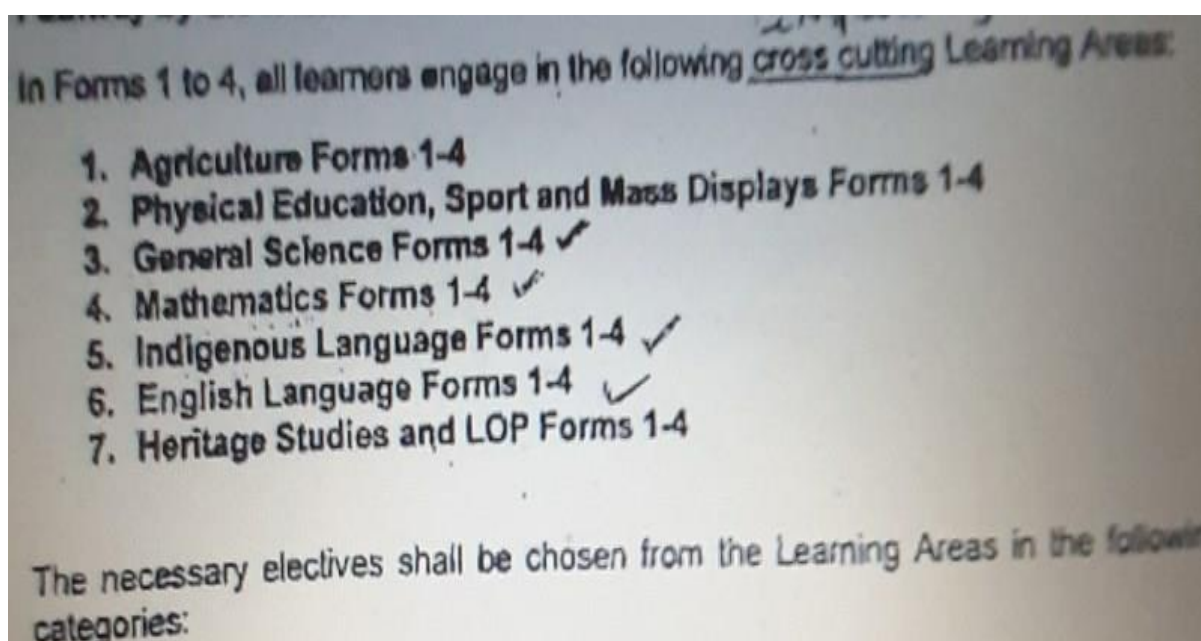


Figure 4.33: Compulsory learning areas prescribed in the new curriculum (The Secretary's Circular No. 2 of 2017)

The Secretary's circular on implementation of the new curriculum provides that: *"Each learner [Form 1 – 4] shall participate in at least ten (10) learning areas, seven (7) of which will be cross cutting and three (3) to five (5) others will be necessary electives (p. 4)."* Mr Moyo was concerned that, seven compulsory learning and a minimum of ten subjects per child was too much for some includable learners.

On the appropriateness of the examinations system for inclusive instructional practices, Mr Moyo affirmed, "The history of examinations in this country does not work in favour of inclusive education." He explained his view further: "The high failure rate in national examinations speaks for itself. From such chronic high failure rate, you can see that the ZIMSEC organised examinations are not for every child." He

reaffirmed: “Surely, this examination system is a disincentive to inclusive education as schools are made to compete for places on the district’s examination results log table. This also leads schools to compete for learners that can easily be drilled for examinations, leaving out the rest in the cold.”

Table 4.14 shows the school’s examination pass rate in the ZIMSEC examinations for the period year 2013 – 2017 together with the national average for the period.

Table 4.14: ZIMSEC Examination Pass Rate for the Period 2015 – 2017.

ZIMSEC EXAMINATION PASS RATE FOR THE PERIOD 2015 - 2017.		
Year of Examination	Pass rate	National average
2013	32%	21%
2014	40%	22%
2015	32%	27%
2016	41%	30%
2017	35%	27%

Source: District examination log examination log tables

Table 4.14 shows the ‘O’ level examination pass rates for All Souls High School for the period 2013 to 2017 and its relationship with national average pass rate. These data seem to confirm Mr Moyo’s concerns that the examination system might be inappropriate for some learners as he also said: “The education system uses a straitjacket approach and a theory based examination system.” Admitted; this pass rate is on the lower side of the scale. He further articulated his view thus:

By a straitjacket approach I mean an inflexible approach to education and examination system which assumes that all children are the same and can all pass academically oriented examinations. I see this thinking as defeating the whole idea of children having different abilities. I think inclusive education should be about both access and choice and not access without choice. ... In addition, when we talk of competence-based curriculum and competence-based examinations, the big question is; what competencies. Instead of just shouting competencies, we should think seriously about issues of relevance of these competencies to the varying needs of children, since children are differently talented.

For adopting an inflexible approach to education, Mr Moyo viewed the examination system as inappropriate for some learners with special needs. He argued that, “Compelling all children to do as many as ten subjects and expect each one of them to pass, shows the education system is not friendly to inclusive practices.” Mr Moyo thus saw the curriculum as inflexible and a disincentive to full inclusion. He further asserted, “Even as we talk about inclusive education, I think it is high time we should move away from equality-based inclusive education in the context of sameness and legal rights to one which is based on equity as fairness and ethics. Ideally, we should not educate children as if they are similar in every aspect of their life. The truth is that each child is talented in his/her own unique way and have different needs.”

Responding to questions on availability and suitability of policies for promoting inclusive instructional practices other than the curriculum, Mr Moyo expressed:

I think at policy formulation level, we have done generally well. The system has made an effort to put in place policies that talk about inclusive education in a big way. What is lacking is enforcing policy implementation and exact compliance. At the end of the day, inclusive education is a voluntary programme that schools may choose to adopt if they so wish or decide to ignore if they don't want to involve themselves in problems associated with it.

According to Mr Moyo, policy makers seemed to have a piecemeal interest in inclusive policies as they tend to emphasise on academic achievement and standards and not on closing the gap. To illustrate this piecemeal orientation, he gave an example of one of the visit made by district officials (school inspectors) to his school. He narrated the incident thus:

After the release of O-level results for last year..., I was visited by education inspectors on routine schools' inspections. Their team leader asked me about the number of candidates who came out with more than 5 'A's at O-level in my school, among other things. When I told him I had four candidates, he was visibly not very impressed. When I tried to explain to him that my school, unlike other schools was non-selective, he could not take any of that. The idea here is that the school inspectors measured school performance in terms of public examination results only and not any other contribution that as a school we can make for the benefit of the people we are supposed to serve. ... I can safely say, inclusive policies are there, but enforcement, enforcement, enforcement; is where we are found wanting [laughing].

Clearly, the discussion above shows that, Mr Moyo viewed the MoPSE as having a piece meal orientation to full inclusion. His key concern was on what he called, “The

Zimbabwean crisis of policy implementation,” characterised by lack of policy enforcement. He also seemed to believe that the performance of inclusive schools should not be measured in terms of examination results only. When I wanted to see the policy instruments that he purported to support inclusive education, Mr Moyo availed to me a file containing The Education Act and The New Curriculum Framework for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education 2015 – 2022. He also showed me the MoPSE’s vision statement which he displayed in the office (see Appendix 9); apparently in line with the Ministry’s assessment criteria for school heads (see Appendix 10). My analysis of these documents showed that, true to his word, the policy instruments spoke to inclusive education in one way or the other.

Talking about whether he viewed supervision instruments and systems used in the district as promoting inclusive instructional practices, Mr Moyo had this to say: “I see supervision instruments used with both teachers and school heads as silent on inclusive education. The tone in these instruments is that of inspection and not assessment in the sense of looking at a subordinates’ work with a superior eye with the aim of helping them improve their performance. I think this explains why district education officers have been renamed education inspectors.”

Mr Moyo was evidently concerned that district authorities and the instruments used for assessing school performance had gradually shifted from a supervision role meant to assist schools to an inspectorate role. The Secretary’s Circular No. 2 of 2017 availed to me for analysis during data collection has it that, “*school heads are supervised in line with Teacher Professional Standards (TPS)*” (p. 9). My analysis of the ‘supervision instruments’ in the TPS booklet confirmed the silence on inclusive education in the instruments for assessing teachers and for assessing the work of school heads (see Appendix 10). The silence seems to support Mr Moyo’s concerns that the MoPSE had a piecemeal approach to inclusive education. He was uncomfortable with an inspection approach to leadership as adopted by the MoPSE. He seemed to prefer school leadership with the aim of helping schools to improve their performance as opposed to inspection which he associated with fault finding and punishment.

Turning his attention to the support he was getting from the church for embracing inclusive instructional practices, Mr Moyo explained in detail as follows:

I think the church is doing its best with respect to children with special needs in general. However, for All Souls High School, the situation is a bit different. Originally, church authorities were more interested in us providing for OVCs and other disadvantaged children excluded from some schools. Children with physical disabilities such as the deaf and dumb and those with visual disabilities were not part of the original plan for this school. When we moved in to include children with physical disabilities into this school, it was not readily acceptable since this did not fit with the disability model commonly practised in the church. ... With physical disabilities, the church preferred institutionalisation than inclusion. However, since we started bringing in children with physical disabilities from our sister schools, people seem to have now accepted our model although with the general thinking that, all children that find their way into this school should pass 'O' level exams as the minimum standard.

The excerpt above shows that, whilst church authorities fully supported the involvement of low ability children and OVC at All Souls High School, they also preferred keeping children with physical disabilities in special schools. With the passage of time, Mr Moyo saw a gradual shift from this tradition as church authorities came to appreciate the inclusive model he championed. However, he saw problems where church authorities assumed that all includable children were capable of passing examinations. He expressed his predicament as follows: "Even children who could not pass Grade 7 examinations are still pressured to pass 'O' level. If they don't, then you are labelled a bad fellow for failing to perform to expected standards. All this is done without thinking about your admission policy at all."

Turning his attention to the extent to which his school was properly resourced for inclusive education, Mr Moyo remarked, "Well, we may not have enough equipment, but I think the church has done its best to ensure we have the basic resources needed for us to function". He offered to take me through workshops for Voc-Tech subjects in order to show me the equipment available and what he expected of his dream school as he also made spot-checks on teaching in progress. Our first port of call was the metal fabrication workshop (Figure 4.34).



Figure 4.34: Learners Working on a Lathe Machine during a Voc-Tech Lesson.

When we entered the workshop during this observation segment, Mr Moyo proceeded to talk to learners (Ls) just after greeting formalities as I also acquainted myself with the equipment available. Below are excerpts of how proceedings in the workshop went on during this observation segment:

Ls: *[Stopped working and greeted the head as we entered the workshop]* Morning sir.

Hm: Good morning students. You can continue working. I have decided once again to come and learn with you. With me is Mr Muresherwa. He is also interested in seeing how we learn.

Ls: Thank you, sir. *[As they get back to business]*

Hm: *[Moved in to a working table; Figure 4.32].* Can you tell me, what is it that you are working own?

L 1: *Ma projects emazama.* (These projects are for examinations).

Hm: *Saka zviru kubuda here?* (Are things coming out well?).

L 1: Yes, sir.

From the metal fabrication workshop, we proceeded to wood technology workshop where we again saw learners busy on their projects (Figure 4.35).



Figure 4.35: Learners Working on Wood Technology Projects for the HEXCO Curriculum.

As we went into the workshop, Mr Moyo showed me available equipment without disturbing learning in progress, and reiterated, “This is what I mean. As a non-selective school we need a lot of equipment such as Lathe Machines you see here so that we afford relevant and authentic education to our learners.” He further explained the state of material resourcing in the school, saying: “I think the church has done very well on equipping the school materially. It’s only that some of our equipment is getting a bit old but otherwise basic equipment to enable us to function is available, as you can see.” Concerning the MoPSE, Mr Moyo expressed; “Honestly, the MoPSE is not doing much, it is only the church and parents that are sponsoring education in terms of material resourcing in this school.

Responding to questions on whether he felt his teachers were appropriately trained for practice under inclusive settings, Mr Moyo explained in detail as follows:

Not really. Our teachers are not trained for inclusive education as such. To say the truth, teachers are trained to teach for examinations only. I think exams are the purpose of education in the district ... I believe, since we enrol children with different forms of exceptionalities who should not be learning for exam purposes; there is also need for specialist skills among our teachers if we are supposed to be effective in helping these children prepare for their future. Children with deafness who are now included in the school, for example, require a special language and specialist levels of skills, patience and

acceptance. Unfortunately, we don't have such skills internally at the moment. We, of course, rely on assistance from X School for the Deaf, which is just across the road. Currently we are planning workshops with these teachers to sharpen our skills.

It is clear from the verbal excerpt above that Mr Moyo viewed his current crop of teachers as lacking the necessary training in handling some of the special needs learners in the school. He explained the challenge as he reiterated that, "People seem to associate education too much with examination and employment. As a result, most teachers are trained to teach for examinations only." Mr Moyo blamed the type of training that teachers received on too much emphasis placed on preparing learners for employment. Talking about whether the school motivated and incentivised teachers for embracing an inclusive framework, over and above what they received as salaries, Mr Moyo was quick to say; "If we do that, we will be playing with fuses of a time bomb." This means his school would be regarded as going against The Permanent Secretary's Circular No. 6 of 2014 which regulated against incentives. He understood that doing so would attract punishment from the employer.

Mr Moyo showed that, even in the backdrop of lack of training for inclusive education and restrictions on the school's effort to motivate teachers, he still believed teacher acceptance of special needs learners was not one of his problems at All Souls High School. He explained as follows:

I can't say we have problems with teacher acceptance of the children we enrol as such. It appears teachers in this school have come to appreciate the importance of giving every child the chance to learn. However, our challenge is where people compare our pass rate with that of selective schools, including boarding schools and use the results for reward management and for promotion. Teachers see such a reward system as rather unfair and demotivating.

Clearly, Mr Moyo viewed teachers as having issues with the non-selective stance embraced by the school only when the system uses examination results for reward management and promotion purposes and to compare their performance with that of teachers in selective schools. Otherwise, teachers accepted children with exceptionalities in their classes without any problem. He reaffirmed, "I think they [teachers] understand our situation."

Concerning his assessment of the support he enjoyed from the community that he served, Mr Moyo expressed; “The community we serve is a mixed bag. Some members do value but others do not value our contribution to society the way I expected it to be.” He clarified his position further:

I think, as a nation, we got it wrong where we confused work with employment and took education as the route to employment only. The reality is that if your school does not guarantee that every learner or at least most of them get full ‘O’ level certificates; forget it. You will never be taken seriously. Your school will never be taken as first choice by parents seeking to place their children, unless if such parents feel their particular child is not good enough or when they are unable to pay fees asked for in what they may be seeing as better schools. Most people from the mission community, for example, will only consider us as a choice when their children will be looking for places to repeat, after they fail their examinations elsewhere, unless if they cannot afford fees elsewhere. People feel that sending their children to a poorly performing school is to risk their future employment prospects.

The excerpt above shows that Mr Moyo viewed inclusive practices adopted at his school as negatively affecting the image of the school. However, the situation was different with parents of children with exceptionalities, including parents of indigent children who could not afford high fees asked in some schools, including boarding schools for the same church. Mr Moyo’s narrative shows negative societal attitude and the artificial link between work and employment as a challenge to full inclusion of children with exceptionalities in the mainstream school system. In his mind, schools were associated with preparation of children for a future life of employment which was confused with work. This means to earn a positive evaluation in the minds of many, All Souls High School needed to pass the test of preparing children for employment at any cost, or else it would be negatively evaluated.

4.4.6 Mr Moyo’s instructional leadership practices

In the previous section, I presented data illustrating how Mr Moyo constructs instructional leadership for his school. This section focuses on his leadership practices. I begin my presentation by looking at his practices of defining and communicating the school instructional vision and mission.

4.4.6.1 Defining and communicating the vision and purpose

Mr Moyo shared with me how he went about his first direction setting task. He described his practices as follows: “When defining the vision and purpose for the

school, everyone who matters gets involved in one way or the other. In this way, we make sure that what finally constitutes the vision and mission statement for the school is in sync with expectations of our key stakeholders.” In clarifying what he meant by “everyone who matters,” Mr Moyo expressed, “In order to come up with the vision and mission statements you are seeing on the notice board (*pointing to the mission statement on the wall, Figure 4.36*), I was guided by government policy, the vision statement of the church and the need to accommodate children from *John Mark Primary School for the Deaf*” [not its real name].

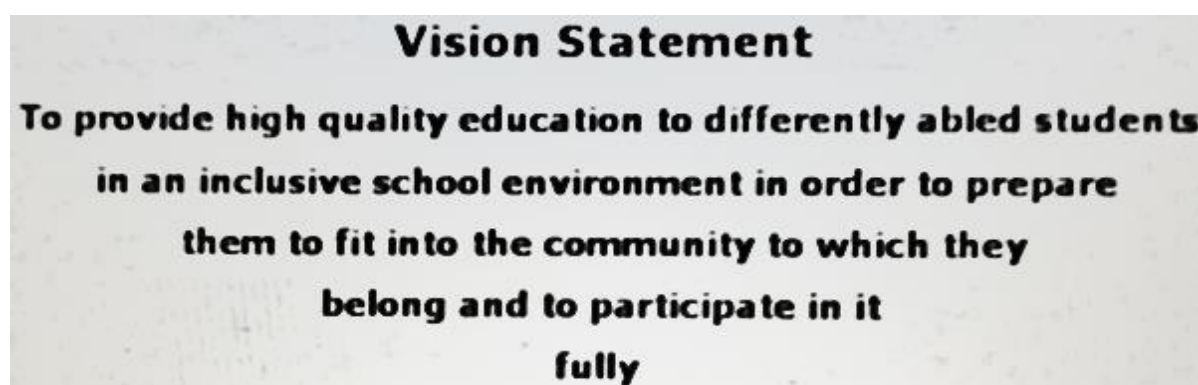


Figure 4.36: Vision Statement for HG High School. (*Source: Charts in the head’s office.*)

The school vision statement for All Souls High School evidently shared similarities with that of the MoPSE and the church. In Table 4.15 below, I present the three vision statements together, to show these similarities.

Table 4.15 shows the vision statements of the church, the MoPSE and the school.

Table 4.15: Vision Statements for the MoPSE, the RA, and All Souls High School.

Institution	Vision Statement
MoPSE	To be the leading provider of inclusive quality education for socio-economic transformation by 2020
Church	To be the best inclusive education centre in Masvingo province and beyond, which offers a holistic education to the Zimbabwean youth for social and economic transformation.
School	To provide high quality education to differently abled students in an inclusive school environment in order to prepare them to fit into the community to which they belong and participate in it fully.

Source: Vision statements displayed in the head’s office for all to see

The key similarity among the three statements was that they all speak to inclusive education (**Table 4.15**). This similarity confirms the influence of the MoPSE and the

church on school level visioning, and Mr Moyo's attempt to strike a balance between expectations of his key publics. It also points to a strategic and collaborative character of school leadership practised by Mr Moyo. The vision statement at All Souls High School was therefore developed from the MoPSE and the church's vision statements on education. He also considered the needs of the community he served.

Concerning how he approached the leadership task of developing a shared vision and purpose for his school, Mr Moyo explained, "I make sure everyone of us is tasked with the responsibility to articulate the vision and purpose of the school to its key publics in order to establish a common purpose." Consistent with this statement, the school's vision statement (see Figure 4.36) was displayed on notice boards in the head's office, the deputy head's office, HOD's offices, the staffroom, and the reception room. This confirms that communicating the school's inclusive vision was a valued and shared responsibility among internal stakeholders.

Focusing his attention to student selection and admission practices in the school, Mr Moyo explained that: "All Souls is an inclusive school in the true sense of the concept. Here we don't select as such. We admit children as they come until we are fully enrolled, as long as they have gone through their primary school education. Isn't it that the country has embraced automatic promotion of learners?" Analysis of records for new entrants into Form 1 for the academic year 2018 and students' progress report books confirmed Mr Moyo's non-selective practices. Figure 4.37 is a sample extract from one of the students' progress report book at the school.

SUBJECT	TERM MARK	EXAM MARK	GRADE	TEACHER'S COMMENT	TR'S INITIALS
English Language		43	D	Work hard	F.S
Literature In English					
Shona		11	D	Shanda nesimba	
Mathematics		16	U	Be serious	BO
Biology					
Physical Science					
Intergrated Science		14	U	Work harder	cm
Commerce		54	C	Good	T.R
Principles of Accounts					
History HERITAGE		48	D	Put more effort	H.C
Geography		31	U	Be serious	KE
Religious Studies					
Fashion and Fabrics					
Agriculture		36	E	Work harder	m.m
Building					
Computers					

Figure 4.37: A Student's Progress Report. (An extract from a report book)

The extract above confirms the non-selective nature of All Souls High School. It shows that learners with low intellectual ability also found their way into this school.

Responding to the question on how he grouped learners for instruction (allocating learners to classes), Mr Moyo described his practice in the following way:

When we get students into Form 1, we put them into classes as they come. I mean, we use the first come first served type of approach ... When children get to Form 3, we assume that they will be in a position to appreciate their passion and abilities. Even ourselves as school authorities and advisors to our students, we now will be aware of the potential and interest of each individual child and better placed to give proper career guidance. At this point we group children in terms of whether they should follow a Voc-Tech, Sciences, Commercials, or Humanities curriculum. I can safely say, what we do at this level, is in line with the recommendations of the Nziramasanga commission report.

The Nziramasanga report availed to me for analysis during data collection recommends that at lower secondary school level (Forms 1– 2), “learners should be exposed to a more general type of education” (p.317). From middle secondary school level (Form 3 – 4), they may then “follow specific pathways in line with their aptitudes and/or interest” (p.317). Observed practice at Forms 1 and 2 showed that Mr Moyo embraced mixed ability streaming. At middle secondary school level, he practised what may be referred to as aptitude and interest-based streaming. This discussion with Mr Moyo suggests that he did not make learners do what he wanted. Instead, he allowed learners to choose what they wanted with guidance from school authorities. In doing so, he also worked contrary to current policy as he seemed to pursue the recommendations of the Nziramasanga commission report which he also availed to me for analysis. Clearly, Mr Moyo fused some aspects of the Nziramasanga commission report, with the recommendations of the New Curriculum Framework 2015–2022. He described this coupling and decoupling practice thus:

In coming up with the school-based curriculum, we combine the curriculum as recommended by the MoPSE with the HEXCO curriculum. The aim is to come up with a balanced school curriculum that addresses to the varying needs of learners. We try to respond to the needs of all our children and the community we serve by providing Voc-Tech and academic education under one roof. ... I think, HEXCO courses provide more authentic learning to some of the children we take in this school. If you don't mind, I can call one of the children with profound and multiple learning difficulties we admitted recently for you to see what I mean.

The verbatim excerpt above shows that, Mr Moyo fused the HEXCO curriculum to the ZIMSEC based curriculum for secondary schools in order to come up with his school-based curriculum. This coupling was in line with his desire to come up with a school-based curriculum which speaks to the needs of all learners. This was also in line with his understanding of 'equity' as radically different from 'equality.' He thus said, "Inclusive schools should not educate as if learners were homogeneous in every aspect of human life." Mr Moyo was prepared to invite me to see some of the children he described as having profound and multiple learning difficulties but admitted in his school. For ethical reasons, I politely declined the invitation, for my ethical clearance did not directly involve studying learners closely. Mr Moyo, however, emphasised: "I wanted to show you why I say, at times what some of our learners need is a community that loves and that, some of our learners can never pass an O-level subject even under open book conditions. However, they still deserve their place in this life. They also need to be prepared for a future which is sure to come whether we like it or not," Mr Moyo emphasised.

Table 4.16 shows the school curriculum offered at All Souls High School in line with Mr Moyo's thinking as discussed above.

Table 4.16: The School Curriculum Offered at All Souls High School.

Subjects offered in the School: Form 1 - 4	
ZIMSEC Based Subjects	HEXCO Based Subjects
Mathematics	Brick and Block Laying
English	Metal Fabrication
Shona	Wood Technology
Combined Science	Garment Construction
Heritage Studies	Computer Operations and Packages
Agriculture	Ornamental Horticulture
PESMD	
Building Studies	
Fashion & Fabrics	
Metal Work	
Computer Science	

Source: Information charts in the headmaster's office

Table 4.16 above shows that, Mr Moyo offered ZIMSEC subjects and HEXCO courses all at once. This means, he complied with curriculum policy and went beyond policy prescriptions. I did not expect that, after blaming the 'new curriculum'

for prescribing too many compulsory subjects (Figure 4.33), Mr Moyo would go ahead to offer HEXCO courses outside policy prescriptions. He explained the paradox this way, “We offer HEXCO subjects together with the ZIMSEC subjects in order to come up with a balanced curriculum. HEXCO course provide practical skills needed by some of our learners. They are friendly to the needs of some of these learners. Whereas ZIMSEC subjects prepare students for university, HEXCO prepares them for vocational training.” He added, “Unlike what the generality of our people seem to believe, university education in its current form is not for every child.”

In order to support his point, Mr Moyo drew my attention to examination information displayed in his office which I analysed and synthesised into Table 4.17 below.

Table 4.17: ZIMSEC and HEXCO Examination Pass Rate for the Period 2014 – 2018.

Year of Examination	O-level	HEXCO
2013	32	98
2014	40	96
2015	32	100
2016	41	97
2017	35	100

Source: Extracted from information charts in the head’s office

Data presented in Table 4.17 confirms the use of two examinations boards at All Souls High School. The same data show that the school pass rate was higher in HEXCO courses than ZIMSEC subjects. Mr Moyo explained his practice: “Some of our students leave school with a HEXCO certificate only. This HEXCO certificate can take them to vocational colleges and for trade test even as they have not passed a single ‘O’ level subject.” This practice is consistent with his earlier statement that every learner should leave school with at least some usable skills even though some may not pass the required number of subjects to qualify for a full O-level certificate.

Talking about to how supervision of teaching activities was organised at his school, Mr Moyo expressed; “Supervision at All Souls is a shared responsibility.” He explained his practice as follows: “Although in the final analysis, I am the one who is finally accountable, it is impossible that I do all the supervision single-handedly. As an individual, I don’t even have some of the skills needed to do everything all by myself.” Mr Moyo’s statements demonstrate his thought that supervision

responsibilities ought to be shared for both feasibility and human resources reasons. Figure 4.38 shows the job description of HODs which was availed to me for analysis.

DUTIES OF THE HOD		
1.	Is the chief planner and should provide visionary leadership and set targets for the department.	
2.	Should ensure that both official and school syllabuses are available the members of the department and these should be current and relevant.	
3.	Should effectively supervise departmental members to ensure effective teaching / learning.	
4.	Should ensure that adequate and standard written work is given, marked and appropriately commented.	
5.	Should effectively supervise members of the Dept, and ensure that all lessons are attended.	
NB: The HOD is as a specialist in his /her own subject area and is responsible for all the teaching learning in his/ her department and is answerable on the performance of the department.		

Figure 4.38: Job Description of HODs at All Souls High School. (Source: Primary data)

It is evident from the excerpt above that, as subject specialists, HODs played a key role in supervising teaching and learning at departmental level. Figure 4.39 also shows the sharing of supervision responsibilities at the school.

SUPERVISION CALENDAR 2018		
Activities	Responsible Office	Time period
Opening meting (target setting)	Hm	Friday before opening
Departmental meetings (1 st meeting)	HOD	Week 1
Checking on schemes and records	HODs	Weekly
Exercise book inspection (1 st round)	HODs	Week 1
Lesson observation and report writing (1 st session)	HODs	Week 4
Exercise book inspection (Second round)	HODs	Week 6
Lesson observation, Records & Exercise book inspection	D/Hm & Hm	Week 7 -11
Closing meeting	Hm	Last Wednesday of the term

Figure 4.39: First Term 2018 Supervision Calendar for All Souls High School.

Figure 4.39 shows that Mr Moyo involved HODs and the deputy head to supervise teaching and learning at the school. I expected senior teachers to appear on the

chart above since, in an earlier discussion, Mr Moyo indicated they were a key element of his supervision team. Mr Moyo justified the absence of senior teachers on the chart above as follows: “senior teachers are deputies to the deputy head. They are involved mainly in routine supervision activities.” He showed me job the description for senior teachers at his school (Figure 4.40) to support his view.

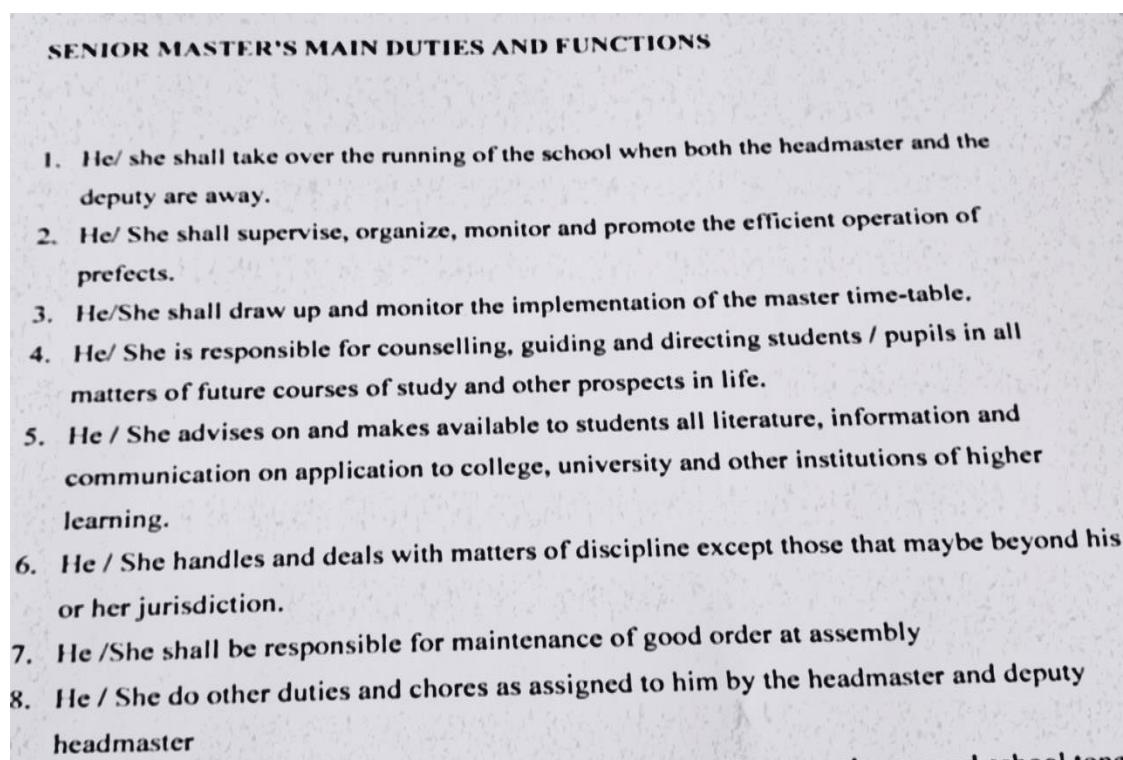


Figure 4.40: Responsibilities of Senior Master at All Souls High School.

Figure 4.40 shows that senior teachers were key pillars of school leadership and administration, at least on paper. However, their responsibilities appear not directly related to instructional leadership in the traditional sense. An analysis of lesson supervision reports found in the school showed that most assessments were done by HODs and Mr Moyo himself. In line with the supervision timetable above (Figure 4.39), I expected to see supervision reports from HODs, the deputy head, and from the school head. However, I found reports compiled by the school head and HODs only. Mr Moyo explained his practices in detail as follows:

I make sure that I observe a lesson for each teacher in person at least once a term, in order to write narrative reports for submission to ministry. In addition, we also assess our teachers as a routine to motivate them to perform, to monitor progress and for staff development purposes. This is where I rope in HODs to assist with the supervision. HODs carry out weekly inspection

of teaching documents and do at least two lesson assessments per teacher, each term. I see this arrangement very useful in helping us develop teachers professionally. HODs are subject specialists who can comment on virtually anything and everything about a lesson in their area. When we assess for purposes of reporting on a teacher as required by MoPSE we use the form provided for the purpose. For all other assessments, we don't use the narrative format.

Clearly, in Mr Moyo's view, assessments were done for different purposes. He further explained his practice thus, "I use the narrative report writing format provided by the MoPSE when assessing teachers for purposes of filing reports with the Ministry. During most of the times, we use locally designed forms". Figure 4.41 shows the distribution list for reports generated using the MoPSE format.

NARRATIVE SUPERVISION REPORT ON A HEAD OF DEPARTMENT.

TOTAL SCORE

<u>Distribution</u>	
H/O-	1 Copy
P/O-	1 Copy
D/O-	1 Copy
School-	1 Copy
H.O.D-	1 Copy

63%

23 FEB 2017
P.O. BOX
MADIBAZO
PHONE

**SECTION A:
PERSONAL DETAILS**

Surname [REDACTED] First Name: [REDACTED] Title: Mrs
Ec Number [REDACTED]

Figure 4.41: Distribution List for Supervision Reports by School Head. (*Excerpt from a supervision report by the school head*)

Supervision reports by the school head were widely distributed as shown in the yellow box to the right hand side of Figure 4.41. Figure 4.42 below shows a sample report generated by an HOD. Unlike most reports by the head, this particular report is framed in line with what Mr Moyo described as "a locally designed format."

SUPERVISION FORM FOR LESSON OBSERVATION

NAME OF DEPARTMENT: TEXTILES TECHNOLOGY & DESIGN DEPARTMENT

NAME OF TEACHER: **E.C No:**

SUBJECT TAUGHT: Text Tech & Design **CLASS:** 13

TOPIC: Sewing equipment - Large equipment **DATE:** 1/02/17

ASSESSMENT OF TEACHING SKILLS	Un	W	S	G	VG	COMMENTS
Preparation and planning						Well prepared, objectives well laid out.
Objectives clear and sensible						
Introduction				✓		Re-cap of previous lesson
Selection and sequencing of content			✓			Well sequenced.
Knowledge of content				✓		The teacher had all the ca
Appropriateness of activity				✓		Activities were appropri
Closing the lesson				✓		An exercise was given
Teaching Procedures						The discussion generate
Generating class interest				✓		lot of interested such tea
Aids/Apparatus/Blackboard				✓		learners were keen to learn
Teacher's use of language				✓		These were used effectively
Teacher/pupil interaction				✓		Vocabulary was used sparsely
Pupil/pupil interaction			✓			Participation was very high
Questioning				✓		This was poor.
Pacing of the lesson				✓		A lot of questions were asked
Classroom management and control				✓		what has been taught.
Focusing pupils' attention				✓		It was good.
Organizing pupils				✓		The teacher was in control
Closing the lesson and follow up				✓		of the class.
Lesson objectives achieved				✓		Learners were well organized
Marking constructive and update				✓		An exercise was given at
Number of exercises given so far.....				✓		ending of the lesson.
Number of tests given so far.....				✓		Objectives were achieved.
						Was up to date but teacher
						gave more comments.
						Enough ex. have been given
						No test has been given.

Recommendations and advice: A good well prepared & presented lesson but the teacher should take note of the following:

1. check on the date on chalk board i.e. 20/01/17 was written.
2. give constructive comments in the learners' books.

Overall this lesson was: unsatisfactory/weak/satisfactory/good/very good. ☒ good

Figure 4.42: School Based Supervision Instrument used by HODs to Assess Teachers.

My analysis of Figure 4.40 (the top most part, marked by the yellow box) shows that, unlike the narrative report by school heads, reports by HODs were silent on the distribution list. Mr Moyo explained this silence: "As I said before, assessment by HODs serve an internal purpose. This is different from my reports which are required by the District Schools Inspector for onward transmission to the Provincial Education Director's office." My discussion with Mr Moyo shows that supervision at All Souls High school was a struggle to meet multiple expectations and pressure from key stakeholders, including policy expectations from the MoPSE. To balance these expectations, Mr Moyo worked collaboratively with his school management team. Even though reports by HODs did not go beyond the physical boundaries of the

school, it was clear Mr Moyo was tapping into the expertise of individual HODs as he also remained hands-on. The deputy head and senior teachers were involved in administrative activities outside direct classroom activities.

Shadowing Mr Moyo revealed that, whenever he did not have a morning assembly, he normally started his working day by visiting the main school gate to monitor punctuality by both teachers and learners. For late coming learners, Mr Moyo observed teachers on duty controlling proceedings as he stood by. He only got active when teachers arrived late at work. He explained his practice as follows:

My presence at the gate is only symbolic. Where it involves controlling children, I allow teachers to do their work without me interfering even as I also supervise the process. I don't need to be directly involved. It is only when teachers are late comers that I get myself directly involved. Ordinarily, I allow teachers to monitor attendance with as minimal interference as possible from the office. I should never sound to my teachers like I can do it all by myself. That way, I motivate them to do their best for the school to which we all belong.

The excerpt above shows that Mr Moyo shared his supervision responsibilities with his teachers. Although he also played his part, Mr Moyo focused on monitoring learning and motivating teachers. During one morning that we were at the main gate together, a teacher of Home Economics, Ms Tsiga, arrived late. The conversation between Mr Moyo and his teacher during this observation segment went as follows:

Ms Tsiga: Morning, sir.

Mr Moyo: Morning. *Kwakanaka here?* (Is everything alright?)

Ms Tsiga: Sir, I am sorry. I am commuting from town and I could not get transport in time.

Mr Moyo: You know. I don't expect this from you. If you come to work late, what do you expect of your children?

Ms Tsiga: I am sorry, Sir. There is no fuel in town and I had to commute to work. Sorry, Sir.

Mr Moyo: It's fine. I get you. But next time you need to avoid this.

Ms Tsiga: Thank you, sir [*Walks away to check-in and start work*]

The excerpts above show that Mr Moyo personally monitored the punctuality of teachers but allowed teachers to assist him in monitoring learner punctuality.

Although he delegated responsibilities to his subordinates, Mr Moyo remained hands-on by ensuring that teaching time was not wasted. During one Monday morning assembly, Mr Moyo addressed learners by advising them:

... I want you to understand that; time is a resource that cannot be stored. On your part as students, I urge you to use every minute of it productively. If you don't use your time meaningfully, I tell you, one of these days, you shall think about me and the advice I am giving you. I am talking about what I have seen happening to those who came before you and not what I was told. The key to success in every human endeavour is in managing your time well and to listen to advice. If you don't listen, one of these days you will cry. ... If you don't want to learn the wrong ways, listen to advice...

Following the morning assembly and after addressing his teachers, Mr Moyo proceeded to his office to attend to a queue of visitors waiting for his attention. On getting to the office, he called for attention and asked the queuing visitors, "Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to attend to teachers first so that they quickly go and attend to children." He added: "For those of you who may not have time, you may go and be assisted by the deputy head." Data presented above further illuminates the multidimensional nature of Mr Moyo's job and how he managed this multidimensionality by working collaboratively with his team members.

As he entered his office, two of his teachers (Ms Mhere and Mr Nduma) in the queue followed him. The conversation between Mr Moyo and the two went as follows:

Mr Moyo: *[Looking directly at the teachers]* Morning guys. What is your story?

Ms Mhere and Mr Nduma: *[In a chorus]* Morning, sir.

Ms Mhere: *[Carrying a baby in her hands]* Sorry, sir. I experienced problems with my house maid this morning. I wake up this morning to find she has left. I don't have anyone to take my child to crèche. May I please go out briefly? I will be back soon.

Mr Moyo: It's fine. But if you have a class, please make sure you leave some work to do. Also tell your HOD and advise the deputy head before you go. I understand your problem. I also have children at home *[smiling]*.

Ms Mhere: No. I don't have a lesson this time. My lessons today start at period 3.

Mr Moyo: It's okay. You can go. Make sure you log out before you go and remember to log in as you come back.

Turning his attention to Mr Nduma, the conversation continued

Mr Moyo: Sir, how can I help you? *[Smiling]*

Mr Nduma: *[courteously]* Sir, I am kindly asking for two days off-duty *(holding leave application forms in his hand)*.

Mr Moyo: What is the problem?

Mr Nduma: There is a family programme that I should be attending at our rural home tomorrow.

Mr Moyo: Sir, this is only a Monday and you want two days. I feel family functions should be spared for weekends. You should understand that you have work to be done. I am sorry, ask other family members to represent you. Tell them you are busy at work.

Mr Nduma: Thank you, sir *[leaving the office without further saying anything]*.

My interest in the observation segments above was on the multidimensional character of Mr Moyo's leadership responsibilities, his time consciousness and also his balancing of empathy and duty consciousness as he negotiated this multidimensionality. His duty consciousness was first evidenced by his choice to attend to teachers before other visitors. He also emphasised on Ms Mhere assigning work to learners before leaving. His duty consciousness was also reflected when he turned down Mr Nduma's request to be off-duty for what he felt was an untimely family gathering. Mr Moyo's empathy was reflected when he said, "I understand your problem. I also have children at home." Clearly, the discussions above also support the multidimensional character of Mr Moyo's school leadership practices which I saw very often during data collection at All Souls High School.

During one Friday morning assembly where I shadowed him, Mr Moyo addressed learners before they sat their mid-year internal tests for the 2017 academic year:

This week we are going to start our mid-year tests. I urge you to take these tests very seriously. Results for these tests should work as a dashboard to show how far you are progressing towards your final examinations and with what speed you are approaching your goals. Whether you pass or not, the result should still convey an important message to you. I therefore challenge you to do your best and never settle for less. Remember, if you settle for less than your best, you get less than you settle for.

The quotation above suggests that, even as he believed that examinations in their current form may not be for every child, Mr Moyo still encouraged learners to think big and never settle for less than their best. After addressing learners, Mr Moyo, in a caucus meeting with teachers, further emphasised:

Ladies and gentlemen, as I indicated to children, we are going to start mid-year tests today. Marking should start as soon as your paper is written. I appeal to you to be very constructive and thorough as you mark these tests. I know we have started a bit late and you may not have such much time for marking, but I still believe you are capable of being thorough. Do your best. Your marking should also be constructive and informative. You need to look at some positive things from every child's work and highlight on these. Make sure you don't return marked scripts to your candidates before your HOD see them.

Mr Moyo always made an effort to motivate learners to do their best academically, whenever the opportunity presented itself. He also encouraged teachers to give positive comments to learners' work. These were comments which gave hope to all learners regardless of individual differences. HODs also encouraged teachers to give positive comments to learners' work (see Figure 4.42). Mr Moyo explained this practice: "Teachers should motivate every child to try his or her best academically. The issue is about motivating children to try their best academically until we are satisfied they have tried enough." Mr Moyo's practice in this context seems to be inconsistent with his earlier emphasis on differential intelligence and his assertion that an 'O' level certificate is not for every child. This shows Mr Moyo's dilemma and struggle to balance pressure from multiple stakeholders.

4.4.7 Mr Moyo: The case of an empathetic multiple inclusionist

As presented above, Mr Moyo's narrative tells a story of a multiple inclusionist with a predisposition to view life through the eyes of learners, hear through their ears and feel through their heart. Given his own background and the support he was getting from the church, Mr Moyo was convinced that, it was only natural for schools to embrace inclusive instructional practices. His understanding and practice of instructional leadership seemed to have been shaped by his own personal experience and personal conviction to live his life for others. His fellow feeling stems from the fact that he was living with a disability and knew first-hand what it meant to be a person with exceptionalities. He also understood first-hand how parents felt when society embraced their children with exceptionalities and regarded them as

human, like all other children. He thus said, “at times what these children need is community.” The paradox, was however that, Mr Moyo felt he was not fully supported by some stakeholders from whom he expected support for his non-selective stance at All Souls High School. He expressed his emotions thus, “People without septic wounds on the mouth will always say we can’t eat food with pus ...”

On his part, Mr Moyo was convinced that, by embracing an inclusive approach to instructional practices, he was doing right for the community he was serving. He expressed his emotions saying, “I feel my heart purified when I work for the good of others ...” Unfortunately, he regarded the MoPSE as inconsistent in its approach to inclusive education and, similarly, the wider community served by the school as unsupportive in general. However, Mr Moyo saw the church and most parents of learners already in the school as supportive of the non-selective stance embraced in his school. Teachers, including the SMT were also said to be supportive. At the end of the day, Mr Moyo’s story is characterised by narratives of empathy, frustration, love and dilemma. His practices were, therefore, based on an effort to find a point of equilibrium on this continuum of fellow feeling, love, frustration and dilemma in a dichotomous school leadership context. His leadership effort was thus divided between a struggle to meet objectives of the social justice logics on the one hand and the competing entrepreneurial logics of key stakeholders, on the other hand.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on presentation, interpretation and in-case analysis of data collected for the purpose of the current study. Data were presented using a hybrid approach comprising vignettes and anthropological techniques (Reay *et al.*, 2019). In-case data analysis adopted what Andrews *et al.* (2013) and Breheny and Stephens (2015) define as narrative data analysis techniques. In particular, I employed what Harding (2018) and Barrera (2019) refer to as interactional narrative analysis. This approach embraces a storied approach to data presentation and analysis. Chapter 5 provides a cross-case analysis and discussion of research findings emerging from data presentation and interpretation in the current chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS, DISCUSSIONS, SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The current study sought to explore the challenges and opportunities of instructional leadership (IL) in inclusive secondary schools as perceived and experienced by school heads in inclusive instructional environments. It sought to provide answers to the central research question: *What are the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools and how does sense-making by school heads shape their instructional leadership practices in such school settings?* This chapter focuses on analysis and discussion of findings. Conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations for policy, further studies and for practice are also given in this chapter. My analysis and discussion of research findings were guided by the three sub-questions upon which the study is grounded.

Discussion of findings in the current study was consciously connected to original data drawn from Chapter 4, literature reviewed in Chapter 2, and the conceptual and theoretical frameworks upon which the study is anchored. This practice of “going back to the whole” (Klein & Myers, 1999; Cardoso & Ramos, 2012), made the findings of my study deeply rooted in an already existing body of knowledge and an existing body of language. The practice also brought the conceptual and theoretical frameworks to the fore and provided an opportunity for self-disclosure in the spirit of reflexivity (Finlay, 2002; Darawsheh & Stanley, 2014).

5.2 Sense-Making as a Theoretical Lens for the Study

The current study is informed by the enactive sense-making theory popularised by Weick (1969; 1988; 1995) and Spillane *et al.* (2002; 2003). Principles of this theory which were found relevant to the current study underscore the thinking that reform ideas which policy implementers construct from their interaction with and interpretation of the context of the policy implementation environment influence “what they do and do not do in implementing that policy” (Spillane, 2002: 733). Coburn (2004: 212) thus submits, “What happens in the environment matters for what happens inside of schools.” Rigby (2015: 376) echoes the same view by asserting that, “Actions in organizations and schools in particular, exist within the context of their environment.”

Although Spillane *et al.* (2002: 391) hint that the meaning of sense-making is “fraught with ambiguity and difficulties,” and O’Connor (2015: 34) cautions that “sense-making is a diverse, fragmented and contested field, where there is no unifying definition,” this theory still remained relevant as an explanatory framework for the current study. This thinking is consistent with Jita and Mokhele’s (2013) view that definitional pluralism and plasticity in social science concepts, such as is evident in the sense-making theory, need not cause any anxiety. Chimbi (2018: 23) concurs with this thinking in saying, “... a capsule definition of sense-making is not only unattainable but also intellectually undesirable. However, the concept still remains relevant.” Jita and Mokhele (op-cit) contend that, what is important in dealing with social science constructs is to appreciate the context in which a concept is used and then proceed from this understanding to apply the concept in one’s own context.

Enactive sense-making, that is, “the process through which individuals work to understand novel, unexpected, or confusing events ...” (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010: 551) is credited for creating “rational accounts of the world that enable action” (Maitlis, 2005: 21). Klein *et al.* (2006), thus see sense-making as a continuous effort to understand connections, either among people, places, and events, in order to forestall their trajectories and act effectively. This means sense-making is “enactive of sensible environments” (Weick, 1995: 30). That is, the action that people take to make sense of a situation in their environment, in turn, enacts the environment that people seek to understand (Spillane, 2002). Weick (1995), as cited in Spillane *et al.* (2002: 733), asserts that, “sense-making underscores that, people generate (*construct*) what they interpret;” and that interpretation is part of sense-making.

The enactive sense-making theory bears relevance in the current study because of its power to explain practices by school heads in terms of the relationship between their cognition, emotions and the context of their school leadership environment (Spillane, 2003; Rigby, 2015). My study harnessed this power to explain goal directed behaviour of school heads in terms of their interaction with and interpretation of messages from the context of their school leadership environment (Coburn, 2004). The theory, therefore, accounted for inclusive instructional leadership practice by school heads in inclusive secondary schools, or lack thereof.

5.3 Cross-Case Analysis and Discussion of Findings

This section presents a cross-case analysis and discussion of the three cases in the current study. I begin my analysis by focusing on personal context of the three school heads that participated in the study.

5.3.1 Personal characteristics of school heads

Personal data of school heads bear relevance for this study, especially as the study embraced a sense-making perspective and a qualitative research paradigm in which the role of personal resources have been seen to be important (Leithwood, 2017; Hallinger, 2018). Jita (2004) uses the term ‘resources of biography’ to describe how personal characteristics and experiences of policy implementers help them to develop personal identities that enable and/or constrain the development of alternative forms of practice. Goldring *et al.* (2008) use the term, ‘leader’s life experience and personal resources’ for what Jita (2004) refers to as ‘resources of biography’ or ‘personal identity’. Leithwood (2017) and Hallinger (2018) use the term personal context. Andrews *et al.* (2013) refer to this as technologies of self.

At face value, data on personal dimensions of research participants in the current study show that the three school heads were qualified for their posts. Mr Simango and Mr Sithole had master’s degrees in education. Mr Moyo had a bachelor’s degree as his highest qualification. According to the teacher professional standards (TPS) (MoPSE, 2015) reviewed in this study, the minimum qualification for promotion as a school head is a first degree and a teaching qualification from a recognised university or college. Qualifications held by the three secondary school heads in my study therefore, sufficed and were fit for purpose in terms of the TPS criteria. An important characteristic among the three school heads in the study was that none of them had training in inclusive education.

Another key characteristic of the three school heads is that two of them (Mr Simango and Mr Moyo) were on promotion posts as substantive secondary school heads for their respective schools. One school head (Mr Sithole) was a substantive deputy head by promotion. By appointment, Mr Sithole was the acting head of Holy Ghost High School for nine years. At face value, the three school heads were appropriately qualified and experienced for their job, including driving the instructional leadership. Two of them (Mr Simango and Mr Sithole) had some history of dealing directly with

exceptionalities from an early age in their lives. In particular, Mr Moyo had a physical disability himself, and Mr Simango grew up with a brother who had a physical disability and a friend who had low intellectual ability. This finding is consistent with the observation by Musengi and Chireshe (2012) that inclusivity is more natural than exclusion. In fact, real life is more inclusive than exclusive.

My interest in the personal characteristics of school heads as discussed in this section was based on the thinking that, such data comprised a key element of person specific contexts of the school leadership environment with a bearing on practice (Jita, 2004; Marz *et al.*, 2013; Rigby, 2015; Leithwood, 2017; Hallinger, 2018). Goldring (2008), as cited in Hallinger (2018: 7), thus contends; “a leader’s life experience and personal resources act as a prism through which information, problems, opportunities and situations are filtered and interpreted.” Marz *et al.* (2013: 15) add that, “Based on their experiences ..., teachers develop a personal system of knowledge and beliefs that act as a cognitive and affective lens through which they look at their job, give meaning to it and act in it.” Findings in the current study elaborated and in many instances brought new insights on the work of such earlier writers on school leadership and policy implementation studies as given above. The link between personal circumstance (resources of biography) to particular perceptions and to particular instructional leadership practices incipient in the current study is discussed in detail in the later sections of this chapter.

5.3.2 The context of research sites

Characteristics of research sites for the current study bear relevance to the study in so far as they illuminate the context (Hallinger, 2018) of the school leadership environment as a medium of social action. Leithwood (2017) and Hallinger (2018) use the terms, institutional context, to refer to the school leadership environment such as discussed under this section. This comprises various elements which can either be specific to an organisation or widely shared (Hallinger, 2018). Interacting with the person specific context (Goldring *et al.*, 2008), institutional contexts as analysed in this section and discussed below were seen to shape school heads’ understanding of what instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school meant to them. Coburn (2004: 211) argues that, “Messages about instruction in the environment influence classroom practices in a process that is framed by teachers’

pre-existing beliefs and practices and the nature of the messages themselves.” Jita (2004) refers to these pre-existing beliefs, as resources of biography.

A common characteristic of the three secondary schools in this study is that they all are church run High schools headed by male heads. This is regardless of the fact that the Education Act allows all interested organisations and individuals to partner government by opening schools and act as responsible authorities (RAs) for such schools. Another key characteristic of the three secondary schools is that they are situated in different socio-cultural, socio-historical and socio-geographical contexts. Whilst OG High School is an urban day secondary school, Holy Ghost High School is a boarding facility in a peri-urban farmland. Whereas All Souls High School is also peri-urban, it is a day secondary school. The two peri-urban schools, that is, Holy Ghost and All Souls High Schools, are located at the administration headquarters of their respective churches. As a result of this proximity to the centre of power, the two schools were more open to direct influence of church authorities, than Open Gates High School which was away from church headquarters.

Two schools (Open Gates and Holy Ghost High Schools) are associated with the vision of individual people as founders. In particular, Open Gates High School is associated with the vision of an individual White missionary. Holy Ghost High School is associated with the vision of the Bishop of the church that owned and was running the school. On the other hand, All Souls High School was established and run by a church establishment which owns a number of other schools in the district.

At the time of this study, Holy Ghost was the only school in which the direct founder; the Bishop of the church, was still available and personally involved in directing the school towards its founding vision and purpose. It was also the only school led by an acting head. The founder missionary for Open Gates High School passed on and the current missionary running schools in the circuit lived in a different town. Unlike the other two schools, All Souls High School was not related to the vision of any single individual but a church system. However, like Holy Ghost High School, it was located in the administration centre of its responsible authority.

The nature and level of inclusivity varied across schools. At OG High School, for example, inclusive education involved a broader spectrum of exceptionalities which

included children with low intellectual ability, orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC), children with physical disabilities and second chance learners. At All Souls High School, emphasis was on OVC and other indigent children who, from the perspective of church authorities, could not afford education in high fee paying schools. The school also enrolled children with physical disabilities from primary schools (special schools) run by the same church. At Holy Ghost High School, inclusive education targeted children with physical disabilities and OVC who showed high academic potential but had difficulties in paying high fees asked for in boarding schools. Fees in this case were paid by the church. Findings in this study seem to confirm the position that there is no single view of educational inclusion even within the same country or public school system (Ainscow & César, 2006; Chireshe, 2011).

5.3.3 Making sense of instructional leadership (IL) for inclusive secondary schools

The first sub-question for the study was: *How is instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools constructed and understood by school heads?*

Findings under this sub-question are discussed in two dimensions. These two dimensions emerged directly from my analysis of data. The first angle focuses on what school heads understood as comprising their responsibilities and role expectations as instructional leaders in inclusive secondary schools, that is, the content of instructional leadership. The second dimension illuminates the factors that shaped school heads' understanding (sense-making) of what instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary ought to be (Rigby, 2015), that is, the context of instructional leadership as discussed below.

5.3.3.1 Listening to different sounds from echoes of a single drum-beat

The first major finding for this sub-question was that, whilst there were some important areas of overlap in their understanding; by and large, school heads understood instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools as different sounds from echoes of a single drum-beat. The main point of overlap in this understanding was that, all the school heads understood instructional leadership in their respective schools in the reincarnated (Hallinger, 2009) sense of the concept as a shared and multidimensional social activity (Mestry, 2017) built on social justice (equity) principles. Howley *et al.* (2019) use the term inclusive instructional

leadership to refer to instructional leadership which is expanded to incorporate a focus on equity (inclusivity) such as witnessed in this study. Choi *et al.* (2020: 8) define this expanded leadership as an “equity-based, system,” as opposed to legal justice-based, inclusive education. The difference was that the concept of ‘equity’ and the purpose of instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school were understood differently across schools.

Table 5.1 presents an abridged view of what school heads in this study understood as their instructional leadership responsibilities (role expectations).

Table 5.1: An Abridged View of School Heads’ Understanding of their Responsibilities as Instructional Leaders in their Respective Schools.

	Mr Simango	Mr Sithole	Mr Moyo
Perceived leadership roles by school heads	Torch bearing [GL]	Policy implementing [M]	Giving hope to the hopeless [GL (IncEr)]
	Promoting inclusive education for all [GL/IL (IncEr)]	Maintaining the inclusive thrust of the school [M]	Providing a relevant curriculum for differently abled learners [M/IL (IncEr)]
	Facilitating & supervising effective teaching/ learning [M/IL]	School resourcing & facilitating learning [M/IL]	Creating a school brand that sells [M]
		School based supervision & accounting for performance by teachers [M/IL]	Promoting a culture of excellence & supervising teachers [M/IL]

Source: Primary data

Key: (a) GL: General leadership; (b) M: Management oriented leadership. (c) IL: Instructional leadership. (d) IncEr: Inclusive Education related role.

Although they used different terms and different areas of emphasis to describe their understanding and practices, Table 5.1 shows that the three school heads in the current study conceptualised instructional leadership in their inclusive schools as a collaborative and multidimensional social activity (Mestry, 2017), carefully and consciously expanded to incorporate a focus on equity.

Mr Simango, for example, viewed himself as the torch bearer, promoter of education for all and as a facilitator and supervisor of teaching and learning activities in his

school. On the other hand, Mr Sithole viewed himself as a policy implementer whose responsibilities comprised: upholding the inclusive thrust of the school; school resourcing for inclusion, facilitating learning, supervising and accounting for the performance of teachers in the school. Last but not least, Mr Moyo viewed himself as an advocate for learners with exceptionalities, responsible for giving hope to the hopeless, providing a relevant curriculum for differently abled learners, creating a school brand that sells, and for promoting a culture of excellence among learners. Clearly, school heads in this study saw their instructional leadership in their schools as multidimensional (Mestry, 2017) and equity based social activities. However the concept of '*equity*' and the purpose of instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school seemed to be understood differently across schools. One school head thus professed, "*My job is not as easy as people may be made to believe.*"

Consistent with the sense-making theory used as a lens for illuminating this study (Tsakeni *et al.*, 2019), findings in the current study show both similarities and differences in the way school heads understood their instructional leadership responsibilities in the schools studied. The first common characteristic among the three school heads is that they all viewed instructional leadership in their respective schools in its reincarnated and expanded sense (Hallinger, 2009).

Viewed from the traditional and narrow sense of the concept (Garner & Forbes, 2013), findings in this study seem to contradict the Director's Circular No 15 of 2006 which provides for instructional leadership as the most important responsibility of all school heads. However, the school heads' understanding seems to be in agreement with their job description as provided by the MoPSE (Figure 4.1), which presents school leadership responsibilities as multidimensional in character.

Another commonality showing in this study is that all the three school heads incorporated inclusivity in their instructional leadership thought, albeit for different reasons. Effectively, this means school heads understood their responsibilities in the context of inclusive instructional leadership; a social justice and equity oriented school leadership perspective (Rigby, 2015; Howley *et al.*, 2019; Choi *et al.*, 2020). Howley *et al.* (2019: 4), saw the key constructs of inclusive instructional leadership as "defined in terms of six leadership practices: (1) visioning, (2) using data well, (3) using research and evidence to guide instruction, (4) sharing leadership, (5)

coaching teaching, and (6) reflecting on practice” (p. 4). Whilst the terms used by Howley *et al.* (2019) appear different from the terms used by school heads in the current study, the six leadership practices as given by Howley *et al.* (2019) confirm the multidimensional character inherent in inclusive instructional leadership as a reincarnated and expanded version of traditional conceptualisations of instructional leadership. In many respects, these practices also overlapped in meaning and are based on a clear vision and purpose. An analysis of data in this study shows that, Mr Simango and Mr Moyo, for example, demonstrated an internal locus of control in their understanding of instructional leadership. This means they felt a sense of internal control of their work environment and the direction that their school leadership should follow. On the other hand, Mr Sithole exhibited an external locus of control in which his work effort was centred more on pleasing key stakeholders in order to be seen to worth the salt, than on an internal drive to make a difference to mankind. Jita (2004) used the term personal identity for what is referred to as locus of control in the current study. The link between school heads’ personal circumstance, personal identity (Jita, 2004) and instructional leadership practices (Leithwood, 2017; Hallinger, 2018) is further discussed below.

5.3.3.2 Inclusive instructional leadership and sense-making: Taking context and personal identity out of the shadows of school leadership narratives

The second major finding in this study is that school heads’ understanding of instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools (inclusive instructional leadership) was shaped by interactions of several factors, which comprise the institutional context, the community context and the person specific contexts of the school leadership environment (Leithwood, 2017; Hallinger, 2018). All these school leadership contexts operate within a broader, socio-cultural, economic and political environment of school leadership systems as further discussed below.

5.3.3.2.1 Socialisation, promotion status and experience with exceptionalities

Findings in this study show early socialisation, experience with exceptionalities and promotion status of school heads as some of the key factors of the personal context (Goldring *et al.*, 2008) of school heads that shape their understanding of what it means to be an instructional leader in an inclusive secondary school; in particular,

their readiness to embrace inclusive instructional leadership and to advance its guiding principles of social justice and equity.

Jita (2004) refers to these personal characteristics as 'resources of biography.' Leithwood (2017) and Hallinger (2018) used the term person specific context to refer to personal characteristics of policy implementing agents (Spillane *et al.*, 2003) such as observed in this study. In support of the operations of such person specific contexts as observed in the current study, Goldring *et al.* (2008, as cited in Hallinger, 2018: 7) assert that, "The leader's life experience and personal resources act as a prism through which information, problems, opportunities and situations are filtered and interpreted." This is also consistent with the enactive sense-making theory (Spillane *et al.*, 2002; Thompson & Stapleton, 2009) which informs the current study. Marz *et al.* (2013: 15) thus explain, "Based on their experiences ..., teachers develop a personal system of knowledge and beliefs that act as a cognitive and affective lens through which they look at their job, give meaning to it and act in it." This seems to apply equally to instructional leaders as the data in this study suggests.

Mr Simango and Mr Moyo, the two school heads that had some experience with exceptionalities at an early stage in their lives and were substantive heads in their respective schools, exhibited a strong sense of ownership and control of the inclusive instructional practices as adopted in their respective schools. Mr Simango, for example, viewed himself as the vision bearer for his school and Mr Moyo viewed himself as an advocate for learners with exceptionalities, clearly showing signs of internal locus of control and ownership of inclusive practices in their schools. Whereas Mr Moyo and Mr Simango had a sense of ownership and control for inclusive instructional practices as embraced in their schools, Mr Sithole viewed himself mainly as a policy implementer, in the strict sense of the concept. In this way, he showed signs of an external locus of control. He viewed the inclusive education adopted in his school as entirely a project of the responsible authority without much input of his own as the officially designated leader in the school. This finding is consistent with Spillane *et al.* (2002) who contend that, depending on the situation at hand and the context in which leadership takes place, school heads may adopt the role of street level bureaucrats or middle level managers. In this situation, and apparently in line with his promotion status, Mr Sithole viewed himself largely as a

street level bureaucrat; a foot soldier whose motivation was to please key educational stakeholders in order to be seen to worth the salt and thus guarantee legitimacy. Even his purpose for supervision and assessment seemed to be based more on reporting and controlling than on motivation and growth as such.

On the other hand, Mr Moyo and Mr Simango, two of the school heads on promotion posts and with some experience of exceptionalities at an early stage in life, appeared to view themselves as middle level managers (Spillane *et al.*, 2002). The two also focused their supervision and assessment on motivation and growth, clearly showing a sense of being in control. This finding points to the promotion status of school heads, early socialisation and experience with exceptionalities as important elements of the person specific contexts of school heads that shaped their understanding of what instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school ought to be.

An unexpected finding emerging from this study was the lack of evidence linking levels of education by school heads with their understanding of what instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school ought to be. Under normal circumstances, one would expect school heads with higher educational qualifications to understand instructional leadership in the same way but differently from those with lower qualifications, if at all. In the current study, Mr Moyo who held a bachelor's degree viewed instructional leadership for his inclusive secondary school in comparable ways with Mr Simango who held a masters' degree. The two, displayed a strong sense of ownership and control of the inclusive framework embraced in their respective schools. Their understanding appeared to be significantly different from that of Mr Sithole who had a sense of external locus of control. Education in his school seemed to be more inclined towards the entrepreneurial logic (Rigby, 2013; 2015) than on social justice and equity (Howley, 2019). He seemed to emphasise too much on examination results, apparently in line with the assumption that, all children are the same in every aspect of life and that; competition is the natural order of life (Florian *et al.* 2016). To the contrary, inclusive education at Open Gates and All Souls High Schools was typically centred more on social justice and equity. This was manifested when Mr Moyo said, "I should help people ... to develop and live their own independent life as healthy, responsible, and productive citizens who control their own destiny." In a similar vein, Mr Simango said, "... we practise what we call

love without expectation.” He also said, “We don’t aim at making names out of children but at children making names out of us.” Clearly, this shows the social justice orientation and a sense of internal locus of control at the two schools.

The findings in this study thus, seem to point to lack of content on inclusive education in teacher preparation programmes for school leadership. These findings also point to a possible relationship between promotion statuses of school heads, their locus of control and inclusive instructional leadership. However, the extent and nature of the apparent relationships is yet to be investigated.

5.3.3.2.2 The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education context

School heads’ understanding of what instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school ought to be, also seems to be shaped by what may be defined as the policy environment or specifically the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) context. Inserra and Bossert (2008), writing in the US, used the term ‘district context’ to refer to what is referred to here as the MoPSE context. This describes the district or national policy environment. According to Leithwood (2017) and Hallinger (2018), this is a “widely shared context.” This is a context of the school leadership environment that all the three school leaders shared since they all took instruction and leadership from the same ministry. In practice, the instructional leadership focus for all the three school heads was, in part, influenced by the desire to embrace the vision, goals and expectations of the MoPSE, apparently in line with what March and Olsen (2004) define as logics of consequences. Jita (2010) used the term accountability expectations to the system to refer to this type of logic.

A related challenge emerging in this study was the mismatch between the expectations of the MoPSE as contained in written policy statements and the real enactment of policy as portrayed in the practice. Whilst the MoPSE had put in place a comprehensive policy framework to enable inclusive education to take root, the same ministry was seen to lack the will to enforce policy compliance among schools. Instead of fully supporting the inclusive practices, the ministry was seen to support more exclusionary practices through its reward systems. Donohue and Bornman (2014), writing in South Africa, describe this action by governments as political symbolism. This is the practice of putting in place an enabling legislative and policy framework without corresponding efforts to enforce compliance. Chimbi (2018: 200),

citing Jansen (2002) therefore, explains that, “most reform initiatives fail to take root in the classroom simply because the policy makers (who initiate and announce the changes) never mean to have them implemented in the first place.”

Findings in this section illustrate that when policy implementers are seen to be pursuing ends that, at face value, appear to be contrary to written policy, people need not quickly conclude that they are decoupling (Coburn, 2004), “ignoring, evading, or attempting to buffer themselves from policy” expectations (Cohen *et al.*, 2007: 518). It may be that such implementers may as well be coupling with public policy as enforced by responsible government departments. For example, given the misalignment between policy as written statements and policy as practice, it can be concluded that school heads in this study were implementing policy as portrayed in the MoPSE’s practices. The choice to take a particular policy orientation seems to depend on how a particular school head interacts and interprets the context of his/her school leadership environment and on his/her locus of control and personal identity either as a torch bearer or a mere policy implementer; a foot soldier.

An interesting but ‘grey area’ in academic literature, which is evident in the current study, relates to how school heads in secondary schools negotiate the challenges associated with the conflict between the (MoPSE’s) policy as written statements and real policy as practice. Typically, this is an area that may need further study and analysis. However, the current study contributes to the debate on the conflict between written policy and practice (Jansen, 2002; Spillane *et al.*, 2002; Coburn, 2004; Donohue & Bornman, 2014; Chimbi & Jita, 2019) by illuminating the idea that, with inclusive practices, this conflict may not necessarily arise from the perspectives and/or interpretations of policy implementers at school level only. Instead, government (MoPSE) may itself be seen in reality to have two policies, that is, overt and covert policies, comprising policy as written (official) statements, and policy as portrayed in its practices. School heads in line with their sense-making may therefore, choose to align with any one of such ‘policies’ and ignore the other, hence my use of the terms, coupling and decoupling all at once. The final policy orientation adopted seems to depend on the valence of perceived sanctions or perceived rewards for performance in a certain direction. Reasons for a misalignment between government policy as written statements (overt policy) and policy as practice (covert

policy) are yet to be established. However, this study adds a voice to the coupling and decoupling conversation (Coburn, 2004; Rigby, 2015) with particular focus on instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools, an area that has not been explored adequately in leadership studies to date. This study partly shows that the adoption of full inclusion on the part of government agents such as the MoPSE may, itself be shaped by the operation of socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio-political factors of the macro level school leadership environment (Figure 2.1). However, the extent, nature, direction and impact of this influence require further investigation.

5.3.3.2.3 The responsible authority context and instructional leadership

Responsible authorities were seen to comprise another key context of the school leadership environment that shapes school heads' understanding of what instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school ought to be. It emerged from this study that, from the perspective of church related responsible authorities, every school is built for a specific purpose that advances the interests of the church. Given this situation, school heads in church related schools saw part of their instructional leadership roles as to help their particular schools to achieve the goals for which they were established by their respective responsible authorities.

Data analysis shows that school heads in this study embraced inclusive instructional practices partly because they believed they were pursuing the founding goals of their responsible authorities. Even as they thought the MoPSE was not fully supportive of inclusive instructional practices beyond putting in place enabling policy frameworks, school heads still embraced inclusive instructional practices on the understanding that their brand of inclusive education was supported by the responsible authority.

Some of the key challenges for instructional leadership were therefore associated with expectations of the church on schools and the MoPSE's practices (covert policies), which were seen to be at variance. Whilst the MoPSE's written policy and vision statements spoke to inclusive education, its practice was seen to be anti-inclusion. However, responsible authorities, even as they also differed in their definitions of exceptionalities, to a large extent, they supported inclusive instructional practices as embraced in their particular schools. Although government policy spoke to inclusive education, the MoPSE seemed to associate inclusive education with enrolment of Black children at formerly "Whites only" schools. At the same time,

schools were motivated to embrace a competitive-market based entrepreneurial logic to instructional leadership (Rigby, 2015) which for all intents and purposes, is anathema to full inclusive instructional practices. This practice seems to have contributed to making full inclusion to remain a mirage in the education system and is likely to remain so unless there is a paradigm shift on the part of the MoPSE as the custodian and official representative of the government in education.

A promising opportunity for the future of inclusive education in the district showing in this study is in the responsible authorities who seem to be supportive of more widespread inclusive instructional practices in their schools. This finding points to the conclusion that the future of inclusive instructional practices in the secondary schools' department in Masvingo District, and probably the rest of the country, may be in the hands of locally owned or perhaps in the context of the current study, church-run schools. Arguably, the role of responsible authorities in shaping inclusive instructional leadership thought and practice by school heads, as revealed in the current study is yet to be explored. An apparent challenge showing in this study is that, even these responsible authorities seem to define exceptionalities differently, something that may further complicate the initiatives on inclusive education.

5.3.3.2.4 The artefacts for inclusive instructional leadership

Another key finding concerns the contribution of instructional leadership artefacts as a critical context that shapes how school heads understand what instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school mean to them. However, the challenge lies in the conflicting messages contained in some of the artefacts. The Director's Circular No 15 of 2006, for example, provides for instructional leadership as the most important responsibility for every school head in the country. This finding is consistent with the argument by Rigby (2015: 374) who, citing earlier work from Bryk *et al.* (2010) and Louis *et al.* (2010), indicates that, "Twenty-first century principals are considered to be instructional leaders." However, the job description for school heads, as provided by the MoPSE, gave a broad list of responsibilities that, taken together, tend to dilute instructional leadership in its traditional sense as seen by Hallinger (2009; 2015); Jita (2010); Mestry (2014); Dimmock and Tan (2016) and Dahiru *et al.* (2017).

In addition, inclusive related policies were also seen to be at odds with the practice by the MoPSE and with supervision and rewards management artefacts available in the schools. Curriculum rigidity, for example, exposes the discrepancy between policy and practice. This dissonance created the challenge of a perceptual dilemma and disenchantment among school heads in the schools studied. The discord makes proponents of the traditional approaches to instructional leadership to report a general lack of focus on instructional leadership in the secondary school departments (MacNeill *et al.*, 2005; Dzimir, 2019). However, the present study tells the story of inclusive instructional leadership as inherently instructional leadership in a reincarnated sense and not in its purely traditional and narrow sense. Hallinger (2020: 1629) sees in present day instructional leadership, the emergence of “integrated models of school leadership in which instructional leadership is enacted in concert with dimensions drawn from other complementary leadership approaches,” for example, to come up with concepts such as distributive instructional leadership, shared instructional leadership and inclusive instructional leadership. Clearly, the goals of traditional instructional leadership are different from the goals of such newer models as inclusive instructional leadership. Whilst inclusive instructional leadership is based on social justice and equity objectives (Musengi & Chireshe, 2012) the former seemed to be based purely on a competitive-market based entrepreneurial logics to education (Florian *et al.*, 2016). This is also reflected in, for example, supervision and reward management instruments which are generally silent and/or lukewarm on inclusivity and hence on inclusive instructional leadership.

5.3.3.2.5 Community expectations as a context for instructional leadership

Another finding incipient in this study is that school heads’ appreciation of their role expectations also contributed to shaping their understanding of what instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school ought to be. This finding supports the view by Scott (2007) (as cited in Rigby, 2015:375) who submits that, “individuals do not act in isolation. Rather, they are influenced by the normative values, rules and regulations, and actions of others that exist in their environment.” This view also concurs with the thinking that school heads do not just act out of context (Priestley & Drew, 2016). Instead, they act in terms of the logics that they create through interactions and interpretations of messages from the school leadership environment as also shaped by socio-cultural, socio-economic and socio- political factors of the

school leadership environment. Kara and Ertürk (2015: 2146) call these logics 'mental models' in which they say, "we think and act through our mental models." Rigby (2013; 2015) classifies the logics of instructional leadership into social justice, entrepreneurial and prevailing logics. March and Olsen (2004) and Dequech (2013), identify logics of social appropriateness and logics of consequences, all of which are consistent with the sense-making theory which informs this study.

Closely related to logics of social appropriateness and logics of consequences, Jita (2010) explains action by teachers in terms of accountability expectations in which there is accountability to the system, accountability to subject matter and accountability to students. School heads' understanding of what instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools ought to be, seems also to be shaped by similar accountability expectations from the community in which they are working.

Mr Moyo thus emphasised the need to focus his school leadership effort on meeting the community at its point of need, whereas Mr Simango talked about the best interest of the child. Mr Sithole talked about his desire to be seen to be worth his salt, apparently in an effort to guarantee legitimacy in the eyes of the community that he served. All this shows community expectations as a key element of the school leadership environment that shapes instructional leadership thought and practices by school heads. Mr Simango, thus said, "*This school does not exist in a vacuum.*"

5.3.4 Inclusive instructional leadership in secondary schools: Pulling through the swampy, bumpy and slippery terrain of the school leadership jungle

The second sub-question focused on: *What practices characterise instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools?*

The summary of findings in this regard is that instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools is characterised by a constant struggle to balance diverse and sometimes conflicting expectations of multiple stakeholders to guarantee self and school legitimacy in the eyes of key stakeholders. These key stakeholders view exceptionalities and inclusive education through differently coloured spectacles. In this setting, inclusive instructional practice is seen to comprise multiple activities more aligned to the perspective of the reincarnated instructional leadership concept

(Hallinger, 2009; 2020). These activities are meant to achieve variegated goals of different publics. This finding is illustrated, explained and further discussed below.

5.3.4.1 A constant struggle to balance pressure from multiple stakeholders

Table 5.2 displays an abridged cross-case presentation of instructional leadership activities of school heads in this study.

Table 5.2: An Abridged Presentation of School Heads' Activities in their Inclusive Schools.

	Mr Simango	Mr Sithole	Mr Moyo
Practices by school heads	Defining school vision in line with the MoPSE's written vision and mission statements and what was understood as the purpose for the church in building the school and the needs of learners	Defining school vision and mission statements from blueprint statements provided by the MoPSE and responsible church.	Defining the school vision and mission statements in line with those of the MoPSE, responsible church and perceived needs of the community.
	Involvement and participation of team members in communicating school vision and goals, and in managing and supervising teaching/learning	Involving teachers in communicating school vision to the school's publics and roping in teacher leaders to help others handle special needs learners	Involving teachers in creating a shared vision through internal marketing and effective communication of the schools brand to the schools publics
	Non-selective admission of learners to accommodate all and every learner	Selective admission of learners and use of referrals from stakeholders	Non-selective admission of learners in order to meet the community at its point of need
	Designing and offering a school-based curriculum to combine ZIMSEC and HEXCO subjects in order to ensure relevant education for all learners.	Defining and offering a school-based curriculum strictly in line with the MoPSE's new curriculum framework to guarantee both self & school legitimacy.	Defining and offering a school-based curriculum to combine ZIMSEC and HEXCO subjects in order to ensure relevant education for all learners.
	Emphasis on both artisanal skills and high stake achievement (examinations)	Strictly emphasising on high stake achievement (examination) only	Emphasis on both practical skills and high stake achievement (examinations)
	Ability streaming of learners for instruction to ensure individualised teaching	Ability streaming of learners for instruction to facilitate teaching	Combination of ability and mixed ability grouping of learners
	Motivating teachers for PD and for high performance in public examinations	Motivating teachers for PD, performance; supervising and reporting on teachers	Motivating teachers and learners never to settle for less.
	Motivating every learner to try his/her level best in public examinations	Disciplining and motivating learners to do their best in public examinations	Collaborative supervision of teaching and learning activities
	Supervising development projects meant to provide teaching space	School resourcing for inclusive instructional leadership practices	Outsourcing expertise to assist on how to handle learners with exceptionalities

Source: Primary data

Table 5.2 presents numerous activities that characterise the practices of instructional leadership by the school heads in the inclusive secondary schools studied. In general, the table shows that this leadership function was performed through at least nine leadership practices. The practices comprise different mixes and levels of emphasis on management and leadership activities in the mould of the morphed (Hallinger, 2009) instructional leadership thought and practice, or what Horng and Loeb (2010) define as organisational management for instructional improvement.

An analysis of practices summarised in Table 5.2 above also shows the similarities and differences among the cases in the study. One of the common characteristics is that instructional leadership involves a struggle to balance pressure from and expectations of key stakeholders. Coburn (2004) uses the terms coupling and decoupling to refer to effort by school heads to balance pressure from diverse and sometimes conflicting expectations of stakeholders as evident in the current study.

In general, Table 5.2 further shows that inclusive instructional leadership practices by school heads begin with defining a clear school vision and goals statement to coordinate effort; a practice also identified by Hallinger and Murphy (1985) and Howley *et al.* (2019). In each school, the vision and mission statements were also communicated to key stakeholders using various media. The statements were defined in line with what the school heads believed, in their understanding (sense-making), were expectations of key stakeholders in their respective schools. The key stakeholders included the MoPSE, responsible authorities, the community served by respective schools, teachers, parents and learners. The three school heads understood their schools as systems operating within a nested environment in which there were other organisations and individuals with interest in what was happening in them. Mr Simango aptly summarised this when he said, “This school does not exist in a vacuum.” With respect to the coupling practices, (Coburn, 2004; Spillane *et al.*, 2011), Mr Simango further expressed, “I should be seeing to it that the school vision and goals agree with public policy, expectations of the RA and the needs of the people for whom the school was built ...” To further show his desire to balance pressure and expectations from key stakeholders, Mr Simango added, “All these key stakeholders should agree with what we aim to achieve as a public school.” This

finding confirms Mr Simango's quest to conform to stakeholder expectations, including public policy on education.

Coming from a similar background, which also reflects on a sense-making perspective and a drive to balance stakeholder expectations, Mr Moyo averred, "Through embracing a non-selective approach, I feel I am responding to the needs of the community that I serve." In further emphasising his understanding, Mr Moyo opined, "Success in life is not about how high you climb the social ladder as an individual, but how many lives are happy because of your own God's gift of life. ...". He believed that, "What makes us human is not our ability to think, but our ability to love one another." Showing the same drive to balance pressure and expectations from key stakeholders, Mr Sithole contended, "It is not like I come up with my own vision from the blue and start to pursue it blindly... Remember, I should represent the Ministry 100% and the church 100% if I should be seen to be worth the salt."

The discussion above shows that inclusive instructional leadership, as embraced in schools studied is characterised by constant struggle to balance (couple) pressure from and expectations of multiple stakeholders as school heads seek to negotiate and find their ways through the swampy and rough terrain of the school leadership jungle. Mr Simango thus asserted, "... my job is not as easy as people may want to believe." Coburn (2004) and Spillane *et al.* (2011) define the balancing act, such as envisioned in this study, as coupling and decoupling of expectations.

5.3.4.2 Inclusive instructional leadership: Dancing to different sounds from echoes of a single drum-beat

All the school heads in this study believe they should embrace inclusive instructional practices. However, evidence on the ground indicates that inclusive education mean different things to different school heads across the schools. As it emerged in the current study, an understanding of what comprise inclusive education and reasons for embracing an inclusive to education vary across research participants in the study. For Mr Simango and Mr Moyo, for example, their construction of an inclusive school is that of a non-selective school that gives equal access to all includable children (Musengi & Chireshe, 2012; Naidu, 2018), mainly, for ethical reasons. This is regardless of whether the exceptionalities involved are of a physical, social or intellectual nature. Their version of inclusive schools, thus agree with Singhal (2018).

Writing from Australia, Singhal views exclusion of children with low ability to learn from some schools in the country as one of the most-subtle forms of exclusion with serious ramifications on the future life of present day school children.

Mr Simango and Mr Moyo believed that children, including those with physical disabilities, the OVC and those who may not pass the required minimum number of 'O' level subjects, should be given equal access to secondary school education in an inclusive context, regardless of varying life circumstances, each according to his/her needs. They believed that once they were admitted, learners should never be allowed to go out empty handed. Instead, they should all leave school with at least some artisanal skills usable in their future life, even without the much-coveted full five 'O' levels certificate. In this all-embracing and whole schooling context (McMaster; 2013), they envisioned parents getting value for money invested in the education of their children whilst children themselves ought to leave school armed with a positive self-image in addition to usable life skills needed for life and work and not employment only. It appears here that Mr Simango and Mr Moyo's thoughts were guided more by issues of equity as fairness (Chireshe, 2011) as opposed to legal rights and equality in the context of sameness (Howley *et al.*, 2019).

Mr Simango and Mr Moyo's focus on instructional leadership, as discussed above, points to an awareness and appreciation of multiple-intelligence (Bas & Beyhab, 2017; Chen & Gardner, 2018) and differential intelligence (Scott, 2016) hypotheses. Table 5.2, shows that Mr Simango and Mr Moyo envisioned an inclusive education system which strikes a balance between the demands of the social justice and entrepreneurial logics of instructional leadership (Rigby, 2014; 2015) without compromising quality of education imparted to learners. Mr Simango thus argued as follows; "...I should also work to improve the examination pass rate and keep it above the national average." This shows his desire to balance expectations. This balance, though difficult to achieve, was seen to be a more appropriate system than one in which schools were commercialised and education marketised (Florian *et al.*, 2016; Phasha *et al.*, 2017). Mr Simango and Mr Moyo's narratives clearly show the thinking that, an equity-based inclusive education system (Howley *et al.*, 2019; Choi *et al.*, 2020) is more appropriate than one in which schools blindly adhere to an

uncritical social justice logic or an entrepreneurial logic based on equality and rights assumptions (Mhlolo, 2015), as the law seems to speak.

For Mr Sithole, unlike Mr Moyo and Mr Simango, the focus of inclusive education appeared to be on a narrower spectrum of special needs with a bias towards an entrepreneurial logic of instructional leadership (Rigby, 2014; 2015; Howley *et al.*, 2019). Mr Sithole's construction of inclusivity seemed to be more inclined to physical disability than exceptionalities in the broad and all-encompassing sense of the concept (Ainscow *et al.*, 2012). His reason for embracing an inclusive approach to instructional practices is to promote practical Christianity, as he assumed this is in tandem with the project of the church. Mr Sithole believed his school was built for a purpose; a situation which was illuminated when he expressed that, "Every school is built for a purpose and ours is no exception." By embracing inclusive education, Mr Sithole, therefore, believed he is pursuing the responsible authority's purpose for building the school. At the same time, he also focused on pursuing the MoPSE's goals, and therefore, "be 100% MoPSE and 100% RA." However, the challenge for this coupling practice is the mismatch between written policy as prescribed by policy-makers and the implemented policy as actually enforced by the MoPSE.

Unlike Mr Simango and Mr Moyo, inclusive practices by Mr Sithole appeared to be centred on meeting the minimum inclusive expectations of the responsible authority of the school as he also pursues literacy and numeracy objectives of the education system. Naturally, as an individual, he appeared more inclined to an entrepreneurial logic to education in line with the seemingly increasing pressure towards a more commercialised and marketised education (Florian *et al.*, 2016; Mhlolo, 2015). In his practice, Mr Sithole's inclusion seemed to be a mere call of duty as expected by the responsible authority for the school even as public policy speaks to inclusive education. He strongly believed he ought to embrace the inclusive framework as a project for the responsible authority and not from inside.

The findings discussed in this section, tell a story of inclusive education as understood by school heads as a story of actors listening and dancing to different sounds from echoes of a single drum-beat. Inclusive education, hence inclusive instructional leadership practices (Howley *et al.*, 2019); meant different things to different school heads across the schools studied even though broadly they all

embraced some form of inclusive instructional leadership. Variations in the way school heads conceptualised exceptionalities made it difficult to have a coordinated effort towards a common goal and version of inclusive education in the district.

5.3.5 Sense-making and inclusive instructional leadership practices

The findings under this section were drawn from an analysis and synthesis of findings from the first two sub-questions and were a response to the third sub-question: *How does sense-making by school heads explain their construction and practice of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools?*

Tracing the narratives of the three school heads in this study shows that school heads did not just practice their leadership which I characterise, largely as, akin to dancing to different sounds of a single drum-beat out of context. Instead, they acted on the basis of meaning (sense) created through interactions and interpretations of messages from the school leadership environment (Spillane *et al.*, 2003; Rigby, 2015; Hallinger, 2018), including their own personal characteristics. Jita (2004) uses the term resources of biography to refer to personal characteristics which provide resources for action. Andrews *et al.* (2013) use the term technologies of self. Findings in this study reflect on the idea that school heads, as individual sense-makers (Spillane *et al.*, 2002) rely on such personal resources to understand messages from the school leadership environment and to act upon that understanding. This thinking is consistent with Coburn's (2004: 211) view that, "... messages about instruction in the environment influence classroom practices in a process that is framed by teachers' pre-existing beliefs and practices and the nature of the messages themselves." In the same vein, Hallinger (2018: 7), citing earlier work from Goldring *et al.* (2008) asserts that, "the leader's life experience and personal resources act as a prism through which information, problems, opportunities and situations are filtered and interpreted." Similarly, Marz *et al.* (2013: 15) avers that, "Based on their experiences in the profession, teachers develop a personal system of knowledge and beliefs that act as a cognitive and affective lens through which they look at their job, give meaning to it and act in it." Clearly, it can be said that the narratives of the three secondary school heads in this study confirm the interaction of cognition, emotions and context (sense-making) as a basis for practice; including inclusive instructional leadership practice by school heads.

My findings in response to the 3rd sub-question are therefore, consistent with the enactive sense-making theory (Spillane *et al.*, 2002; Thompson & Stapleton, 2009; Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2017) and the interpretivist epistemology that inform this study. The key tenets of the enactive theory, which illuminated my findings in this perspective, include the principle that people (school heads included) do not just behave like matter, instead, they act on the basis of the meaning they attach to messages from the environment (Coburn, 2004; Ganon-Shilon & Schechter, 2017). Coburn (2004: 214), citing earlier work from Berger and Luckmann (1966) submits that, “cognitive understandings (the way things are), norms (the way things should be), and routines (the way things are done) are socially constructed over time through interpersonal interaction in dialogue with messages from the environment.” Di Paolo *et al.* (2010), therefore, assert that the boundary of the mind is not the skull.

In the next section, I present a synopsis of the key findings as discussed in this section.

5.4 Summary of Major Findings

The first major finding for this study was that, whilst there were some important areas of overlap in their understanding; by and large, school heads understood instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools as different sounds from echoes of a single drum-beat. This means, whilst there were significant areas of similarities in their understanding, consistent with the sense-making theory (Spillane *et al.* 2003) and social constructivism (Cresswell, 2012), school heads understood instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools differently.

The main area of overlap with implications for practice was that, albeit for different reasons, all the school heads viewed instructional leadership in their schools as a collaborative, multidimensional and equity based social activity (Mestry, 2017; Louis & Robinson, 2012). Hallinger (2009) uses the terms reincarnated, morphed and leadership for learning to refer to this modern conceptualisation of instructional leadership which Mark and Printy (2003) and Hallinger *et al.* (2020) also define as the broad form of instructional leadership to differentiate it from the narrow and traditional sense of the concept. Horng and Loeb (2010) use the term organisational management for instructional improvement to distinguish the reincarnated or broad

conceptualisation of instructional leadership from what Hallinger (2009), Alvesson and Kärreman (2016) and Garner and Forbes (2013) define as the narrow or the traditional sense of instructional leadership. Dimmock and Tan (2016) use the term learning-centred-leadership. In particular, school heads understood instructional leadership in the perspective of inclusive instructional leadership (Howley, *et al.* 2019) and their responsibilities as multidimensional. They did not see instructional leadership in the narrow sense of the concept. This supports Howley *et al.* (2019) who see inclusive instructional leadership as a form of instructional leadership which is consciously expanded to incorporate equity (inclusivity). Hallinger *et al.* (2020: 1629) thus talk about “the emergence of ‘integrated models of school leadership’ in which instructional leadership is enacted in concert with dimensions drawn from complementary leadership” perspectives such as inclusivity. Choi *et al.* (2020) used the term equity based instructional leadership for what is referred to in this study as collaborative inclusive instructional leadership. The main area of difference was that, the concept of ‘*equity*’ (inclusivity) and the purpose of instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school seemed to be understood differently across schools.

My findings in this study therefore point to challenges of plasticity of the construct, ‘instructional leadership’ in general and ‘inclusive instructional leadership’ in particular, in terms of content, context and purpose. The plasticity such as evident in this study made Rigby (2015: 375) to conclude that, whilst “twenty-first century principles are considered to be instructional leaders, conceptualisations of this role and associated practices differ significantly.” This plasticity also led some writers from the traditional school to declare limited or lack of instructional leadership in the secondary schools’ department (Spillane, 2009; Dimmock & Tan, 2016; Dzimiri, 2019) and others to claim that instructional leadership in its traditional sense has largely remained a concept primarily associated with elementary schools, with very little relevance to the secondary schools’ sector (Goddard, 2003; MacNeill *et al.*, 2005; Marzano *et al.*, 2005). This thinking is also in line with Mestry (2017) and Hill (2014) who see it as an elusive social activity. Mestry (2017: 258) citing Kellerman (2015) thus said, “School leadership has become a high wire act that only the most skilled are able to perform successfully.” Hallinger (2017) and Hallinger *et al.* (2020) therefore, suggested a shift from the traditional construct of instructional leadership

to leadership for learning. Dimmock and Tan (2016) suggest the adoption of the term learning-centre-leadership which they claim is less aligned to authoritarian connotations of instruction. Clearly, this suggestion is in response to critics of the instructional leadership paradigm which seem to centre on the deficiency of concrete definitions of the words “instruction” and “instructional leadership” that are acceptable to all, and not on the practice of instructional leadership. Hallinger (2015) thus describes instructional leadership as a passing fancy that refuses to die.

The second major finding in this study is that school heads’ understanding of instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools (inclusive instructional leadership) is shaped by interactions of several factors, which comprise the institutional context and the person specific contexts of the school leadership environment (Leithwood, 2017; Hallinger, 2018). Key elements of this school leadership environment can be classified into the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) context, the responsible authority context, the personal context (characteristics) of respective school heads, the community context and the perceived expectations of both parents and learners. Clearly, this finding shows that, inclusive instructional leadership was characterised by multiple stakeholders with varying and sometimes conflicting and mutually exclusive expectations on the role of school heads as officially designated instructional leaders at a school level. These contexts, working in cohort with personal characteristics of each individual school head, made school heads view instructional leadership in different ways, as they also sought to achieve different goals from their inclusive practices and hence my use of the term *‘listening and dancing to different sounds of the same drum-beat.’*

The current study has shown that, depending on the context of their school leadership environment, school heads believe that their particular brand of inclusive education and therefore, inclusive instructional leadership (Howley *et al.*, 2019) was the right thing to do for their respective schools, albeit for different reasons across the schools. Their reasons for embracing an inclusive approach to education ranged from the felt need to meet expectations of key stakeholders in order to guarantee school legitimacy on the one hand, to personal convictions to ameliorate the life of the less privileged, and fellow feeling by individual school heads that for various reasons identified with differently abled learners and the less fortunate in the

community on the other hand. In particular, school heads were seen to act in terms of what March and Olsen (2004); Spillane (2002) and Dequech (2013), regard as logics of social appropriateness and logics of consequences.

Logics of social appropriateness seem to motivate some school heads to seek ways through which they could make an impact in the life of others within the spirit of love without expectations and fellow feeling. Mr Simango thus said, *“Our guiding principle is that you can do a lot to humanity, if you don’t care about who gets the credit ...”* In the same spirit, Mr Moyo said, *“I feel my heart purified when I work for the good of others in the community.”* This type of thinking seems to have made the two (Mr Simango and Mr Moyo) to embrace social justice and equity (inclusivity) as guiding principles for their leadership of learning. On the other hand, logics of consequences seem to motivate school heads to seek to avoid sanctions associated with poor performance apparently in search of self and school legitimacy in the eyes of key stakeholders. These logics are similar to what Jita (2010) refers to as accountability expectations in which he sees teachers (school heads included) as accountable to the system, accountable to the subject matter and accountable to students.

A key challenge showing in the current study is that of conflict of expectations between some of the key stakeholders within the system, such as the MoPSE and the RA. In addition, government policy on inclusive education as written statements and its policy as practice are seen to be at variance with each other. Government is regarded as paying lip service to the inclusive framework. Such conflict made Jansen (2002), writing from South African, as later echoed by Donohue and Bornman (2014), to view some government policies (inclusive policies included) as mere political symbolism. In a more radical analysis, Jansen (2002), as cited in Chimbi (2018: 199), concludes that, “most reform initiatives fail ... because the policy makers (who initiate and announce the policies) never mean to have them implemented in the first place.” Failure by the MoPSE to fully support its own policies created a state of perceptual dilemma (Ruff & Shoho, 2005) and disenchantment among school heads. In order to guarantee legitimacy, school heads therefore sought to strike a workable balance between the social justice and the entrepreneurial logics of instructional leadership (Rigby, 2014; 2015). As a result, instructional leadership practice was characterised by a constant struggle to balance

diverse and sometimes conflicting expectations of multiple stakeholders. Since the social justice and the entrepreneurial logics are opposite ends of a continuum (Rigby, 2013), school heads risk the challenge of adopting what Slee (1996) writing from Australia defines as exclusion within inclusion.

Another challenge is that school heads believe they are practising inclusive education in a largely exclusionary environment. Members of the larger community served by schools are seen to support inclusive practices in cases where they directly benefit from the practice only. For example, support would come from those who have a child with special needs who cannot be accepted in some selective schools in the community. Key stakeholders such as the MoPSE, opinion leaders and some parents of children without special needs are regarded as unsupportive. The school heads in this study further alleged that the MoPSE promoted exclusionary practices through assessing and rewarding schools in terms of performance in public examinations only. In addition, the MoPSE was accused of offering a rigid curriculum which favoured high intellectual ability learners ahead of other groups of learners. However, responsible authorities and parents of children with special needs were seen to be supportive of inclusive instructional practices.

A positive finding and an opportunity for the future of instructional leadership is that, even against the backdrop of an unsupportive community, school heads still embraced inclusive instructional practices in their respective schools. Although they claimed that, they were getting a harvest of thorns for their inclusive instructional leadership practices and that when they asked for an orange, society gave a lemon; school heads still believed they needed to embrace inclusive instructional practices in line with their personal convictions and/or expectations of the church. This study seems to show that the future of inclusive education in Masvingo District, if not the whole country, lies in the hands of local and/or church-run schools, properly socialised school heads and teachers that are well trained and motivated for inclusion. Whilst for political reasons, policy makers abandoned the F2 system at independence, church schools seem to retain an affinity for an all-inclusive and equity-centred-approach to education. This study points to the need for a paradigm shift on the part of the MoPSE, the custodian of education in the country and the official representative of the government in education, in favour of this equity based

(inclusive) education, if the education system is expected to be more responsive to the needs of society through full inclusion of children with exceptionalities in the mainstream education system. In the absence of this shift, full inclusion may remain a mirage regardless of the existence of an enabling policy framework that includes a National Constitution, the Education Act and the Curriculum framework which, at face value, talk to inclusive education. On the face of it the new curriculum for example speaks to inclusive education, but in practice it makes it difficult for schools to teach certain subjects that are needed by some learners. In the absence of such a paradigm shift, the MoPSE will continue to treat inclusive policy as mere political symbolism and full inclusive education as a practice will remain an illusion in the education system. In the next section, I draw conclusions from the key findings as presented in this section (Jansen, 2002; Donohue & Bornman, 2014).

5.5 Conclusions

A key conclusion drawn from this study is that, in terms of its scope, that is, its purpose and beneficiaries' mix, inclusive instructional leadership was understood to mean different things by different school heads across the inclusive schools that participated in this study. However, there were also significant areas of overlaps in the way inclusive instructional leadership was understood in terms of its content, that is, what it involves. For example all the school heads viewed instructional leadership as a shared, multidimensional and equity based social activity. This means, they understood instructional leadership in the reincarnated and not the traditional sense of the concept. Clearly, it is on the basis of purpose, beneficiaries' mix and the meaning of 'equity' (inclusivity) (Howley et al., 2019) that school heads seemed to understand instructional leadership differently, hence may of the statement; *'different sounds from echoes of a single drum-beat.'*

Another conclusion that may also be drawn from this study is that, school heads' understanding of what instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school meant to them was shaped by the interaction of their cognition, emotions and interpretation of messages from the context of their school leadership environment (sense-making). It showed, in this study that, the social context of the school leadership environment mediated by what Jita (2004) defines as resources of biography, plays a pivotal role in determining how school heads in inclusive

secondary schools understood what instructional leadership for an inclusive secondary school mean. I can thus conclude that inclusive instructional leadership by school heads, as seen in the current study, is partly explained in terms of their understanding of the purpose of schooling in society, in which some stakeholders believe in a commercialised, market centred and examination oriented education whilst others believe in a social justice (equity) oriented system. Howley *et al.* (2019) assert that, even the “curriculum itself results from struggles over the purposes of schooling” in society. The present study thus acknowledges that, this struggle has a lot of implications on sense-making and instructional leadership practices by school heads in inclusive secondary schools.

We may also conclude from this study that, throughout their practice of instructional leadership in their schools, school heads grapple with trying to balance pressure from and expectations of their key stakeholders. These stakeholders include the policy makers, responsible authorities, the community served by each respective school, parents, teachers and learners. A key challenge is that educational stakeholders are multi-layered and their expectations are diverse and at times conflicting. Whilst inclusive instructional leadership is traditionally guided by the social justice logic and equity principles (Rigby, 2014; 2015; Howley *et al.*, 2019), stakeholders in schools are divided between the social justice logic and the entrepreneurial logic of instructional leadership. This means instructional leadership is a power game. Admittedly, this situation creates a state of perceptual dilemma (Ruff & Shoho, 2005) among school heads. A particularly interesting conclusion drawn from the current study is that even the MoPSE, the official representative of the government and the custodian of education in the district and hence the most important and powerful stakeholder in education also tended to favour the entrepreneurial logic of instructional leadership, as opposed to equity (Howley *et al.*, 2019). This is despite government policy that speaks to inclusive instructional practices. The MoPSE’s policy as written statement (overt policy) and its policy as practice (covert policy) are therefore seen to be in conflict.

Whilst on the face of it, all the school heads embraced inclusive instructional practices, apparently in line with the social justice logic and equity principles, real practice seems to be guided by the need to balance what Spillane (2002), March and

Olsen (2004) and Dequech (2013) define as logics of social appropriateness and logics of consequences. This means that, as school heads act in a manner that they consider socially appropriate, that is, in terms of their sense-making, they also seek to avoid negative consequences and sanctions of acting in contrary to expectations of their key stakeholders. In other words, school heads act in a manner that guarantee both self and school legitimacy in the eyes of key stakeholders in order to protect personal identity. Mr Sithole, for example, talked about his desire to be seen to 'be worth his salt' and to be 100% MoPSE and 100% the responsible authority.' Mr Simango on the other hand, was apprehensive that society might not judge him lightly if children did not do well in public examinations. At the same time, Mr Moyo wished that, "all parents in the surrounding community viewed his school as the first choice and not a last resort for placing their children."

Concerns about the search for legitimacy, as reflected in this study, reveal the challenge that instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools is itself "marginalised" within the education system (Rigby, 2014: 636). Howley *et al.* (2019: 6) therefore, aver that, "Principals who take an interest in marginalised students confront power arrangements that structure inequity throughout society as a whole and schooling in particular," where they also risk marginalisation. In the context of this discussion, I, therefore, conclude that, adoption of inclusive instructional practices amount to constant struggles over the purposes of schooling against people and/or organisations holding alternative and, at times, conflicting views and power. In the process, by roping marginalised children through inclusive instructional leadership practices, school heads may also risk being marginalised themselves, and hence their constant struggle to search and guarantee legitimacy.

I also conclude that practices by school heads in inclusive secondary schools were characterised by the internal drive to live for the service of others, positive aspirations and optimism for the life of every child as a fellow human being, and love without expectations. However, the same school heads who embraced these personal values experienced a sense of being misunderstood, let down, frustrated and disillusioned by a system which kept education as an institution for sorting, sifting and grading children for employment which was often confused with work.

This is an institution which is built on the neoliberal assumptions of competition (Florian *et al.*, 2016) and not collaboration, as guided by social justice and equity assumptions. The conflict of stakeholder expectations witnessed in this study seems to result in school heads decoupling (Coburn, 2004) from some of the overt policy expectations as they seek to couple (Spillane, 2011) covert expectations as read from messages within the school leadership environment. This justifies my conclusion that, school heads' understanding of instructional leadership for inclusive secondary schools is like listening to different of the same drum-beat and their practices are like pulling through the swampy, bumpy, and slippery terrain of the school leadership jungle. Clearly, my findings in this study add to scholarship by suggesting that, at times when we see school heads acting as if they are ignoring, evading, or attempting to buffer themselves (decoupling) from written policy statements (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Chimbi, 2019), they could be doing so in order to couple their action with 'policy' as practised by key and more powerful stakeholders. Decoupling in this context may not be targeted at buffering the classroom from environmental pressures (Coburn, 2004) but rather coping with conflicting and sometimes mutually exclusive stakeholder expectations and pressure.

Whilst the schools that participated in the current study were identified in terms of the extent to which they had embraced inclusive instructional practices ahead of other schools in the district, the concept of inclusive education seemed to be defined differently across schools (Choi *et al.*, 2020), and even by their key stakeholders. Consequently, the schools focused on different forms of exceptionalities, with some of them not considering certain forms of exceptionalities as deserving attention and qualification for inclusive education designations. This selective concentration by key stakeholders created a situation where measurement, assessment and comparison of school performance becomes difficult, thereby creating challenges of disenchantment among school heads as the officially designated school leaders. This confusion puts the future of full inclusion at risk and may be part of the reason why inclusive education in Zimbabwe is still an unfinished business more than 25 years after the Salamanca Statement and 40 years after independence, even against the backdrop of an apparently supportive policy and political environment.

The current study seems to suggest that church related responsible authorities and properly socialised school heads are better placed to embrace inclusive instructional practices ahead of the public schools in the conventional sense. The latter appears to favour an entrepreneurial approach to education and political inclusion ahead of social inclusion, apparently on the belief that competition promotes equality and justice. This reality seems oblivious to the fact that, on the face of it, policy and legislative framework in the country speak to inclusive education. It may not be farfetched to conclude that church related responsible authorities have a stake in the future of full inclusion in such districts as the one studied in this enquiry. However, the challenge is that, even among responsible authorities, exceptionalities and the necessary interventions are viewed differently. For example, some responsible authorities seem to be aligned to a medical model or an uncritical social justice model of inclusive education which is based on equality in the context of sameness as opposed to equality in the context of equity and fairness (Howley *et al.*, 2019). However, the role of the church still remains important, given the challenges within the public sector. A similar challenge on the policy practice divide is described by among others, Jansen (2002) and Donohue and Bornman (2014) for South Africa and by Chimbi and Jita (2019) for Zimbabwean situation.

5.6 Recommendations

Drawing from the conclusions above, I make recommendations as set forth below.

5.6.1 Recommendations for policy

I therefore recommend that inclusive specific policies should be considered to integrate an inclusive education component in every teacher's training programme in Zimbabwe. The prevailing situation in which teachers are trained to teach for examinations only is not appropriate in a country where education is built on the foundation of equity, justice and fairness (Chireshe, 2011) and where there are no specific teacher preparation programmes for school leadership. As a matter of policy, practising school heads and education officials, ought to attend in-service training programmes on issues of inclusive education and the purpose of schooling in society, if the ends of justice, fairness and equity engrained in inclusive frameworks and social justice perspectives are to be realised through instructional leadership.

Whilst there is a need to decolonise education and depoliticise the curriculum (Walton, 2018), there is also a need to de-marketise, humanise and to enforce inclusive sensitive curriculum policy in order to bring in a stronger element of vocational training, in line with the tenets of learning-centred-leadership and whole schooling principles (McMaster; 2013). There is no reason why a child who has done 'O' level should leave school without artisanal skills usable in future life in the event that he/she fails to attain the coveted 5 'O' level subjects. The criterion for assessing school effectiveness may need to be adjusted to suit the needs of all learners, taking full cognisance of the differential intelligence hypothesis (Scott, 2016) and the fact that not every learner is capable of becoming a doctor or an engineer. In any case, doctors and engineers are not necessarily the only happy people in the world.

5.6.2 Recommendations for practice

The concept of inclusive education as special needs education for children with disabilities should be revisited. Communities ought to be weaned from the misconception that inclusive education is specifically special needs education for children with physical and/or severe mental disabilities that need assistance within a medical model only. In fact, inclusive education of all includable learners should be perceived as the norm and not the exception in every school. In such settings, schools need not assume that all learners are homogenous in every aspect of human life or that all learners are university material. Inclusive education should not be based on assumptions of equality as of sameness, but as of equity and fairness.

Although schools are expected to continue to ensure that learners do well in public examinations, emphasis should also be put into finding effective ways of helping differently abled learners to benefit from their learning experiences. Communities ought to demystify the role of an 'O' level certificate and the perceived relationship between work and employment. However, this recommendation does not mean that schools should downplay the importance of the school leaving certificates. Rather, it seeks to propagate the idea that, with or without a full 'O' level certificate, every child still need to be fully prepared for a future life of work even outside of formal employment. This calls for de-commercialisation and de-marketisation of education as a social good and a redefinition of quality and purpose of education in society.

It is important that inclusive education should not only be offered at selected schools. In fact, all includable children should be afforded access to any school of their choice (Choi *et al.* 2020). Learners, according to their individual needs may be allowed to decide on the route to follow as they pursue their educational goals in any school of their choice if they can afford to pay the required fees. Society can also be educated through advocacy to appreciate that; it is mythical and idealistic to believe that, every child is capable of passing 5 'O' levels including English and Mathematics. This recommendation is particularly plausible given the fact that the ordinary level examination pass rate in Zimbabwe has always averaged around 20% since 1980; a situation which has been described by SCMZ (2006) as the manifestation of a neglected generation. Although the advent of the new curriculum has seen the pass rate slightly increasing to an average of 30% (MoPSE, 2020), by all standards, this pass rate is still fairly low and justifies the call for a needs based curriculum.

There is a need for society to redefine inclusive education and to formerly recognise exclusion of learners with low ability to learn as a new form of discrimination (Singhal, 2017; 2018) which should be addressed before it is too late. A call for redefining inclusive education and reviewing instructional leadership to fully embrace an inclusive component in all schools should not be seen as academic arrogance, but an attempt to domesticate and acculturate such key concepts in order to make them more relevant and applicable to local conditions. Inclusive education needs to be redefined to differentiate it with special needs education which seems to be associated mainly with equality and justice in the legal sense and a medical model of disability.

The MoPSE may also avoid reinforcing exclusionary practices by measuring and rewarding school performance in terms of performance of learners in public examinations only. To ensure the success of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools and, hence, the success of inclusive reforms as embraced in the *New Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015 – 2022*, schools need to be rewarded rather than stigmatised for embracing inclusion. This means, schools can be rewarded for performance in examinations and for closing the gap all at once. In fact, there is need to redefine quality education away from an emphasis on examination pass rates, in order to promote inclusive education. If the

MoPSE continues to reward exclusionary practices ahead of inclusive practices, then inclusive education in secondary schools may forever remain a fallacy. There is, therefore, need for a change of mind-set by all stakeholders if full inclusion should be possible and education becomes a worthwhile experience for all, as opposed to a selected few. Schools may take advantage of the euphoria on the new curriculum to embrace changes suggested in this study.

5.6.3 Recommendations for further studies

The present study examined challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership focusing on the situation in three inclusive schools in the Masvingo District of Zimbabwe. This study may be considered as a “keyhole” into an understanding of the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools in the entire country and beyond. It is, therefore, recommended that further research be carried out in other districts to test the findings of the current study. This study focused on the challenges to and opportunities for instructional leadership as perceived and experienced by school heads in non-selective (inclusive) secondary schools. Similar studies may also be carried out with school heads in selective schools to establish the reasons for their continued emphasis on exclusionary practices, more than 25 years after the Salamanca Statement (1994) and despite the backdrop of an enabling regulatory and political environment. Studies may also be carried out specifically focussing on inclusive education of low ability learners which has emerged in the current study as an area that seem to have been overlooked by members of the academic community as people seem to associate inclusive education with disability studies. Such further studies as suggested above may assist to validate the findings of the current study as they also contribute to scholarship. The role of responsible authorities in inclusive instructional leadership and the effect of education for employment assumptions on inclusive instructional leadership also need further exploration.

5.7 Final Thoughts

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910), as cited in West (2016: 51) eloquently asserted, “I know that most men, including those at ease with problems of the greatest complexity, can seldom accept even the simplest and most obvious truth if it be such as would oblige them to admit the falsity of conclusions which they have delighted in explaining to

their colleagues, which they have proudly taught to others, and which they have woven, thread by thread, into the fabric of their lives". This assertion succinctly describes my findings which elaborated, expanded and in many respects brought new insights on findings by earlier writers on inclusive education and instructional leadership. These new insights may be seen, in some cases, to jive in the face of conventional wisdom as they also significantly contribute to scholarship. For example, even the much talked about and romanticised updated curriculum was labelled in this study as anti-inclusionary. The new curriculum was seen to be built on the foundations of the entrepreneurial logics and a faulty neo-liberal assumption that children are the same and are all capable of passing the same subjects and many subjects. In the current study, this assumption does not seem to offer any promise for the future of inclusive education as it seems to disregard the multiple intelligence (Bas & Beyhab, 2017; Chen & Gardner, 2018) and differential intelligence (Scott, 2016) hypotheses.

This study also raises pertinent questions that challenge conventional thinking about inclusive education and the purpose of education in society. It points to a potentially conflicted thinking that, "the very education system which we believe should be preparing our children for the future may as well be destroying the future of the very children that it seeks to serve" (Mhlolo, 2015: 169). One research participant thus said, *"... people ... are as poor as they are because they are sending children to school; at times for the wrong reasons.* This means, the education system in Zimbabwe, which the grant narrative has often claimed to be among the best in Africa (ZIMFACT, 2018) may actually be too romanticised when in actual fact it still manifests the vestiges of its colonial past where education for 'Black children' was associated with sifting and sorting children for employment purposes in 'Whites' owned enterprises. Such employment was often confused with work.

My study challenges educators to redefine quality education, inclusive education, to begin thinking of inclusive education in the context of 'equity', and to think of 'equity' as radically different from 'equality.' It also challenges educators to begin thinking of how to promote alternative models of social justice and inclusive education which require treating learners differently [and not the liberal conception of simply treating everybody the same]. This study thus provides answers to the question on why and

how education in Zimbabwe has remained largely exclusionary more than 25 years after the Salamanca Statement and 40 years after independence, even in the backdrop of a regulatory and political environment which at face value appears to be supportive of inclusive initiatives. It also points to the limitations of promoting inclusive education through an uncritical social justice framework centred on political integration and legal-rights based equality as opposed to ethics and equity issues.

This study further highlights the danger of governments promulgating policies that they may never mean to implement (Chimbi & Jita, 2019). Such policies may create a sense of perceptual dilemma (Ruff & Shoho, 2005) and disenchantment among policy implementers. In order to cope with such policy conflict, policy implementers may decide to decouple from written policy in order to couple with policy as practice by a government department such as the MoPSE. In conventional wisdom, the apparent decoupling practice, as witnessed in the current study, may be explained as an effort by school heads to “ignore, evade, or attempt to buffer themselves from policy” prescriptions (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Chimbi, 2018). This study challenges such conventional wisdom by arguing that, it is not in every case that decoupling is targeted at buffering practices from environmental pressures. In some cases, decoupling is done to cope with conflict between written policy (overt policy) and practice (covert policy) by government departments and thus benefit learners and/or ensure school legitimacy as accounting centres.

Another important contribution by this study to scholarship is the proposition that, whilst the MoPSE pays lip service to full inclusion by keeping inclusive policy as political symbolism, the future of full inclusion may as well be in the hands of responsible authorities for respective schools. My study also shows that, early socialisation and experience with exceptionalities and promotion status of school heads play a central role in shaping inclusive instructional leadership thought by school heads. This finding has implications for training and career management for school heads as officially designated school leaders in their respective school.

Finally, my study contributes to scholarship on sense-making and implementation and on instructional leadership by bringing to the fore the dimension of inclusive secondary schools. It is particularly relevant at a time when schools have assumed the role of socialising the young into the culture of the community to which they

belong, following a steady and gradual disintegration of the traditional family system (Haralambos & Holborn, 2013) as an agent of socialisation. It is also relevant at a time when education has increasingly tended to be commercialised and marketised (Florian *et al.*, 2016; Phasha *et al.*, 2017) across the globe. In the Zimbabwean context, commercialisation of education seems to have resulted in what Dore (1997) defines as the 'diploma disease' or qualification escalation. This 'disease' has resulted in the education system inadvertently condemning to hopelessness, more than 80% of children who wrote examinations each year, since independence in 1980. As a result, most schools have become more and more exclusive as they seek to avoid negative labelling associated with failure of learners in literacy and numeracy oriented examinations. All this happens in the backdrop of a policy and political framework that seem to favour inclusive education but to no avail. My study therefore confirms that, "the very education system which we believe should be preparing our children for the future may as well be destroying the future of the very children that it seeks to serve" (Mhlolo, 2015: 169). Clearly, commercialisation and marketisation of education appear to be acting as a magnetic force in the macro level school leadership environment that seems to be pulling schools further and further away from equity (inclusivity). In the absence of a paradigm shift (Fusch, *et al.* 2018) by key and powerful stakeholders, including the policy makers, the situation is likely to continue unabated. To borrow a line from one of the participants, a disenchanted Mr Simango, one may therefore, ask: "*When will we learn?*"

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Acceptance letter by the Department

Loyiso Jita <JitaLC@ufs.ac.za> Mar 25, 2017, 5:01 AM

to me

Dear Edson

Congratulations on the acceptance of your CTR application! Please note the accepted title – it is important to use this accepted title in all your documents henceforth. You are not allowed to change even a comma in the approved title. You can take note of the comments from the committee as you proceed with the study.

I also attach the final document that we submitted to the committee for your records.

Please work on your draft chapter 3 and instruments for ethics application.

Have fun,

L.

Dear Prof Jita

I =

The CTR committee suggests the following change to your student's title: *"Challenges and opportunities to instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools of Zimbabwe"*

All of the best to the promoter and student with the study

Kind regards

Christa

Appendix 2: Letter to the MoPSE Requesting Permission to Conduct Research

Letter to the MoPSE Requesting Permission to Conduct Research

House No. 10887
Mucheke Township
Masvingo
Zimbabwe

14 April 2017

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education
Ambassador House
Harare
Zimbabwe

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Dear Sir/Madam

I hereby request for permission to conduct research in selected secondary schools within Masvingo district in Masvingo Province. My name is Edson Muresherwa. I am presently studying for a PhD degree with the University of the Free State. As part of my PhD programme, I am required to conduct research on an aspect of interest with a view to making a contribution to knowledge and understanding of the issues under study. My interest is on instructional leadership in inclusive (non-selective) secondary schools. The title of my research study is:

Challenges and opportunities of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools of Zimbabwe

The purpose of the study is to examine the challenges and opportunities of leading instruction in inclusive secondary schools as experienced by school heads and how these challenges and opportunities influence the enactment and practice of instructional leadership in these settings. The study will be confined to selected schools in the Masvingo district of Masvingo Province; Zimbabwe.

The study has the potential to benefit learners, teachers, and instructional leaders at various levels, including school heads by pointing out the challenges and opportunities of leading instruction in inclusive (non-selective) secondary schools as a basis for improved learning through improved instructional leadership practices in these school settings. Policymakers may also be influenced by the findings of this basic study to promulgate and enforce more informed inclusive related policies and practices for improved learning. The study is in line with the new Curriculum Framework for Primary and Secondary Education 2015-2022, one of whose guiding principles is inclusivity. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education will directly benefit from the study as the findings will be shared with the Ministry for possible policy considerations. The three schools that directly participate in the study will also benefit from this study. The research findings will be shared with these participating schools and any other school in the district and beyond as will be found necessary.

The study will involve: 1) administering a questionnaire to 30 teachers drawn from 3 secondary schools; 2) observation of one staff meeting and one morning devotion per school. 3) Photo-copying 10 supervision reports 10 records of marks and 10 schemes of work per school; 4) interviews with administrative and teaching staff, as well as the District Education Officers at the time convenient to them. The interviews are expected to last no more than 60 minutes per session and with permission from research participants a recording device will be used to record the interviews. The questionnaire will be completed at a time most convenient to the research participants, without interfering with their work activities.

The following is a list of school identified by their pseudonyms in brackets for this study:

(a) XXX (Open Gates) High School

(b) YYY (Holy Ghost) High School

(c) ZZZ (All Souls) High School

I undertake to observe confidentiality and to protect participants from physical and/or psychological harm. I also undertake to strictly observe the Official Secrecy Act. No names of the schools and/or persons shall be used in any report of the research. All participants will be asked to participate voluntarily in the study and may withdraw at any time should they so wish. Upon the completion of the study, I undertake to provide the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education with a copy of the research report and to share my findings with instructional leaders in the district (and possibly other districts) as will be seen necessary.

I have already applied for ethical clearance from the University of the Free State to guarantee strict observance of research ethics in conducting this study and am waiting for their response. If you need any further information and/or have suggestions, please contact me and/or my research supervisor; Prof Loyiso Jita.

Contact details: jitalc@ufs.ac.za or +27829083369

I hope my request will receive your favourable consideration

Yours sincerely

.....

Edson Muresherwa

Cell: +263 849744 (E-mail: edsmuresherwa@gmail.com)

Appendix 3: Clearance Letter from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE)

*All communications should be addressed to
"The Secretary for Primary and Secondary
Education
Telephone: 732006
Telegraphic address : "EDUCATION"
Fax:794505*



Reference: C/426/3 Masvingo
Ministry of Primary and
Secondary Education
P.O Box CY 121
Causeway
HARARE

21 June 2017

Edson Muresherwa
House No 10887
Mucheke Township
Masvingo

**Re: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH IN MASVINGO PROVINCE:
MASVINGO DISTRICT: [REDACTED], [REDACTED] AND [REDACTED] HIGH
SCHOOLS:**

Reference is made to your application to carry out research at the above mentioned schools in Masvingo Province on the research title:

**"CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP IN
INCLUSIVE SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF ZIMBABWE"**

Permission is hereby granted. However, you are required to liaise with the Provincial Education Director, Masvingo Province, who is responsible for the schools which you want to involve in your research. You should ensure that your research work does not disrupt the normal operations of the school.

You are also required to provide a copy of your final report to the Secretary for Primary and Secondary Education.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S.J. Utete-Masango', written over a faint rectangular stamp.

Dr S.J Utete-Masango
SECRETARY FOR PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION
cc: PED – Masvingo Province

Appendix 4: Ethical Clearance from the UFS

Faculty of Education

07-Jun-2017

Dear Mr Edson Muresherwa

Ethics Clearance: Challenges and opportunities of leading instruction in inclusive secondary schools of Zimbabwe

Principal Investigator: Mr Edson Muresherwa

Department: School of Education Studies (Bloemfontein Campus)

APPLICATION APPROVED

With reference to your application for ethical clearance with the Faculty of Education, I am pleased to inform you on behalf of the Ethics Board of the faculty that you have been granted ethical clearance for your research.

Your ethical clearance number, to be used in all correspondence is: **UFS-HSD2017/0531**

This ethical clearance number is valid for research conducted for one year from issuance. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension.

We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure we are kept up to date with your progress and any ethical implications that may arise.

Thank you for submitting this proposal for ethical clearance and we wish you every success with your research.

Yours faithfully

Dr. MM Nkoane

Chairperson: Ethics Committee

Education Ethics Committee

Office of the Dean: Education

T: +27 (0)51 401 9683 | F: +27 (0)86 546 1113 | E: NkoaneMM@ufs.ac.za

Winkie Direko Building | P.O. Box/Posbus 339 | Bloemfontein 9300 | South Africa

www.ufs.ac.za

Appendix 5: Consent Form for School Academic Staff

Consent Form for School Academic Staff

If you agree to participate in the study entitled:

Challenges and opportunities of instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools of Zimbabwe

Please complete the attached consent form

- I hereby give free and informed consent to participate in the above-mentioned research study.
- I understand what the study is about, why I am participating and what the risks and benefits are.
- I give the researcher permission to use recording device (yes/no).
- I give the researcher permission to make use of the data gathered from my participation, subject to the stipulations he has indicated in the above letter

Participant's Signature: Date:.....

Researcher's Signature: Date:.....

Appendix 6: Interview Guide for School Heads

Interview Guide for School Heads

Background to the interview

My name is **Edson Muresherwa**. I am a student at the University of the Free State and am researching on the challenges and opportunities of leading instruction in inclusive secondary schools in Zimbabwe. Following your consent to participate in this study, as indicated in the consent form, I am kindly requesting you to respond to the questions in this questionnaire. I would like to reassure you that the resultant data will not be used in its raw form. To ensure confidentiality of data sources, no names, even of institutions, should be written on the questionnaire. Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary.

Instructions for completing the questionnaire

The interview consists of 44 questions presented in chronological order. As you provide your answers, I will be tape recording your responses and, where the need arises, I will also take notes of our discussion.

Part A: Bio-data

- (a) Age
- (b) Gender
- (c) Highest qualifications
- (d) Length of experience as a school head: (i) in this school; (ii) elsewhere.

Part B: School heads' sense-making of instructional leadership

- 1) School heads are often faced with dual responsibilities of school management and providing leadership in the teaching/learning programmes. What do you consider to be your most important responsibility between the two? [Probe: (i) May you briefly explain your response. (ii) What do you see as the major activities involved in proving effective leadership for successful teaching/learning (instructional leadership) programmes?
- 2) What do you consider to be your most important responsibilities (expectations) as the officially designated instructional leader in this school? [Probe: (i) Why do you consider them as your most important responsibilities? (ii) What more can you say?
- 3) What do you consider to be your most important objective as you lead teaching/learning programmes in the school? [Probe: Why do you say so?]

- 4) In your opinion, do you feel that leadership of learning in inclusive secondary schools is similar to leadership of learning in selective schools? [Probe: (i) Why do you say so? (ii) May you shed more light on this.]
- 5) Whose responsibility do you feel it is to: (i) define, and (ii) communicate the school vision and mission to educational stakeholders? [Probe: (a) May you briefly comment on the role of: (i) the MoPSE, (ii) the responsible authority, (iii) parents and (iii) the community served by the school on defining and advancing the inclusive vision for this school; (b) which other stakeholders are involved?]
- 6) Do you consider it important that school authorities develop a shared inclusive school vision with each of following stakeholders: (i) parents of children without special needs? (ii) parents of children with special needs? (iii) the surrounding community? (iv) the responsible authority? (v) teachers?, (vii) the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE)? [Probe: May you justify your responses.]
- 7) In your opinion, do you feel it is entirely your individual responsibility (as an officially designated instructional leader) to provide resources for effective teaching and learning in this school? [Probe: (i) Why do you say so? (ii) May you say a bit more. (iii) What do you see as comprising a favourable teaching/learning environment for an inclusive school?]
- 8) In your opinion, to what extent does: (i) the MoPSE, (ii) the responsible authority, and (iii) the community served by the school take children with learning difficulties to be children with special needs, worth of its attention? [Probe: (i) What other children are considered as special needs children for inclusive education purposes in this school? (ii) May you kindly explain your response.]
- 9) (a) To what extent are teachers in this school rewarded for their participation in inclusive education? (b) Do you feel it is important for teachers in inclusive secondary schools to be rewarded for working with learners with exceptionalities? [Probe: (i) Briefly explain your response. (ii) What else can you say?]
- 10) Do you consider that the Zimbabwean national schools' curriculum adequately addresses the needs of learners with special needs including those with learning difficulties? [Probe: (i) Why do you say so? (ii) What measures are you taking to make the school-based curriculum suited to all children in this school, if any? (iii) What more is being done? (iii) To what extent are you being successful in doing so?]
- 11) Do you consider yourself adequately empowered to reward and motivate teachers for their participation in teaching learners with special needs in this school? [Probe: (i) May

you briefly explain your response. (ii) What do you do to motivate teachers? (iii) What else do you do?]

- 12) In your assessment, do you feel you are getting the support that you deserve from each of the following stakeholders as you carry out your duties of leading learning in this school: (i) parents of children without special needs? (ii) parents of children with special needs? (iii) the surrounding community? (iv) your responsible authority? (v) your own teachers? (vi) The MoPSE? [Probe: (i) Why do you say so? (ii) What more do you feel may still need to be taken to ensure that you enjoy enough support? (iii) What is the nature of support you are getting if any?].
- 13) In your opinion, to what extent does the MoPSE's support of your inclusive approach to education impact on the effectiveness of your leadership of learning in this school? [Probe: May you say a bit more on this]
- 14) In your opinion, are you convinced the MoPSE is doing enough to recognise and reward teachers for their participation in inclusive education? [Probe: (i) Why do you say so? (ii) What more do you feel can still be done?
- 15) Do you consider that rewarding teachers for embracing educational inclusion of learners with special needs would be an indicator of the MoPSE's commitment to educational inclusion?
- 16) Do you consider that teachers in this school have been adequately trained to handle children with special needs? [Probe: (i) Do you consider such training important? (ii) Why do you say so?]
- 17) Do you consider that training of secondary school teachers to handle inclusive classes is an indicator of government's commitment to educational inclusion? [Probe: Why do you say so?].
- 18) In your opinion, do you feel the community being served by your school views your school in a positive light for embracing the inclusive framework? [Probe: Why do you say so?]
- 19) To what extent do you feel that your school is adequately resourced for inclusion? [Probe: (i) Why do you say so?]
- 20) In your opinion, are you convinced that the MoPSE shares the inclusive vision as embraced in this school? [Probe: Why do you say so?]
- 21) In your own assessment, are you convinced the inclusive framework which has been adopted in this school helps to improve the image of the school in the eyes of: (i) the

MoPSE? (ii) responsible authority? (iii) the community around the school? [Probe: May you shed more light on your assessment.]

22) What benefits do you see accruing to you for embracing educational inclusion in this school? [Probe: May you say a bit more]

23) What do you see as your reason for embracing an inclusive approach to education in this school? [Probe: (i) May you briefly explain your response (ii) What more do you say? (iii) What role has been played by: the following in motivating you to embrace inclusive education in this school: (a) the MoPSE? (b) the community? (c) the responsible authority? (iii) What other stakeholders do you see as influencing you to embrace an inclusive framework in this school?]

24) (a) How do you identify and select children admitted into your school? (b) Once children are admitted into your school, how do you: (a) allocate classes to them? (b) allocate subjects to classes? [Probe: (i) Briefly explain your response. (ii) What else can you say?]

25) (i) How do you rate ZIMSEC examinations in terms of their suitability in addressing the needs of learners with learning difficulties? (i) What measures are you taking to ensure authentic assessment of learners according to individual educational needs? (ii) What do you feel still needs to be done to make the examinations system more suited to the special needs of learners with exceptionalities? [Probe: May you say a bit more on this]

26) To what extent do you subscribe to the assumption that every school child is capable of passing at least five O-levels including English Language and mathematics? [Probe: Briefly explain your response]

27) In your own assessment, are you convinced that learners with learning difficulties, learners with high intellectual ability and those with physical disabilities are effectively benefitting from the inclusive framework as adopted in this school? [Probe: (i) Why do you say so? (ii) What do you feel may still need to be done to make all learners to benefit more from inclusive instructional practices?]

28) Are you convinced that the MoPSE genuinely expects schools to embrace full inclusion of learners with exceptionalities in the light of how the following are assessed and rewarded: (i) effective performance of teachers? (ii) effective performance of schools? (iii) effective learning? [Probe: May you briefly explain your response.]

29) In your own assessment, to what extent do you feel that measuring (i) effective learner learning, and (ii) effective performance of schools in terms of how learners perform in

public examinations only motivates you to embrace inclusion of children with low intellectual ability in the mainstream education system?

- 30) When teachers are involved in professional development programs, there is obviously loss of teaching time. In light of this, do you continue encouraging your teachers to further their education through in-service programs? (Probe: Justify action in this case.)
- 31) Do you consider it important that knowledgeable teachers ought to be involved in assisting others in handling learners with exceptionalities? [Probe: (i) Why do you say so? (ii) To what extent are your teachers helping each other in handling learners with special needs? (iii) What exactly is being done?]
- 32) Whose responsibility do you feel it is to supervise teaching/learning programmes in this school? [Probe: (a) What role is played by each of the following stakeholders in supervising teaching/learning activities: (i) the deputy head? (ii) senior teachers? (iii) HODs? (iii) Who else is involved in supervising teaching/learning activities in this school? [(b) (i) Do you see it important that you should share leadership roles with other stakeholders in the school? (ii) May you briefly explain your response]
- 33) Inclusive education seems to be based on the principle that school programs should be modified to meet the special needs of learners and not vice-versa. Do you impress upon each one of your learners to pass 5 O-levels as a standard measure for success? [Probe: (i) May you please justify your position. (ii) How else do you measure student learning in this school?]
- 34) To what extent do you see the following artefacts used in Masvingo district as supportive of inclusive education practices such as adopted in this school: (i) the legal framework? (ii) supervision instruments? (iii) policy circulars and other instructional leadership artefacts? [Probe: (i) Briefly explain your response. (ii) What more can you say?]
- 35) What prospects do you see for the future of inclusive education in this district? [Probe: (i) May you briefly explain your response. (ii) Is there anything that you see as an obstacle for the success of inclusive education in the district? (iii) What do you see as promoting an inclusive approach to education in the district?]

Appendix 7: Check-list for Observational Studies

Check-list for Observational Studies

The observational activities will be guided by the following broad question:

What practices characterise instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools?

The observation process will be characterised by notes taking on the following instructional leadership dimensions:

1) Defining the school mission and goals

- (i) Does the school have a clear mission and vision statement?
- (ii) Is the school mission statement displayed on notice boards?
- (iii) How else is the mission statement communicated?
- (iv) How effective is the mission statement communicated?

2) Managing instructional programme.

- (i) What does the head take most of his/her time doing
- (ii) Who else is involved in leadership activities?
- (iii) Any evidence of teacher leadership?
- (iv) What is the emphasis of instructional programmes?
- (v) To what extent do staff meetings and briefings talk to issues of quality and education for all?
- (vi) "Who are speaking and whose voices are being heard? Are there any voices being denied or challenged?" (Adopted from Makaye, 2015).
- (vii) How does the head ensure effective supervision of teachers?

3) Creating a positive teaching/learning climate

- (i) How does the school head protect instructional time?
- (ii) How does the school head motivate staff?
- (iii) How are learners grouped for instruction?
- (iv) Any sporting programmes for children with disabilities?
- (v) What is the extent to which staff meeting address issues of inclusion?

4) Use of instructional leadership artefacts and resources

- (i) What are the instructional leadership artefacts used and by who?
- (ii) What is the general atmosphere in terms of interaction for learning?

Appendix 8: Check-list for Document Analysis

Check-list for Document Analysis

Document analysis activities will be guided by the following broad question:

What practices characterise instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools?

Document analysis will be characterised by a serious study of documents as artefacts of instructional leadership. During the process, notes will also be taken. The notes will be analysed and concerted to fuller version of the reality they represent at the end of the document analysis process.

The following documents will be analysed:

- 1) Minutes of staff meetings:
 - a) To establish the extent to which meetings talk to issues of educating every child in inclusive settings.
 - b) To get a feel of leadership distribution in the schools under study.
 - c) To get an appreciation of the problems and benefits which accrue to school heads for their leadership of learning in inclusive settings.
 - d) To get a feel of the instructional leadership activities employed by school heads in inclusive settings.
- 2) Samples of exercise books: Emphasis will be on the quality of marking, the comments given by teachers, purpose of supervision by school heads and how school heads assist teachers to help children with special needs.
- 3) Report books and mark schedules: Attention will be focused on the quality of marks, the comments given by teachers, and whether teachers are encouraged and assisted to follow up on poor performance by children with learning difficulties.
- 4) Lesson supervision reports: These are analysed to establish (i) the extent of distribution of instructional leadership, (ii) the type of assistance that teachers are given to help learners with exceptionalities (iii) extent to which instructional leaders emphasise on the need to educate every child.
- 5) Vision and mission statements: These are analysed to establish if they talk to issues of inclusion and quality of education in inclusive settings?

Other instructional leadership artefacts: e.g. job descriptions (i.e. of Deputy Heads, HODs, senior teachers, class teachers).

MINISTRY VISION

**TO BE THE LEADING PROVIDER
AND FACILITATOR OF INCLUSIVE
QUALITY EDUCATION FOR SOCIO-
ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION BY
2020.**

MINISTRY MISSION

**TO PROVIDE EQUITABLE, QUALITY
AND RELEVANT AND INFANT,
JUNIOR AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION.**

Appendix 10: Inspection Form for Narrative Report on a School Heads

NARRATIVE SUPERVISION REPORT ON A SCHOOL HEAD

NARRATIVE SUPERVISION REPORT ON A SCHOOL HEAD

TOTAL SCORE

7/8

Distribution:

- Head Office 1 copy
- Provincial Office 1 copy
- District Office 1 copy
- School 1 copy
- Head 1 copy

Section A: Personal Details

Surname:..... First Name(s):..... Title:.....

E.C. No.:..... Phone Number:.....

E-mail address:

Male

☐

Female

☐

(a) Qualifications:

Academic:..... Where obtained and year:.....

Professional:..... Where obtained and year:.....

Self advancement (e.g. computer literacy).....(2)

Comments:.....

(b) Date of Appointment into service as a qualified teacher:.....

(c) Substantive Grade:

(d) Date Appointed to Substantive Grade:.....

(e) Current Position/Title:.....

(f) Date of appointment to current position:.....

(g) Disability status:

(h) Presentation:

Section B: Institutional Details

Name of School/Institution:..... When established:.....
 Postal Address:.....
 Registration No.:..... EMIS No.:..... Dept/Stn Nos:.....
 Email Address:..... Phone Nos.: Land:..... Mobile:.....
 Any other communication system.....
 Province:..... District:.....
 Type of School:

P1	P2	P3

S1	S2	S3

 Boarding or Day:.....
 Responsible Authority:..... Code No:.....
 Date of Last Visit:.....
 Date of Visit:.....
 Purpose of Visit:.....

Section C: Enrolment and Staffing Details

Enrolment, Staffing and Infrastructure Details (8 points)

1. Enrolment and Staffing Details

(a) Enrolment by Grade/Form, sex and totals

Comments:.....

(b) Enrolment trends for the past three (3) years: Declining or increasing

Reasons/comments:.....(2)

(c) Staffing Details: Name, E.C. No., qualification (academic and professional) subject specialisation, subjects being taught, classes being taught and teaching loads

Comments:.....

(d) Head's Teaching Load and Subjects/Grades taught

Reasons/comments:.....(1)

2. Infrastructure Details

Teacher Accommodation, Classrooms, specialist rooms, boarding facilities, toilets, sport facilities, culture facilities, school grounds.

Library and equipment, signage and national flag, furniture provision.

Comments:.....(5)

Section D: Administrative and Professional Responsibilities (90 points)

1. Administrative Responsibilities (40 points)

Office Organisation (4)

Displays, Vision, Mission, Clients charter, Core values, Master timetable, enrolment and staff details, examination pass rates, School Development Plan, filing system, returns and notice board.

Meetings (4)

With Responsible Authority, administrative staff, Heads of Department, teachers, parents, prefects, minute books.

Financial Management (6)

Budgets, Finance Meetings, procurement procedures, financial records, evidence of user requests, audits.

School Projects (5)

Productive Units and other school projects.

Asset Management (4)

Asset registers, repairs, maintenance and asset disposal.

Performance Management (5)

Monitoring teacher and pupil performance, syllabus coverage, examination pass rate trends for the past 3 years.

School Tone (4)

Reception, cleanliness, climate, orderliness, teamwork, motivation, Learner friendliness.

Discipline (4)

Relevant circulars and statutes, school rules, outline of prefect responsibilities, staff conduct, attendance and availability of disciplinary structures.

Public Relations and Communication Strategy**(4)**

Means of communication, Relations with the community, parents, Responsible Authority, Ministry Officials, feedback mechanisms, Client charter, recognition of achievement. Management of complaints.

2. Professional Responsibilities**(50 points)****School Curriculum****(10)**

Subjects on offer. Departments, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Technical and Vocational (Tech/Voc), indigenous languages, teaching loads, availability of national syllabi, school syllabi, schemes, timetables and professional records, lesson plans.

Non-Formal Education**(8)**

Existence of non-formal education policy, programmes undertaken, learner enrolment, teacher's involvement, community involvement, funding mechanism.

Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation**(10)**

Supervision plan, supervision proformas, supervision of Heads of Department, teacher support staff and SDC personnel, children's work.

Staff Development**(5)**

Staff needs analysis, planned staff development sessions, certification courses.

Sporting Activities**(4)**

Available sporting activities, staff allocation, timetables, students' participation at school and tournament levels, notable achievements, sporting facilities, funding.

Arts and Cultural Activities**(4)**

Available cultural activities, staff allocation, Timetables, students' participation, notable achievements, facilities, participation in festivals, funding.

Guidance and Counselling**(4)**

Counselling programmes and career guidance, School on the shop-floor, Learner care and protection programmes.

Leadership Role In School Development Committee**(5)**

Timely elections, procurement, internal controls, audits, conflict management.

Section E: Conclusion and Recommendations

- Strengths noted:

.....

- Areas for improvement:

.....

- Challenges:

.....

- Recommendations:

.....

Name of Reporting Officer:..... Designation:.....

Province:..... District:.....

Signature:..... Date:.....

Appendix 11: Letter from the Language Editor

HUMAN RESOURCES RESEARCH CENTRE



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Human Resources Research Centre
P.O. Box MP167, Mount Pleasant,
Harare, Zimbabwe
(263) 772241953
E-mail: gamatw@gmail.com

UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE

24 June 2020

To whom it may concern

This serves to certify that the PhD document titled: **Challenges and opportunities to instructional leadership in inclusive secondary schools of Zimbabwe**, by **Edson Muresherwa**, was edited by an experienced editor/proof reader. I have edited the documents and advised the author to effect various changes including the mechanics of language, formatting of text and referencing style.

I am of the view that the quality of the documents is of generally accepted academic standards.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Murewa'.

Appendix 12: Turn it in Report

Thesis			
ORIGINALITY REPORT			
6%	4%	2%	4%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
1	scholar.ufs.ac.za:8080 Internet Source		<1%
2	link.springer.com Internet Source		<1%
3	Submitted to University Der Es Salaam Student Paper		<1%
4	scholar.ufs.ac.za Internet Source		<1%
5	edst.educ.ubc.ca Internet Source		<1%
6	Submitted to University of Nottingham Student Paper		<1%
7	www.emeraldinsight.com Internet Source		<1%
8	www.tandfonline.com Internet Source		<1%
9	repository.up.ac.za Internet Source		<1%